# Douglas East Constituency Debate

**Andy Wint**

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, we're live at the old Granville Hotel, what is now Jack’s on Douglas Promenade to talk to the candidates in Douglas seats. Douglas is the capital of the Isle of Man and the main business centre of the Island. It is the modern home the Island’s parliament, which is located in the legislative buildings on Bucks Road. The boundaries of Douglas East include the districts of Crescent, Derby, Strand, Victoria and Windsor, plus St Ninian's from the old Douglas North constituency and finally includes the length of Douglas Promenade. Their previous MHKs were Claire Barber and Chris Robertshaw

And standing in apathetic order: Clare Barber, Joney Faragher, Peter Gilmour, Michael Josem, Jon Joughin, Christine Urquhart and Amanda Walker.

So, let’s go to the candidates, Joney Faragher, why do you want to become MHK for Douglas East?

**Joney Faragher**

Well, I think that there are lots of challenges ahead and I want to make positive difference. I've been involved with politics for well, most of my life, really to varying degrees and I've become more engaged in the last decade. I think I feel at the time is right both in terms of myself as a person. In being the right person and in terms of political scene on the Isle of Man, to take this step.

**Amanda Walker**

I stood at the last election and I just had twice the Council and I've had a lifelong interest in politics, and I have a degree in politics. I've lived in Douglas East for 21 years and I have raised my children here, both gone to school in Douglas East. Obviously, I'm a homeowner so I'm very aware of all the issues, and I think there's a huge amount of challenge in the next five years, not least Brexit, which I think has not actually been fully addressed yet, because I think. It has been largely masked by the COVID crisis and the climate of emergency, our leaders need to urgently address this

**Jon Joughin**

Well, I've had a long career of public service when I was in the post office. I was the branch secretary of the Postman Union for nearly 20 years. I've been a town councilor for eight years. I've been the mayor of Douglas for three years, and what I'd like to do is be the MHK for Douglas East and step up.

 **Michael Josem**

Our campaign for Douglas East is about three key things, but more than anything else, it's based on the idea that we need someone who will be our voice to the government instead of the government voice to us, and those three key things that, first of all, these are squeeze on the cost of living, especially addressing the housing crisis. Second of all, to as we rebuild from the pandemic to address the shadow pandemic. The mental health crisis and third of all, is about holding the senior government officials account. You know, over projects such as the Douglas prom out the front here, the Liverpool landing stage, the water slide and at the NSC and so on.

 **Clare Barber**

Over the last five years, I've certainly thought to hold government to account. I've always said I wouldn't stand again if I didn't feel that I had something more to offer, and there's certainly projects that I've started with in terms of the sex offences legislation we've seen the domestic abuse legislation and the secondary legislation that will now need to come through that I'm really passionate to get right, but also to see the evolution of Central project unit and we're absolutely in the middle of the heart of the promenade and having been part of the scrutiny team that wrote three reports into the failings of the promenade, I'd like to see the Capital projects unit through to its evolution.

**Peter Gilmour**

I'm Manx with four generations of family living and born on the Isle of Man, I spent nine years in the Royal Air Force and 25 years since then working in finance, business and economic technology. My priorities are the Manx economy and diversification. I think we've only scratched the surface of the digital economy. We've got far more to do that I work full time digital economy. And I think we need MH days that understand business, finance and technology.

**Christine Urquhart**

I am standing isn't through sheer frustration. Frustration at a government that doesn't seem to care or listen. Frustration at policy that doesn't seem fit for purpose doesn't fit for all, and frustration is a working-class person equipped working, class resident and citizen of this island who just don't feel that they're being heard. The lack of transparency, the lack of accountability. I hope to bring that into government.

**Andy Wint**

OK, Amanda Walker, first of all, what would be your main priority if you became an MHK?

**Amanda Walker**

I think it's very difficult to identify just one question, but I think the overarching priority has got to be addressing the climate emergency and the economy also needs addressing, but those two are not separate, they are absolutely independent and interlinked and I think within the economy we've also got to be aware of education and healthcare. And we've got to make sure that we address mental health crisis that is very clearly part of the impact of the COVID epidemic.

**Andy Wint**

Joney Faragher, how important do you think the climate emergency?

**Joney Faragher**

Very important, it's certainly one of the top priorities on their doorstep, and there are several quite easy fixes that we can make to cut our carbon emissions, but really, we need to be following professor current impact report in order to achieve net zero by early earlier than 2050 I would say. But yeah, definitely.

**Andy Wint**

Jon Joughin, are you getting the climate emergency on the doorstep?

**Jon Joughin**

I've known about the climate emergency for 20 years. What really annoys me is that the government hasn't done anything for 20 years. The last thing was this all be damned and the one before that was the energy from waste plants. Orkney is completely and utterly self-sufficient. They've made making so much electricity they're turning electricity into nitrogen to run their vessels on. We can do it as the will to do it. But what we do need to know and find the money where to get the problem. We won't get subsidies like the rest of UK. We don't get subsidies from Europe. We'll have to pay for ourselves. And it's gonna be very expensive.

**Andy Wint**

Peter Gilmour, the climate emergency, the climate crisis. How important do you think that is?

**Peter Gilmour**

I think it's very important but I think it's more important that we spend any money on it costs effectively, we need to remember it's a net target. We may be a small part of global warming, but we still have to do our bit. We've got plenty of natural resources we need to use, but we need to think outside the box a little bit. I think we have a lot of international development money which we send abroad we should be helping to support rainforests and indigenous peoples. For example, where we can offset at least 10 times our own emissions, which are now reduced already. They've been updated this last week from .84 metric tones, down to .5, so things are going well in it for us.

**Andy Wint**

Christine Urquhart, what do you think?

**Christine Urquhart**

I will be honest with you, I haven't learned enough about it, I’m still learning. I've been so focused on people and the systems and service provision with what I've been doing for the past five years. What I do know is that it needs to be thought through thoroughly. I agree with Peter expenditure, expenditure needs to be done wisely. And there is a concern with regards to electric cars filling the island and what we do with those batteries etc that was mentioned previously.

**Andy Wint**

OK, Michael Joseph.

**Michael Josem**

Yeah, so that's why I think we think that climate change is a big problem and that's why Liberl Vannin is the only political party on the Isle of Man to be biosphere partners. We think we can do better than the government target of reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and. First of all, we want to prohibit fossil fuel extraction on the island and in our waters, and to empower makes households to have the right to obtain 0 carbon emission electricity as part of their normal supply.

**Andy Wint**

Do you think that the gas exploration should go ahead?

**Michael Josem**

Absolutely not. Our policy is very clear that we want to prohibit fossil fuel extraction on the land of the Isle of Man and in the surrounding waters, it's very clear policy.

**Clare Barber**

I think the climate emergency is absolutely something that we need to focus on and we need to look at that across all areas of government that needs to be across transport, it needs to cross properties. It needs to be across waste, but we also need to make sure we're looking at things like the sewage outlets in Peel. It's absolutely not appropriate that in Peel and Laxey we still have our children swimming in beaches that are not fit for humans, and we have an A4 sign at the side. I reported on this, this was something we did actually very early on in the administration in the environment, infrastructure Policy, Review Committee, and I've been frustrated that we haven't seen the progress that we need to, in resolving those very key issues.

**Andy Wint**

OK, let's talk about Douglas Promenade. Peter Gilmour. Douglas East is right across the Douglas Promenade; what do you think as a new MHK you would do?

**Peter Gilmour**

(start of the answer lost due to an internal problem with the recording) ...and so a lot of good people that have this. Seems to be led by few donkeys and few hard decisions to be made. All of staff government get bad publicity, so I think the training should the training should begin within the DOI - a whole culture shift is needed.

**Andy Wint**

What do you think of Douglas promenade, Jon Joughin?

**Jon Joughin**

It’s accountability really, they need to be held accountable for what they did to the people down here. The businesses around here we knew it was going to be a big project everybody knew it was going to be 2 1/2 years. It was always going to be a big project that wasn't. I mean, what? What really annoys me about the project is that the biggest project in Douglas East for 100 years, not a single Douglas East MHK involved in it, so like they scrutinised afterwards. But they weren't involved in it. Now single Douglas MHK was involved in the whole project.

**Amanda Walker**

I think it was very obvious from the start that it was going to be a very difficult project. 9 out of 10 major projects run over budget and don't go to their timeline. That was all compounded by the COVID crisis, which clearly had an impact, and I think, and I said when I stood in 2016. But I think we should have had a major UK contractor over to map the whole problem, so we didn't have them multiple diggings open all of them that we had. I think there was some serious engineering logistical errors made and I think the huge impact on the businesses on the prom is something that has to be looked at, because

we've given, we've given proper compensation for people impacted by Covid. I'm not so sure that we've given proper compensation for the businesses impacted by the prom debacle.

**Joney Faragher**

So, I do think from conversations on the doorstep that this has been a sense of. There's a sense of genuine frustration at the lack of accountability and transparency and I think that people do want to see some of that accountability built in, so I have actually said that if elected, I think that we need to have it inquiry into what's happened. Now I know people do become a little bit weary of long-winded enquiries, don't seem to actually go anywhere but I would like to use this one to provide genuine accountability and transparency. There's such a sense of frustration out there that it needs to be addressed. I think that it also needs to in build into how we conduct capital projects in future because it's just not acceptable what's happened here.

**Clare Barber**

I certainly would push back against John saying that happened after the event that actually has happened throughout the process of the promenade and we have pushed for some significant changes, including getting the business manager in place in terms of a liaison that has been a very positive change, I've spent many hours and I've been humbled by the stories that I've been told by those people who've got businesses and properties on the promenade and who are absolutely at their wits end, and we have to remember it's not just the potential loss of business. Some of these people have got their own private properties, the mortgage from their property on the promenade is secured against their private property. The devastation to these people is absolutely unforgivable in terms of how they were initially handled in this project.

**Andy Wint**

Michael Josem, what do you think we can do about Douglas Promenade?

**Michael Josem**

Look, at this stage we're very late in the game now and so hopefully, but this should be finished in in coming weeks. But what we need to do going forward is we need to fight for senior government officials to be held directly accountable. And there were already proposals in the last ten word put forward by Julie Edge, the Member Franken, to link pay for senior government officials to performance. And we can build on those immediately so that we can avoid further blowouts in the Liverpool landing stage if we can avoid further dragging out of the of the NSC water slide. We and we can address the ongoing a budget blowouts with less than.

**Andy Wint**

Now just go round the the panel as a quick. Just a quick opinion. Do you think the government is serious about tackling climate change on the Isle of Man?

**Joney Faragher**

That's quite a big question, and I think that there are some members of government who are serious about it, but I don't think that the policy at the top has reflected a level of seriousness about it.

**Andy Wint**

Amanda Walker, do you think the do you think the voter thinks that the government is serious?

**Amanda Walker**

I don't. I don't think the general public think that the government is serious about it, because I think the government’s behaviour has shown that they're not really serious about. It's an awful lot of lip service being paid.

**Jon Joughin**

It’s true, they they've failed. The people of Douglas Hadley, people of the island, and they have done nothing to 20 years. They've done nothing about climate change in the past five years.

**Andy Wint**

But we've known about, as you say, people have known about climate change. We hear about it all the time, yeah?

**Jon Joughin**

These people accountable for doing nothing about climate change.

**Andy Wint**

OK, Christine Urquhart – climate climate change. Do you think this government has done enough? Do you think people think the government is doing enough?

**Christine Urquhart**

There’s calls for eclectic cars by was 2035, where's all the electrical ports for these calls around the island? We're rebuilding the prom, where's the electrical ports for the electrical cars that they want to push them in? They I don't think they're taking.

**Peter Gilmour**

Yeah, I think it's been thrown together plan. Well, all reaction proactive It's a great danger that they've got some of it wrong. They're talking about planting 85,000 trees, Sure, alright, well, you can't just plant trees. You've got to think about planting trees in the right place. You know you've got to plant them to protect water for wildlife and other such things. You can't. Just. You've got to think this through, and I don't think it's.

**Clare Barber**

I think there has been some real positive changes in terms of the climate change forum and actually having a proper conversation about climate change. For me the legislation is almost peripheral because actually you can have as much legislation as you want. But if you don't see fundamental change in actions, we will not see the change that we need to see across our island. So, I believe there has been voices within government who've really pushed hard and I believe I've been one of those. But has there been enough action? Not as yet, but I believe that there will be huge changes and I'm really delighted to hear it as such a positive point around the doorstep of people wanting to see that change. 'cause that's imperative.

**Andy Wint**

Michael Josem, do you think the people, do you think the voter believes that the government gets climate change and knows how much action needs to be taken?

**Michael Josem**

I think it's a good word that you've used repeatedly there, Andy, it’s action. There's a lot of lot of hot talk, and so it's like you know, here we are talking about climate change. You know, probably one of the drivers of this is all the hot air battles by politicians, and so that's why Liberal Vanin about taking leadership. You know I rode my bike down here to Jacks tonight. Here we own the centre, one of the easiest places in the Isle of Man to cycle two. Didn't see many other people cycling along and we gotta take personal leadership. That's why my approach is that many, many voters will have in their hands use 100% recycled paper 'cause we gotta take personal leadership. The time for talk is over. And now we've gotta act and and move forward in it.

**Andy Wint**

OK, let's talk about affordable housing. Lots of people in Douglas East want to buy houses. Peter Gilmour, what do you think the government, what you think, and have you been hearing about the cost of housing on the Isle of Man?

**Peter Gilmour**

This is a major problem. It's a triple whammy because it's not just the cost of housing, it's that's impacting the people that can stay here to work. People who can bring into work, so it's exacerbating the skills shortage. We need to look at three things together. Diversification. Every time we ask our youngsters when they leave, and we've lost 40% of our youngsters under 30 every year since 2011 we need to look at all three things and every time you ask them they say affordable housing. The lack of diversification and jobs available and the cost of travel.

**Andy Wint**

What do you mean? Lack of diversification in jobs?

**Peter Gilmour**

What I mean is, they don't when they go to study in in university, they can't get the type of job they want. We have two main sectors here, E-gaming and insurance which is 40% of our economy finance, add that - that's the bulk of our income. If you don't want to work in finance, you don't want to work any in e-gaming or insurance you won't get a job here, so we've got to think about the needs of your workers and diversifying the economy, moving into the digital economy to create new jobs which can be in fashion, energy, trading, you name it. We've all seen that when we’ve work from home. I've known that for years has been an IT engineer, more people saying now we can employ people not just here but around the world.

**Clare Barber**

I think in terms of the affordable housing, there's going to be a number of pieces that have to come together. We've seen within the Covid crisis the last two years there's been a huge increase in property prices, which has blocked people from being able to get onto the ladder. But it's also meaning people can't downsize as easily they're struggling to find availability of smaller, smaller homes, so we need to make sure there's an increased availability of homes we need to make sure we legislate against gazumping people who've saved up, they put their deposit in their conveyancing fees together and at the last minute they're having that money wiped from underneath them and they're back to not just square 1. They're back to negative, we need to move away from that. We need to make sure we have availability of social housing and we need to make sure that we're regulating landlords and the landlord registration bill will go away towards that to make sure that people are renting are in a good quality accommodation.

**Andy Wint**

If the landlords bill doesn't include public sector landlords, it surely can't be a landlord's legislation?

**Clare Barber**

So, I supported bringing the public sector landlords into it. I believe everyone should be on the same playing field. If we have a standard of living that's appropriate for private sector, that should be the same standard you should expect in the public. Unfortunately, that wasn't accepted the deal. I feel they're going to bring a separate piece of legislation. There's going to need to be a focus on getting that right. Why we couldn't bring it in together? I'm still not clear on, but unfortunately, we were unsuccessful in trying to make that move.

**Christine Urquhart**

I'm going to pick up on that that social housing should absolutely begin with that landlord bill, and there's where your lack of transparency and accountability comes from. It's shining bright just from that one bill alone. I believe, I've got 26-year-old son who owned his own property two years ago. Now he can't get on property ladder because prices have skyrocketed due to Covid and people coming here to live to escape Covid there needs to be more regulation with how that's happenin, more regulation and taxes on the number of properties that people own and what they're allowed to own, and more importantly, the houses that are being, built we we've. We've got people in residential care who could actually live on their own if they had the property that was that that was built for them.

**Andy Wint**

OK, Joney Faragher, do you think the government should get involved in the property market? Make sure younger people buy property?

**Joney Faragher**

Absolutely. So, this is being a huge issue on the doorstep. We need quality affordable homes so that for rent and for purchase so that we can attract young people and essential workers back to the island. So, we need a combination of support for buyers, incentivizing developers and constructing more social housing. Some of the issues that I would include some and so I keep hearing that echo some solutions I would bring in would be good development of brownfield sites, especially in Douglas, tangible support for first time buyers, as you mentioned, I also think that we need to have support for people to downsize. I've heard that a lot on the doorstep. People want to downsize. We got under occupation, actually, they want to move into a small property, but they can't because of the cost involved and because of the lack of suitable property

restricting or disincentivizing multiple property ownership by taxing second third properties. So all of these need to be included in a National Housing strategy.

**Amanda Walker**

I think it's an incredibly complex issue. I don't think there was ever a mythical time when it was very easy to buy a house, and so I think affordable housing is a very real issue. I also think that there are an awful lot of our young people who, when they are seeking jobs elsewhere, will find housing even more expensive than it is on the Isle of Man. And I think one of the things that we could do is actually have a proper Manx right to buy scheme because I think there's an awful lot of social housing that's blocked by people who've been there for a considerable length of time and now it's an economic point where they don't actually need social housing, so I'd ring fence. I would allow them to buy, not with the massive discounts that are offered in the UK, but within an appropriate and proportionate discount. And then I would have the money ring fenced so that we could build more social housing because I think.

**Andy Wint**

So, you'd advocate right to buy in social housing?

**Amanda Walker**

I would advocate the right to buy in social housing ringfencing the money coming in. I wouldn't give them massive discounts that were brought in under the Thatcher right to buy. I think we would design our own rights by scheme, which then would create a reservoir of social housing which would alleviate a lot of problems, and much of that social housing could be allocated to key workers as well, so I think there's a huge issue with some of the sectors that we have in the economy that over inflate wages, and that because of those overinflated wages, it's fueled that the housing inflation, and I also think there's an issue with investments, and we have an awful lot of finance businesses that are based on investment, so we can't

restrict people being allowed to buy housing here because it's a major thing that insurance companies will invest in because they're gonna move away from office space because more and more people are working from home, I also think what we've got to do with housing is make it a big priority with the climate emergency and we've got to support people retrofitting. I do not think that means testing at making houses more environmentally friendly is the way to go. I think the audit needs to be done, and then we should be retrofitting on the basis of the houses that are causing the most environmental damage. And I certainly think a lot of the older properties we need to look at the planning laws and we need to make sure that retrofitting can be done and doesn't get stopped because of aesthetics.

**Jon Joughin**

I totally disagree (recording interrupted)..there's two main things in the housing market for affordable housing. One is the invisible money (audio interrupted), the second thing is planning. We've just had a big part in developing down the Ballasalla, there's not a single first house affordable for these houses. The government’s granted this scheme, and they've just pushed up 30% the prices of them as well. Why are we doing these schemes when we need affordable housing? These gains for when we need.

Well, actually this was owned for developed for the residential land, so some of it should be zoned for for our first-time buyers. There's an application gone in last week for 44 first time buyers house is up in the top of Johnny Watterson's Lane. I hope the government back it 'cause they're gonna build them first before they build the other houses. They're the sort of schemes that we want first and before builders get planning permission, they should be told to build the affordable houses first, then sell the profitable ones.

**Andy Wint**

So, you say affordable houses first?

**Jon Joughin**

Yes, before they get the license.

**Andy Wint**

Do you think this the government acted against the interests of youth?

**Jon Joughin**

We don't need half million-pound houses. We need affordable houses for our children to grow up in, or

they'll be gone and they won't come back.

**Andy Wint**

OK, that's what I wanted to talk about and that is quite a few of the candidates have talked about the falling birth rate on the Isle of Man and population on the island, Christine.

**Christine Urquhart**

What would I do to make it attractive? Diversity it like Peter said early, you need to diversify the employment in the educate and education to give people something to come back to the affordable housing we've all just sat in and spoke about that birth rate dropping. People want to take control their lives more, now that's not the case. In school, get work, get married, have got home our kids that that doesn't exist anymore. We live in a modern age, people having children later in life now, but to be able to bring these people here, we need to have our infrastructure correct. And it's not correct around health system can't even support ourselves. We've got five year waiting lists in healthcare two years waiting lists and mental health. If our infrastructure can't support or is how is this going to support anybody else?

**Andy Wint**

Peter Gilmour, the government stated ambition is to increase the population of the Isle of Man to increase the economically active population of the Isle of Man. Do you think that's that's possible? Do you think we can do it?

**Peter Gilmour**

It's not something I'd like to see. Actually, I'd like to see a lot more upskilling on the Isle of Man, I'd like to see us being a little bit more careful here. We like to come here at the moment. I think we're financially cleansing our young people off the island. We're not giving those. I've left the opportunity to come back because we haven't got done diversification, so we need to be careful. Here that we're not creating a gated community for old people and driving all our youngsters away. The number of people I've spoken to on the doorstep despecially mothers, so nearly in tears. They're basically saying I'm not see my son or daughter again because once they've gone to university they can't afford to come back here.

**Andy Wint**

So, what sort of mechanism do you think the government could put in place to make sure that doesn't happen?

**Peter Gilmour**

I think what we need to do is invest in funds, for instance, when a somebody born on the Isle of Man, that some money is ring fenced for them when they go away, do their education. They can access that money when they come back. So that kind of thing we need to really talk this through to work out how we'll get our own young people back here.

**Michael Josem**

Yeah, look, I think that too much discussion of the of the Manx migration system focuses purely on people who are new to the Isle of Man and instead we do have that ready-made group of people who already have a love for our island and that is for young people have moved away and many of them have left in search of dynamic and rewarding careers, right? Like your own family Andy, and in that sense, since working careers pull many people away on the Isle of Man, that's going to be the first thing that we focus on. Allowing dynamic and exciting industries to thrive here on the Isle of Man and to also ease the squeeze on the cost of living. And that's why you know our policy to on the on housing is about two parts. First of all, building more housing but also carefully scrutinising people who from abroad, who want to use the main housing market as a as a speculative financial instrument rather than a place to live?

**Jon Joughin**

You have to just increase the employment that we've got the Isle of Man is renowned for being whichever way you throw us will stand. I mean, 10-15 years ago there was a bank on every corner. We've fallen over banks. You know they've gone now you know and after that we've had the E-Gaming and insurance are going to be the major ones. What is good about the Isle of Man and what's creative about the Isle of Man? So adaptable and we can change quickly for the next thing that's coming along. You know, you know we were. We were children. It was all boarding House of the Long year was all tourism that's all gone. Now we can still have but spoke to listen back. We can work on that again, but whatever, then the next industry that comes along, we'll be ready for it.

**Amanda Walker**

And I think one of the things that will attract more people back here is the lifestyle here. And I think certainly my eldest daughter went off to university was never ever going to come back to the Isle of Man, she came to do a gap year before she went to do her masters in Australia, and she's been here ever since. And I have two grandchildren so who live here, and my middle daughter came back for a year to work after she went to university so I think there are opportunities here. I think one of the most import things is to actually support and develop our creative industries here because I think and the nighttime economy, because I think both of those things make it an attractive place to live and work with things to do for young people and attractive things for them to do.

And I think it's absolutely ridiculous that we've got the so-called arts sector down at the end of the prom where they closed down the sale gallery and they're going to turn it into yet restaurant, so the arts sector basically consists of the Gaiety Theatre complex, and we we've lost a gallery. There's a lot of people who are very interested in art, particularly younger people things like digital art and Peter mentioned the fashion industry. All of those things we have hugely talented people here. UCM produces an awful lot of people who go to top quality universities. Places like the London School of Fashion, those people there's no reason why people like Thea Bregazzi couldn't be based on the island and do her international licenses.

**Joney Faragher**

Yeah, well first of all I think this is absolutely tied up with affordability issues. So, like the housing issue that we were talking about earlier, but it isn't just that, it's about quality of life as well and I think that we if we put in strong social policies and strong family policies, we will be attracting young people back here to actually have their families. So Universal Day care for example puts more people into the work loss means more taxes are paid that stimulates our economy that way. But it also supports families, and it also puts those strong social values in there and improved access to lifelong education means that people can upgrade their skills, grow more productive and resilient to economic change. Again, you're stimulating the economy, but you're also putting those strong social policies in there that will actually improve lives. So, I think the strong set of policies that I have in my manifesto will actually impact upon the quality of life over here as well.

**Andy Wint**

OK, thank you - now we're talking in Douglas East tonight, I’m joined by Clare Barber, Joney Faragher, Peter Gilmour, Michael Josem, Jon Joughin, Christine Urquhart and Amanda Walker before the general election, we've heard them. Now let's go to the audience and we got.

**Beth Epsey**

Well Andy, we do have a section on the Manx radio election website called ‘I Wish you'd asked’ and lots of people have sent through questions and we're going to take some of those now, so this is a question from Michael, who says:

Please can you ask the candidates what they feel can be done about the departments of government that have become bloated with management structures and unyielding to the wishes of not only the public but also the MHKs who are supposed to head them?

**Christine Urquhart**

I want to call middle management; middle management is a nightmare. It's costing us too much money. We've seen the report come out last week, 42% of gross expenditure is on salary and a lot of that is management it. It needs it needs. I want to see a full audit across government.

**Clare Barber**

Yeah, I mean it's an area that I've been frustrated with. Having been in The House Keys the last five years. We see blockages appearing to happen where there is an excessive level of structures and I give an example where there was an opportunity to bring a number of other religions to come into the hospital and people have no religion, the humanists to come in and offer services to people when they were bereaved and we went through about 7 different management tiers to actually try and get an outcome on something that was simply adding a few more phone numbers to a leaflet and that for me highlighted the challenges we have it we have to reduce that and that has to be across all governments. But we also need to remove the silo working if we can start to see the zero-based budgeting, but working on a topic rather than on structured departments, I think we will start to see the change that has to happen.

**Michael Josem**

The big problem that we have here with that our government is there's no accountability. So that means then subjects go over budget, there was no accountability for the leadership and so, for example, Bus Vannin. And for the last three years running has had significant budget blowouts of over 100 many hundreds of thousands of pounds over budget and no one has been held accountable, so we've got to start putting some skin in the game from the leaders of the budget blowout from Bus Vannin last year during the pandemic. When many buses were operating, reduced service would be enough money to pay to end holiday hunger on the Isle of Man and to pay food vouchers for the families who are receiving free school meals on the holidays. And that's a sort of reform to have skin in the game so that senior government officials are held directable and they feel the pain because many of the taxpayers.

**Andy Wint**

OK. Let's go to Covid-19, and the question now that just says, 'If you'd been Chief Minister during the Covid crisis, what would you have done differently?

**Joney Faragher**

Well, the first thing I absolutely would have done was initiate a scientific team in order to take their responses from those, and I would have closely followed the science, that is exactly what I want to do, and I work very closely followed the science.

**Amanda Walker**

I would have also been science-led, but there are two key things I would have done very differently. Number one I would not have opened the borders before the UK relaxation occurred. I think that was a serious error of judgement and number two. I would have had the teachers vaccinated. I worked in social care. And I was double vaccinated by mid-February I was working with one child at a time. My colleagues in education were working with 30 children in primary schools. Very often 30 children whose noses they had to wipe, and they haven't been vaccinated at all.

**Jon Joughin**

Well, I think they did a remarkably good job and covered myself. I think perhaps the only bit that they got possibly wrong was the bit after Christmas where we had the students come back and the little steam packets fiasco, but we had the little bit of Steam Packet work, but I think remarkably compared to the rest of the UK, I think they did remarkably well and should be praised for what they did.

 **Michael Josem**

I think it's all very well for candidates here to be Harry hindsight and to retrospectively say what they would have done. So, we've got, I think look at what we what we said and what candidates said at the time and so. In February 2020. You know, I disagreed very strongly with the government's policy of only quarantining people who had symptoms returning from affected areas and unfortunately it seems that subsequently, how the how the disease will in in in November and December last year, I called for scientific investigation and to prioritise the vaccination of people who are more likely to contract Covid. Unfortunately, the government refused to listen to the science, so that's really disappointing. But I think what we've got to do is really look at. What people said and did at the time.

**Christine Urquhart**

I would have listened. I would have listened to what people were saying around me I would have paid attention to everybody, concerns or want to listen to the doctors, because what happened between New Year and February and the schools catching it? And they still wouldn't close us down and I think there was a lot of ignorance and a lot of arrogance. And I wouldn't have been that person.

**Peter Gilmour**

I think a lot of people wouldn't like to attack the government on it, but they could have done things better to keep people safe. The first major problem was not this year, and then she was saying we've got 2000 people coming to the island in December, and she advised that they got checked that tested again before release, that lead to large wave in January, and then we were assured that the key workers in the Steam Packet were being tested, the government thought they were, and that ended up in the next wave and then a lot of people thought don't open the borders to the schools close or bring the schools closed date forward. They didn't. We ended up with another wave and the schools go back this week. I think they haven't done enough to give information to the teachers, so I'm expecting a small wave over the next two weeks because of that.

**Clare Barber**

There’s been areas where I had spoken out very strongly. In fact, in terms of my frustrations with the handling of Covid and on the broader piece, I think that there has been some really positive action I've been comfortable with some of the decisions. One of the biggest concerns I had was the late closure of the boarders and also the fact that we left people out of the island and we really made it impossible for them to come home.

People who were stranded in the likes of New Zealand people who had no money left. They had no ability to earn, they had no ability to get sick pay. They couldn't afford accommodation or food, but they couldn't get back to the UK because but until they got to the UK. They couldn't get in the ballot to come back to the island. They were absolutely left an impossible situation, and some of the emails I had during that time were absolutely harrowing. And they have stuck with me, and we really should have listened.

**Michael Josem**

Clare Barber’s service during the pandemic was really impressive, donning the PPE gear she really deserves to be congratulated for that, it's really impressive.

**Andy Wint**

OK, just a few notes in. There are 900 new houses allocated in the Eastern plan of which 225 will hopefully be allocated to first time buyers. They say we've done housing so far. I want to come on to another question I had and that is regarding antisocial behaviour around Douglas and what can be done to that, so let's broaden that out to law and order.

**Jon Joughin**

I mean that they have to be much stricter, the police. I've seen them working on a Friday night, some of the young people have got no respect for the police whatsoever, and I'm afraid respect is earned and not a given here. So, you have to go out and only respect the police, they have to go out and enforce the law. I mean it is antisocial behaviour getting worse around Douglas, yes, I did. I've driven a taxi for my brother a couple of Saturday nights and it's pretty horrendous. I had no idea it was that bad in Douglas.

**Andy Wint**

So, what should the police be doing? Well, they need to meet their presence, be stronger, put some rules down. They need to come up with a much stronger force.

**Joney Faragher**

Yeah, I mean, I do agree that we could do with more bobbies on the beat, just generally across the island, but I actually think that more of a carrot and stick approach is needed rather than just being all stick. We have lost quite a lot of our youth facilities across Douglas. There aren't any areas that are dedicated for teenagers whatsoever. We used to have use facilities like the machine across Douglas, but that's gone, and we really do need to be putting in things for these young people. They can't use parks. They're not allowed to. They don't have the money to use the facilities that are aimed at adults, so we actually do need to be putting in facilities for them so that so that we can. Actually give them something valuable and productive to do with their time.

**Amanda Walker**

And I think there's there is an issue with under social behaviour, but I think it's so it's a matter of simply breakdown with our new champion, and I think that a big part of that is the cultural landscape that they live in. And I think we have very much lost the war on drugs. I think it's become a thing that is seen as socially acceptable, and I think because they've been underfunding abuse services, proper positive things going to be doing don't occur and don't attract young people, and so I think we've actually got to have a major look at the way we treat our young people.

I think an awful lot of the issue with drugs. These young people are self-medicating because they can't get access to the mental health services that they need. And then we criminalise them. And we've also got an issue with them, people off Ireland seeing the Isle of Man as a honeypot for them to bring their drugs over to, particularly during the Covid crisis because they saw it as a very lucrative market, and we've got a major problem with that. More police being thrown at it won't necessarily solve it.

**Clare Barber**

We have to increase the number on the streets, which is something I've absolutely supported within Home Affairs, but there is more to do and I don't want to see us, though looking to criminalise our young people and our and those people who may commit antisocial behaviour, I'd like to see far more of what the police do actually, which is working with them educating and encouraging, but looking at the provision that is missing to make sure that those young people have somewhere to go and an interesting thing someone told me just the other week. Actually a 17-year-old in Douglas East who couldn't go out with her young friends to most restaurants in Douglas wouldn't let them come without an adult with them because of licencing, despite the fact they weren't drinking. And actually, if you can't go to those places where you want to sit and have a coffee or have a pizza with your friends, where do you go? And the reality is, we all want to go somewhere that isn't our parents home. I've been there, you know, and I'm sure my kids. Will be there at some point and I want to know that there is somewhere for them to go and.

**Andy Wint**

But this is public order in his public order, is antisocial behaviour getting worse in Douglas?

**Clare Barber**

So I think that there has been antisocial behaviour in Douglas. I think in Onchan’s there been quite well of well publicised issues with antisocial behaviour, but where there are groups of young people who gather together, it can be intimidating even if they're not actually committing offences. But we've seen windows smashed on the Villa Marina. There have been incidences that I've spoken directly with the police around, and there are people who live in certain areas around the centre who have felt incredibly scared because they've had their rear staircases rattled. People banging at the windows, you know that's incredibly intimidating for someone my age, let alone someone who may be in their 60s, seventies, even their 80s and feeling very much under threat.

**Michael Josem**

I'm a firm believer that prevention is better than cure and that by the time we get to policing these things, it's that's too late. And So what we really need to do is we need to get back into a mindset where our children are producing rather than consuming and producing in many different ways. The most obvious ways are in through art through part time work through, encouraging young people to get involved in sports, so I get up at 9:00 AM every Sunday morning to referee junior netball. Not because I particularly like getting up at 9:00 AM on a Sunday morning, but it's really important for us as community leaders to do the hard work. You know whether it be with hockey or football or gymnastics or whatever. Those sort of endeavours are really important to build a healthy culture of production and that doesn't just sport, but it's also worked out. It's in faith and other interest groups OK.

**Peter Gilmore.**

I'd agree a lot. I go with client what Claire said. I've heard a lot of the same on the doorstep. The vast majority of our youngsters are, well, very well behaved, is usually just a minority, and it's the usual suspects. And it's not just the usual suspects, it's the usual suspects parents. So I think sometimes the police need to do a little bit more talking about to those guys, but also this antisocial behaviour sometimes is a sign of something else going wrong, so you know we need to join this altered our mental health provision as well just to make sure that for part we're identifying youngsters with problems.

**Christine Urquhart**

I agree with Claire again. You know our children turn 18 and then all of a sudden, they're allowed to go out drinking and dancing and nobody really educated them because they've always been with their parents. They should be allowed into these premises from the age of 16. If they're not drinking alcohol, to educate themselves about and make themselves aware of how people behave.

**Andy Wint**

OK, mental health now. We've had some questions in regarding the mental health services and long waiting lists for mental health on the Isle of Man.

**Joney Faragher**

Mental health I would say is in crisis right now, which is shown by our suicide rates and we do use suicide rates as the tracker. The key tracker of our mental health policy. Yeah, absolutely I do. I do work in this area and the waiting lists are astronomical, people are already in crisis when they contact the mental health services and then they're told that they have to wait another 18 months. Two years sometimes, especially for children and

adolescent mental health services. And so, how do we? How do we address that? Firstly, global research indicates to us that the key feature of a successful mental health service is funding. So, we do actually face some fundamental questions about how we view mental health. It has never been seen as important as physical health. And in my opinion that needs to change, and so let's just say that we have the funding in place, and we will then have a team of fully trained professionals who actually work out in the Community. At the moment we work the inverse way around where people who are not feeling mentally in in a good place have to actually attend institutions or buildings that might be intimidating how to access public and transports that might be overwhelming for them to actually navigate, so we need to invert that situation, so we have community based mental health.

And then we also need an affiliated prevention and postvention service for suicide suicides, suicide is actually seen as being contagious. So therefore, we need to identify the individuals around. Somebody who has died by suicide identify how they're how they're vulnerable, and put the appropriate support in place.

**Clare Barber**

We need to normalise mental health in the same way we have talking about physical health, we need to understand that we all have mental health needs and we will have times when we learn and we have times when we're feeling more comfortable with ourselves. But we need to be able to talk about that, and a big piece for me is around talking or we also have a longer term piece because there are people where we have, we've not managed to get them when they're at the lower level. One level two stages have been supported with mental health, and they do now have more complex needs within mental health and we need to make sure that that is something that is provided for. We've sorted out contacts now with the UK to make sure that we have beds available for people. That was something that before was done in an ad hoc basis and meant there was long waiting lists, but we need to make sure we're addressing this at every level, and we need to really focus on the child and adolescent mental health needs waiting list is far too long.

**Andy Wint**

Now you’ve been in in the health service for a long time now, has this suddenly exploded or is it just a matter of people becoming more aware of it?

**Clare Barber**

I think there has been an element of people becoming more aware, but we have seen the waiting lists increasingly grow. We also see that mental health services end up picking up other complex needs. And as Christine talked about before, there are people where there's a big crossover where they may have mental health needs. There's almost also maybe social care needs, and then there may be a criminality of you, know that's. Also resulting, we need to be able to look at holistic care for people, but I'd actually like to see mental health and physical health and life support as part of the structure of our basic core curriculum and our public. You know, in our PSHE lessons in school.

**Peter Gilmore**

I think I think most of us feel the same about that, the issue of mental health and well, what I'd like to add is, I'm glad to see that Manx Care we starting to get a grip of it they started to advertise well. This isn't just an island man problem, this is an Ironman UK America. Various parts of the world problem. So this problem has been building up for several years, so my main concern is that we join up the systems so that our mental health, healthcare professionals working a joined up way.

**Andy Wint**

 The Isle of Man, we are an affluent island. Do you think it's something you should be able to solve?

**Peter Gilmore**

Well, one of the major problems is recruitment. We're gonna have a lot of difficulty. The UK are trying to recruit lots of mental health professionals and clients always, except if we're gonna find that very difficult. It's quite a tough, stressful job to do so. So I'm, you know. Obviously, we need to hope that we can get the people, but I also think maybe we need to maybe train a lot more local junior counsel. I mean, I spent time on some for the Samaritans years ago. You know, we we've had a bit of a tragedy in our family extended family with this lately, but I I think making sure the systems are joined up, that's what's needed.

**Christine Urquhart**

And mental health – Manx solutions for Manx problems? Isn't that what our Chief Minister kept saying throughout Covid so we can talk about the global issues? We could talk about the UK issues, but we need to concentrate on the Manx issues I want to see mental health workers in every GP surgery. Take the pressure off the GPs to cut down referral times to cut down waiting lists and we need to stop being ignorant. There's not, and I don't know a person who gets the age of 40 who hasn't suffered some kind of trauma. We need to stop ignoring that fact. We need to, like Claire said again, we need to constantly put more into children mental health because so much trauma happens there and we get to the crux of that and help the children. We won't have to deal with the adverse childhood effects which is the aces as they get older, which is what has cost in our health system so much money now.

**Andy Wint**

And do you think it's something we should? The government should be putting more money into.

**Christine Urquhart**

Absolutely 100%. We need a rehabilitation centre. Manannan courts fabulous, but that's pretty cute. What about those who work go from an acute stage and there's nowhere in between before they get put back into the community. We need. We need a rehabilitation centre as a step down and for those who want to self refer but not as cute for Manannan court. And I think that needs that governments been, I would say ignoring it and or pushing this issue aside, the times come now that they no longer gets pushed aside.

**Andy Wint**

OK, I just want a quick 10 second answer from everybody. Then we're going to go to the minute summing up and it concerns Douglas, and I want you to tell me whether you think Douglas is attractive as a town.

**Joney Faragher**

It's not as attractive at the moment as it used to be. It it needs to. It needs to off its gate. We do need to up our game, it can be. It's got so much potential.

**Jon Joughin**

Douglas he still got it and they were loading handling hot fix up a month ago, there’s a will for business to come back into the town centre and when the promenade has finished, I think it's gonna be the gateway to the Isle of Man. OK, Michael Joseph.

**Michael Josem**

I think it's at the moment it's physically unattractive, and when we have the Ward St and Parade St and Fort St and Regent St and North St, looks like a bomb site, but I think it is emotionally and intellectually attractive in that there's a really powerful community and sense of community now in Douglas and we can build on that.

**Clare Barber**

(first part of answer cut off my internal error) We've got some beautiful places around the quayside Victoria Street where we really had a focus actually on bringing the community into Douglas. And that's absolutely what we should focus on.

**Peter Gilmour**

Yeah, in a lot of ways, Douglas hasn't changed since I got the boat to go into the Air Force four years ago, but there are subtle changes happening.

**Andy Wint**

Is it attractive?

**Peter Gilmour**

Not to enough.

**Christine Urquhart**

I'm going to apologise again. I cannot hear you, Andy.

**Andy Wint**

It's Douglas attractive as a place look, does it looked nice?

**Christine Urquhart**

It is as a capital, it doesn't look nice. Now you come in have you seen the view from the boat?

**Amanda Walker**

Liverpool had its three graces, Douglas currently has multiple disgraces and it needs to really get sorted out and I think we need people who are going to be positive and proactive and encourage small startups. Small businesses, which is what the Manx spirit’s all been about.

**Andy Wint**

OK, each candidate will now have one minute to tell you why they should be an MHK for Douglas East.

**Christine Urquhart**

Why should I be an MHK? Because I will offer you the transparency that you seek. I will be honest. I will be your questions. Your queries in there I am not self serving, I've got no self interest. My interest is in you and so yeah, that's why you need to vote for me because you will get an honest as honest politician.

**Peter Gilmour**

Yeah, my background nine years in the Air Force, I consider myself a person of integrity and honesty. I'm very experienced in business, finance and technology. I think the key to growth in the Isle of Man we need to be as clever as we were in the 80s, now to start designing a green economy and a digital economy and move lots of jobs into that. I think we need to prioritise the needs of your workers in terms of housing diversifications and skills. Working full time working full time in the digital economy. I'm a candidate that knows how to do that.

**Clare Barber**

Thank you Andy so you know, I see myself first and foremost as a mum, a wife, a nurse and a Douglas resident and I see that those things are what empowers me to be able to accurately and positively represent the people of Douglas East over the last five years. I believe I'm someone who I hope my record speaks for myself. I've had, you know, some really heartwarming feedback both on the doorstep, by email and in letters that make me realise why it's so important we have representatives who listen. Who understand who take the time to really almost walk that journey with the people who are struggling, because when you're at those darkest and most difficult times, you need someone who will take that burden with you, but then to empower and to really try and achieve the change that we all want to see. So I hope I might get your support for another five years to serve as MHK for Douglas East, thank you.

**Michael Josem**

Thanks Andy. Michael Josem deserves your vote because our community plan is based on several core principles. First of all, input improving government services by holding senior government officials accountable, easing the squeeze on the cost of living, especially by fixing our housing crisis and recovering from Covid-19 by addressing the health and economic challenges caused by lockdowns. I'd encourage everyone to have a look at the website online at michaeljosem.com for more details on these policies more than the policies. However, what I think is really important is that many people talk a lot. But what we really need is action now, and so that's why while other people talk about the climate emergency, I ride my bike around town to reduce the strain on parking and the environment while other people talk about the mental health crisis, I took the training as a mental health first aider to ensure that there is support for members of our community. When people talk about poverty, I helped out by

by volunteering for the Isle of Man Food Bank to ensure that people in need have support when they need it.

**Jon Joughin**

Thank you Andy. I think the clock stopped anyway. I think what we're going to need in the next government certainly is experienced politicians. We're going to have a. We've got 4 left already from this Parliament, we're probably going to get another two or three on top of that, so you're definitely going to need experienced politicians. I’ve been a politician for over 9 years so I'm well experienced some well experienced in East Douglas. I've lived here for 30 years, so I'd like to use that experience to represent the people of East Douglas. But most of all, I'm a committed politician and more of a pragmatic politician. I am not going to be a politician that sits on the backbench criticising government. I want to join government. I want to be a part of government. I want to build something in government. I want to build something for the Isle of Man if they're gonna put me in that apt. I wanna build a bridge. I want to build a school. I wanna make this island a better place to live in and that's why you should vote for Jon Joughin.

**Amanda Walker**

Right, the reason why I'm standing is because I've lived in Douglas East for over 20 years. I'm a local person. I walk the streets every single day with my little dog Nico. I'm an extremely approachable and positive person. I've got a degree in political science, and I have got 36 years' experience of teaching. I've worked with young people extensively. I have a real desire to make a difference and to make a change

and I think that the Isle of Man is an absolutely fantastic place to live. I have absolutely no intention of leaving the island. However, I do find it a very expensive place to live and I would like to do things to improve things for ordinary working families. I also think that we've got a. We had a government previous administration that adopted a very adversarial approach towards our teaching profession and I think that's one of the things that I could really help to improve because I have got 36 years teaching experience. I think there are major problems with the health service that needs to be addressed. I'm hoping that Max care will go a long way to do that. One of the main reasons why I think you should vote for me is because I'm actually a Douglas East resident.

**Andy Wint**

OK, and finally Joney Faragher standing for Max Labour. Of course. OK, you have one minute.

**Joney Faragher**

Thank you and so all the things that we've been talking about tonight about also in our kids' futures. I understand that I've experienced that. I understand the kinds of issues you want to hear us talking about. You want to hear whether or not your kids will ever own a home, and that's a big part of my agenda. You want to hear how the financial squeeze on you can be reduced. So for many people their income might not have changed. But they'll definitely have noticed that the cost of living has increased. We want our kids to have a great education. As I've mentioned, education is a key to solving inequality, it's a big priority for me. We want to hear how we can address the climate crisis without it being too costly for us and we want to understand how it will actually help us and make our lives better. My core ethos is that strong social policies make strong families. Living wages, affordable housing, strong employment rights, economic opportunity mean that families are able to thrive. Please take this opportunity to make it clear that we want things done differently and we want a fresh approach.

**Andy Wint**

OK, thank you. I must say Joney Faragher is standing on behalf of Manx Labour and Michael Josem is standing on behalf of Liberal Vannin, all the other candidates that you heard tonight, are standing as independents.

**Andy Wint**

Now tonight you've heard the candidates. If you live in Douglas East, this is not the final word. Of course, you can go to maxradio.com. You can find the detail of all the candidates and I would urge you to speak to them to chat to them, and if they come knocking on your door to invite them in for a cup of tea and talk to them, they're here to listen to you. This, by the way, the Manx radio candidate debates are just a small part of our election coverage. If you go to maxradio.com, there's information for voters we’ve

got translations in Manx, Russian German, Portuguese, Ukrainian, Chinese, Afrikaans, Greek, Hungarian and Polish. There are videos from all the candidates. There are also podcasts from all the candidates, 20 minutes sometimes as well. There are coronavirus contingency plans, and there's a general election calendar as well so you can see who's standing. You can see what they stand and you can see when you can vote now.

Tonight we've been at Jack's bar and Smokehouse. You probably heard that in Douglas the old Granville Hotel on Douglas Promenade tomorrow night will be at UCM Homefield Rd campus for Douglas North, and then on Wednesday will be at the Pinewood in Pulrose for Douglas South. On Thursday at the Shore Hotel in Laxey for the constituency of Garth and then a week on Friday will at Peel gold club for Peel and Glenfeba. Well, I want to thank you ladies and gentlemen, for your attention tonight. Thank you very much for being with us and thanks to everyone here at Jacks. I want to thank Andy Gibbs for all his help for putting us up at Jacks tonight. Thanks to the big team behind us all. Thanks to Beth Espehy. And to Matty Cunningham and to Alex Brindley, and to Andrew Beasley as well. I’m Andy Wint, and tonight we've been at Jack's bar and steakhouse, ladies and gentlemen.