

# ELECTION NEWSLETTER

GENERAL ELECTION 23<sup>RD</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021



## CAMPAIGN TO RE-ELECT GEOFFREY BOOT MHK FOR GLENFABA & PEEL

Working together to make  
the West the best!

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Dear Elector

Our Parliament dissolves on the 12th August 2021 and this will herald the start of my re-election campaign for the constituency of Glenfaba & Peel with the General Election on the 23rd September. I continue in my role as Minister of the Department of Environment, Food & Agriculture until a new Council of Ministers is formed in early October.

Over the next few weeks I will endeavour to call on as many of you as possible. I'm a great advocate of letting people know what I believe in and my future vision, not just for the constituency but the island as a whole. I believe in representing people and listening to grass roots opinion. Not only do I live at the heart of the constituency in St Johns but I shop locally, do business locally, my family also live in the constituency and my grandchildren attend local schools.

What a five years it's been! It started with Brexit as the big issue and as the Minister at DEFA, I was at the heart of this, in negotiating through our external affairs with the UK to ensure that our fisheries and agricultural industry could continue to trade with the EU and that we would not be swamped with fishing boats from either EU or the UK. It was a tense period when we faced what I can only describe as a 'race to fish' in 2016 when I had to negotiate with Scotland, introducing new management measures, which escalated to discussions with Nicola Sturgeon, to prevent the pillage of our scallop fishery. We have improved management, have better relations with surrounding jurisdictions and the Brexit agreement has almost eliminated access from European boats and we will be reclaiming fish quota in due course.

From the agriculture point of view, we secured continued access for our meat and dairy products. Regulatory issues meant over 800 legislative revisions to retain trade access.



I also committed to reforming agricultural support; I have done this and we have retained area payments, unlike some of the surrounding nations, as well as added more funding for the new Agri Environment Scheme, which supports our whole nation Biosphere status. I also committed to keep the meat plant open; I have done so and this has assisted our farming community and our provenance labelling for high quality, local agricultural product.

From a constituent's point of view, I committed to stay in touch, I have run regular surgeries and produced newsletters, as well as being active on social media platforms, which are kept up to date and that has been important, particularly during the pandemic.

Brexit was quickly followed by the acknowledgement by the Chief Minister of a climate emergency. That led to much activity in my department, culminating in the Climate Change Bill which I took through Keys and awaits Royal ascent. This represents a pragmatic approach to net zero by 2050. We have already started on phase one of an action plan.

I finish this term of office with a greater understanding of the west, the constituents and the Isle of Man generally. I hope that I will be able to put this knowledge and my business experience to work in the next administration and be central in forming a new programme for Government.

## Our Health Service

Following Brexit and Climate Change, Covid became the next huge challenge, here and around the world. Our great National Health Service rose to the challenge, thanks to all the staff and the island's community spirit enabled us to weather the crisis somewhat better than some of our neighbours. Regrettably, lives were lost but with community cooperation and strict border controls, we avoided extended lockdowns. The newly independent 'Manx Care' now has to be resourced to address treatment backlog as well as a Covid booster programme. In short:

- REDUCE WAITING LISTS AND THE BACKLOG
- ENSURE AS MUCH ON-ISLAND HEALTHCARE PROVISION WHEREVER POSSIBLE
- ENSURE THE NHS IS PROPERLY FUNDED



## Economy

The Covid crisis has shown us a new way of remote working and this will enable people to relocate to the island and do business elsewhere. It is a greener way of doing business. It won't work for all, but it has certainly laid a foundation that may enable us to attract new business. Without economic development we will simply not be able to afford all the things we want. This will involve increasing the working population by attracting new people. There are already shortages in some sectors but with the opening of borders, we need to showcase the Isle of Man to its full potential as not only a super place to live but a great place to do business. This also includes making sure that UCM and our education system delivers well educated and rounded young people.

There will be challenges and opportunities, particularly in IT, data storage, etc, as well as services generally where we should be more worldwide facing. There will also be further opportunities as a result of the revision of the worldwide tax regimes; countries like Malta are already on the grey list and we are seeing interest in relocations to the Isle of Man.

## Education

Our education system is going through a refresh, following the Beamans Report. It is now less of a 'them and us' attitude between the Government and the teaching profession and the teaching fraternity will be more involved in the decision making process. We have five excellent schools in the constituency. At long last, we now have approval for the new STEM block for the QEII, work starts shortly. The next step is to secure funding for expansion and modernisation of the Cloth Workers in Peel.

## Environment

I'm sure everyone is aware of the fact that we have a worldwide climate change emergency. We all need to play our part. DEFA has been at the centre of the new Climate Change Bill which commits to Net Zero by 2050 in a pragmatic way. We have to bring you and businesses with us on this journey whilst preserving economic growth. Work has already started on improving biodiversity, carbon sequestration, peat bog restoration, planting more woodland and rewarding land owners for carrying out environmentally friendly practices.

We need to embed good environmental practice and Biosphere throughout Government. The next administration will face some big decisions with regard to renewable energy and I have been working on strategies going forward. We have to be careful with our small population and limited resource not to make hasty decisions that we could regret in the future. A phased approach is important but we need to put a Manx stamp on it, not simply buy offshore carbon credits.



## Our Biosphere

It was a great accolade when our island was granted Biosphere status in 2016. Since then, we have had a Biosphere champion and team embedded in DEFA and I have been proud to recently launch a Vision and Strategy 2021 to 2026 entitled 'Working Together for a Sustainable Future'. This is a local plan that sits under UNESCO's global goals for sustainable development and revolves around five E's - Education, Enjoyment, Engagement, Environment and Economy. These are all interlinked around sustainable development. Biosphere is not about stopping development, it's making sure that our



community supports Biosphere wholeheartedly and development is done in a sustainable way.

We've made a lot of progress in this administration; ten marine nature reserves, the Ramsey Bay project, registered a number of new ASSI's.

On the cultural side, we have registered more buildings in this administration than in the last 20 years. We worked with Culture Vannin on the Isle of Man poetry map. Engaged with partners in plastic reduction, beach cleaning, litter collection and education programmes that ensure the younger generation will be proud to live in the only whole-nation Biosphere in the world.

## Housing

Government has recently commissioned a national strategic housing review which will take a holistic look at housing available and demographics as well as affordability. The new Landlord Registration Bill was controversial with landlords; however, I do hope will not put people off entering the market, as I believe there is demand for rental accommodation as well as home ownership. It will be interesting to see what the review reveals and how we might address the problems of getting help on the first step of the property ladder for younger people. There will be no 'instant fix' but at least in due course we will have an informed direction of travel.



## Planning

Having been Head of Operational Planning for the last five years, I have driven reform, but there is more to be done. Covid presented logistical problems, but we have now caught up the backlog in appeals. The new local plan in preparation for the north and west will bring much needed certainty that will aid provision of a new Peel sewerage plant, among other things, and set the scene for the next five to ten years. Many sites have been put forward and we will all have an opportunity to have our say in due course. I have already received representations about land surrounding Slieau Whallian Park. Firstly, this does not automatically mean that it will be developed and from a personal perspective, I will be opposing the proposals. As the final arbiter of appeals, I must apologise to some constituents, where apart from general planning advice, due to my position, I have not been able to deal with specifics of individual applications.

## Government

Going forward, I believe in incremental reform of Government. In DEFA we reduced the number of directorates from 9 to 5 and have streamlined processes. What's happened in DEFA needs to happen across Government.

Constitutionally, we still need to make changes and I will encourage a review, particularly of the unelected chamber (the Legislative Council).

## Employment

Unemployment dropped steadily throughout the administration and in fact is less now, after the pandemic, than it was before. As an island, we are facing skill shortages and desperately need to train people on island as well as attract 'new blood'. There are, unfortunately, some people who are long-term unemployed, cannot work for a variety of reason, very few compared to many jurisdictions, we must, however, ensure that they are not left behind. I believe in fair taxes, pensions and benefits.

## Roads and Transport

We all know that the road infrastructure in the Isle of Man is not at its best. Cuts years ago have come through the system in the last five years and it's inevitable that we are going to have to spend more on maintenance. Within the constituency we have seen a number of schemes, Foxdale and the Curragh Road, as well as much resurfacing in Peel, the replacement of Peel Harbour Road bridge, but there is more to be done and I would certainly hold out for more funding in the new administration to make roads a priority.

Transport is another area where we can do better. I would like to see responsive transport available to the outlying areas in the constituency; this will address some of the deficiencies in bus timetables.

If we are to move to more environmentally friendly transport, it is essential that electric vehicle charging points are available throughout the island. Active transport needs to be encouraged.

## Tourism

It would be remiss not to mention tourism, although we haven't had any for some time, we are starting to open up in a safe way. Tourism enables and makes a lot of smaller businesses and tourist attractions profitable which also provides facilities for island residents.

The Steam Packets purchase early in the administration proved to be a prudent decision, maintaining our sea services throughout the pandemic, keeping the island supplied with food and essentials. Air links all but ceased but with the opening of borders, it is essential that we restore these links sooner rather than later. It would've been easy to simply close things like the wildlife park, the horse trams, the heritage railways, etc, during the pandemic. Had we done so, they may have been lost forever. I will continue to stand firm in preserving these heritage assets for tourism and residents alike. I really hope that we will be able to hold the TT next year, it has been greatly missed by many.

## REQUISITION MEETINGS AROUND THE CONSTITUENCY

**Peel**  
**QEII School, 7.00pm, 15th September**

**Glenfaba**  
**Foxdale School, 7.00pm, 9th September**

**St Johns School, 7.00pm, 6th September**

This year, for the first time, postal votes are available, download form at [www.gov.im](http://www.gov.im) or contact me and I will arrange an application form  
Tel: 801027 Mobile: 381497

You will receive a polling card shortly before the election and your polling station will be shown on the card.

**Greener Manx Solutions to Manx Problems**