

HOUSE OF KEYS GENERAL ELECTION 29TH SEPTEMBER 2011

**X PAUL
HEAVEY
FOR MICHAEL**

ELECTION MANIFESTO

"I won't lie to you. I won't let you down.
I am a friend you can rely on."



The condition of our Roads and Pavements

"The state of our roads is a national disgrace." Too much money has been wasted on 'road improvement projects' such as Richmond Hill, Windy Corner, Brandish Corner etc. I believe we should make it a priority to get our existing roads and pavements into better condition before embarking on any further 'road improvement projects'. Money spent on maintenance is money well spent and will save money in the long run.

Road Safety

"There are bad roads, but no such thing as a dangerous road. The only thing that can be dangerous are the people who use them." Is it not time that some of our villages had speed cameras in operation at busy times? It amazes me that some drivers do not slow down through our villages at busy times such as when children are on their way to and from school and we have a responsibility to help protect them. Is it too much to ask that drivers consider the safety of children?

Additionally, driver training for all Government employees who operate vehicles during their work should be mandatory. It should also be made available for businesses and individuals who wish to take part. Good drivers make safe drivers and good drivers are far more cost effective than bad ones. A well trained driver will not use as much fuel or cause as much wear or damage to a vehicle and we have the opportunity to demonstrate this to all road users by taking the initiative and leading by example.

Schools and Education

"What's the point of turning out bright, well educated young people if we can't provide the opportunities of employment here on the Isle of Man?" The greatest achievement of recent years has to be the high standard of our schools. This must continue as it is vital that we create the economic environment to develop their careers here on the island. In the future we

can expect to see more diversification in local employment opportunities. Therefore it is essential that we have a diverse and broadly educated young population to take up these positions.

To ensure that funding remains available we must examine how school budgets are sometimes poorly spent. For example, the practice of spending any likely surplus in a school's annual budget before the end of the year because it cannot be carried forward to the following year. Furthermore, the needless cost of having the Island's business school located in a grand rural estate.

Recreation Facilities

"Why is it so difficult to get the Government to invest in recreation outside of Douglas?" Frankly, it disappoints me that the only place which seems to see investment in this area is Douglas (perhaps with the exception of a couple of swimming pools in Peel and Ramsey). We have SO much potential to build excellent facilities for so many people to enjoy. Personally I would like to see a BMX track, with car parking and perhaps a cafeteria situated at Glen Wyllin for example. A proper race course at Jurby with race course facilities including a new grandstand building, possibly creating a function venue for the use of the Jurby community which is sadly lacking since the loss of the old Jurby Pub.

I would also like to create off-road courses specifically designed for 4 wheel-drives, scramblers and mountain bikes which could be managed in a way that helps to limit the damage they may cause to our uplands but encourages more people to enjoy our countryside.

If we are expected to work hard and contribute to the Island's economy don't we have a right to expect some investment in our area? I am open minded to any suggestions that may help people make the most of their spare time.

VAT Sharing Agreement

"We need to take action on this as a matter of urgency." A working party must be formed without delay to look into the pros and cons of staying within the VAT Sharing Agreement. Once all options have been investigated these findings must be given openly and freely to the public. Then and only then Tynwald must make a clear and informed decision on the future of the agreement. We should not be afraid to leave the agreement if all the evidence proves that this would be the best course to take in securing long term financial stability for our island.

Income Tax and National Insurance

"If you can completely understand it you either work for the tax office or need to get out more often." Why does it have to be so complicated? I believe we need a modern, clear and fairer personal taxation system that is both easy to understand and cost effective to administer. I would support a complete overhaul of this including the joining together of these departments to streamline their efficiency. Meanwhile, income tax rates should remain low. I am totally opposed to an increase in personal taxation to prop-up irresponsible Government spending. We as individuals are required to exist within our means and our Government should lead by example.

The Economy

"The Isle of Man is a business and we are all shareholders. Isn't it time that the Isle of Man Government faced up to its responsibilities and the people who have a vested interest in its finances?" Those people by the way are YOU!

For example: We are reliant on banks to provide mortgages for homes and loans to businesses that in turn take a slice of profit that goes off-island and into the hands of shareholders and bankers around the world. Yet the Isle of Man Government has the means to provide these services themselves.

All too often we are denied mortgages and loans based on rules created off-island by large banks that have little regard to local circumstances. For example if you apply for a loan at a well known bank in the Isle of Man your application will be handled by an office in Jersey. Frankly, I think this is wrong. Meanwhile, millions of pounds of YOUR reserves are being invested around the world potentially helping other people to buy houses and develop their businesses while here on the Isle of Man we are forced to beg U.K. Banks for help.

Therefore, I would like to see the Isle of Man Government implement a Lease-Purchase Scheme for first time buyers for up to £150,000 with a minimal deposit subject to certain terms. This would replace the house purchase grant scheme. It should also be made available for people who are trying to buy a home later in life who are all too often turned away by mortgage lenders due to their age. Such a scheme would help single people work toward the security of owning their own homes, moving more people out of the 'rent trap' and stimulating a stagnant housing market and construction industry.

Similarly, funds should be made available from Government reserves to finance small businesses where high-street banks are failing to provide adequate support. Low cost business development loans are essential if we are to enable new business ventures to get on their feet. New business ventures bring opportunity and growth to our economy with obvious benefits.

By investing money in housing and business it could create an opportunity for private Isle of Man investors to place their funds within this scheme in return for a safe return on their savings. I would like this to be a tax-free savers scheme.

These proposals admittedly over-lap with facilities being offered by high street banks with local branches. However, they are aimed at consumers which the banking industry does not support adequately and I feel justified in seeking to offer publicly funded finance which the banks are free to compete with if they decide they want to.

Meanwhile we must continue to fully support our financial services industry by speedily adapting our legislation to meet the demands of an ever more competitive international market and ensure that our business tax rates remain attractive to new customers from a wider range of industries.

Locally the retail and service industries must face up to the fact that they cannot compete on low price and must therefore concentrate on improving their customer service, after-sales service and marketing techniques if they want to survive. Furthermore, I believe that all areas of business on our Island should endeavour to achieve higher standards in customer service and our Government departments should be working toward setting a good example.

Public Sector Employment

"Some say we have too many people working in the Public Sector and I think they have a valid point." Even so, our Public Sector and Civil Service workforce provide many essential services that the Island would miss if we were to recklessly cut employment in this area. I recommend that we should be examining efficiencies first and using our existing human resources to provide the most cost effective delivery of public services. This may result in retraining staff and moving them between different departments but will help to protect jobs and retain experienced staff in meaningful roles that we will need in order to secure the future of our nation. One of the biggest mistakes an employer can make is to lose valued workers during a time of cut-backs because the future cost of replacing them will be higher, redundancies to balance the books should be a last resort. We must accept that when it comes to this there will be job losses in certain areas.

Insurance

"Why do we waste millions of pounds each year with U.K. Companies on vehicle insurance?" I propose a system where your vehicle tax includes basic vehicle insurance, underwritten by the Isle of Man Government. If you want to add comprehensive cover or take your vehicle off-island then by all means pay your money to any number of insurance providers. But for those of us on a budget who rely on motor transport to get around why should we, especially our young people, get ripped off year on year by companies that do nothing for the Isle of Man? We have the ability to sort this out, putting money back into OUR economy, reducing the risk of uninsured drivers and making people less reliant on public transport.

Work Permits and Immigration

"I feel that strict control is required to protect our culture and economy." As an island community it is essential that safeguards are in place to ensure that those who have built our island have priority in employment, education and public services. While we should welcome people who bring benefit to the Isle of Man through their expertise, skills or wealth it must come with a guarantee of their best intentions. I would like to see new resident workers subjected to a probationary period during which time a deposit should be held by the Government. This deposit would be returned after a satisfactory period of residency and contribution to the our taxation system. Meanwhile, temporary or seasonal workers should be limited to a certain period of months until being required to register as permanent. Until the probationary period has been successfully completed a new resident should have no entitlement to social support or benefits. If during the probationary period a new resident, or member of the family were to commit a criminal offence or be found to not disclose any criminal convictions in previous countries where they have lived, their application for residency should be refused, deposit retained and required to leave the island. The Isle of Man must not be seen as a safe haven for criminals or as a social system that is easy to exploit.

Public Transport

"There's never a bus at the time you need one." I fear that this is a situation that will get worse unless we see a dedicated rural bus service with a rural 'hub' ideally situated in Jurby. Using smaller buses and operating routes which integrate with the major service routes could help to link up the transport network in a relatively cost effective way. I am keen to see improvement in this area as it is extremely important that we have a good transport network to support individuals, families and businesses on a permanent basis.

Healthcare

"It is ridiculous that we have to wait days to see our G.P and weeks to see a consultant." Our healthcare service is falling well short of what we should be getting. If you are unfortunate enough to fall ill you should be able to see a doctor the same day and this is the target I believe we should be achieving. Meanwhile, waiting weeks to see a consultant in this day and age is unacceptable. Often prolonging suffering not to mention causing people to take unnecessarily long periods of time off work, there are obvious reasons why we should be demanding better. I feel that too much of our resources are being wasted on pointless politics and needless bureaucracy and not enough being delivered in front-line hands-on healthcare.

The decision to place a new doctor's surgery and community centre in Jurby is great news for Jurby. However it leaves me asking the question "When are we going to get something similar in Kirk Michael?" and this is something I would continue to campaign for. Meanwhile, people who let themselves down and inconvenience others by not turning up for Doctor's or hospital appointments might be persuaded to buck their ideas up if the department were able to issue fines in the same way as fixed penalty notices! Although I have no doubt more people would turn up for their appointments if they didn't have to wait such a long time to get one in the first place.

Environmental Issues

"I don't believe that merely protecting the environment should be our priority. Our priority should be improving it." We are surrounded by some of the most wonderful land, sea and wildlife imaginable. It has been important in the past to protect this environment and I can't argue with that. But isn't it a shame that we don't make more effort to improve it? We have the potential to encourage wildlife and this can bring many benefits to our quality of life and our economy. I fully support any feasible scheme to progressively improve our natural environment.

Power and Energy

"Unless we start planning for the future we will end up living at the mercy of unreliable foreign imports of gas and electricity." I cannot emphasise enough the need to develop our own renewable source of power as a matter of increasing urgency. Moreover, this fast growing market provides great opportunities for the Isle of Man to pioneer new technology in the industry. We shouldn't be looking to buy the technology, we should be looking to design it, develop it, manufacture it and sell it throughout the world. If you think this technology is beyond the capabilities of the Isle of Man, think again.

We have the ability and the natural environment to create huge amounts of electricity from the sea using tide and wave energy. Solar energy and production of methane gas from natural waste are other real possibilities in the drive toward low-cost renewable energy which could be used to our advantage. Maybe even to the extent of exporting surplus energy to others.

Incidentally, I do not stand in favour of land based wind farms at all and can almost rule out any support for off-shore wind farms due to their extremely high cost and unreliability.

Personal Debt Management

"Debt counselling is available freely from hundreds of on-line websites, banks and financial institutions. But solving your debt problems is not quite so easy." Thanks to the generous lending policies of Credit Card companies, many people now find themselves in a position where they can only afford to make minimum payments on a large number of credit cards and paying unreasonable levels of interest. I think the Government should offer (subject to conditions) to buy this debt and provide individual debt reduction plans with realistic interest rates. This would ease the burden for hundreds of families who have fallen foul of irresponsible borrowing, create revenue for the Isle of Man and enable more money to be spent within the local economy instead of being absorbed by off-island creditors. I would like to see more emphasis on the advantages of avoiding getting into debt in the first place rather counselling people after the event.

Jurby Airfield

"If ever there has been a wasted opportunity to contribute to industry, recreation and leisure on the Isle of Man this is it." It is high time Jurby started to get the support it deserves. Its potential is huge and it's redevelopment long overdue. Let's start with motor sport and where I see a future for the Jurby Airfield Racetrack. I want to see construction of small industrial units on a site totally dedicated to motor sport. Here we could create a community of motor sport enthusiasts by allowing them low-cost facilities to work on their cars and bikes. Opportunities for motor sport businesses to have work shop and retail outlets in a great location and the use of the race track as a testing ground. All around the island we have motor enthusiasts working from their homes, cluttering up roads and drive ways with their projects and struggling without proper facilities to properly enjoy their pastimes. I would also like to see a storage and maintenance facility for mobile homes and caravans when they are not in use. Development of Jurby Airfield should be supported by our Government.

Agriculture and Fishing

"Are we prepared to lose a Manx institution in favour of cheap imported foods that are not as good or guaranteed to be so cheap in the future?" The land and sea have been farmed for generations and have the potential to keep producing quality food for both our population and for export. Proposals to replace farming subsidies with maintenance payments is, in my opinion, wrong. It will result in a loss of jobs and traditional farming skills that have taken generations to develop, not to mention the erosion of a community that is at the very heart of traditional island life. Our agricultural policy should be one of continued support in order to keep producing sustainable crops long into the future. As crop prices inevitably start to rise as a result of global food shortages and with a volatile trade market including higher transportation costs, we would be in an advantageous position if we were to have less dependency on food imports. It is not a case of 'if' we become more reliant on Manx farming it's a case of 'when' we become more reliant on Manx farming and we must make sure it's still around long into the future. Meanwhile, it is interesting to note that while we are being encouraged to 'shop local', our schools and hospitals use cheap imported meat. Shouldn't we be looking at the bigger picture rather than sections of Government focusing solely on their own departmental balance sheet?

Steam Packet Company

"Why should we feel any loyalty to this company that is not Manx owned and has fleeced us for decades with high prices and poor service?" It's also a major reason we see a declining tourist industry and a reduction in manufacturing, not to mention adding a premium to the price to most of our imported goods. Any notion that we can't live without the Steam Packet and we cannot afford to lose them is wrong. The fact is we lost them a long time ago and today's Steam Packet Company is a badly run, debt laden organisation that operates with the sole priority of paying dividends to its foreign shareholders. The Isle of Man could benefit massively with a new sea transport provider and I would welcome one.

Whilst every effort has been made to address as many issues as possible in this publication, I am aware there are many other issues which are important to you. If you would like to know where I stand on any subject please feel free to contact me.

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X **PAUL HEAVEY**
FOR MICHAEL

A friend you can rely on