



Geoffrey Boot
Minister of Environment Food & Agriculture (DEFA)

Tynwald: 01624 685485
Mobile: 07624 381497
www.geoffreyboot.org
geoffrey.boot@gov.im



**Summer 2019
Glenfaba & Peel**



Ray Harmer
Minister of Infrastructure (DOI)

Tynwald: 01624 685596
Mobile: 07624 215577
www.rayharmer.im
ray.harmer@gov.im

Raw Sewage, Clean Beaches and Bathing Water Update

Tynwald recently gave unanimous approval to complete the final sewage plant installation in St John's, Peel & Laxey. Work on the new Peel sewage plant is due to begin as soon as planning has gone through the final approval. Modernisation of the St John's plant will also follow in due course. By the end of this administration, the expectation is that there will be no raw sewage flowing into the sea anywhere around the Island. This fulfils the Tynwald commitment to ensure that our waters match the highest bathing standards.

Peel Marina Silt

At long last there seems to be progress. We were prevented from dredging and dumping the silt at sea because of the heavy metal contamination brought down from the Deads areas of the mines in the River Neb. The Marina area has been silting up and nothing has been removed for the last three years, so urgent action is required if berths are to remain usable. A scheme has been agreed between DOI and DEFA to remove the silt to a field adjacent to the Peel Power Station where it will be allowed to dry out. The second stage will involve removing this material to the Deads area of the mines, where it will be capped. More work will be needed to prevent further leaching in the future.

The replacement of the harbour bridge took place towards the end of 2018 and beginning of 2019. The new bridge has been built and has come in under budget and on time.

Schools in the West

Whilst funding was approved for a new Science Technology and Engineering Maths Block (STEM) at QE11 over 18 months ago, the Education Department has not yet moved the project forward. Jointly as MHKs we have been lobbying the department, and DOI have even offered manpower to the Education Department to help to get this invaluable facility off the ground.

Roads

The increase in the annual budget of £1.1 million for road repairs has, at long last meant, more work can be done to maintain roads across the Island. However since there was a continual lack of investment over many years, there is still a long way to go. Roads that have so far been improved include Station Road, Poortown Road, Factory Lane, Castle Street, Foxdale Road in St John's, Ramsey Road to Kirk Michael and A27 to Glen Maye.



Two estates in Peel, Ballaquane Park and Bellevue, have been improved due to the Residential Streets Project and further similar work is planned over the next 2 years.

The 2019 budget approved regeneration schemes for East Quay and Michael Street.

We are about to hold consultations to introduce 20mph speed limits in town centres and work has started on the heritage trail from Peel to Douglas and should be completed by Autumn this year. We are working with Beach Buddies and local volunteers to open up and improve footpaths such as Lynague.

Geoffrey Boot

Fishing

Peel is the centre of the fishing industry in the Isle of Man and will feel the effects of the reduced queen scallop allowable catch more than anywhere. This affects not only the fisherman but will have a knock on effect with processors and the supply chain generally.



We undoubtedly have some of the best fisheries science in the world thanks to Bangor University and of late very effective enforcement, but unfortunately the science tells us that the biomass of queen scallops has reached a critical point and consequently we've had to bring in much lower catch limits. I realise this is of great concern to the fishing community and there has already been some backlash, but the situation is that if we don't take action now we may lose the fishery altogether. Stocks are at an all-time low.

Going forward if Brexit happens, there will be opportunities to renegotiate our fisheries management agreement and take back more control of our waters. We also need more quota, as there are quota species in our territorial sea that we cannot at present access. With our queen scallop stocks at their lowest ever we are able to provide grants from DEFA for diversification but quota to catch these additional species is essential. I am working hard on all these aspects.

Climate Change

A few weeks ago our Chief Minister announced acknowledgment of a climate change emergency and what is in essence the adoption of the UK climate change targets, including net zero CO2 by 2050. Matters have moved swiftly on, there has been a robust debate in Tynwald following on from the climate change consultation earlier in the year and we are now committed to a climate change Bill next year. We have recently appointed a very experienced independent Chair to the Committee, Professor James Curran, who will advise us on what is possible with the tools, technology, environment and economic levers we have in the Isle of Man. I welcome the independence, this approach has worked well in other jurisdictions.

Working across government and in particular with Manx Utilities, not pre-empting the climate change independent report, we are already working on electrification of the Island. We will have targets, annual reviews and reporting so that people will be able to see what progress we are making. It may well be that we can achieve net zero earlier than 2050 and in this respect I look forward to the independent Chair's report by the end of the year.

I have recently visited Scotland specifically Aberdeen and the Orkney Isles looking at community green energy projects, including community generation and smart grid technology, as well as small scale hydrogen production. Technology is moving fast and electric vehicle ownership on the Island is accelerating as people realise this is both an environmental as well as an economic move in the right direction. DEFA are starting a tree planting scheme that the Chief Minister announced recently to plant 85,000 trees, one for every citizen. Our agriculture reform will take account of ongoing tree planting that will offset carbon emissions.

Brexit

Yet another year passed and nearly three years into this administration. From a government point of view, and in particular the Department of Environment Food and Agriculture, it's been a period of uncertainty. The Brexit workload has been immense. To give you a taste of what DEFA has had to cope with in the last few months, I have taken over 800 pieces of legislation through Tynwald that required realignment or change in the event of Brexit taking place. Without this we simply wouldn't have been able to continue trade with the UK or into Europe. Food Agriculture and Fisheries are perhaps the most effected by Brexit, not only are there extra requirements, for instance catch certification in the fisheries, health certificates for meat and food exports, but with the threat of trade ceasing in the event of a hard Brexit we have had to involve ourselves in contingency planning along with a lot of preparation in the energy sector, food, medicines etc.

With the delay to Brexit this may seem futile, but we can't do these things instantaneously and to say this has been resource hungry in terms of public service commitment would be a great understatement.

Agriculture

The rural areas of the constituency have a large agricultural community and we have been consulting with that industry as well as the Manx National Farmers Union, who have supported fundamental changes that will retain an element of area payment but will also have a distinct environmental content. This will tie in with our biosphere status and also feed into our climate change strategy as well as continuing to support locally produced quality food.

Unesco

When I last reported on the Unesco biosphere we were in the early stages of realising what it really meant to the Island. With the appointment of a new biosphere champion things have moved at pace. There can't be many people on the Island that have now not heard of our biosphere status, it's a proud accolade for the Island and one that not only guides us, in terms of our environmental future (and we have a good story to tell) we have got 10 marine nature reserves around the Island, world leading, our upland areas - much of which is in government ownership - are in good environmental condition etc. Biosphere is about man and the environment which includes not just environmental issues but our culture. It gives us the tools to market our Island as a place to live work and play as well as a holiday destination.

Food Matters Strategy

The food matters strategy continues to bring new producers on line and increases our food sector GDP and local employment. This all plays to a greener future for local produce, it's not only fresher, but there are less food miles.

New legislation

That's just a taster of what's been going on. As Brexit resolves itself we have a number of legislative Acts which we wish to put in place before the end of the administration, including a Competition Bill, Animal Welfare Act and legislation around our plastic and future waste strategy, as well as a Climate Change Bill among other smaller items of legislation that are business as usual.



Ray Harmer

In the West, as well as investment in roads, there has been significant development in other areas thanks to the dedication of many in our community. Jointly as MHKs we have been on the steering committee for the pilot of an integrated care project called the Western Wellbeing Partnership. This brings together 23 different agencies, both government and Third Sector, to provide a one stop shop for health and social care in Peel and the West. The business case has been approved and so we will see the Day Care Centre transform into the Western Wellbeing Centre. An extension is to be built onto the Peel Surgery to provide more treatment rooms and facilities, which will see all the critical services in one place. This will tie in with the completion of the new sheltered housing development, replacing Westlands. It is hoped plans for a Men in Sheds and Scouts Centre will get off the ground soon.

It was a pleasure to support the opening of the Knockaloe Heritage Centre at the start of May which offers a fascinating insight into life at the WW1 Internment Camp on the Island. It is also good to see a playpark, proposed by the commissioners, next to the swimming pool, approved by planning and will be completed soon.

Department of Infrastructure

The Prom

The promenade project in Douglas has finally started and will see a substantial regeneration of our capital. This will include greater pedestrian areas from the Villa Marina to the harbour. Improvements to Castle Street, Duke Street and Market Hill have already begun and refurbishment of the promenade walkway will follow, once the main project is complete in Autumn 2020. Work to rebuild the horse tram sheds is taking place and the historic stables have been saved.

Sea Services

Tynwald approved the bid to buy the Steam Packet for £124.3 million as an arm's length company. This is good news as it gives the Isle of Man strategic control and puts the company on a firm footing for the



future.

At the end of May a new Sea Services agreement was signed. This means more sailings, more discounts, new vessels, improved facilities and services.

Historic milestones were achieved with the land purchase and the planning and Tynwald approval for the Isle of Man ferry terminal in Liverpool. Building will start later this year with completion in March 2021. It will revolutionise ferry travel by providing passengers with a comfortable, modern building with all new facilities.

Buses

Bus Vannin now operate two new services, Connect Ports and Connect Villages. Connect Ports use the Patient Transfer Service to provide transportation to the airport and Connect Villages is a demand responsive service. The services have proved popular and Connect Villages has gained twice the number of passengers in a number of areas. This is critical because Treasury have tasked Bus Vannin to save



£1 million per annum by 2021 as part of the SAVE initiative. The Village services, which at present operate in the North, will hopefully soon be available in the West and elsewhere. It is hoped to trial hybrid and electric buses shortly as technology improves. We have also introduced contactless payments on all buses.

Airport

The airport continues to see a year on year growth in numbers and 2018 was a record year. Security has been improved through the introduction of more scanners, more staff and better equipment. We have saved money by passing on responsibility for baggage handling to the airlines. We are continually aiming to make the airport more efficient and bring it up to date. This includes improvements to the landing system and vital maintenance to our parking stands. The plan is now to put the Airport at arms length from Government in order for it to prosper.

Emissions and Electric Cars

As it is important to reduce our emissions, it was good news that Tynwald approved the policy to commit to more electric vehicles and charging points by 2030 of both private and Government vehicles.

Housing

The shared waiting lists for Public Sector Housing are working well and have expanded further with impending proposals for a Western Housing Committee. This means more people will be housed more quickly. The Landlord Registration Bill is due to be presented to Keys over the next year. This will also include a Rent Deposit Protection Scheme to help tenants. New eligibility criteria have been approved by Tynwald to more accurately assess those who are most in need of housing.

Footpaths and Active travel

A cross government initiative including Public Health, Education and Home Affairs is underway to provide safe and easy routes for walking and cycling. The department has developed a footpath strategy which aims to provide footpaths suited to a wide range of needs, concentrating on the Heritage Trail, the Raad ny Foillan and the Millennium Way, which celebrates its 40th year.

Manx Credit Union

Tynwald approved secondary legislation so that the Bill's Day Order became effective on 1st April 2019. Following consultation, flexibility has also been provided for interest rates so that the Credit Union can cover costs on small loans.





OUR ISLAND:
A SPECIAL PLACE
TO LIVE AND WORK

PROGRAMME FOR
GOVERNMENT
2016-2021

GD No: 2017/0002

Programme for Government — 2½ years on

The Programme for Government continues to guide government and parliament as a living document. Tynwald members working with the Council of Ministers have amended and updated it, bringing in the new actions taking us to the end of this parliament. The newly amended document is available online at. – <https://www.gov.im/media/1364644/programme-for-government-year-2.pdf>

More money for police, health, education, infrastructure and tax payers in the Budget.

In the budget this year, there was a surplus, which has enabled some additional spending for much needed services. The police service has seen an extra £2.5 million and an extra £5 million given to a health transformation fund. The capital programme, about £475 million over the next five years, will help with many matters including infrastructure, regional sewage infrastructure, ferry links, Liverpool Ferry Terminal and work on Victoria Pier. Personal tax allowances were increased to £14,000 per person. There has been an increase to state pensions of 2.5% and revenue funded benefits have increased generally by 2.4% above inflation, and there have also increases to child benefit, employed persons allowance, maternity payments and disability payments.

Radical Shake-up for Health

May Tynwald approved all the recommendations in the Sir Jonathan Michael Report. This includes the setting up of an independent organisation called Manx Care which will undertake all the operational functions of the health service. A transition team in the Cabinet Office will plan the much needed fundamental changes, such as integrated care, an Air Bridge for faster transportation to the UK in a medical emergency and tele-medicine for on-going consultations.

Superfast Broadband

For the Island to compete in international markets, it needs to lead in information technology. The new communications strategy has been launched which will see the Island have super-fast broadband. £2million has been earmarked in the budget towards achieving an Island-wide fibre broadband network.

Isle of Man Student Grants

In the May Tynwald there was approval of an increase of £2,000 towards the maximum available maintenance grants for students studying for a degree in the UK as well as a boost for those studying on Island. The changes will also mean more students will benefit from support toward their fees.

St Johns Post Office

Sadly St Johns Post Office counter is at risk. We have had meetings with the Post Office and German Commissioners and we understand it will stay open until December with reduced hours. Tynwald will debate the future of the Post Office in October which will set the direction of travel. We are hopeful that this will include retaining sub Post Office counters as they are a valuable community asset.

Joint Surgeries

On the second Saturday of every month we join Peel Town Commissioners at the Peel Town Hall for a joint surgery which runs between 11am and 12 pm. If you have any matters of concern please feel free to drop in.

Contact

We both have a policy of trying to deal with any queries and issues within 48 hours or at least acknowledge the same. Whilst we both use social media to post items of interest, we have our own personal policy of not replying directly to social media comment and feeds. We would ask that you contact us via post, telephone or email so we can personalise our response in a more specific and considered way.

