

Ramsey Constituency Debate

Transcript

Andy Wint

Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm Wint and we're live tonight in Rasmey. Ramsey is a town in the northeast of the Isle of Man, bordered by Garff to the southeast, and Ayre and Michael to the north, west and southwest. The town is sometimes referred to as 'Royal Ramsey', following the visit of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in 1847, which led to the construction of the landmark Albert Tower, after His Royal Highness climbed to the top of the hill overlooking the town and the northern plain – we're live tonight at the Mitre. Now prior to the dissolution of the House of Keys on the 12th of August, the MHKs Dr Alex Allinson and Lawrie Hooper. Tonight, we have, Dr Alex Allinson, Robert Cowell, Lawrie Hooper, Jonathan Kinrade, Simon Mann, Luke Parker, Leonard Singer and Erica Spencer. Just a quick mentioned by the way there was what they used to call a requisition meeting on the 9th of September, there's now an additional one which is on Monday the 20th at the Westhall at RGS - just an extra what they used to call well there's now a pre-election meeting was a requisition meeting. So first amongst the candidates now, I want to go to Lawrie Hooper - there was a stabbing in Ramsey, what is the situation regarding anti-social behaviour in Ramsey?

Lawrie Hooper

It's a tricky one I think Andy. The Isle of Man we know has problems that we've seen that I think in the last couple of months really. I think to my mind it comes down to a lack of social care like a social support like availability of some of the services, which means people often in getting a little bit left behind. I think which then obviously produces itself in behaviours like we do unfortunately see on our streets.

Jonathan Kinrade

Lack of social care and lack of community policing possibly as well I know a lot of people like to see bobbies on the beat and that sort of thing. Education difficult to cover it within educational say really social care and catching these issues at an early age identifying them and the right people in place to try and sort them out.

Simon Mann

First, our thoughts and prayers goes out to the two families involved in that incident one was a police officer and one was a member of our community, my understanding is. You've got to look at all these incidents as with the facts as they occur they're all slightly different but it certainly is a sign of a deteriorating state in our town. It has to be seriously addressed. It's certainly worse I go back to 1976, many people in Ramsey will be aware of the often that the large fights and selling used to cone up in our pubs. They were mainly drink related in

those days but I'm afraid today some of the more serious instances we're seeing are directly related to abuse of drugs. I'm not saying this particular incident was because we don't know the facts.

Robert Cowell

Thank you very much for me this is an exceptionally rare event within Ramsey I think we're very lucky to have a very good safe town. Obviously the policing in our town maybe this opportunity for more in Ramsey social care where required for me I think we have 99.9% of our citizens of Ramsey are good law abiding people and we can't tell the whole town with an exceptionally rare situation.

Dr Alex Allinson

This is a very rare situation Ramsey has got a great community spirit is a safe town to live in but as the chief constable said in his recent report there has been a rise in violent crime related to the pandemic related to lockdown and also related to drugs. What we need is to emphasise the community policing that's really taking place but also for the community to get behind that and work together to make sure this never happens against.

Luke Parker

Domestic abuse is on the rise with mental health issues were under roads and wanted keeping such government needs to do is support government areas as well as charities and organisations are currently on island, and financially support them given the resources that they require to prevent this further.

Leonard Singer

I think which is very regrettable very upsetting. It's unfortunate it's happening I think a lot of it is due possibly to young people particularly after school doesn't there's nobody actually who looks after them. They are left on their own the roads there's a lot of drug there is a trick problem on the island. There's no doubt that youngsters from 9/10/11 are groomed for drugs and they take drugs alcohol I think is still part of it I think the police have gotten can take it was so more police on the street I think that would also help.

Erica Spencer

I think this is born out of a lack of social opportunities and a lack of support for people you're experiencing problems whether they be mental problems or problems of a more personal nature. I think that there's very little opportunity for those people to engage into society, which causes frustration. There could be more police on the streets of Ramsey, and I know that the police are quite sort of strapped really for police officers. Obviously with the limited number of officers that we have across the island, the police may be called out and each case that takes bobbies off the beat.

Andy Wint

Is there enough for young people to do in Ramsey?

Erica Spencer

No definitely not in my opinion. There's no after school clubs or there's very few, there's not a lot for people to get involved in young people after school is as Leonard has just said - during the weekends and things, specially during the winter there is very little for young people to do. And little opportunity for them to meet up.

Leonard Singer

The problem is that the youth clubs as I understand it are open for join the term time but out of term time there's no youth clubs. I think if it's very good for children on the island, if their sporty cause there's plenty to do and for sporty but if they're not sporty then they will tend to where did they go so there would be on the corner of the street. We've got to do something and also the police knew the incentive now for the police neighbourhood policing I should say hopefully that will be able to help

Lawrie Hooper

It's an interesting one so will not be talking to people on the doorstep the issues that have come up around more stuff to do in Ramsey I mean quite very that one of them was someone suggested expanding the skate park to provide more facility down there there's also been a lot of talk about whether we can make better use of school facilities because those facilities we have in Ramsey actually are pretty fantastic if I'm honest. Then a lot of people have been talking as well about the younger right at the younger end actually is there enough in town indoors for 2,4,6-year-olds to do and these are all really a valid questions to ask the question I always ask back is well actually is it government strove to provide these kind of services? Or is that really something the commissioners can help with

Andy Wint

Well there used to be a nightclub, bar loco has closed now, how much is there for people for young people to do in Ramsey or do they have to go to Douglas?

Jonathan Kinrade

It is an issue that will be nice to see more bars and facilities and entertainment complex is all those sort of things do have course bear in mind the size of the population of the town, what's commercially viable. That's key part of my manifesto is going to encourage more people back at the time then these there's more reason for these places to open up

Robert Cowell

For young people are you talking about facilities for playgrounds and BMX tracks in the park and we've quickly turned our focus is to night clubs and bars and what have you. My thing

with nightlife is if you put it's down to individual businesses the business market should see as an opportunity to make some money and say you know what will put in my colon Lam Z but I think if you try to do that you have serious opposition from the police force. So on one side you don't want a night club because it's going to cause any social behaviour and the other side of the coin we've got antisocial behaviour, not having enough police and round in a circle well you know we have to start providing more police potentially and be more open to new business in the town. Whether that's night clubs or bars or have you.

Dr Alex Allinson

Yeah I mean we do have a club just downstairs from us but you speed scooter bars reopened and is doing functions we've got quite a lot in Ramsey both in terms of the provision from the commissioners government and the private sector as well. What we need to do is engage those young people who aren't taking part in sports while taking part in the youth activities and ask them why and try to make sure that they are not left behind.

Andy Wint

Okay, it didn't take as long to come to the M word the end word is Marina - Simon Mann what's your opinion?

Simon Mann

Yes well I have been against that scheme from 2019 it had crazy written all over it then it still got crazy written all over it and you know it. Ramsey isn't against investment it's not against having some improvement for the sailing and cruising fraternity. But when you're talking of actually what will ultimately be selling the public beach to provide expensive housing for a limited number of people, I'm afraid that is something that's a step too far. We've got marinas around the island and other places and there's room for further marinas but just not that particular scheme and not in Ramsey.

Erica Spencer

Am I for the Marina or against it? On South Beach most certainly against it for a large number of reasons. One option that the people of Ramsey have been talking about is in the old part of the harbour on the way to the park. But instead of justice having a Marina where people will come and leave their super yachts and then go home something where we can have more freshwater activities, where we can have huts and people can come and hire boards and maybe do scuba diving and things like that which will bring more people from around the island to Ramsey. It will provide more opportunities for young people that we've just been talking about and for the people of Ramsey.

Leonard Singer

Well I was the first person Andy to when this came re-emerged there is no opposition to it at all or image case didn't stand up and say we oppose it I was the first one to stand up and say I will I will stand for election and I am totally opposed to the use of that public it's a

public beaches in a public beach for generations. To think these people can come along and take our public beach is wrong. I'm not waiting for any feasibility studies or waiting to see whether they comply with conditions or not. I'm just saying no I oppose the Marina proposed because it would destroy everything that Ramsey means, if I'm elected I will take this item to Tynwald at the earliest opportunity and I will ask Tynwald to oppose any support opposition to any building or anything on this beach. It's a to public beach and it should stay a publicly.

Luke Parker

Obviously the Marina being built in the South Beach I am opposed to it there's many reasons not just looking wise but just commercially viable and things as you already mentioned about a marine isn't generally Ramsey while that sounds great and I think it would add an attraction somewhat to empty is it financially viable? A big part of mi is no well it becomes a very nice boat park we as government and also as local authorities have to really look into this very carefully it has to be commercially viable, self sustaining financially. It doesn't need to be a derelict boat park and then loan behold well from the boat at a park there paying for it ends up as us taxpayers paying for people to park their boats or people not even park in the boats because of reforms to expensive.

Dr Alex Allinson

I mean when this first came about three years ago now I've always said I only in favour of Marina within the harbour area and I'm also in favour of people investing in Ramsey so I kept it very much in open mind. Unfortunately the last three years we've seen nothing develop. So did the people behind the idea of having about a coastal Marina haven't signed any documents with the DOI, Defra have produced lots of environmental concerns about it. In those last three years we've also had the entire Ramsay Bay declared a marine nature reserve as well, so I really don't see how this will ever get off the ground and if they did want to actually advance this. To actually give a lease would have to go before Tynwald, so I think we're arguing about something which I genuinely do not think will happen.

Andy Wint

Why do you think these people have dragged their heels?

Dr Alex Allinson

I think that there are a whole range of reasons I think the people behind the initial concept don't have the necessary financial backing to go forward. They haven't progressed any plans with government but what they have done is caused quite a bit of concern and anxiety amongst the people of Ramsey, which is showing now in this election. I have met with the people behind the Marina concept another asked him to be upfront and honest with the people of Ramsey in terms of their future intentions and I hope they will.

Robert Cowell

For me we are have for me kind of missing the point in some ways the marine leisure industry across the UK is a multi million pound business and we need to be tapping into that there's no debate in my opinion that Marina does redeveloper town so we've seen Peel, Peel has worked Douglas quayside very nice too it has worked. OK so Ramsey needs redevelopment so for me I fully support a Marina in the inner harbour the government owned the land I think from swimming pool to approach road, so we got the land there to do something with. Perfect. And it would be developed town and importantly for me from a tourism point of view it would bridge the gap between the town and the park, where currently tourist get last.

Lawrie Hooper

I think I Marina in and of itself probably isn't what we're looking for in Ramsey were looking for I think is an inner harbour regeneration to help lift up the whole quayside, the whole area, the whole place that that's rubbish just talked about. In terms of will there be anything on the South Beach the answer there is absolutely no it can't be. Not just because I think the people around zero post it because it isn't a designated a it's got legal protection it's got planning protection. In order for anything can be built on that piece of land government would have to throw out its strategic plan its climate planets biosphere status. It's absolutely madcap idea and I think anyone who is propagating the idea that it even has legs even has the potential of happening is being a little bit misleading.

Jonathan Kinrade

Agree with that pause being said there is in my mind no way on earth we we've used the phrase public beach it is a public beach when's the last time somebody was allowed to build on a public beach? It simply can't be allowed to happen it wouldn't be allowed to happen especially on a marine nature reserve investment into the town the quayside the harbour and some sort of interface to the freshwater activities will see water activities in the lake in the lake, I'd be absolutely on board with this.

Andy Wint

Ramsey needs a lift, how much of a lift and how to do it?

Jonathan Kinrade

I think you could start with the basics and justice the very simple basics, bit of tidying up. It might not be a very popular opinion I'd say it looks a bit tired at the moment and could do with a bit so who's going to leave those that government businesses opportunity combination of the two. The job to do this, it is a bit of government in conjunction with the commissioners who then work with the residents get the residents on board and support and was trying to be done and local business and business that on already in Ramsey get them on board and give them a reason to come up here and investigate opening up.

Dr Alex Allinson

I mean in terms of Ramsey I don't think it's tired it needs some improvement absolutely anytime needs some improvement any town needs to revitalise itself. What we have in Ramsey is a really coherent community. We also have some excellent commissioners who have gone out of their way to do things like a skate park the Mooragh Park, the wet play area that's there all of them are bringing people into the town what we need to do is build that collaboration between central government, who often have the money, local government who know what the people need and private enterprise so we can work together for the good of the people of Ramsey.

Robert Cowell

Exactly that sort of cohesion so local government central government need to work together. Is Ramsey tired? I think in places runs is falling down you know I think it's a disgrace how bad the state the town. A few years ago we had the generation of the street and the courthouse area and funds were put aside and spent but there's no ongoing fund so you can spend your money and make the place great but there's not the upkeep and the maintenance money. We need to be continually investing in the town all the time not just once in a blue moon not about...

Andy Wint

What about the owners of derelict properties?

Robert Cowell

Agreed, it's a very difficult situation where if someone doesn't want to do something how can you force their hand? But it's getting to the point where slates fell off a roof or, bits of masonry for building and clatter car and thankfully it was a car not a human being. We're getting to the stage now we might have to say you need to improve your building if you don't do it will do it and then you'll be charged. Compulsory purchase it renovated and so on the private market.

Lawrie Hooper

I think part of it does come down to that question of how you force improvements and actually the Commission has already happened legal powers to do that so the question back my mind is why the commissioners aren't doing that more often? So Rob also mentioned there's no funding available there is regeneration funding still available in the pot - again but you need someone there to grab that and spend it whether it's local businesses or whether it's the commissioners. The thing from the government can and should be doing to support businesses and to support Ramsey in terms of regeneration is actually building that critical mass in town. So, getting more government workers in town supporting more businesses opening in town. Supporting more events happening in town.

Erica Spencer

I agree that Ramsey town needs a lot more money spending on it but I don't think Ramsey community is sleepy or tired at all. I think it's a very vibrant community, a very frustrated community that we are seeing buildings that are falling down. Many brownfield sites where we've had promise of redevelopment and this just hasn't happened. I think what Ramsey needs, it needs rejuvenation but needs the right kind of rejuvenation. Can I just say I know we've passed the Marina and clearly we are all against any kind of development on the South Beach, but remember peel is facing millions of pounds every so many years to remove the silt from their Marina, there is no way that the Marina is making any money for the Isle of Man. There's also the problems of what you do with the silt? So we need to be very careful and we need to understand what kind of regeneration is feasible, and a lot of that is going to be born out of the economy, attracting more businesses that people have said.

Simon Mann

Ramsey is in the worst state I've seen it in 40 years and considering tonight we've got two sitting members who been an officer five years we've got ex members and members of the commissioners here. They're looking out on the fruits of their labours. It's a complete mess. Now what Ramsey needs at this stage is a regeneration programme with all the major stakeholders involved, in something similar to the scheme that was first done in Douglas under Douglas 2000 I think it was. Between the major stakeholders in the town you draw up a scheme about to what the people in Ramsey want for their town, not what somebody thinks they can impose on the town, I think actually there's a tremendous spirit in Ramsey there always has been and there's a pride in the town and I think people are walking around this town at the moment and that feeling very upset. I'm upset when I see the state of it I used to patrol this town back in the 70s, and it was a town that was pretty nearly immaculate that were good businesses here and so on and it's a crying shame to see the state it's in. And I'm sorry but you've got people sitting in this room down on this panel who will be in the in the positions have been able to do something about it. It takes guts and tenacity to go out and do something for this town we've got vacant sites here that have sat vacant demolition sites look at the state of the school site over there. Knock down a building and just leave it.

Luke Parker

Following from what Mr Mann said, I actually think that town is gradually under lift were coming out of cover situations unfortunately that will have a negative impact in all businesses. We've had off the key worked on under park itself. I pushed within regeneration area with a wet play area with the housing department commissioners, like Mr Hooper already mentioned commissioners does have powers with derelict buildings and things and. We ourselves would past five years have pushed for encouraging those redevelopment. One key aspect that does hold specially Parliament St back is we are under conservational planning. We are restrained, or the people that owned properties, are financially restrained or governed of what they can also do with those properties. They need to be really looked into haven't been under commissioners for the past five years. We have talked with those conservation officers important fortune post offices keep changing, and they keep changing off working with people and another sudden not working with people. That needs to stop these be coherent across all areas.

Leonard Singer

There's no doubt when you go around the town and you look at the infrastructure particularly roads and the pavements is horrendous - and nothing is being done. It should be done the other thing is that we need government incentives to bring business to Ramsey because businesses that end don't want to particularly want to come north.

Andy Wint

Well I was going to bring this this subject and, we're almost at halfway nurse I'll bring it now in the past that there's been talk of bringing government department to Ramsey, how likely is that? How possible is it?

Simon Mann

This has been locked up for years and the problem is being if you can't really bring a large department here, because there's no buildings that would accommodate them. So it would mean probably building , and we don't want government to go to that expense. You could bring smaller department and sections of departments to work here. But then we did have a very big company that of had had 300 jobs here a private company not long ago, and the everybody said this is fantastic because the people are going to go to really boost the town - but it didn't people maybe went out for sandwich. They came here because it didn't live here so it didn't really boost the town as was expected.

Erica Spencer

Well I learned today that the education department is moving out of Douglas and they're going to move down to St. John's, which is already quite a packed building - and that's a missed opportunity because the education department could very well of move to one of the town's obviously the Ramsey will be number one. But could have moved to one of the towns around the Isle of Man, as Leonard just said even if they only go out at lunchtime and buy a sandwich or go and have somewhere to eat - then at least they're doing that and they see things in the shop they might bring their families back to buy.

Dr Alex Allinson

I've got a vested in fiscal so I was responsible for moving out of Douglas and one of the issues in in Ramsey is the lack of office space at the moment. Also the lack of existing government buildings. We're moving in Saint John's actually is coexist in the existing buildings owned by government. With the experiences we've had we've doing a lot more hot desking and reducing the number of people have to be one building and that's what Ramsey can actually capitalise on. Mr Hooper has been instrumental in terms of having community hub so rather than government departments coming up here, let's have government services coming up here to serve the people of Ramsey. We don't necessarily have to get loads of people in their desks, all we can do is get the services to local people so it's used far more effectively.

Jonathan Kinrade

In this modern world hot desking and people are used to working from home now we don't necessarily need to relocate to a department here we need to possibly have a government premises here that people who live up north, Ramsey, Maughold was can base themselves from there rather than going into Douglas for the day.

Lawrie Hooper

I'm happy everyone's finally caught up to the conversation actually to Tynwald, and produced a report tabled in front of Tynwald that said we actually already doing this so the community hub pilot was phase one of the work which is bringing government services Ramsey, phase two is a hot desking hub. I heard the comment earlier on we need to build somewhere perhaps if this talk often became popular. Absolutely why wouldn't we? If it turns out that this is going to work and we can get 50 – 150 government staff working in Ramsey, living in Ramsey walking to work, ticking a climate change box ticking your active travel box - why wouldn't you do that? If government needs to invest in the town to do that tidying up wanted to give our brownfield sites I'm all for it.

Robert Cowell

Work hubs Covid working from home it's all tosses the modern way in technology is there we don't have to relocate department so we can just say if you live in the north he living around you want to work from Ramsey you crackle you know what we are failing to forget is the town hall was built as a three storey building, effectively in the second floor that building is empty. It's easily convertible into office space for government workers. I think also we need planning reform. Doing things is too hard I'm not going to name names a certain development within the quayside which would have been officers by now if things have been a lot easier for said developer.

Simon Mann

Well the only thing I want to see from government is not there buildings down here necessarily but some sound investment in this town. We've got several thousand taxpayers here and when I look around this town and look for anything particularly new that government has provided for Ramsey in the last five years, the only place that I can see if the Mayfield flats and they were to my knowledge planned well before this this current administration have been in power. So what is Ramsey actually achieved in five years, what is our government for all the tax that's being paid in this town received back? And it's now time we seen some investment in this down South yes will have something from government they can come and spend and invest some money in this town improve the place for the benefit of everybody.

Luke Parker

Key thing is services. There's no point having loads of offices mean the big influx of people whose lovely, but services. I think in return of providing services welcomed in natural attraction to them bring people because you offering services to people under doorstep were often having to go elsewhere is the key thing for that.

Andy Wint

It's now time to get out and about with the microphone, our first question please.

Mrs Craine

I would like to ask, as the candidates could you just look along the row and acknowledge whether there's an issue with women being in politics on the island? What would you do to address this issue if you believe that there is one?

Erica Spencer

I would say the probably owns enough women in politics. As a woman I would like to think that any votes that I get will be on the issues that I stand for rather than on my gender, but in general women are poorly represented in Manx politics. My my answer is bring it on to be honest, I'm as tough and as stronger than and as intelligent as the guys.

Robert Cowell

I think Eric is right she's very right. We live in a modern world you know. I think the fact that we still talk about equal opportunities is horrifying really you know. Anyone can stand I don't you to stand you know, anyone can have a go. The lack of humour representation is poor I don't really know what the answer is other than to encourage females to stand.

Lawrie Hooper

It's definitely an issue but if you look at some of the statistics that you look at the amount of women actually get returned to the house into dimpled roughly in the same proportion to the number of candidates. So it's not that there aren't enough women getting elected is there on and off women standing. There was a small piece of work done into this actually asking the current members of Tynwald why do you think this is one of the issues. One of the things that came up was the into the evening and there was a bit of a disincentive sometimes people that have you know young families which tends to be women rather than men having that childcare responsibility. How you solve it is quite complicated I think part of it could be changing now as a work. Part of it is endorsing party systems like ours and I'll tell you my party reached out to a lot of people had a lot of conversations with potential candidates and overwhelmingly again the majority were men. A lot of women interested in standing but again raising some of these same issues around hours of work and other responsibilities and it's a complicated picture but I think definitely we can do more.

Dr Alex Allinson

I mean in terms of female representation it isn't good enough it's not good enough in terms of the keys is not certainly not good enough in terms of council ministers and if we're going to breakdown the boundaries for women standing and people of any different culture and people with disabilities standing we have to make it far more accessible. Now that means dealing with the barriers for people standing, the toxic nature of social media for instance. The hours of work, also the lack of childcare provision and the lack of being able to job share when you actually get into the parliament. So that I think there are a whole range of issues there that we can work with. Things are improving. 2016 of the election was a watershed in terms of getting more women into Tynwald, the MLC elections that came over after that again accelerated that change. So it's all there. But we need to ask women and people from minorities why they not standing addressed that to make them able to do so.

Simon Mann

Yes will of course the Island's had an appalling record as far as inequality is concerned and it's not just being with women but in fact. As we stand at the moment of course there is no bar on women standing for the House of Keys. The discouragement I feel is actually in the way the House of keys operates. When we see the House of keys frequently sitting till late in the evening, a simple ordinary answer most people would have as well why don't they sit more frequently? The working man has to work you know throughout the entire week and yet, we have these very rare and very short periods when our government actually sits. There's no wonder that women aren't attracted to that environment, and I think we've got we've got to start to improve that.

Jonathan Kinrade

I agree we certainly need more female representation the barriers to entry right through this process I'm learning more and more I'm doing it. It's a big deal for somebody to have to take months off work without any pay some of us are fortunate, we run our own businesses and that means you've got the opportunity to do it. I certainly couldn't have given my notice in to run to maybe have a job on the 24th September or not. Disabled people are not going to be able to go around knocking on everybody's doors through. Too many barriers to entry. The cost of rules out another whole section of society.

Luke Parker

I think one key issue is the engagement with politics and it's not just directed to women I mean generally is to educate actually what is involved. I'm talking from young people youth which is always a hot topic within politics to engage more same for same for women, but also men there's a lot of misinformation and misunderstanding of actually what you need to do to get involved being involved. Being involved the local commissioners you just turn up to a minimum requirements turn to a meeting and give your say and hope that you do your best. I think sometimes we over big this picture that we're going to be encompassing ourselves and hindering ourselves that we can do things and we can't have a life outside of what we're doing in politics. I can tell you right now you can and I will encourage all sexes all ages to get involved in politics, and we need a broad range not just off women but broad range of men women and ages is well within politics.

Leonard Singer

I agree with practically everything that's been said because we do need more women in politics we need a different viewpoint and that's what we will get if we get women in politics. How do we encourage them? Just by talking. I was in Kenya a few years ago and there at the parliament they actually have seminars for women to teach them about politics and encouraging to stand. Maybe that's not exactly that we could do that but again but I think people should be elected on merit whoever stands should be elected on merit. But we would somebody mentioned about sharp elbows, men have got sharp elbows well I know a couple of women who are who are in Tynwald with me like Brenda Cannel and Claire Christian, their elbows are just as sharp as the men's.

Christine Sutcliffe

It's a two part question really, what's the panel's view on overseas aid? Also taking in a small number of refugees?

Jonathan Kinrade

This is a controversial one on the doorstep but my opinion is we should be offering more overseas aid my huge amount but a bit more and bring us more in line with other...

Andy Wint

At the moment we are mandated to offer point 7% GDP under the UN order they were quite spending that at the moment would you take in Afghan refugees?

Jonathan Kinrade

I would certainly look at we should be helping everybody we could and what's the best way for us to do that we'd have to seek advice from the people in exterior relations as to how many people we can actively offer support to. You don't want to ring people over here and not have the facilities and the services in place to back to help them and support them. So yeah we should absolutely be taking as many as we can actively help. If that means sending some money to other parts of the UK maybe where they've got those facilities in place to help more than we maybe could as well possibly look at that.

Lawrie Hooper

It's an interesting one so I agree that actually should be meeting that international commitment that we've already made but in terms of in terms of refugees I think what is worth bearing in mind is a lot of these people were out there in Afghanistan supporting some of our forces supporting British servicemen and servicewomen. If we aren't going to offer the support to them in their time of need then what does that say about us as a nation? Equally a lot of them are skilled. They're translators there doctors their nurses their teachers their engineers. We need these kind of people here anyway so maybe a better

thing for us to do instead of thinking or how many refugees can, we take we should be going out to the UK with a massive net and saying come and apply for a job on the Isle of Man. We need people with your skills.

Robert Cowell

Fantastic answer Afghanistan is where the worst human crisis of the modern world I would be absolutely all for taking in refugees. The Armed Services protect the other man I think we almost forget that in a way that we are part of the UK's military efforts if you like it or not. We have a social responsibility to those individuals and I think we should be protecting them. In regards to the GDP of .7 yeah absolutely keep up the payments.

Dr Alex Allinson

We are relatively rich nation we have a responsibility to take our role in terms of the world stage. Most of the overseas they goes to organisations actually based on the island who then reached out, so I'm completely fall for that continuing. In terms of refugees - Afghanistan is a very unusual situation where we have very skilled people often who with links to British armed forces leaving because they're being targeted because of those links to British armed forces. The UK is going through an entire resettlement programme, I think we should be looking for those people who have the skills who want to work over here who can contribute to the element community and we should embrace them.

Erica Spencer

I think the best measure of society is compassion and therefore we should try and help as much as we possibly can. If we can increase the amount of aid above the 0.7 then we should do that. I've been having a look at what other areas of the UK, how they've approached this situation and south west Scotland had a good idea. What they did was they did a kind of a recogniser of how many Afghan refugees could be supported within that community and they said OK we can we can take in X number of families because we have the support for they said ok, we can take in X number of families and I think. We should do that we should have an idea of how many families how many people we can take onto the Isle of Man and we should open our arms wide and say please come and find safety on our island.

Leonard Singer

Yes I agree with her Erica said these people are genuine refugees just sort of coming for jobs people who are looking for job. They are genuine refugees are in great danger yes bring them here yes they have got the skills. They speak English most of them because of the jobs they were in so yeah I agree that we should be looking at taking some in. The other part of the question was about general overseas aid I support that we should give some overseas aid but I hope but I wouldn't give it to NGOs has to go directly to the scheme - we know the record of NGOs lots of money often disappears when it goes abroad. I would forgive the money direct to the schemes. We had one I think people on the island here we're going to Malawi and they were helping find water, and that money went directly to that scheme and when you are money was being used it didn't get dissipated elsewhere.

Luke Parker

Yes, I'll be very much in support of still giving support financial support has offshore countries or where it needs to any skill sets or any other charities out as an island or government we support currently and if we can afford to pay more than nothing let's do so. Let's give what we can. As for the refugees I would love to take in refugees. Obviously I know just talk about skills sets and things - as a father while the terrible situation for all those families to be in and we as he has already mentioned as a rich culture should be supporting these families and these people who are in dire need. To think of having children involved in things is horrendous. At the same time what does mainly concern me we currently have medical issues on the island. We currently have schooling issues. We also have financial issues on the island we need to get our home sorted out first, before we entice or bring these people over and go welcome to our home or what a mess.

Simon Mann

As far as the overseas aid is concerned I think the safest way that that is spent is it's directed to the immediate emergencies as they occur around the emergency relief and that it goes in at the sharp end and gets used properly we can be sure that it is being wisely spent. As far as the refugees are concerned, we have to put ourselves in the position if some disaster occurred to the Isle of Man a nuclear explosion or something and we all suddenly had to leave this island, we would hope also would hope that somebody would take us in and that's the basic humanitarian answer to this. However much people may feel against this, these are fellow human beings, they are the same resource they work they all do the same jobs as us and when push comes to shove and those hard hardship in this world we should be prepared to welcome in our share. It's a it's a responsibility across the globe and I think it won't be a massive number of people when it comes down to what the actual share is, and I also feel that the churches on the island have a role to play in the middle of that.

Isabel Murdoch

I would like to ask panel what their view is on the current electoral system the first past the post system, would you be in favour of a change to proportional representation? Either to elect people at present, or would you support is the Scottish system where some people are elected locally and some are elected regionally?

Lawrie Hooper

I would absolutely support some form of single transferable votes that are ranking candidates in order of preference thing that's quite sensible idea. Scottish system with the list is really interesting, in the back of my mind been thinking for a while about how you would elect members of the legislative council. Maybe that's a sensible route to go down for that way you can lope vote locally for your local MHKs, but actually vote nationally or in larger constituencies perhaps for legco members.

Andy Wint

would you like to see an elected legislative committee?

Robert Cowell

Yeah so thank you very much good question. I would keep the first past the post I think for the old man politics MLC being elected, I would like to say yes I would like to see them MLCs elected. Part of me things radically and things you know what were scrap MLCs and from the 24 MHKs, we have a separate division within that to go into an upper chamber voted within the elected individual.

Dr Alex Allinson

I think it's a really interesting concept talk about constitutional reform in the way we vote - the main impetus those to get more people to vote in the first place. We've talked in the past about electronic voting I think as we go over the next five years we really need to look at that again personally I think the system sort of works at the moment. I think we need to simple system people understand I can actually engage with and that's one of the main problems. Ramsey's always had a relatively high turnout but we look at other places other constituencies in Douglas and hardly anyone comes out there 30/40.% so we need to tackle that.

Jonathan Kinrade

Yeah I think the system works relatively well as it is keep it fairly simple. I think their role (MLCs) is so specific to scrutinising policy and that sort of thing there in different type of skill set, they're not necessarily politicians so I would not elect them, no.

Simon Mann

Yes well we did experiment briefly with a single transferable vote, it actually created vast problems for the returning officers and doing the calculations in an 8 seat constituency would actually be a nightmare. The first past the post system has always worked well for the island, and I would suggest that certainly using modern technology and hope that there has at least been one jurisdiction that actually experimented in having the polling booths in supermarkets over the space of a week. And the score actually coming up on the screen, and you could then actually see the developing pictures to us as to who was ultimately going to get elected. In the jurisdiction where it was tested it actually resulted in a massive turnout.

Luke Parker

elected I thinking again what jobs do by MHKs being the electric and we are the ones that basically see you and then we can go forward with that, I think that's the best way to have two separate elections would I think will be very messy to some degree. I think it will be I think you'll end up having a two tier system where we will have one sort of mandate where will be telling to you guys or what we want to do, and then those who are promising other

things because I was trying to get your approval as well I think it'll cause confliction within that by having just one electorate and then we can push our mandate forward.

Leonard Singer

First past the post is works on the Isle of Man because with so few only got 24 people in the house I'm against an elected legislator council because what it would mean is there would be the actual legislative members would have a larger area there represented, and therefore they could claim that they had a greater mandate than the member of the House of Keys.

Andy Wint

They do that in Jersey with deputies and senators don't they so there are regional deputies a nationwide senators in jersey the other..

Leonard Singer

Well you're right, but I don't I think but I'm saying I think they would claim that they had a better mandate and also if you're only going to divide say 8 into eight areas and we all everybody is independent and they have to run their own election and the costs to us all here a quite considerable and just in the constituency. It would be unaffordable for all to people and therefore he wouldn't necessarily get a good choice of members who only be those who could afford it.

Erica Spencer

I think like members of legislative council be elected for transparency reasons and I also think that we should have a look at the role that they fulfil and question whether some of that can be done by existing civil servants to keep costs down. First past the post seems to work well.

Andy Wint

Last time I sat in this room doing this type of programme was in 2001 when contesting on the panel were Brian Beatie, Alan Ball, Joe Crane, Joe Rooney and Leonard Singer of course to Mr Singer and Mr Bell were elected in 2001, I'll just tell you the turnout in Ramsey in 2001 anybody guess? 66.4%, so it'll be interesting to see what the turnout is going to be in Ramsey. Ladies and Gentlemen it's now time for the candidates to give you their minute, why they think they should have your vote so in reverse order.

Erica Spencer

Why do I think I should have your vote? I'm new to this and the Isle of Man I'm at an age where I've had a lot of experience working in different departments. I bring enthusiasm to the post. I bring knowledge. I bring experience of the various aspects and the issues that are affecting Ramsey at the moment, as we just talked about regeneration. We need to look at

our rating system. We need to look at more jobs we need to look into our schools remove our children are being educated in porta cabins at cetera. I bring my enthusiasm and hopefully my dynamism to the job if elected. I would love to represent the people of Ramsey.

Leonard Singer

I served as Ramsey MHK for 12 years and I am a current commissioner. All that means that are I've wide experience and knowledge of monks politics I know how it works and how it doesn't work. My enthusiasm for the job is undiminished. So it's working for Ramsey working with Ramsey, speaking up for the town your problems are my problems and I will work on your behalf to get a result to get justice to expose unfairness and to show that if you put your trust in me that, your vote was justified and finally I'm standing here to see the back of the Marina – see it go on South Beach.

Luke Parker

Over the past decade I'm involved in many aspects of the town both personally and professionally the events as part of empty being part of dreams youth committee Ramsey Chamber of Commerce and more recently held the position of deputy chairman Ramsey town commissioners for the past five years. We've been involved in many aspects of the town both I guess had personally professionally. I believe that rather than spending the first couple of years getting to grips of how politics nationally and locally work, that I can hit the ground running and with your support that together will make Ramsey and the island a better place.

Simon Mann

Yes well I have a non practising lawyer qualified in two jurisdictions I 40 years experience of law enforcement. My experience of Ramsey goes back longer than any of the other candidates sitting in front of you tonight. I lead on the issues as far as the current Marina proposals are concerned, I've been firmly against that since 2019 and more importantly the burning issue for Ramsey is to get a new medical centre and some decent health service for this town. I can only ask you for a very strong mandate on that on election night thank you.

Jonathan Kinrade

I'm a very proud Manxman and I'm wanting the island on Ramsey to be the best it can be for me my children and all of our futures. The time is right for me to stand the combination of life and business skills of over 20 years split between running my own businesses and working for other people. I have enough experience to contribute and enough passion awareness to be relevant. I'm used to learning and adapting very quickly, picking things up running with them utilising the information skills available rather than thinking I know everything myself and building relationships with others. I'm honest hard working passionate, not afraid to mix things up but not afraid to rattle a few cages. I want to do the best I can for Ramsey and the whole island and would relish the opportunity to be what I think is going to be part of a fresh new intake into Keys, thank you.

Lawrie Hooper

Thanks very much Andy, it's been a privilege to serve as one of your MHKs for the last five years. You've heard today a lot of very good five word statements like we must improve the town, but these are only the tip of the iceberg. What I'm really interested in is the next five words how are we going to do it? And the five words that come after that - how to pay for it. And the five words that come after that being MHK is much more than just slogans. These challenges facing us take much more than just five words, government is not about politicians playing to the crowd. I've demonstrated over the last five years that I work hard and I work for you but I've got the courage to stand up for Ramsey and make your voices heard. Thank you very much for taking the time to talk to me on the doorstep have read my manifesto if you haven't already, as these conversations helped put it together and help me build it to reflect the needs of Ramsey. When it comes down to it though the power to choose your next government rests with you and I would encourage you to all go out and vote on the 23rd of September and please if you do vote for me, let's get straight back to work.

Robert Cowell

Thank Mr Wint I've got more than five words Mr Hooper. I'm a current commissioner for your town I want to serve Ramsey my main point is we need to get back on track with our economy. Economic growth has to be at the forefront of what we think about going forward. I want to retain our youth so youth talent doesn't leave the Isle of Man and never to be seen again. I want to broaden our range of jobs, bring new business to the island my skill set would sit within the department for enterprise or perhaps Treasury Department. I do not want Ramsey to be a negative place a few candidates here that say Ramsey says no. My messages Ramsey says yes. Yes to economic growth yes to be development, yes to better travel system, yes to the right marina and yes to better healthcare provisions. I want to be your voice and help you thank you very much.

Dr Alex Allinson

Thank you being elected to represent the people of Ramsey back in 2016 was one of the proudest moments of my life. We've gone through an unprecedented 18 months. I think the next administration must hit the ground running. We've got a crucial decision to make in terms of whether we invest in the future of our nation, or whether we start to pinch save money and put it all into reserves. I am for investment. We've got to tackle climate change we've got to tackle intergenerational fairness, but fundamentally we've got to invest in the infrastructure not only in Ramsey but throughout our island. That's why I'm standing again. I'd like to thank all the people who were standing with me for this post because it takes bravery and courage to stand up and being in the public limelight. But the main thing when we get to next Thursday the 23rd, is that people come out to vote the people of Ramsey have their say to define what happens over the next five.

Claire McDonagh

My questions about local authorities, we recently had a local authority election at which we only had nine candidates elected at Ramsey. What are your thoughts on local authority reform and do we have too many local authorities on the Isle of Man?

Erica Spencer

I like the idea of local representation so I think that we should keep local authorities. It's a shame that only nine people step forward but possibly I think that says a lot about peoples despondency at the moment.

Leonard Singer

We to change, we have too many local authorities we need to make it much more efficient Four plus - that's been pushed for ages and why it hasn't gone through there too many MHKs to represent the parish count parish council they voted against it. The other thing quickly is the previous situation was where you had members on the council, a third of them had to stand down each year and stand again. So you have some continuity for of people for three inch for two years after three. So, I would go back to that because it will mean that there's elections every year people who can I get a chance to stand the dentist at one year they could stand another year now it's impossible.

Luke Parker

I'm in favour for local authority reform, unfortunately I don't have enough time to explain the whole aspects of that because it's not just about local authority reform it's local authority reform and also government reform. Government has reformed to adapt to local authority reform at the same time. It has to be intertwined to each other, because they'll need more finance more funding and more adaptability with the areas that they have.

Simon Mann

Definitely needs to be reformed we've got some of the highest rates in the island and round see and look at the state of the town what are we getting for the money that's being paid so? Yes it definitely needs to be reformed and I would suggest that the amalgamation of some of the authorities and a close look at what they having to pay for local authority housing which should be covered by government.

Dr Alex Allinson

We need local government reform absolutely we also desperately need the reform of the rating system to actually make sure that the services that people need are provided to them in the most officiant way.

Robert Cowell

Very proud to be on the local authority I agree 4 + 1 yes please find too many local authorities reform absolutely. I wont be very popular, I think it's a PR problem. I hope that

all the candidates here who want successful stand in the by election for local authority and we actually boost the town hall and take it forward.

Lawrie Hooper

So yeah local authority rates reform well overdue definitely needs to happen definitely yes to fewer local authorities but you know what I'll say to everyone - , go for it there's three empty seats on the Commission is right now. There will be there will be a by election in the next couple of months.

Jonathan Kinrade

Yes to 4.1, yes the rates reform and yes to closer working relationships between commissioners and Keys.

Andy Wint

OK if you're can if you're a constituent in Ramsey I mentioned at the start of the programme, there's an extra pre election meeting where it used to be called requisition meeting or Westhall Ramsey grammar school next Monday the 20th - Manx Radio is going to be live on air. On Wednesday will be a Douglas rugby club for the middle constituency, on Thursday Onchan Views, ocean views for the constituency Onchan. Next week Monday tonight at the Whistle stop cafe in Port Erin station for Rushen, and a week tomorrow night at Seven Kingdoms in Douglas for Douglas Central. Ladies and Gentleman, I want to thank Dr Alex Allinson, Lawrie Hooper, Jonathan Kinrade, Simon Mann, Luke Parker, Leonard Singer, Erica Spencer – your candidates for Rasmey. And thank you for being with us, tonight at the Mitre in Ramsey!