



TREVOR COWIN



MANIFESTO

House of Keys Election
Thursday 23rd September 2021

Polling stations for the Election will be at the Centenary Centre in Peel, Glenmoye Methodist Church, St Paul's Church Foxdale and St John's Methodist Church. Polling stations will be open from 8am to 8pm.

CHANGE IN REPRESENTATION

The message I've received from everyone I've spoken to is that we need a change from the MHKs of the past and present as they have failed to deliver on major projects, especially those referred to below, which affect us in the West of the Island. Having spent the last 10 years fighting from the outside I've decided to stand for election so that, if elected, I can fight for what I believe in from the inside where my voice could have much more influence.

BACKGROUND

I'm well known as "the man who writes letters to the papers", and I've been referred to as a "campaigner for accountability" and a "serial petitioner" of Tynwald. For those voters who don't know me; I was born on Tynwald Day, all of my ancestors were Manx, I'm a true Manxman and I'm proud to be so. I've lived in Peel for nearly 50 years with my wife Allison, who is an active member of the community. We have three children and four wonderful grandchildren who all live on the Island.



CAREER

Early on in my 40+ year career with the Civil Service I worked in the Attorney General's Chambers, where I gained valuable experience of the law, and later became a Deputy Director of Social Security for the DHSS. Throughout my career I have dealt with complex legislation and in doing so I have developed an essential knowledge of how it works and how to read and interpret it. This will be of immense value to me if I'm elected as an MHK.

Since retiring I've run my own consultancy business specialising in National Insurance liability, pension entitlement and benefits. I now provide advisory services to individuals free of charge and expect nothing in return. I get immense pleasure and satisfaction from using my skills to help people.

ACCOUNTABILITY

If elected I aim to ensure that:

Government Ministers and Senior Civil Servants are held accountable for the failures and mistakes they have made, which have cost taxpayers millions of pounds.

Government Ministers are challenged and held accountable for failing to deliver on the promises they have made.

The transparency and scrutiny of processes throughout Government is improved.

Non-disclosure agreements between Government and private companies are stopped. Taxpayers deserve to know the real costs of contracts that Government enter into on their behalf.

LOCAL ISSUES

The majority of voters I have spoken with have told me that they are more interested in local than national issues, so I'll comment on these first, the most important of which are as follows.

UNTREATED SEWAGE DISCHARGE

Peel beach is the jewel in the crown of the West and it is enjoyed by people from all over the Island and from further afield. It is blatantly criminal to allow its bathing waters to continue to be polluted with untreated sewage and leachate from the old Raggatt landfill, which contains toxic manmade chemicals. This has got to stop. Action is already overdue, which begs the question - what have past and present MHKs done to address the issue? How the Island has been awarded "Biosphere Status" whilst this situation continues is, frankly, beyond me.

If elected I will make it my number one priority to ensure that it does stop.

The licence to discharge these pollutants into the sea was issued on behalf of Mr Boot as Minister for the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture (DEFA). How on earth the man politically responsible for the Manx environment, and therefore primarily responsible for its Biosphere status, could grant such a licence simply beggars belief.



The scandalous daily scene of gulls feasting on untreated sewage. This has to stop!

SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT FOR PEEL

Tynwald and Peel Town Commissioners have been talking about building a sewage treatment works ("STW") for over 10 years; but still nothing. A planning application for an STW was submitted by the Manx Utilities Authority ("MUA") in April 2019, but, it was mistakenly referred by DEFA to the Council of Ministers ("COMIN") rather than to the Planning Committee. COMIN appointed a Planning Inspector and a Public Inquiry was held.

After 20 months, and after spending hundreds of thousands of pounds of taxpayers' money on preparing the application, the Planning Inspector's Report was referred to COMIN. However, COMIN was then advised that the matter should never have been referred to it in the first place, an Inspector should never have been appointed, a Public Inquiry should never have been held and COMIN didn't have the legal power to determine the application. Frankly this whole situation was a complete farce.

Contrary to popular belief, COMIN didn't refuse the application; it didn't make any decision on it.

To avoid further legal difficulties the MUA withdrew its application. In doing so, however, the MUA stated that the Glenfaba House site was still very much in its thinking.

If elected I will press for a fresh application for the Glenfaba House site to be submitted as a matter of urgency, and well before the MUA's announced date of February 2022, which is 14 months after its first application was withdrawn. Quite why this has been delayed this long, even though all the plans have already been drawn up and the environmental impact assessment for this site has already been produced, is unclear, but I have already been pressing the MUA for answers about this.

PEEL MARINA

Successive DOI Ministers have failed to ensure that Peel Marina is dredged regularly and have allowed silt to build up to such levels that it became impossible to moor boats in parts of the Marina. This is a clear case of poor design and mismanagement by the Department and its successive Ministers, which included, until recently, Mr Harmer. But who has been held accountable for it? Nobody.

Prevention being better than cure - the best solution to stop the Marina silting up is to stop silt entering it from the River Neb in the first place. 'Canalising' the river, by building a wall to separate it from the Marina, would achieve this. The situation in Laxey is a good example.

The DOI has said that building a wall would cost £5m but, even if this figure is accurate, this amount pales into insignificance compared to the cost of having to dredge the Marina and dispose of the silt every year, forever! That the DOI has no other plans on how to deal with the problem long-term, is staggering. If elected I will insist that the DOI establish a comprehensive and fully funded plan for the management of silt in the Marina, including:

- the erection of a separate wall to create a canal, and
- a programme of ongoing scheduled dredging of the 'canal', the dredgings from which the DOI accepts could be dumped at sea, and
- the removal of the 44,000 tonnes of silt presently 'festering' in the 'temporary' de-watering lagoon next to the Power Station by the 8th March 2024, in accordance with its planning approval, and
- the removal of 10,000 tonnes of silt, which the DOI illegally dumped in a hole in the ground off Poortown Road, in respect of which planning approval expired last August.



NATIONAL ISSUES

PLANNING

This has been my "pet" subject for over ten years. **The Planning Committee has been illegal since it was first created in 2005** and continues to be illegal. It would take too long to explain why in this Manifesto but I'll happily explain the reasons for its illegality to anyone who wishes to contact me. In my opinion some of the current planning processes aren't fit for purpose and there needs to be a root and branch review of them, including a review of the legality of the current Planning Committee. I'm not in favour of the Western Area Plan because the proposed 1,000 homes would be built on largely greenfield sites. Also there has been a lack of improvements to vital infrastructure, such as roads, and the provision of additional school places, GPs and dentists.

FISHERIES

Enquiries which I've made with DEFA have revealed that the Department continues to operate a Fisheries Management Agreement ("FMA") between the Island, Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland which is clearly unlawful in its current form as it has impliedly been revoked following the abandonment of the EU Common Fisheries Policy, and that DEFA hasn't taken any steps to establish, post Brexit, its fishing rights in the extended (12 mile) territorial sea. This is a damning indictment of the Department. That it continues to enforce the provisions of such an outdated and impliedly revoked FMA is, frankly, beyond me.

DOUGLAS PROMENADE

What a disaster. Mr Harmer was the DOI Minister who allowed the contractors to rip up the whole of the Promenade rather than starting at one end and working in stages to the other end. Then, when things went wrong and there was a Ministerial vacancy in the Cabinet Office, he jumped ship and moved to a non-job as the Minister for Policy and Reform. That the DOI doesn't know how much the contract will end up costing is staggering, as are the findings in the Beaman's Report that the DOI doesn't know how many civil engineers it employs or whether they're properly accredited or otherwise qualified. I believe that there should be a full Public Inquiry to establish what went wrong and to ensure that those persons in Government, including Ministers and Civil Servants, who are responsible, are held to account.

LIVERPOOL LANDING STAGE

The original cost of the Liverpool Landing Stage was said to be £25m. The DOI Minister has gone back to Tynwald on two occasions to increase this budget by over 100%, to nearly £52m at the last count. The completion date has been pushed back by over a year from February 2021 to March 2022 at the earliest. This is a ridiculous state of affairs and one which should be investigated by way of a full Public Inquiry.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The issue of climate change is one that divides opinion but Tynwald has approved a Climate Change Transformation Programme which, at the moment, must be followed despite the costs committed so far of £40m. Whether a new administration will prioritise the current stated aim of achieving no less than 75% of the Island's electricity from renewable sources within the next 14 years, remains to be seen.

In line with international agreements; I believe that, taking into account our particular circumstances, we should do our fair share to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the changing climate in the most cost effective way. I do, however, wonder how efficiently Government can make meaningful change when the Transformation Programme will be led by a Project Board consisting of seven politicians, along with a nine-strong Steering Group including the Chief Executives of all Government departments, who will collectively manage a team of 10 civil servants who will actually deliver the Programme!

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

As part of the climate change transformation programme the Council of Ministers has committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions from transport by 2050. Whether that target can be achieved remains to be seen, but part of the programme is to bring forward a strategy to promote public transport and active travel. In order to contribute towards COMIN's policy I'm strongly in favour of providing free public transport for Island resident taxpayers and their children, the costs of which should be funded from the climate change budget.

HOUSING

House prices have rocketed recently, with the average house price now well in excess of £300,000. I welcome the recent announcement by the DOI that the First Time Buyer Schemes have been reviewed, resulting in increases to the income limits and maximum property prices eligible for the Schemes. However, I do not believe that the needs of first time buyers have been adequately met by this review. A full review of the First Time Buyers Schemes is needed to re-evaluate the level of Government support that should be provided, as it is imperative that our young people aren't priced out of the housing market. Consideration should also be given to the feasibility of introducing restrictions on property ownership based on residency, similar to that seen in the Channel Islands.

HEALTH SERVICE

It is pleasing to note that Manx Care have recently launched an ambitious programme of trying to reduce waiting lists across a range of physical treatments. I believe it is equally important for Government to ensure mental health services are adequately funded. The current waiting lists for mental health services are unacceptable for people in crisis, and if elected I would support additional funding for mental health services across the lifespan (young to older adult) and varying in severity from mild to moderate right up to severe presentations.

FINALLY

Efficient lawful use of our resources, together with truthful open and accessible governance without blind bureaucracy is my goal. I have the knowledge to address the things that need change, the courage to expose the issues which require changing and the wisdom and breadth of knowledge of the workings of Government to ask for your trust to make it happen.

Tenacious, incorruptible, direct, honest, experienced and passionate. Vote for me, your next MHK.

I believe that, because of the current uncertainties over Coronavirus, it would be irresponsible of me to carry out door to door canvassing. Instead, I will be posting a copy of this Manifesto to every property in the Constituency listed in the 1st July 2021 Register of Electors. However, if you do wish to speak with me on any issues that affect you, please get in touch by phone or email.

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