

Political Questions – Steve Rodan (2011)

Why this candidate wishes to be a member of the House of Keys?

To give the people of Garff a strong voice in Tynwald. To bring to bear my 16 years experience – including 5 as Speaker, and 7 as Government Minister – in the continuing service of the Manx people.

How well does the candidate think that the present?

On the Plus side.....in the face of world economic recession, Government's legislative programme and fiscal and economic policies have enabled private business and commerce to generate the wealth which has maintained strong and positive economic growth, virtual full employment, and the strong tax revenues necessary to fund high quality public services. Proactive engagement with international tax and regulatory authorities has maintained the Island's good standing at the forefront of reputable global business centres. On the negative side.....other direct external challenges have been handled with political ineptitude. The Government response to the UK's proposed ending of the Reciprocal Health Agreement was one of weakness and capitulation, with

If the candidate were elected, what would their priorities be at a constituency level?

pitiful political fightback before the last minute reprieve thanks to external support.

To continue to head up the Laxey Village Regeneration initiative to improve the built environment of the commercial centre (to see the extension by Tynwald of the Town and Village Regeneration Fund into the next financial year and beyond will be an early national priority of mine). To work with local authorities to end the neglected maintenance of roads, footpaths, vegetative overgrowth in village and parish. Promotion of Laxey Valley and its historic industrial heritage, nationally and internationally. To safeguard the countryside from intrusive over-development. To promote close cooperation between Laxey, Lonan and Maughold Commissioners to enhance efficiency and ratepayers' value for money. To continue to support numerous community organisations in the constituency.

If the candidate were elected, what would their priorities be at a national level?

National wealth creation and full employment. The vigorous defence of our national interests and the Manx

What does the candidate view as the main political and social issues facing the Isle of Man in the next 5 years?

way of life against unwelcome political pressure and interference. To rebalance the public finances following the UK raid on VAT sharing and indirect taxation income. To maintain the 5 key planks of Manx economic policy viz. - Low, internationally competitive rates of corporate and business taxation - A statutory Budget surplus, - No external government borrowing, - Build up Reserve Funds, -while sustaining high quality public services. To enhance and promote the institution of Tynwald whose legislative independence has made possible our unique fiscal, economic and social environment within the British Isles.

How to better manage our relationships with the UK Government, Europe, US and the outside world in the face of external pressure and challenge. How to create wealth - the economy will need to grow sufficiently to generate the replacement tax-revenues to make up the recent £190m losses in VAT sharing and indirect taxation, and in the meantime we must "cut our coat

How would the candidate deal with the challenges/issues over the next five years - as stated in the Main Social Issues question?

according to our cloth". - without wealth creation by the private sector, Government's provision of social housing, education, policing, health, social welfare and other public services simply cannot be paid for. - likewise, without sufficient tax revenues we will be unable to meet the challenge of Demographic Change – the ratio of retired to working people is growing, with rising demand for pensions, healthcare services, social support and homecare from an ageing population. How to reduce the costs of government, streamline the public administration, increase efficiency and reduce waste. How to tackle the problem of "NEETS" – while unemployment is only 2%, much of it is in the 16-24 age group, those not in education or training.

By stepping up constructive political and diplomatic dialogue with external governments and organisations. By making friends and allies of UK and international politicians, thereby enlisting greater outside support for the Isle of Man; a policy of "exchange-secondments"

between top UK and Isle of Man civil servants must be developed. By giving better critical scrutiny to policy imported from the UK and EU before it is adopted wholesale here. By developing better governance – full use of the new system of Tynwald scrutiny committees, and early introduction of the Ombudsman and Auditor General services will be critical. By a “Government of National Unity - this will include setting up a high powered National Productivity Commission of top business people, to identify the unnecessary red tape and regulation which hinders business, competitiveness and wealth creation, and advise on action required to generate new business investment; similarly, ongoing and corresponding engagement and dialogue with Third Sector voluntary organisations, and trade union bodies will also be vital. By developing bilateral trade, financial and commercial opportunities with India, China and other emerging markets. By strategically introducing legislation that will diversify the economy, and generate new outside niche

investment eg. Intellectual Property, clean-tech enterprise, and renewable energy; and further developing the conditions which have already encouraged e-commerce, space industry, shipping and aircraft registration and other specialised commercial markets. By placing greater emphasis on the value of the Manufacturing Sector, and building on existing commercial successes of creating world-class products and services for export into the global supply chain serving blue-chip companies and household names. By stepping up support for export marketing of high quality Isle of Man produce – meat, scallops, cheese. By developing a proper Heritage Tourism Strategy, with better coordination with coach operators, marketing deals with air and ferry operators and hoteliers. By rigorous downward pressure on public spending, while protecting where possible front line services and the more vulnerable in society. This must include reviewing the Scope of Government – I am in favour of continuing public ownership of many key strategic State assets, but

Government is not necessarily any good at running them, and a policy of service-level agreement partnerships with the private commercial sector should be examined. By generating significant savings within Government through enhanced productivity and reduced bureaucracy. We will need to: - radically shake-up employment structures and the management of the public sector work force. - streamline and centralise Government Departments' procurement, personnel and accounting functions to avoid duplication. - invest in improved technology and improve procedures, to reduce administration costs and improve management information for better strategic decision making. By more rigorous scrutiny of proposals for Capital Projects and the use of external consultants, to ensure value for money to the Isle of Man taxpayer. By developing more skills training programmes to prepare local individuals for work within the Hospitality and Service industries. Greater emphasis on vocational training and apprenticeships, so that

What does the candidate feel has changed for the better, for Isle of Man residents, in the past five years - giving examples?

all young people reach their full potential.

Increased quality of life in comparison to the UK, where economic slump, massive job redundancies, spending cut-backs, crime and social unrest prevail, and national discontent is the norm. We must be thankful we are as well as we are. Much of the "Big Ticket" spending by Government on replacement infrastructure has now been accomplished in recent years: new Hospital, health centres, MEA Power Station, Prison, Energy-from-Waste Plant, new and replacement school buildings, Iris Sewerage Strategy (but work still outstanding in north of the Island, including my constituency). Provision of housing, but pressures on first-time buyers still acute. Lowest crime for 25 years. Energy security. Breast screening services.

What does the candidate feel has changed for the worse for Isle of Man residents, in the past 5 years - give examples?

Cost of living - imported inflation due to the state of UK and world economies, and rising global fuel prices. Travel costs. Traffic. Longer hospital waiting lists. Appalling

Does the candidate feel that the Isle of Man has been too reliant upon the financial services industry?

children's dental health. High rates of alcohol abuse.

If The candidate feels there is too much Financial Services reliance, how does the candidate feel that they would further diversify the Manx economy?

No longer, thanks to diversifying the economy as stated earlier, with manufacturing being a notable success eg. IOM/NW England Aerospace Engineering Cluster.

Is the candidate in favour of independence from the United Kingdom?

Not now. This would be cutting off or nose to spite our face, in the naive belief that recent challenges from them and external pressures from other agencies would thereby simply go away. When it is judged to be in our best interests, and at the time of our choosing, we should not hesitate to do so.

Is the candidate in favour of -and if a standing member, did they vote for- a popularly elected Legislative Council?

Yes. I have a parliamentary record of supporting this with (failed) legislation.

Is the candidate in favour of -and if a

Only if we move from a

standing member, did they vote for a popularly elected Chief Minister?

parliamentary system of government to an executive presidency. Therein lies the difficulty with this popular aspiration.

Is the candidate in favour of nationalisation of air and or sea services to and from the Isle of Man?

No

Is the candidate in favour of onshore wind farms in the Isle of Man?

No. Not a penny from the Isle of Man taxpayer or energy consumer should be involuntarily used to subsidise this. However, the Isle of Man is ideally placed to take advantage of off-shore wind, tidal and wave energy when these technologies become economically viable for commercial enterprise to develop. Current targets for reduced energy consumption should be met through better insulation, waste reduction and other efficiencies.

Is the candidate in favour of Means testing for "universal" benefits and social housing?

Universal benefits are unsustainable, and a policy of targeting will have to be carefully considered. Similarly with social housing, provided we apply principles of fairness and overall social cohesion – there has long been taxpayer subsidy in the private housing market through mortgage



tax relief. This is often overlooked.