

Arbory, Castletown and Malew - Wednesday September 1st, The Viking Castletown

Andy Wint Good evening, we're live at the Viking in Castletown tonight for the first of our constituency chats around the campfire. Arbory, Castletown and Malew for the House of Keys General Election on September 23rd. May I remind you that's three weeks tomorrow. The constituency of Arbory, Castletown and Malew covers a large area in the South of the Isle of Man and is made up of local authority areas sharing the same names, it also includes part of East Rushen, part of the former constituencies of Rushen and Malew and Santon, along with the island's ancient capital Castletown, which is where we are tonight. And tonight, I'm with Graham Cregeen, Steve Crowther, Tim Glover and Jason Morehouse. We're here to hear what they have to say to the constituents in Arbory, Castletown and Malew. First of all, I want to go to Steve Crowther, why do you want to become an MHK?

Steve Crowther

Well, I don't know about the time I've got, but just very quickly. I studied at Castle Rushen, I studied architecture in Manchester and the fundamentals to me were my international travel, and believe right now our constituency had a great legacy to start, and we've lost momentum at the current time - that's why I'm here.

Andy Wint

Now you were you were involved in infrastructure in in the Far East, was it?

Steve Crowther:

Yes, Hong Kong, Thailand, China

Andy Wint

What did you build?

Steve Crowther:

Well I didn't build myself (laughs), quite a few projects really. You know, airports, particularly transport infrastructure was my field

Andy Wint

What do you think of the bypass in Ballasalla?

Steve Crowther:

A great opportunity, unfortunately I will come to this in a minute, we've lost momentum again and again. Again, the big worry for me is that at the moment we don't have a strategic review, so at the moment we have what I would call a postage stamp review of a simple junction which has now become very complicated.

Andy Wint

Tim Glover, why do you want to become an MHK?

Tim Glover:

I've been on the periphery of politics, obviously with my job in The Newsroom at Manx Radio for 24 years. I've become frustrated with what I'm seeing, and you've got a choice then, haven't you? You can either decide to try and get involved, become a player or you continue to shouting from the sidelines I think I can achieve a lot more being involved and represent the people of Arbory, Castletown and Malew.

Andy Wint

If there's one thing that that gets your goat, then about Arbory, Castletown and Malew, one thing that you think, is burning inside, that should be put right – what is it, what do you think?

Tim Glover:

I think people don't feel any better off than they did five years ago, and I think we've wasted opportunities. I can think of the technology gateway at the airport, it's still exactly as it was five years ago and was a big constituency and island concern at the time nothing has happened. That's the frustration that I'm getting from the people knocking on doors. And I share this.

Andy Wint

Jason Morehouse, do you feel better about the position that you held up until a couple of weeks ago than you did when you got elected?

Jason Morehouse

Definitely, I've learned a lot so I've enjoyed it and I've got many skills every found hugely.

Andy Wint

OK, so, what do you think this constituency needs to move it forward?

Jason Morehouse

It needs someone who's going to actually be there to push to ask the questions and ensure that Arbory, Castletown and Malew are always at the table and always getting the key push that they require.

Andy Wint:

OK, what do you think about the economic wellbeing of this constituency?

Jason Morehouse

I think there's huge potential here. We're in a good location. We've got the airport here and the airport technology gateway is hopefully on the verge of shifting forward. There was £2,000,000 allocated to it in the 2019 budget. It's been held back by Covid, we really in probably one of the best locations in the world, and you know when people find out about this location, they come here. They're amazed.

Andy Wint:

Graham Cregeen, if you're successful that will be 20 years, you've been an MHK for how long now?

Graham Cregeen

15 years

Andy Wint:

When you started as an MHK, what were the burning things inside you? What did you want to do for the constituency? Of course, different constituencies been merged now.

Graham Cregeen

Yes, well I've always been part of community. You know, I was brought up in Port St Mary's part of Port St Mary's lifeboat / Rushen emergency ambulance - moved into Ballasalla and during my time, I've never been one of those people who sit back, if they don't think it's right and do nothing - I've always gone out and done things. And when I stood for election in 2006, one of my big concerns was that we'd been in a situation where we'd been having lots of schemes. Government was spending money and there was quite a lot of money that was going through and you always think, well one day this is going to end and we needed to put something in there to try and back that up, just in case we have a downturn, unfortunately a couple of years into that we had the VAT, we lost £200 million a year of income, and through my time in Parliament we're still adjusting all the way through that. And of course, now we've had the global COVID pandemic. And, we've spent possibly best part of £250 - £280 million trying to deal with that, and that will also have a knock-on effect, because we're still trying to rebalance. And how are we going to keep those finances? Especially with the uncertainty in the world at the moment

Andy Wint

The difficult thing to sync, obviously, as a constituency MHK - if an MHK then gets ministerial responsibility, is there a danger you lose touch with your constituency?

Graham Cregeen

I don't think so, because you know, during my time as Minister for Education, you know that a lot went forward. We've pushed forward with the Castle Rushen High School and there was lots of pressures through Treasury, who kept on trying to knock the budget down and we were trying to justify why we needed a swimming pool, the theater, an indoor sports or all the modern facilities that a new school should have, rather than just a steel portal frame. For constituents on low incomes we brought in a maintenance grant to help those people go to university, so you're able to do things for your constituents. I chair the Balthane user group, and the amount of work that we've that's gone down in Balthane, we've got 100+ businesses down there, so you're always trying to do that, and I've helped a number of businesses in Castleton.

Andy Wint

With respect the Balthane industrial estate remains an industrial estate, it's not a business park. It looks like parts of it look like a tip. I remember years ago there was going to be, remember the Airport Innovation Center, the enterprise so we had Deveres there as well. And now Balthane industrial estate, it's got some very dedicated workers there, and hard working businesses – it just doesn't look very nice.

Graham Cregeen

Well, part of that is that you need to get the road infrastructure when you go down there. Previously before I got involved, there was derelict cars everywhere you had the scrapheap there. You also had paper recycling that was blowing all over the place. So all those those businesses have now gone. The area is being tidied up, so it's working with businesses and also trying to work with local authorities because all these things have to be funded.

Andy Wint

Steve Crowther, what would you do to smarten up Balthane?

Steve Crowther

Look the the fundamentals are that we're talking about tidying up and moving cars. Let's stand back for a minute and have a look at the bigger picture. The key problem here is in this constituency, when we pulled it all together and combine the two, we had a real opportunity and the two incumbents had a real legacy. You know new school that was in the Pink book. We had an opportunity for a new technology gateway and fundamentally we had an opportunity for new housing we've lost all three, they're buried. The schools in nearly mothballed..

Graham Cregeen (interjects and says that it isn't)

Steve Crowther

Well are we going to have this banter all night so are we going to move on?

Andy Wint

Well, it's your opinion that it's mothballed, ok?

Steve Crowther

Well, it is – there's no plan... (ok, Andy interjects)

Andy Wint:

Let's talk about housing

The housing lots of housing.

Steve Crowther

What housing?

Andy Wint:

Ballasalla...

Steve Crowther

Yeah, but that scheme was planned significantly....

Andy Wint:

Just being here there are 36 houses.

Steve Crowther

Yes, there are. The interesting thing is that when the Southern plan was reviewed in 2011, the inspector advised there was no significant first-time buyer housing, interestingly. Particularly because of the chumocracy at Dandara, we've now nothing down there and we've nothing in the new development here. We all know there isn't going to be any first-time buyer housing, exactly why I've made the effort...

Andy Wint:

Why isn't there going to be any first-time buyer housing?

Steve Crowther

Because the current legislation means that the developer at the moment can sell on block the affordable homes to buy to let, and that's exactly what we've got at the moment. We haven't got any homes for first time buyers. That's exactly why I've put all the effort into finding something that will work.

Andy Wint

Tim Glover, you've been walking around the entire constituency. Have you come across people moaning about first time buyers?

Tim Glover

Affordable housing and first-time buyers is the biggest topic that is coming up on the doorstep apart from COVID, but it is the biggest.

Andy Wint:

Is this by younger people or their parents who want them out the house?

Tim Glover

It's all age groups, it's looking after their, their children and their grandchildren. They don't see a way out.

People in the estates are wanting to move out but see it's unaffordable at the moment and it's a massive issue that's got to be addressed very early on in the next administration. If you go back to 2010 and 2011 86 people were helped out with their first-time buyers through the government scheme 2019 - 20 it was 19. There are just over 50 first time buyer homes planned for the next year. It's not enough to meet the expectations that are out there for people.

Andy Wint:

Jason Morehouse, you were a teacher for how long at Castle Rushen?

Jason Morehouse

For 20 years.

Andy Wint:

OK, so a lot of your potential voters will have been taught by you and will be wanting to buy houses, how can we reconnect with first time buyers and give them a foot on the ladder?

Jason Morehouse

Yeah, I think it's a really important issue. I brought a motion in January that was successful and since then, there's been this slow movement forward. I asked again in June where the information was what was happening, and last week the infrastructure minister came forward with something which was pretty basic, but it was something that allows us to talk about the best solution going forward. We were in a situation last month where we had over 50 candidates going around the island. Saying this is an important issue, but there was no consistency in terms of what we were looking for.

Andy Wint:

There'll be parents listening to this who've got their children living at their house at the moment. Those children want to, but they earn a decent wage. I mean, there's negative unemployment on the Isle of Man. People with a good education can get work and sometimes very well-paid work, but we can't seem to break that chain so that they can get a foot on the ladder and they watch people buying multiple properties to let.

Jason Morehouse

There is the rumor that multiple properties have been bought to let. But in terms of getting the evidence from the Land Registry and get the evidence from the builders and other people, it's a tough call that one. But the key problem is and the problem is that the remains is that there's an issue in terms of availability around. We need to plug that game, until young people can get a home, they're going to be happy staying on the island they look for alternatives.

Graham Cregeen

There are many developments even the ones behind us here, there have to be a 25% of affordable housing, (but they're not affordable from the crowd) - They go to part of the government Affordable Housing Scheme which they go through, which it goes through the system. So even in in Ballasalla and behind us here there will be affordable housing. One of the issues we've got is that with the current rise in prices and materials and everything else, the scheme needs to be adapted, because some of this joint equity that we have is probably too low at the moment with the current prices, so we now need to up that. Regarding Castle Rushen High School, I was in touch with the Department of Education, Sports and Culture they are still looking for a completion date for Castle Rushen High School, 27/28.

Andy Wint

But is the money there to do it?

Graham Cregeen

It's in the pink book, ready to go. (it's not, argues Steve Crowther) When you've got something in the pink book any capital scheme still has to go to Tynwald for overall approval. So, plans are getting drawn up when they've completed that...

Steve Crowther

Well, I'm an architect, Graham and I can tell you how long that will take. Yeah, it's about another five years Graham before you could even before you could even suggest that.

Graham Cregeen

Unfortunately you may not know that the department has been working with people, they've already got preliminary designs so that final planning will be going in. They're talking about a three-year build, so so that's why they're, looking at...

Andy Wint

So the timetable from let's just say next Monday it was approved. It could be another five years before it is finished?

Graham Cregeen

Correct, it's a three year build

Andy Wint

So that could be 2026

Steve Crowther

Well, I understand probably now. Graham told us three years ago at the parents evening that the bill would be roughly 40 - 45 million, no problem he would get that approved with Treasury. Problem is now, I believe that project is probably between 60 to 70.

Graham Cregeen

It'll have increased with the with the with the cost of materials.

Steve Crowther

Exactly right now... do you think Treasury are going to do that in the next month? I don't think so.

Andy Wint

What state is Castle Rushen High School in?

Steve Crowther

Terrible, I can't even...and the worst part is the pool. Let's look where we are at this time.

Andy Wint

Well, that's a public pool.

Steve Crowther

Oh well, well, it is but it's tide to the school.

Andy Wint

Members of the public use that as well, are you saying it's in bad condition?

Steve Crowther

Poor, actually to tell the truth. The floor's bad, the boilers are in a terrible state. Graham knows all this and because he's trying to put it into the new school and pushed and pushed, we've now ended up with no school at all and the result is,

we've got a a guy used to teach there and a minister used to be in Education and we have nothing. Let me go to the fundamentals here if we have a look at the technology park. All of this works together, so we've now got a constituency. We just lose parts that isn't pulling, this is the key question.

Andy Wint

OK, Tim Glover. In terms of paying for all this, and if the economy in the South and we're talking about Arbory, Castletown and Malew has to move forward. How can we create more jobs?

Tim Glover

Government needs to be far less clunky and a lot more efficient. I've spoken to businesses that are wanting to set up business in the South. There's a children's television film producer. It's steady work. They're on three productions at a time. They're wanting to bring 100 jobs to the South of the island.

Andy Wint

Is this to the to the airport or to Ronaldsway?

Tim Glover

It will be into Castletown that they have been asking government now for some of the promises that were made from Enterprise to come to fruition, and they've been asking now for about a year and a half to two years. Nothing has happened - government is too slow.

Andy Wint

We get phone calls all the time on Maninline from people saying we're a rich island we're one of the richest islands in the world pro rata, we've had nonstop growth since 1984. Why can't government connect with people and projects to make things happen? Other places do it there, but how long did they take to build the new airport in Hong Kong?

Steve Crowther

Uh, quite a while but it was a new island. They did have to use nearly 1/3 of the Earth' dump

Andy Wint

From the time they started, how long was?

Steve Crowther

About seven years

Andy Wint

Two years longer than Castle Rushen High School that is, going back to jobs in the South of the island, Tim Glover - do you think everybody, and this is a point about travel the government talks about restricting the carbon footprint - so if we bring jobs to Castletown, Arbory, and Malew and that'll surely help that. So, shouldn't that be a priority to get jobs, meaningly for well paid jobs in the South?

Tim Glover

And that's why we need two MHKS who are going to be campaigning and shouting and raising the flag for Arbory, Castletown and Malew to bring jobs down here. We've got a golden opportunity with a load of businesses that are wanting to be based down in the South and other business have spoken to is wanting to relocate to the at the airport for Freeport there. 2 1/2 years he's been waiting for an answer. It's not acceptable. Government needs to move in a far more - it's hindering rather than helping at the moment.

Andy Wint

Jobs, come from education and our young people often leave the Isle of Man and never come back.

Tim Glover

because they can't afford a house.

Andy Wint

Mr Morehouse, what can we do to make sure that our youngsters who go to university come back get a decent job and get a house?

Jason Moorhouse

I think the priority is actually going back to the housing situation, but also the range of activities for them. There's a major issue in terms of that provision and until we get the investment by private companies and we actually get the housing, local people are going to look across them.

Andy Wint

What do you mean by range of activities?

Jason Moorhouse

Because you've still got a situation where, in terms of the things that young people are looking for, is quite limited...

Andy Wint

Fun?

Jason Moorhouse

Yeah, fun yeah.

Andy Wint

So what nightclubs gyms?

Jason Moorhouse

Well, yes, just in terms of the range of resources because these young people have been at big cities across. They've been at the university and they've expectations, and it turns down. And we're not going to match that head on. But in terms of the basics, we need to ensure that they can afford to live here in a decent home and build up relationships and put down roots again and live happily here.

Andy Wint

Do you think the education that children receive on the Isle of Man is good enough?

Jason Moorhouse

It's dependent on which children you're looking at. There's always the issue in terms of making sure every child reaches their full potential, and I would argue that in the past five years.

Andy Wint

You mean the clever ones will succeed and the other ones fall by the wayside?

Jason Moorhouse

Yeah. And in terms of the last five years, we needed to be investing more to ensure there's enough support and those children. All we share full potential, so there's also been issue in terms of COVID in terms of actually ensure that every child so those opportunities and it's been difficult for the children, the schools and teachers. But education is moved forward and learned a lot from that.

Andy Wint

OK, well Mr Cregeen, you were in that department, education, sport, and culture for more than a while as well, is it good enough going forward?

Graham Cregeen

No, and one of the issues that we've always had is recruitment of teachers and when you're looking at trying to bring people over here, you know some of the facilities that we had like in Castle Rushen, which is why we've tried to push it along is to try and attract teachers here to new builds. You want a proper environment for the teachers to be in and also the people to learn, so we've got to. We've actually got to move that along. We did work with St Thomas', we did some work on St Mary's School, so a lot of the schools were getting investments. But what you also have to realize is like we touched on earlier, is that the funding for all these has to come from somewhere and you know what services?

Andy Wint

Do we have to pay teachers more to come to the Isle of Man?

Graham Cregeen

Well, that's what we offered them. We offered them London fringe to actually come here and for our local people, but unfortunately that was turned down. And we'd offered an additional £6000 from 24,000 to 30,000 for new teachers coming in into the profession, but that was turned down as well.

Andy Wint

Steve Crowder so you were in you, did you live in Hong Kong?

Steve Crowther

Yes, I did for quite a period

Andy Wint

We're talking about facilities you live in Hong Kong, that's a very snazzy place to live.

Steve Crowther

Well, he isn't at the moment he was at the time.

Andy Wint

Ok so how do we make the Isle of Man, if you like as

Moorhouse said, more fun for young people?

Steve Crowther

It's not just about fun, is it? I mean we always classify young people as just, you know, going out for a laugh. Actually, they're really focused today, very heavily on, you know the education process, but fundamentally, let's have a look at this constituency. We have this opportunity for a technology gateway. It's sat doing nothing for five years for me right now. Fortunately, we have a new opportunity. The new eco house hybrid that have developed offers as an opportunity to develop on the island a new climate change, research park and I would like to position that opposite the opposite, the airport. What we're looking for is the high skilled jobs. That's what we need in this constituency. That's the future, that's the vision that we need to go forward.

And I think if people can see that if young people can see where we want to go. So, and that hinges particularly around the biosphere and other things that you know at the moment, if you ask most young people, they don't relate to it over the past, most people in the room they probably won't relate to.

Andy Wint

What does the biosphere mean to you?

Steve Crowther

Well, I'll tell you what it's described as and I'd like to bring that out. The UNESCO biosphere is about our entire culture, not just you know, flora and trees, it's actually about us. It really does offer, if used properly, a real potential to show investors our integrity where we want to go, what we want to deliver. And I believe that young people, if they can see that if they understand where we are going, if we're clear, you know and seems to mention, joined up government. And it always sounds like they're all holding hands. Actually, but the reality is, it's making sure there's a little bit of an element of executive that stops. You know some of the nonsense between departments and that we look as if we're strategic.

Andy Wint

Tim Glover, in government, there are elected members and there are officials, some of them very senior officials paid a lot more than the people who are elected by the people. How do does an elected member get their will through over senior civil servants who may not agree?

Tim Glover

You've got to win arguments. You've got to bring other politicians along and build momentum and pressure for things to go through. But can I just return to housing? I didn't really get a chance to look some positive points across there, and what we can do. Government owns a lot of land, a lot of brownfield sites. Why aren't we selling plots like we have done in the past Ballaloch us down the road here over School Hill it was built that way. The plot was sold and then you built your own house. Well, it's a cheaper way of doing it exactly exactly. The rental side of things. Affordable housing should not be or first time buyer housing and it has. There is a difference because the interpretation of affordable is not what the public see as affordable. It's first time buyer houses that we need to be focusing on, but affordable housing in that all of these schemes should not be rented out. And should not be bought by multiple paper based multiple ownership.

Andy Wint

Do you think government should bring in a law? Tynwald is very nimble, t can bring in at all when it wants it. Do you think they should bring in a law to say that somebody could only have a certain number of properties to for buy to let?

Tim Glover

I think that you start to tax people more on the on ownership of multiple properties. So for example, a second house that's bought 10% a third house, 20% has to be limiting that opportunity for people because at the moment people with money are seeing the only way to get a return with interest rates so low is to go into property. But at the same time that's having a knock on effect for our youngsters who will leave this island. And I've heard of several that are planning to go as well. If we lose our youngsters, we're losing our potential professionals and teachers, doctors, nurses and any other profession that you want to bring people into and where we're short at the moment, we're not going to be able to do that from people within the Isle of Man. We've got to make the Isle of Man an attractive place for our youngsters and affordable for them to get onto the property market. I've heard of 30-year-olds and 40-year-olds. They're still living with their parent because they cannot see the light of day of ever getting on the property ladder.

Andy Wint

Jason Moorhouse, 16-year-olds can vote. When was the last time you spoke to a 16-year-old on the doorstep?

Jason Moorhouse

About 2 hours ago. Yeah, it's one thing I've tried to keep local links and I've gone into local schools and regular basis. I've been heavily involved with Junior Achievement. I think it's important that all people in the constituency have got access to their MHK

Andy Wint

How important do you think then that young people get onto the ladder, get a job, and then contribute to society? Because I want to come to antisocial behavior and how we combat that on the Isle of Man, there's been a rise lately about of antisocial behavior.

Jason Moorhouse

Yeah, I think we're in a good place and there's always been a very small group of individuals. You can tame in any age, and those individuals don't carry out their lives, as we perhaps expect and there's backlash. There are issues, but the majority of young people are incredible. They're so motivated they're fulfilling their dreams, whatever it might be, and we really need to be putting on the back and saying, well done, you know that the problems that we've seen in areas that Onchan are hopefully just one offs and a small group of individuals. There are thousands of young people across special and we're doing this proud every single day of the week and they're special, they make the island special.

Andy Wint

Ok, I want to talk about poverty on the Isle of Man. I want to talk about the underclass and the people that we don't often talk about. Steve Crowther, and getting the economy working for people and breaking a cycle of dependency from people who come from. Families that don't see any point in achievement and that just goes on.

Steve Crowther

Actually this just going back again, so I'm sorry to revolve around a housing issue, but it does illustrate a point you see. So if we you know, probably we're probably talking about areas of social housing here, and one thing that I can measure is that you know a lot of people assume that some people are in social housing. Perhaps have a nice car on the driveway or and there's a belief that you know they're sort of exploiting the system. The real truth is right now that at the moment nobody can get a house they can't get out of that situation in socializing and actually talk to a lot of people, which is exactly what we're doing right now. You really feel the measure of that. So at the moment there is a real chance. I think I've got a great system and others to, you know really help people to move. You see, if you can see a one or two people who can't get a mortgage very, very difficult on the album and they're stuck in this rut. And if they can get out of that, it would actually help the social housing free up some space. Some people get their first house and that does change the whole poverty cycle.

Andy Wint

Graham Cregeen, has this changed over your tenure?

Graham Cregeen

There's been changes in there like we were talking earlier about the schemes that government brought forward. But like I said earlier, that. Material prices have gone up that the total cost of housing has gone up, and I think what government has to do in in the next administration is actually look at maybe loan guarantees, because we've done that over the COVID period for businesses, you know we need to increase possibly the equity share and one thing that I've always been advocate for is, say, the land up in Ballasalla, which is government land is actually having that buy to build, so you can actually go down that line so that not happen to just go to the big builders and have their houses. But it's also sort of giving people the opportunity and and the other one that's going to be coming in is the infrastructure

levy. Now part of that infrastructure levy could be used for if you're looking at say Castletown that young people could go into those properties and get a grant from government to do up old properties, which would be really helpful.

Andy Wint

Do you think there are more poor people on the Isle of and then there were when you first came in in 2006?

Graham Cregeen

I, I think there's the aspirations of people who have moved on as well and you know. So far we're we're lucky that we haven't got people begging on the streets, but we've still have a lot of people who are sofa surfing that haven't got anywhere to go. And what worries me is that in the future we're going to have serious mental health issues from people who have nowhere to go.

Andy Wint

OK, well live tonight at the Viking in Castletown, I'm Andy Wint with the constituents and also the candidates who are vying for the two MHK, positions in Arbery Castletown and Malew. Your vote gives two MHK a five-year contract to do their best. We're with Graham Cregeen, Jason Morehouse, Tim Glover and Steve Crowther. And by the way, there are pre-election meetings as well. This is a special Manx radio program from the Viking. There's a pre-election meeting tomorrow at Arbery Primary School From 7 till 9. Next Tuesday the 7th at Castletown Community Hall and on Wednesday the 15 at Ballasalla Primary School, tomorrow night Manx Radio is out and about and we're with Ayre and Michael at the Ginger Hall in Sulby.

Andy Wint

So be right, we'll go to the audience now in the Viking anybody here with a question, we have microphones out and about. Everybody who's been watching terribly politely here as well. And oh, there's a lady here. Yes, your name is.

Angela

Angela

Andy Wint

Your question please?

Angela

Given a lot of the talk has been about lack of skilled people on the island, whether it be security people at Ronaldsway and tradesmen at Dandara, doctors, nurses, dentists, what would be your stance if the island was asked to bring in and take and take Afghan refugees?

Jason Morehouse

I think this is a tough decision. I think in the first instance, so we need to be making money available because those people are really in a difficult position. In terms of them coming to the island, we need to

actually look at what facilities we've got available. At the moment we've got real pressure in areas such as mental health in terms of housing. As we've heard in terms of all those key support areas that these people would need, so I think it needs to be considered and we need to look at the options and the possibilities. But we can't rush into it. But in the short term there should be some funding to ensure they are being looked after and have a decent standard of living.

Andy Wint

If suddenly we were offered 5 Afghan refugees, would it be a good idea to accept them?

Jason Morehouse.

I think to be difficult given the current pressures we've got.

Andy Wint

Tim Glover

Tim Glover

I think Jason is right, the infrastructure is creaking and groaning here on the Isle of Man, as has been asked in the question there, but I think we're better than that. We're meant to be an affluent society as well. I think if we just took a family that was going to offer skill sets to the island, that sets a good example we've got to do it proportionally for the very reasons you've said. But I think we're better than just saying let's just send some money into nowhere.

Andy Wint

Graham Cregeen

Graham Cregeen

I, I think you're assuming that we will be given an option about which refugees that we'll actually take. And and so you know, like Jason said, the advice that the government has previously been given is that the money that we send helps thousands of refugees. And you know what we've seen across the health service at the moment, even for our own people, we are struggling to to have mental health professionals. There's three mental health professionals in in the police service and that's it and you've got to have the infrastructure and support in place for these people because it's not going to be that easy to integrate one family. They need a support mechanism around them.

Andy Wint

Steve Crowther

Steve Crowther

I think look, you know we're playing politics here, aren't we? The issue is that this is, you know, we're an international jurisdiction I think we need to show humanity. I think the key thing is though that we must make sure that you know whenever you take people on board, you really do have to resource that properly. It's not just a case of taking somebody in for the sake.

Andy Wint

OK, and the lady there what's your response?

Angela

Yes, just referring to what Jason said. We're needing housing and things, but we need. We do need people to come to the island and wherever they come from, they're going to need housing. Aren't they Oh yeah, that definitely in terms that. But we need to actually look at what we can offer at this moment in time. We can't rush into things. I was in Sheffield in the early 90s studying and they brought a small community there and it wasn't done well known major issues. So anything we do need to be taken, we need to look at the full issues.

Andy Wint

Do you think we should accept Afghan refugees?

Angela

I just think that it will never happen, but if we were in that situation, I would hope a country would take me in.

Andy Wint

Any other questions from the floor here?

Will

Housing, which we seem to talk about lot about housing and the problem with housing, and I feel that a lot of the problem is due to the pension funds buying into the houses, on the other hand. And I think we need to restrict what they can actually buy into. So for example, at the moment I think you can't get mortgages on the Isle of Man if you unless it's over 150,000 to protect the first time buyers. But in reality. You can't get a house on the other man for 150,000, so it needs to be up to two, three, 400,000.

Andy Wint

Steve Crowther

Steve Crowther

Well, that's a great question for me. Look, yeah, exactly correct. That is the problem. Just two quick answers One of the key factors is you can't get mortgages on the Isle of Man because of repossession laws. It does actually cause a lot of problems so it is a challenge and we are stuck in this cycle. Interestingly, that's exactly why I've spent the last five years helping an entrepreneur develop a true eco hybrid system that allows a four-bedroom house for 180,000, that's exactly why I'm here, because we need the legislation that allows us to deliver.

Tim Glover

How much did it sell for? You need to tell us that – that sold for over £400,000 hasn't it?

Steve Crowther

It's so for only 400,000. That's the differential, but we can sell them for that, you know, a developer can sell them for that, and that's the key. That's the fundamental.

Graham Cregeen

I think what we've got is we've got another number of employers over here as well who are trying to attract staff over here. And the only way they can do is that they've brought up a number of houses and then they rent them out to their staff, and that's been causing the issue with them. One of the things that we can do is actually put some additional cost in land registration fee. So, if it's your second, your third and your 4th house, you then increase the cost of that registration, and then you can use that money. But you've still got a problem that you know people are seeing that got no returns in the bank. It's about 1% and they're seeing 7% return on housing, so so that's what you're competing against. But government has to take an active role in actually developing the first-time buyer markets. And more, yeah, housing is something that we all need to be aware of.

Jason Morehouse

But we also need to think about the alternatives to buying. There's a lot of people out there who do not want the responsibility of having its 40 year mortgage, whatever it may be they want affordable suitable private sector accommodation, social housing and we need to look at the range of property but at the same time first time buyer houses need some form of protection because at the moment there are too many investors. Too many people going into that marketplace.

Andy Wint

But how can you stop investors? Surely that's anti-competitive.

Jason Morehouse

That that is the issue and in terms of if you try and come up with a solution, they'll come up with an alternative. So we've got to make sure there is a range of properties. And some of the properties are clearly for first time buyers and the assistance is there to ensure those individuals can afford those houses.

Andy Wint

Tim Glover

Tim Glover

One of the things I'm pushing is that government should be a lot more strategic in its thinking, and if we go back to the current. First time buyer schemes that government has. They're reacting now too late because the property market has already surged away 300 and 13,000 pounds was the average house at the end of December. We know it's a lot more than that comes September now in 2021 they talk about 140 to 190,000 flats and two-bedroom house is way out of kilter. Yes, they've announced that they're looking at it, but again, it's slow. It's not going to be brought in until April 2022. That's not helping anybody. Government is too slow. It needs to think much more proactively and strategically, and should have been prepared for this spike. It was well known it was coming. You could only ask to talk to estate agents last year so. It should be one of the first things that the new administration talks about and nothing should be on or off the table.

Andy Wint

Will, what's your response?

Will

You hear of properties being bought without even being looked at. You know you look at houses and they're being sold, sold, sold, and they're not even being looked at. And there's people just businessmen are not for a fact. Pension funds in the UK, they're just putting the money into that because it's it's easy money for them.

Andy Wint

Do you think Tynwald should should legislate against that?

Will

Think they should. So there there should be some sort of restriction in the amount of houses. I think one of you said about the the amount of house you can you can buy before you end up paying more more tax. Maybe that would deter it a little bit, but yeah, I think the that's where a lot of the conversation we've had tonight is about housing or it revolves around housing. This is this is where we need to sort out the housing.

Andy Wint

Issue OK, thank you. Well, anybody else got a question?

Tim Glover

It's the biggest issue on the doorstep without question.

Jane

Hi, good evening gentlemen, mines regarding to we've had one of the candidates has referred to a possible mental health crisis in the future. It's actually now the mental health crisis. It's not coming, it's already here. What I'd like to know from the candidates is we haven't got an endless pot of money. We know there needs to be some action. How would they go about dealing with the current mental health crisis will get worse.

Andy Wint

Steve Crowther

Steve Crowther

I think the key for me is that, let's just have a look at this. Obviously this cuts through most of society, particularly after the COVID period and my own daughter and faced a lot of challenges. She was in isolation for nearly two weeks at the beginning, the first lockdown. It was it was, you know, it was pretty devastating. Left her with panic attacks, we talked about it 'cause we wanted to tell people about that. And fundamentally, you know, the key here is how to, particularly on major issues that are influencing schools for me, mobile phone, peer pressure, social media - let's have a look at real strategies to help deal with these issues. Because it's preventative, rather than just the keywords that we need at the

moment. Certainly we need investment in departments and we. The right people to speak to channel people in the right direction. That for me is using the intelligence of the system rather than just you know, carte blanche approaches to, you know, throwing money that's not the answer for.

Andy Wint

Graham Cregeen

Graham Cregeen

I think what we've got to do is we've got to front load the expenditure now because the cost is going to be even greater in the future. We really need that, you know, in education, sort of. There's 3 educational psychologists and the amount of work that they have to deal with already that there needs to be more input in there. And you know, we will have to find that money, because otherwise if we do not. We will have a serious problem in the future and you know, it's about priorities where we where we put our priorities and that's going to be one of the key ones.

Andy Wint

Jason Morehouse

Jason Morehouse

Yeah, I'm really concerned about this area. It's something that the faster response, the better the outcomes, and it's particularly noticeable with young people having to wait 18 months, two years. And for a child of 14 or 15 or younger, two is a huge amount of time and they're missing out on their education on their family life and key things. It must be a priority whoever gets the most repush eyes.

Andy Wint

What do you say then to members of the older generation who just say you need to pull yourself together to man up? They went through the Second World War. They went through a depression on the Isle of Man. And they went through an early part of life with no money. How do you counter that? I think

Jason Morehouse

I think that is something that people were saying over this year. I think they'll third lockdown really hitting many people and I was surprised that the kind of the middle aged older person was ringing me up in despair and they for the first time actually saw that things were outside their control. And I think we're a lot more. Able to recognize these situations, and I think it's not just the young people, it's older people. Also in this situation and we need to respond that way.

Andy Wint

You think there's a genuine mental health crisis?

Jason Morehouse

Yeah, I think in terms of COVID it just shift everything further in that direction and.

Andy Wint

Tim Glover, would you use the word crisis?

Tim Glover

Yes, I would. I think we're just at the tip of the iceberg on this, and the indicators have been there long before COVID as well. With the shocking suicide rates that we've seen in recent years on the island, the evidence was there nothing was done. This again is why government needs to be a lot more strategic. The answer at the moment, yes, they put. Some announced some more resource for the crisis team because let's face it, you can't book a crisis for tomorrow. Tomorrow might never come. A crisis is a crisis. I think at the moment they need to work. Government needs to work with the third sector a lot more closely because there are. Some excellent charities that are doing some excellent work within the mental health area. We need to go right to education as well and we need to take away the stigma within schools about mental health. We need to give coping mechanisms, teach that within the schools to people. But we can do all of this. But again, unless you take this strategic approach for government, unless you deal with the causes of mental health issues, yeah, we are still going to have that crisis. Yeah, so it is always about being a much more strategic and forward looking thing. You deal with the issues that are there and we've discussed some of them earlier tonight. Affordable housing poverty, addiction having jobs.

Andy Wint

OK, just a quick come back on that, Jane.

Jane

I do think that government can't afford to everything on its own.

Andy Wint

OK, anyone else got a question for the candidates here as well on the far side?

Nadia

Hi, I want to raise a few points that I found paradox in so I can talk about it forever and word that we haven't got the time. So I firstly I really agree, strongly agree with the lady (Jane) about the mental health crisis and I think that this actually started way before COVID and I even tried to raise awareness around the suicide. So it's rising rapidly and someone actually sent me a message saying you've got to shut up and just not say that.

Andy Wint

OK, what's your question?

Nadia

So the question is that I've got young children in school, so one of them is in Castletown in Victoria, Rd and another is Castle Rushen, I think that generally the children live in the island one of the reasons is because they're not happy here to start with. There's a lot of bullying happening in schools, and I think that the moral sets go are very. Which is not really good enough, and I think that not much is being done around it. So for example, my little daughter got kicked in the face and came back with a mark on her face and I think that the children have a lot of anger issues. Too many things, so I think that that should

be that that there should be more things done in school to support mental health. At early age and be like be addressed the early age so they don't grow to be aggressive for depressed young people like mindfulness, meditation, yoga.

Andy Wint

I'll go to a former teacher about that, something we've picked up on Maninline when we go round the schools. It's bad behavior amongst younger not 6th formers, but amongst younger people and bullying in schools.

Jason Morehouse

Yeah, I, I think it's one thing that goes back to that lack of investment in terms of supporting the classroom teacher have got bigger classrooms. It's more stressful. All the issues linked to COVID have put more pressure in that situation on the teachers and the schools and individuals, and I think it's one of those. Things that when the education bill came was coming through we, we said we need to just stop for a moment, take stock of the situation ring and really get to grips with what's happening in schools. I think that's so important.

Andy Wint

And my parents will want to know how can you stop bullying?

Jason Morehouse

I think all the time you you need to be looking at that as an issue with its one child or any number of children.

Andy Wint

OK Graham, can teachers stop bullying in the class?

Graham Cregeen

No, it's it's from teachers and back to the families because you actually need the support of the families as well. So, so it's not just a case of Oh well, the teacher has to deal with this. The family has to support this and you know, like we said earlier and having those mental health professionals in their educational psychologists to try and help people to understand why they've got these issues. But you know, it's across society. And you know Jason had said about the education bill. One of the things that we've been talking in there was a social media policy. Now that's been put back years because it's not being brought forward and and and that's what one of the unions that had been asking for was a social media policy to try and deal with those issues.

Andy Wint

But there were so many unions, weren't there? 5 Union, Yes, I mean. And again, this comes back to the latest daughter getting kicked in the face in a school in the South of the Isle of Man. I mean, this is the Isle of Man that really shouldn't happen, should it?

Graham Cregeen

No, no, and that's where they need to bring the parents in and the teachers and to talk to the families and and they need to support from there because you know your child will be then worried about going back into school, so they need to deal with this properly,

Jason Morehouse

Could I just ask ages ago for was the incident actually reported to the school? Because I think that's quite important.

Natalie

On multiple occasions I've had I've been through hell with my daughter because of trauma that we suffered. Then she was put in the Education Support center. She was got hurt there so I had to pull her out. I wrote to the Doctor himself about. And it's been going on for years, so there's just now I've had a message from a friend of mine who said that her daughter is terrified of going back to same school in same class as mine and another child from a next-door class. Their parents have just removed her and going to private education because of issues with bullying. I'm just feeling that because, I did try to speak to the mother of the child that hurt my daughter as well, so she threatened me. Police with police if I try to talk to her again about it so she's not being cooperative.

Steve Crowther

It's really looking at prevention and we've got to start a lot earlier. You see, This is why I have to focus on our chief constable's told us that we have a serious drugs issue in our schools. And that's also combining with with a lot of key issues - particularly mental health, but if you just have a look at particularly, I want to talk about can talk about kids when they get to secondary school. Well, let's just have a look at 14 to 18 and you know we took away a lot of things they can't go in bars at 16. Fair enough, and you know, there's a lot of they can go in bars, but there there's restrictions, but and there's a lot of other issues. That we've taken away arcades. Good thing. But the problem is we didn't give him anything else to do and that's the key area that we need to focus on. But coming back to secondary school, we need a strong strategy about the mobile phone, peer pressure and social media grams mentioned aspects of legislation. Good, but what I'm saying is it needs a grown up strategic view as to how we're gonna go forward.

Andy Wint

OK alright we're gonna leave that there any very quickly.

Tim Glover

On the point you're making Grahams mentioned the education bill. It was rightly withdrawn from Tynwald because it just wasn't fit for purpose and that was coming from teachers. And everybody else. There is a reluctance from schools to actually suspend transgressors at the moment, which you know that for a fact, yes, I do. If you talk to any parents on the doorstep, they're telling you there's not even a one, two, or three strike. It's there's a real reluctance to actually take action, and I think that needs to change, OK?

Andy Wint

Any more questions from the audience here at the Viking?

Jeff

All candidates take same thing. They've all got proposals to create an economy, but they don't say how attract business from UK or Germany or France. Don't say how mental health, refugees. Manx radio subsidy. It's all going to be paid for their economy, dying on the Isle of Man. What are you going to do to attract business? To come here, whether it's the tax rate, not 15%, what are you going to do to attract business to come here? Set up here.

Andy Wint

Do you think the other man economy is dying?

Jeff

Yeah.

Jason Morehouse.

I think it's a pretty key protection to look at the economy to ensure there are jobs Those are also the opportunities I think the biggest issue that overriding is the size of the government at the moment it's taken to the young. The best skilled, the most ambitious people and those will be so much better in the private sector. It's coming back in journey, but yet we really actually need to shrink government back and get the government working within its means, because at the moment they're borrowing money. Looking at a whole new range of things in terms of private businesses coming, they're wanting to come here. They want to do business. It's making sure there aren't 2. Many regulations and too many restrictions and red tape on them.

Andy Wint

What's stopping businesses coming then?

Jason Morehouse.

I think that they are coming, but the issue is, once they're here, it's it's ensuring that they can do business and get things done. There are lots of restrictions and we're not good with the follow up.

Andy Wint

Tim Glover, Jeff just said, you know, politicians will say things you said you don't want to make a load of promises that you can't keep. So what do you think about the economy...

Andy Wint

Nobody can make any promises here apart from to work hard. That's the only promise you can make when we don't have a political system here without political system. There's a lot of things that can help. Government needs to be a lot more flexible. I talked about this production company that's wanting to bring 100 jobs to the island. The only reason those. Some jobs aren't coming to the island which will help boost the economy. It is the clunkiness and the slowness of government that needs to be a lot smarter and a lot slimmer and a lot more effective in dealing with things. And we also need to stop waste money let's look at the flip side of that. We're wasting long millions on schemes like Douglas

Promenade. That's over running like the Liverpool landing stage, which is why I support the central idea of taking the capital projects off departments and controlling it with professionals elsewhere.

Andy Wint

Very quickly, Graham Cregeen, very quickly.

Graham Cregeen

The issue that you've got is that to attract companies over here, unemployment is so low so then they have to bring people over with them. Then they need houses to go into, so you've got that cycle that you need houses to put people in that house. Price is so expensive there, then it puts it up. It's going this vicious cycle. Of trying to attract them in and having the people here which we've got that issue was the other one that we have is and Tim right. The Department of Enterprise has been really clunky. It's dreadfully slow at times, and what we need is that to put some vitality in it and make sure that the people in that department can go out, and so it's a good time.

Andy Wint

OK, very quickly. Steve Crowther

Steve Crowther

Thank you Jeff. I think I mentioned this of the day. The key thing here is making sure that we have a clear vision of what we want to do. We're talking about an in joint venture. That's the other aspect. Making sure that we can work with private enterprise. Looking at investment, some of the key issues in the UK at the current time are that the UK Government is investing heavily in small business. Their mantra is productivity. You're absolutely right, we are going to face challenges to attract people we work permits and other issues. But let me come to the fundamental. We need a a focusing government. That's joined up, that's that's clear as to where we want to go.

Andy Wint

OK, gentlemen, each candidate will now have one minute to address you, the electorate – we will start with Jason Morehouse.

Jason Morehouse

From my perspective, the strength and growth of local economy is and must be a priority. Without vision, people will not return home. Businesses will not succeed and we'll all be worse off. Economic success will ensure that there can be MTR investments in things like mental health. There will be better investments in education and a new school at Castle Russia will be built. Over the last five years I've been active community MHK. I've got out there. I've met people and I've tried to take things forward. I've been an approachable person who is always there and importantly, between local people and national government. I am someone who gets things done and at the same time prepared to say no when I feel it's wrong, as was the case with £400 million bonds. Over the last five years, I'd be one of the most active MHK's in terms of asking parliamentary questions in terms of bringing motions and getting things done.

Andy Wint

Graham Cregeen

Graham Cregeen

I think from my years of experience in Tynwald that I've proven record of actually achievement. It's not just a case of standing by the sidelines and throwing stones, it's actually about what you can actually say that you've achieved in in in in that time, and during that time, yes, I've had motions to Tynwald. Regarding Crosswick farm about planning about developments and also as part of my time in the Public Accounts Committee. When you're reviewing these schemes, but I think going forward, the next administration is going to need people with experience of actually a record off achievement because they work. They're the ones who's going to have to get on with the real work of government of protecting the island is people, and in its economy. And with that, I hope the people of Arbery, Castletown, Malew will see from what I have achieved over the my time in Tin World. That I have been good for my word, thank you.

Andy Wint

OK, Steve Crowther.

Steve Crowther

Look what we've heard here today is, you know, we have done things and I'm doing things. But when we actually look at the constituency, nothing delivered the school. You know which I'd like a climate change technology research we're the same. With the housing, the Castletown housing is being very pretty. Well yes we have got some housing, no first time buyer. I have a solution to these challenges and the same with the school. As an architect, I know that we can move this for much more, more quickly, these are the essentials we need, the investment we need, the creativity and we need the long term vision that will take us forward. It's really essential now if I'm given the honor of being elected, that somebody finally delivers for this constituency. Thank you.

Andy Wint

And finally, Tim Glover.

Tim Glover

I think it's a good opportunity to press the reset button. We need a fresh approach. We need two MHK for Arbery, Castletown and Malew who are working together which they haven't been working together for the good of this constituency and the good of the island. They give more weight than two. The cases that are bringing forward. I think the Isle of Man government. Needs to take a far more strategic approach to all solutions, whether they be local or indeed big national issues, a strategic approach with some forward thinking. Let's have some confidence in government, let's get rid of the waste

Let's take this as an opportunity to really move forward, and hopefully in five years time we'll feel a bit better than we do. Currently at my time as a commentator, I want to come to an end. I think it's time to become an active player on the pitch for your team.

Andy Wint

OK, ladies and gentlemen, I only have one piece of advice for you the, the gathered multitude here at the Viking. And if you're a constituent in Arbery, Castletown and Malew think very deeply about when you cast your vote. Three weeks tomorrow, the House of Keys general election is 3 weeks, tomorrow the 23rd. This has been our first debate and I thank everyone at the Viking and the enormous production team that we've had here as well. Tomorrow night we're going to be live at the Ginger Hall in Sulby, it will be packed because there are umpteen candidates and we're hoping to get round to everyone. If you're listening to this as a podcast or watching the video somewhere, anywhere in the world, Anytime, day or night. As an exiled Manxy, we thank you very much indeed for being with us tonight. Ladies and gentlemen from the Viking in Castleton, I'm Andy Wint, thanks to Ben Hartley to Beth Espey, to Andrew Beasley to all the assembled multitude and Matty Cunningham as well, thank you for being with us and goodnight.