

Geoffrey Boot – Glenfaba and Peel

Political Questions (2016)

Why do you want to be a member of the House of Keys?

Having been elected as Glenfaba's MHK in 2015 I have done my best over this Parliamentary year to service and keep my constituents informed as well as taking on a substantial department workload in two departments, Department of Economic Development (DED) and Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture (DEFA), served on two select committees, plus the Strategic Sea Services Working Group.

I would like to build on this experience and hope that with a five year term I can make (that politician cliché) a real difference.

I have reached an age where I can dedicate nearly all my time to Manx politics and I think this is important as it is really a full time job. I come from a consummate business background which I have found very useful in Tynwald.

If you were elected, what would your priorities be on a national level?

I continue to be a great believer in transparency and communication, something government has not been good at in the past. We are in an uncertain political situation after Brexit

If you were elected, what would your priorities be on a constituency level?

but my priorities continue to be Economic Development as without that we will have insufficient money to pay for the good things we all want, an excellent health service, education for our children, good roads, low crime, clean, pleasant and secure sustainable environment.

How well do you think the present administration has handled the major challenges of the past five years?

Continuing good communication through constantly updated website, Facebook, Twitter feed and newsletters where appropriate, working and communication with local Commissioners to facilitate joined up Government ensuring effective response to constituents concerns.

What are the main political and social issues facing the Isle of Man in the next five years?

Unfortunately only of late have some of the burning issues started to be tackled such as public sector and state pensions. In the last year whilst I have been an MHK we have now set the scene for difficult decisions that need to be made in the next Tynwald.

We must keep our economy on track and take advantage of opportunities that may arise as a result of Brexit taking back more control, providing Manx solutions to Manx problems not just

absorbing EU regulation as we have been doing. We need to keep an eye on immigration and be careful to ensure adequate social housing. We also need to maintain a low tax rate but one that is fair to all. The aging population represents an additional challenge.

How would you deal with the challenges referred to in the previous answer?

Continue to encourage diversification and growth of our economy and make legislation and regulation address our problems not the problems from across. Make our island the place to live and do business.

How would you deal with the issue of public sector pension reform and the public sector pension deficit?

This process has now been started with recent motions in Tynwald. Actuaries projections rely on numerous factors, the present proposals rely on economic growth within the bounds of previous economic expansion. There will be more debate in the new Tynwald. No more final salary pension schemes and manage the present deficit.

What has changed in the past five years for Isle of Man residents for the better? (Please give examples)

This is a difficult one to answer because in any five year period there are always some winners and some losers. Our economy and jobs available have continue to expand and our salary levels are generally higher than those in the UK.

What has changed in the past five years for Isle of Man residents for the worse? (Please give examples)

Our environment continues to improve and in health and social services we are at last getting to grips with some of the problems of the past. Crime has fallen to new lows and unemployment likewise.

Is the Isle of Man too reliant on any one sector of its economy?

Sadly spending cuts have had an effect primarily with regard to provision of social housing, education, road repairs and staff shortages in the health service have not helped waiting lists.

If you feel it is, how would you further diversify the Manx economy?

The Isle of Man has a fairly diverse economy much to the envy of our Channel Islands friends we still have a manufacturing base, E-gaming is now a considerable part of our economy and it is of concern that anything that revolves around IT can move location very quickly.

I have for the last year been a member of DED and there is a lot of work going on behind the scenes that is confidential but every avenue for diversification for new jobs is an area being explored. It is difficult for us to make any predictions as to what will be the new E-gaming or aircraft registry consequently its important that we follow all opportunities. Our recent biosphere

Are you in favour of increased independence from the United Kingdom?

status from UNESCO confirms the island as excellent place in which to live and do business as well as offering new tourist opportunities and marketing opportunities for Manx produce.

If you are, in which areas?

The present arrangements work quite well, in some ways I would like to remove the need for royal assent to our legislation and it would be good to be a sovereign state as that would open the door to our own negotiation with third countries. However with Brexit the UK remains by far the largest recipient of our services and exports as well as our imports so we should be careful about making any hasty judgements or moves to further independence until matters settle down.

As a continuation of the last answer I think Brexit offers us opportunities to get out from under the umbrella of EU legislation oft quoted "we can't favour Manx companies because of EU legislation", "we can't dictate a local produce policy because of EU legislation" etc. Let's see how the UK untangles and re-exerts our own policy in these areas.

Are you in favour of parliamentary reform in the Isle of Man?

Yes to a limited extent, I did reply to the recent Lisvane enquiry my feeling is that the Legislative Council should take on a more scrutiny role and not have a veto on legislation the way they do at present. They should be able to recommend but at the end of the day the elected members should make binding decisions.

If you are, which aspects of the parliamentary system would you change?

As above

Who should have the responsibility of electing the Chief Minister?

The Chief Minister should be elected from within the elected members of the House of Keys and by the House of Keys.

Are you in favour of the nationalisation of air and/or sea services to and from the Isle of Man?

No

Are you in favour of renewable energy projects in Manx territorial waters?

Yes I have been involved in the Cleantech sector in DED and I see a great future if we can become better connected with UK and Ireland.

Are you in favour of an increase in means testing for financial support

Where this has a proven benefit yes but not means testing for means testing sake

**and/or services provided by
Government?**

which can cause distress and have
unintended consequences

If you are, in which areas?