

Together — we can make a difference

**Paul Weatherall
for**

Ayre & Michael

House of Keys General Election

Thursday, September 23rd, 2021



Published by
Paul Weatherall, Halcyon Days, Main Rd., Ballaugh, IM7 5EX
Elections (Keys and Local Authorities) Act, 2020

My personal manifesto follows, but each of the Liberal Vannin candidates in this election have agreed to argue for the following core policy objectives to be part of the next administration's Programme for Government:

Jobs

Government should help create the environment to:

- Enable businesses to thrive and ensure everyone has the opportunity for a secure job that works for them;
- Attract inward investment to grow businesses and provide a range of well-paid jobs;
- Transition to a Living Wage Island, ensuring no-one is paid below the Living Wage by the end of the next administration and supporting small businesses as we make this change;
- Enable the transition to a greener, sustainable economy, while protecting our rural and marine sectors;
- Reform employment law to better support families through modern practices such as flexible working and shared parental leave;
- Continue to support businesses and workers until the Island recovers fully from the covid pandemic, enabling business to bounce back stronger and better.

Fairness

However we engage with government, everyone deserves to be treated fairly - whether it's when we pay our taxes, or when we need to access support or government services like healthcare or education.

Our priorities will be:

- Tackling the housing crisis through developing an all-Island housing strategy that delivers on suitable, sustainable and affordable homes for renters or owners – at every stage of life;
- Ensuring education services, from pre-school to postgraduate and vocational education deliver for all students and deliver appropriate provision for students with additional needs;
- Reforming our welfare system to ensure that no one is pushed into poverty, and working to reduce the cost of living on the Island;
- Upgrading our National Health Service into a National Health and Care Service, reducing waiting lists and looking after us all throughout our lives.

Party Manifesto



Open Government

Better decisions are made when we can all have an informed open discussion, when information is shared and when our representatives are held accountable for decisions they make. We will work for a government committed to:

- Answering 'Freedom of Information' requests promptly and comprehensively as the default position;
- 'Open Data', ensuring government information is available to the public as a matter of course;
- Bringing more transparency to the budget process, so changes to fees and charges are not hidden away out of sight;
- Ensuring government is held accountable for delivering on time and on budget;
- Supporting and protecting whistle-blowers who bring to light failings in government systems and actions;
- Representatives accepting responsibility for their actions and owning up to mistakes;
- Not hiding behind commercial confidentiality excuses when reporting on the details of government contracts. It is our money that is being spent; we have a right to know that it is being spent wisely and effectively.

Freedom

We will support policy and legislation that gives us more freedom over our lives, whilst protecting the Island through appropriate regulation and no unnecessary red tape. We stand for:

- Freedom from discrimination;
- Freedom to have a meaningful work / life balance;
- Freedom from cruelty and mistreatment for our companion animals;
- Freedom to choose to have care provided in our own homes in later life;
- Freedom to choose our own path in life through ensuring equal opportunities to access lifelong education and skills training, supporting sustainable and secure employment.

Background

My home is now in Ballaugh, previously in Bride, but I was born near Durham, England.

With an interest and involvement in politics since I was at school in Hartlepool, I joined what was then the Liberal Party, in the UK in the mid-1970s.

I was their candidate for Harborough in the 1979 General Election and election agent in Rugby and Kenilworth in 1983. At that time, I was also a town councillor for Kenilworth, Warwickshire.

After moving to Scotland, I became a senior officer in local government in Renfrewshire and then Argyll & Bute. I have experience in working with elected politicians and officers across departments, in preparing budgets, advising on policy decisions and delivering projects, on time and on budget.

I have lived on the Island since 1997, working at King William's College, the International Business School at the Nunnery, Milntown, and Manx National Heritage, before retiring in 2016. At MNH, I helped develop their iMuseum service. I am now an occasional volunteer for the Manx Wildlife Trust.

I have some business experience from running a small printing company in Kenilworth, running a B&B with my wife in France, and as a sole trader in IT, on the Island.

As Chair of Liberal Vannin during the last year, I have worked with my fellow Executive Committee members to develop party policy and support our Party Leader, Lawrie Hooper, MHK for Ramsey.

We have held meetings and campaigned on this year's government budget, housing, the Area Plan for the North & West, animal welfare, education, drugs reform, and many other issues.

I will pledge to represent your interests in Tynwald and to argue strongly for the policies that I put forward in this manifesto. In making this promise, I am being as open and transparent with you, as I hope that the new administration will be.

I ask for your vote on September 23rd, to elect me as one of your MHKs for Ayre & Michael. Together, we *can* make a difference.



Paying Our Way

Many of us have concerns, perhaps fears, about how we are going to pay back the money spent by our government during the Covid pandemic.

Many hundreds of millions have been paid out to businesses and individuals to help cushion them against financial loss, while the Island has been virtually closed to visitors in repeated lockdowns. Government has also recently borrowed a further £400 million to restructure debt for the Manx Utilities Authority and the Steam Packet. It is possible that further support for businesses will be required over the next 12 months, as we prepare for what we all hope will be a more normal summer in 2022; with the return of the TT and regular visitors from the UK and the wider world.

We have been able to finance this and take out loans because the Island is fortunate in having around £2 billion in its financial reserves, giving lenders and other jurisdictions confidence in our financial stability. However, these reserves are there to make sure that we can meet our long term commitments, such as pensions, and also meet the challenge of future emergencies.

Although the current financial year and probably 2022/23 are not the time we should be contemplating raising government revenue or indeed significantly reducing expenditure, the next administration will need to address this in future years. Hopefully the economy will be resilient and grow, but if we are to see improvements in health and social care and invest in measures to help people reduce reliance on fossil fuels, then somehow we'll have to pay for that.

No-one wants to see taxes rise, either directly or by 'stealth'. Any that may be necessary must be seen to be fair and increased gradually. Consideration should be given to a small increase in National Insurance, with an end to the cap at £3,500 per month and an end to people who choose to continue working past retirement age being exempt. The tax cap should also be reviewed and we should consider scrapping the annual vehicle road fund tax and raising this money instead from increased duty on petrol and diesel.

Any organisation can always find ways of doing things more efficiently, and the Isle of Man Government is no exception. A department by department review is essential, with the Department of Infrastructure perhaps top of the list. However, we all value our public services. Hospitals, schools, emergency services, our culture and heritage all rely on the taxes we pay. They are our services and we must ensure that they are run to meet our needs.



Health & Social Care — Manx Care



I am extremely grateful and full of admiration for the devoted people who have provided our health and social care services and cared for us during the covid pandemic. Thank you all!

The next administration will need to ensure that Manx Care is more resilient if we face a similar situation in the future. The focus now though must be to provide the resources to bring down waiting lists, particularly for those with chronic long term conditions and those requiring diagnosis and treatment for cancer.

Manx Care has another important task ahead of it: to better integrate health and social care. I will support measures to improve care for those who wish to stay in their own homes and provide more choice for people who may need to move into sheltered accommodation or residential homes in later life.

The situation with the Corrin Memorial Home in Peel has shown the need for more sustainable provision in this area. Private or charity run homes must have agreed relocation plans in place in the event of their closure.

Manx Care itself is a new approach to service provision. Its governance structure appears top heavy and opaque. I will support a review towards the end of the next administration.



Climate Change— a Green New Deal



Our retiring government can be commended for declaring a 'climate change emergency' in 2019 and commissioning James Curran to produce his report, showing us the way forward. However, they have left the important decisions to those about to take over the reins.

If elected, I will be arguing for a target based approach in key areas, with targets set for 2025/26 to:

- Substantially reduce the % of homes heated by fossil fuels, by developing meaningful grant and loan schemes;
- Substantially increase the % of electric vehicles on the Island, with vehicle charging points located at all petrol stations, community facilities and parking areas;
- Establish solar farms to increase the % of renewable energy in the Island's power generation mix;
- Commission an additional interconnector with the UK to plan for the transition from our gas-fired power station at Pulrose;
- Plant an additional 500,000 trees in community woodlands and within our towns and villages;
- Increase financial support to encourage our landowners to re-wild their least productive land.

Delivering homes free from fossil fuel heating systems and installing and maintaining renewable energy power systems, will bring jobs to the Island. New skills may be needed and our University College must be at the forefront of delivering those skills, in partnership with local businesses. This will be the cornerstone of our 'Green New Deal'. Action will be taken to reduce the Island's carbon footprint and we must all play our part, but we must make sure that local jobs are created and local businesses flourish as a result, not relying on contractors from off-Island.



Liberal Vannin is a member of the Island's Climate Change Coalition and if I am elected, I will work closely with other MHKs and MLCs who agree with its aims. I also recognise that climate change is not just about us; it is also a threat to our wildlife and biodiversity. I will promote our Party's pledge as a Biosphere Isle of Man Partner and support measures to strengthen our Wildlife Act.

Rural & 'Blue' Economy

Although farming and commercial fishing only account for around 2% of the Manx economy, both are vital components for our food security. Farm subsidies are food subsidies, benefitting us all, not just farmers.

They also both play important roles in the social and cultural fabric of the Island. The rural landscape that we all love has been fashioned by our farmers over generations and centuries. A large part of what they do is to maintain and conserve it in a sustainable way for future generations. This has always meant adapting to changing circumstances.

Our farming and fishing industry is currently having to adapt to at least four factors:

1. A, hopefully, short-term re-balancing post-Brexit, as new rules and trading relationships bed in.
2. Changing dietary choices by consumers, both here and abroad mean that demand for meat, dairy, and, to a lesser extent, fish products is reducing, slowly but steadily.
3. The long term impact of global warming / climate change means that measures to mitigate the effects may lead to demands for reductions in numbers of sheep and cattle being reared, worldwide.
4. Constraints on fishing quotas are likely to continue into the future in order to conserve stocks.



Government has a role to assist in helping farmers and fishers to adjust, with grants and subsidies to adapt to these changes. Farmers who set aside their least productive land should be more highly rewarded than currently, with additional support for those who use this land to increase biodiversity, plant trees, conserve peat, etc. Boat owners should also be rewarded for adapting their vessels to take out tourists to discover the sea life in our coastal waters and explore our coastline. Eco-tourism is likely to be a niche, but growing market for visitors in the future.

We all value the magnificent environment that we are so privileged to enjoy as Island residents. Let us all continue to value those who help to keep it so:- our farmers and fishers, but also organisations such as Manx Basking Shark Watch, Manx Birdlife, Whale & Dolphin Watch, Manx Wildlife Trust, and of course our government's Department of Environment, Food & Agriculture.

School & College



Child care & pre-school provision in Ayre & Michael are vital for families with working parents and we are fortunate in having facilities in Andreas, Jurby, Kirk Michael and Sulby. I will support measures to make child care more affordable and ensure that parents continue to have access to high quality services as close to home as possible. We also need to secure long-term, sustainable funding for the Island's mobile library service, which is an excellent resource for Ayre & Michael.

Our primary schools also play an important role in village life. I will scrutinise the Education Bill when it returns to the Keys, to see that it supports them in providing an excellent grounding for our children going on to secondary school. Plans to alter the management structure within Education should be reviewed to ensure that they are cost effective and deliver meaningful change.

The last year has been particularly difficult for our secondary school students, with significant disruption to their GCSE and A-level courses and assessment. Online learning is no substitute for face-to-face teaching and the quality of this provision has been too variable. Students must be offered additional support, where required, to make sure that they don't lose out when exams return to business as usual next summer.

Improved provision for pupils with special educational needs is urgently required, with assessment matched by funding to remove the frustration experienced by so many parents.

Our University College in Douglas will need to develop courses for people to gain the skills required for meeting climate change measures. Apprenticeships and skills development should be offered to people throughout their working lives. Flexible learning is key to keeping the Island's economy growing. More academic options should be offered to encourage students to obtain their higher education on the Island. All Island residents should be entitled to up to 5 years free training at Apprentice / HE level, to be taken at any point in their lives. Better grant provision, based on academic performance, should be available to those who do choose to take up courses in the UK and elsewhere.



Our children will deliver the future prosperity of the Island; investing in their education is one of the best things that we can do as a community.

Housing — Nests & Nest Eggs

The Island's Housing Strategy is divorced from the reality of housing need. Liberal Vannin will campaign for an Island-wide policy to provide affordable, suitable and sustainable housing to meet the needs of Manx residents. In particular, an improved first time buyer's scheme is urgently needed.

In Ayre & Michael, the Area Plan for the North & West suggests that there is little or no requirement for additional housing. If elected, I will resist planning applications that encroach on productive farmland, while supporting limited development that helps to keep our villages vibrant and allows our young people to find affordable homes in the area in which they have grown up. Priority must be given to development on 'brownfield' sites.

Restrictions on multiple home ownership should be considered and an Island Housing Association or Trust established to provide and manage social housing for those who find it difficult to enter the housing market. This would allow the Department of Infrastructure to focus on strategic need, instead of property management.

A range of sheltered housing and residential care homes are needed to provide choice for those of us who find ourselves unable to remain in our own homes as we get older.

Planning rules should be relaxed to make it easier to convert properties into holiday accommodation, to support our rural economy. Likewise, rules should be relaxed to support people who choose to work from home, incorporating studios and workshop space within or adjacent to their homes. I will also seek to work closely with the Diocese to find innovative ways to preserve the many iconic churches in the constituency.

Many properties have inadequate insulation. Improved grant and loan schemes will need to be developed to help people make their homes more fuel efficient and convert heating systems from fossil fuels, as oil and gas boilers require replacing. Electricity prices must be capped to ensure that everyone can continue to afford to heat their homes after conversion.

In Liberal Vannin, we believe in a property owning democracy; our homes are not only our castles, but are the heart of our communities.



On-Island Transport

There has been growing concern over escalating costs and the management of the Douglas Prom refurbishment. In the meantime, roads in Ayre & Michael (with the exception of the Mountain Course) and other parts of the Island have suffered from neglect, despite the tarmac applied recently to some of our rural roads. If elected I will demand increased scrutiny of such major capital projects and seek greater local input to decisions on annual road maintenance.



Rural bus services have been subject to poor planning and decision making—and even poorer communications with bus users. Time should have been taken to discuss the needs for public service transport around our villages with local taxi firms. Subsidising them to provide essential services may have been more cost effective than Bus Vannin. On the main routes, better connections for Ballaugh, Kirk Michael and Sulby to Douglas, Peel and Ramsey would be good (especially after evening events). A review early in the new administration will be welcome and again, if elected, that is something I will be demanding. Consideration should be given to Bus Vannin becoming a separate agency. It will need to become leaner and fitter in future. Fleet changes seem to happen far too often. The next time we do need new buses, they should be electric.



The way Eric Corkish's campaign for mobility scooter access on our buses has been handled has, quite frankly, been a disgrace. Heads should be hung in shame. People with disabilities deserve better than that. The wheels have been coming off the bus at the Department of Infrastructure recently. It's time for a change of tyre, at least.

Of course, other transport options exist and I will campaign for an integrated strategy for the Island that takes into account our changing needs for active travel arrangements and the impact of climate change measures. Continuing to re-vamp the former Northern Railway line from Kirk Michael through to Ramsey, for cyclists and other users will be an asset. Our railway and horse tram services are by and large visitor attractions, rather than efficient transport links, and should be viewed in that light.

I also recognise that many people will still choose the convenience of their own car, but we should encourage people to switch to electric vehicles as soon as possible, and consider using the bus as an alternative, whenever practical. Future changes to vehicle licence fees must be seen to be fair to all owners and any major changes to duty for different categories of vehicle need to be introduced gradually, with an option to pay monthly.

Ferry & Air Links

As an essential monopoly, it is right that our outgoing government made the strategic decision to take the Steam Packet into public ownership and ensure that it has the financial resources to maintain and develop services.

The last eighteen months have been difficult in terms of income generation and balancing covid restrictions with delivering the freight we depend upon, and allowing essential passenger travel. I hope that the 2022 season will see a return to normal service being resumed. Government needs to provide the policy framework and work with the Steam Packet on promoting the Island as a tourist destination, but then give the company the freedom to make the operational decisions to deliver what has been agreed. The project to replace the landing stage in Liverpool should be fully reviewed by the incoming administration.



The global aviation industry is reeling from the covid pandemic and restrictions on world and local travel. The companies providing air links to the Island are no exception. It is right that subsidies have been paid to ensure that essential routes have been kept open throughout the pandemic. It will take some time to adjust as our borders with the UK, Ireland and elsewhere fully open again, and it is too early to forecast which airlines may be available to provide continuing services as we all start to feel more confident about travelling, and visitor numbers rise again.

It may be that our government will have to consider full or part ownership of an airline in the future and we need to prepare for that eventuality. However, there are too many unknowns to make such a decision at the moment. If I'm elected I will be keeping a watching brief on this and support action to ensure that air routes meet our needs and those of our visitors.

Social Issues

Being an MHK is not just about ensuring good governance and service delivery by our civil servants and their departments. It is also very much about addressing the social issues that concern us all, or particular sections of our Island community.

The last administration delivered long needed reform of abortion legislation. If elected, I will seek to introduce legislation or support other MHKs on the following issues:

- **Assisted Dying** — I would like to see consultation on assisted dying legislation for the Isle of Man include provision for those who are not terminally ill, but are suffering from progressive illnesses and other conditions, with no hope of recovery. Having adequate safeguards is crucial. There are many jurisdictions that we can take evidence from;
- **Animal Welfare** - The Animal Welfare Bill introduced earlier this year was a travesty, not fit for purpose. I will support the introduction of a new Bill that does what it says on the tin. Improves welfare for our companion animals and protects wildlife such as mountain hares;
- **Recreational Use of Cannabis**—It is time that this issue was properly tackled. The ‘War on Drugs’ isn’t working. Like prohibition in the USA last century, it is causing more problems than it is solving. It is wrong that users of cannabis can face a criminal record and prison, while those of us who drink alcohol responsibly have no such penalties. Consultation on decriminalising like Portugal or legalising like Canada and many US states, is long overdue. I will support a review of the Misuse of Drugs Act, 1976 and public consultation to give Island voters the choice.

Other social issues, not requiring legislation, but which need attention include:

- **An Island Youth Strategy**—There are many things that young people can and do enjoy taking part in on the Island, but there is no co-ordinated approach. It may not be a big issue in Ayre & Michael, but it can be in Ramsey, Peel and other towns. I support an integrated approach on this, involving sports and other community organisations, along with Police, Education & Social Services, as appropriate.
- **Access**—Commitment to improving access to our streets, public spaces, buildings (including Tynwald itself), for people with disabilities, working with local organisations such as Disability Networks.



Government Reform

There are always proposals to improve the way Tynwald and our government works—or doesn't. There are pros and cons for them all and it is always difficult to get agreement for any particular course of action.

I am open to change, but not change for change's sake. I am a strong believer in the saying: 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it'.

Areas that I think are worth looking at are:

- The relationship between our Island government and our local authorities—and between the local authorities themselves;
- The role of the Legislative Council—and how MLCs are elected;
- The relationship between the Island and the UK;
- How our Chief Minister is elected, who gets to decide on the Programme for Government and how our Council of Ministers operates;
- Whether voters should be able to recall MHKs more easily than at present.



I don't have all the answers to these issues, but I believe that they are all worthy of attention and should not be dismissed as too difficult to resolve or ignored because we have other priorities. Perhaps a constitutional commission is the answer, with recommendations put to voters at the next general election?

Whether any of these reforms take place or not, I will press for more honesty, openness and transparency in government.

On Thursday, September 23rd, 2021



Polling Stations

Ayre and Michael
Kirk Michael Commissioners Hall Main Road, Kirk Michael
Ballaugh Parish Hall, Station Road, Ballaugh
Jurby Parish Hall, Bretney Road, Jurby
Andreas Parish Hall, Andreas
Bride Methodist Church Hall, Bride
Lezayre Parish Community Hall, Clenagh Road, Sulby, IM7 3AB

PAUL WEATHERALL

Your Liberal Vannin Candidate

for

AYRE & MICHAEL

Find out more



You can

Arrange an appointment to meet me

Let me know what concerns you

Discuss this manifesto

Help with my campaign



By contacting me on:

07624 479436

Email — paul.weatherall@manx.net

Facebook— [Paul Weatherall for Ayre & Michael | Facebook](#)

Twitter—[@Paul Weatherall](#)

Or write to me at Halcyon Days, Main Road, Ballaugh, IM7 5EX

PUBLIC MEETINGS FOR ALL CANDIDATES 7.00—9.00 pm

Wednesday 1 September - Andreas Primary School
Tuesday 7 September - Jurby Primary School
Thursday 9 September - Ballaugh Parish Hall
Monday 13 September - Sulby Primary School
Thursday 16 September - Michael Primary School
Monday 20 September - Bride Methodist Church Hall

You can find out more about Liberal Vannin and our other candidates at

www.liberalvannin.im

To show your support, please display the front cover of this manifesto in your window

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