

A photograph of Michael Leather, an older man with glasses, wearing a dark blue double-breasted suit, a light blue shirt, and a patterned tie. He is standing in front of a dense background of green leaves and branches. The text is overlaid on the image.

HOUSE OF KEYS GENERAL ELECTION 2021

23RD SEPTEMBER 2021

MICHAEL LEATHER
MHK CANDIDATE FOR ONCHAN
MANIFESTO

Manifesto - Michael Leather

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Dear Constituents,

Having lived in Douglas until the 1970s, when I decided to move to Onchan, whilst still working in the tourist industry, until 1980s. In 1990. Because of the decline in tourism, I diverted to the building trade. Holding a BSc (Hons) Building Surveying Degree, and a MSc in Commercial Property Development, has identified to me, the possibility of restoring tourism back, as a major contributor to the Islands employment and financial sections. Introducing many leisure facilities, and alleviating considerable parking problems in Douglas are also possible. A new sea wall for Douglas Promenade is also necessary.

Improvements

Over the past few years, Douglas has seen, expensive, aesthetic improvements, referencing the Douglas town shopping centre, and hopefully, an improvement, following the re-surfacing of the Douglas Promenade. It is however, doubtful that either major expenditure would encourage

any additional tourists to the Island, nor increase trade from the Island's population, in Douglas town. The money spent on recovering Douglas Promenade would have paid for a new 240 - 300metre Pier to accommodate cruise ships, or would have built the proposed sea wall. Both alternatives would have contributed toward producing money on a perpetual basis.

Traffic Congestion & Car Parking

An annual increase of cars on the road, has become a major issue, presenting noticeable congestion, in Onchan Village and, at various road junctions toward signpost and Governors Bridge, also Summerhill to Promenade. The Onchan build up could be alleviated, by building a bridge from Governors Road to Victoria Road, which would also permit easy access to Broadway and Promenade, Derby Road, and other town outlets. The bridge could also permit access during the TT periods, and other road closures, which would ease congestion on the Central and Queen's Promenades. Parking in Douglas is a serious issue, for all Island residents working and shopping there. Please see my promenade proposal.

Over the past, constituents all over the Island, have been informed that candidates will look into tourism, parking and provide a solution to the traffic congestion, which

to date has never materialised, the reason being, that land is a premium, and so making roads wider, or providing alternative commuter routes, to ease the already congested roads, whilst providing new parking facilities. These promises do not appear to be practical. see possible bridge proposal above.

To reduce Onchan's Morning traffic, coming from Baldrine, Laxey and other coastal areas, it would be worth looking into the possibility for diverting coastal traffic, to the Groudle Road, between 8am-9am & 3:30pm-5:30pm which would alleviate Onchan Village main road. This would not include cyclists and the bus service going into Onchan from the Laxey & Baldrine area. The morning congestion near signpost requires serious consideration to alleviating the build-up of traffic. Speeding around the vicinity of the Archibald Knox area, requires some form of traffic control, to make the area safer for children going to, and coming from school.

Education

Two years before leaving school, non-academics could be allocated 1-2 school days a week, learning about the basics of a chosen trade. Lessons having both theory, and practical tuition. The decision would be for the child and parents, to meet with a careers officer, who could go through the practicality as to which career would be best for the school child. This would give the child a basic starting point, when looking for a job rather than faced with nothing, when suddenly leaving school. The opportunity to learn CAD could also be an option.

A room at, "The Hub", could be made available for Onchan children, and the discarded government computers could be made available for these children to use. It would appear that many children are being denied the facility to learn from, and become proficient, with computer programmes, and other types of study, due to either lack of facilities at home, or having study problems, due to a noisy household. I would like to see children spend two to three hours in the evening, for say three days a week, learning at the Hub, instead of them walking around Onchan, aimlessly, in small gangs, where vandalism could become an issue.

Possible Solution with Additional Multi-Story Car Parks

At the present time, the only solution for alleviating parking in Douglas, would be to buy expensive land, near, or in the town, to build multi story car parks, which would cause Douglas town to lose the valuable land, creating eye sores, whilst causing possible congestion when queuing to enter or leave the multi-story car park. As most things happening in Douglas, directly or indirectly, affect Onchan residents, this is, and has been a cause for concern for a considerable time, but nothing has been done to alleviate it. See my promenade proposal.

The Basis for My Proposal

My proposal for creating a social, economic and environmental surroundings, for the Island's public, and creating the reality for bringing back tourism, in noticeable numbers, must include modern hotels, as well as existing, various leisure facilities, low priced transport to, and from the Island, and an excellent atmosphere to attract tourists. The closest we have is the TT period, which suffer premium costs, to assist the poor number of visitors during the rest of the summer season. High boat fares fewer passengers, lower boat fares more passengers. Either way, the profit gained would be from the boat and visitors to the Island in general. As the boat is government owned, the overall profit for government would be far higher, as it would include tax returns from the tourist accommodation, and leisure spending on the Island.

We need to Learn from the Past

By looking at the Island's history, the above requirements could be produced, by following the example of Sir Henry Loch, who reclaimed the Loch Promenade land from the sea. This was carried out in stages, where the original sea wall, found at the back of W H Smiths, was extended to the road side wall of the Marina Gardens, (sunken gardens), and finally to the current inadequately high, and ageing sea wall.

The high cost of the reclamation, was in the main, recovered, by selling part

of the reclaimed land, from the original sea wall, to the road side wall, to developers. The developers built the sea front boarding houses, pubs and hotels along the promenade, to accommodate many of the visitors, and combined with various other large commitments, such as the Battery Pier and extension to the Victoria Pier, made by the government, and private enterprise, all based upon tourism, brought realistic tourist facilities, at affordable prices, to Britain's working class.

Butler's Tourist Area Life Cycle (1980)

The rise and fall of tourism, and the possibility for bringing back some of the facilities, which had been created, by private enterprise, and sadly lost, can be related to Butler's Tourist Area Life Cycle (1980), which can be found, by going on the internet and putting in the underlined above. Using Butler's Tourist Lifecycle, I shall use Blackpool as an example, of rejuvenation, as it can be closely related to the Island.

According to Butler, people in the 1800s followed a practice of sea bathing to cure diseases, and the people who could afford it, went to bath at Blackpool's seven miles of beaches. In 1868, the railway was built and connections from all over Britain, gave cheap access to Blackpool, and people from all walks of life, used to go to Blackpool for weekends. (Blackpool was an underdeveloped attraction)

In the 1870s, factory workers won the right to holiday periods, and Blackpool was becoming popular, started to attract

private enterprise to consider investing large sums of money. In 1894, the first main attraction, Blackpool Tower was opened, and in 1904, Blackpool's South Shore Fairground was opened and in 1905, was promoted, and advertised as Blackpool's Pleasure Beach. (Facilities paid for by private enterprise)

Between the first and second world war, Blackpool was classed as one of Europe's leading resorts, and tourism was boosted by the introduction of a new law, made in Parliament, which gave workers entitlement to holiday pay. Both Blackpool and the Isle of Man, were very busy resorts. (Most attractions and accommodation buildings paid by private enterprise), but only after, Sir Henry Loch had invested large sums of government money on infrastructure, such as piers and the Douglas promenade, followed by private investors, did the Isle of Man become a well-known, and popular resort, which was very successful for decades.

The Island's Tourism Started to Decline

Commencing around the 1960s, Freddie Laker started cheap, package tours to Spain and other Mediterranean countries, which offered all in flights, with modern hotels, having bathroom en suite, at prices which Blackpool and the Isle of Man, could not compete against. Having guaranteed weather, cheap drink and cigarettes, low prices when eating out, Spain became the place to go.

Blackpool's tourism started to decline, and like the Isle of Man, tourism was allowed to run down. Blackpool was allowed to tick over, from the lights in September, the Golden Mile, and from the week-end Stag, & Hen parties. The Isle of Man Government put its efforts into the finance sector. (The Island lost £150 million a year, loss of duty, from the common purse agreement.)

The Rejuvenation of Blackpool's Tourist Industry and how the IOM can Learn From It

In 2000, Blackpool commenced a rejuvenation project, assisted by an EU grant, of £300 million, which was spent wisely, upgrading it. Considerable amounts of money were quickly provided by private investors, cashing in on new prospects. These committed financial outlays, quickly created over a million additional tourists.

Looking at <https://www.lancs.live> ... Lancashire News Blackpool on 4th October 2019, it writes that Blackpool's tourist economy for 2018, had grown, for

the fourth successive year by 200,000 visitors, with increases in both day and stay visitors.

From the site www.visitblackpool.com or type (number of tourists to Blackpool) 12. Nov. 2020, Blackpool's figures for 2019, were in excess of 18 million tourists, with the value of the visitor economy increasing to more than **£1.6 Billion**. Although it can be appreciated that many day, and week-end tourists will be included.

Government must make a Commitment to Encourage Private Investors

In the main, the above clearly shows that without the Government making an initial, substantial injection of capital into the tourist industry, which would then encourage the private sector to consider injecting large amounts of cash, to create modern hotels, tourist attractions, and various other infrastructure. However, without the government making a serious commitment to a rejuvenation

programme, the Island will continue to refuse facing reality, by simply playing around, and dabble with a non-committed approach, regarding tourism, whilst remaining heavily dependent upon the finance sector, and without increased income from tax receipts, will have to keep limiting public services, and infrastructure, whilst depleting government reserves.

Example of Governments Lack of Commitment to Tourism

On page 8 of the IOM Tourism Visitor Economy Strategy (2012-15), under Building the IOM Cruise Market, states that in 2012, twelve cruise ships visited the IOM with an estimated 6,000 cruise visitors and 3,000 crew. This generated £60,000 income to the treasury, and an estimated £450,000 of economic benefit in visitor spend. Cruise ships booked for 2013 were already 18, to visit the IOM. It is now 2021, and the IOM still has not a single berth for cruise ships, nor any commencement date to provide one. The IOM Government has given no encouragement to this growing market, which is obviously crying out for

berths in Douglas, for allowing cruise ships to make regular attendances to the Island. IOM today, announced on 8 March 2018, that a government plan to build a 240-metre cruise liner berth on the outer side of the Victoria Pier, and improve five of the Island's key ports. It also states that No Planned Start Date has been announced, and with nothing started to date, three years later, can only explain the lack of interest/foresight, in tourism/cruise ships, government has. It would be interesting to hear from the Chief Minister, Tourist Board and the Director of tourism, as to why such a great tourist facility has been ignored.

My Proposal for Providing Facilities and New Sea Wall

My proposal would be to extend the Loch Promenade, from the War Memorial to the Victoria Pier, which is a length of approx., one kilometre. Build a new, future proof, sea wall of two hundred metres out, onto the beach, running parallel to the existing sea wall. This would produce an area of 200,000 square metres or approximately 49.5 acres, of prime land, less the area taken up by the new sea wall. From the governments "Issues & Options," which was based upon the new Douglas Promenade, a new sea wall would cost **£1.5 Million** per 100 metres in length. The above proposed sea wall would require additional 400 metres, additional materials for height, also waterproofing agents, but would produce a very large intrinsic & monetary return for the outlay, against little return, for the outlay spent on the proposed "Issues and Options" sea wall.

Should the sea wall be built, instead of filling the whole void, like the rest of the promenade had been, it would be prudent to make two underground floor levels, the ground floor, (the sea bed, levelled and waterproofed), 1st floor and the top floor, being the flat roof. The flat roof, would be above the current promenade level, to

make two good lower-level ceiling heights. The top level being a little less, than the height of the new proposed sea wall, and available for all sorts of facilities.

Various plots toward the sea wall area, designated for hotels, could be sold off, whilst other areas, above and below, sold as lease hold, to not only alleviate initial outlays, but provide a perpetual income for both rent, rates and income tax, for the next 150 plus years.

The two underground levels, could consist of lower-level, ground floor parking, for both public spaces and for new buildings above, consisting mainly of modern hotels, also possible flats and offices. The first floor could provide, modern underground shopping precinct. There are all sorts of leisure opportunities, such as squash courts, purpose made rock climbing, gymnasium, swimming pool, 10 pin bowling, controlled rifle range, pensioners club, snooker hall, discotheque, pubs, etc. Having lots of space, all things are possible. The top level could have large lawned areas, and with new hotels protecting it from the east wind, could offer a host of opportunities.

Modern Purpose-built Hotels with Conference Facilities

The modern hotels sited toward the front sea wall, could have large conference rooms, which collectively could accommodate very large conference facilities, bridge congress, trade union congress, political parties congress, or the likes of a large number of people coming specifically to play competitive poker, run by credible outlets, such as the Island's Poker Stars.

Hotel with Casino Licence Providing all Year Entertainment

My proposal would include, offering part of the land to buy, or on a long lease, with option to renew, for a large hotel, providing high class entertainment throughout the year. The carrot for this would be to offer a licence for a mega casino, offering large gambling facilities and jackpots. This should attract people from all over the UK, Continent, etc. It would be practical to consider offering the above to one of the major cruise lines, where cruise and stay

would be an obvious option, as well as flying in clientele from various destinations. With reasonable landing fees, to include domestic flights, would make Ronaldsway Airport, both busy, and a profitable airport. Consideration can be related to the Islands e-gaming, which according to page 10, issue 5, 2021, of Business 365, produces 21% of the Island's GDP and is growing. A well-run casino, and poker congresses could generate considerable income.

Making Purpose-Built Facility for Cruise Ships Entertainment

A new pier could be made, as a 250 - 300metre extension to proposed sea wall, in parallel with the Victoria Pier, and the sea bed between the two piers, dug out to a 10 + metre draught at low tide, to accommodate the large cruise ships. The Battery pier could be extended to protect the cruise ships from any adverse weather conditions. The cruise line with the hotel would probably have a cruise and stay facility, creating an all-year tourist situation. Please see page 8 of the Isle of Man Visitor Economy Strategy [isleofmantourismvisitoreconomy.pdf \(gov.im\)](https://www.isleofmantourismvisitoreconomy.gov.im) What has been done to facilitate and promote cruise ships? As previously stated, in 2013 the Island had booked 18 cruise ships, bringing approximately 10,000 - 13,000, visitors & crew, and we had no facilities to let them berth! It is now 2021 and we still have no facilities to berth cruise ships, and as an Island, supposedly boasting tourism with tourist facilities!

Reduce our Heavily Dependent Financial Situation Upon the Finance Sector

With restrictive finances, The Island has many situations it has to consider prioritising, such as; Our Economy, Infrastructure, Tourism & Travel facilities, Health & Pensions, Social Care, Education, Law & Order, and in Onchan, there are currently, many roads requiring repairs, and resurfacing. It is however, important to give everyone the opportunity to be able to earn a decent living, and be offered various social and leisure facilities. The government needs to be able to finance the various situations, by way of healthy tax receipts, in order to benefit, and provide security for all its residents. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, (OECD), are looking at the concept of a global minimum tax rate, if the finance sector started to decline, what would be plan B?

Someone Needs to Represent and make Proposals, on Behalf of the General Public

It has to be made clear, that the enclosed would be a proposal to Tynwald. If elected, then the proposal would be prepared in far more detail with relevant documentation, and would require many considerations, to include finding interested parties from the private sectors. It would also need to be presented to the Island's new Capital

Projects Board. But without someone having the foresight, required to present something of this scale, and other smaller projects, the Island's population will continue to be denied the above facilities, and other projects, which could be made available.

Where is the Money Coming from to Pay for all This?

People quite rightly ask me "Where is all the money coming from to pay for all this"? The answer is, the bulk of the money would come from "private enterprise," as it has done so in the past. The initial government outlay, could be borrowed and the money paid back, initially interest only, whilst under construction, then interest and capital over a time period.

If the government will work with the private investors and offer encouragement, then there could be progress with the investors,

government and general public benefitting, but putting up unwanted and unnecessary blocks, with unrealistic demands, the promenade and town shopping centre, will continue to, be part of a high-risk flood zone, whilst continuing to have empty sites, such as the Villiers, Summerland and Steam Packet Building. In the UK the Secretary of State acts for the benefit for public interest in general, by overriding these blocks, and preventing or stopping unrealistic high density housing schemes, granted by planning.

YOU CAN VOTE FOR TWO PEOPLE. PLEASE MAKE ONE OF THEM FOR ME



Many thanks

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MHK candidate for Onchan

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