

Douglas Central Constituency Debate

Andy Wint

Douglas is the capital of the Isle of Man and the main business centre of the Island. The constituency of Douglas Central combines the districts of Albany, Ballabrooie, Eastfield, Somerset and part of Garden City from the former Douglas West constituency, with Quay and St Georges from the old Douglas South constituency, and Tynwald from the old Douglas East constituency. Before the Keys was dissolved, its MHKs were Ann Corlett and Chris Thomas. Tonight, your candidates are: Damian Ciappelli, Ann Corlett, Sara Hackman and Chris Thomas. Damian Ciappelli, why do you want to be an MHK for Douglas Central?

Damian Ciappelli

I'm standing as an advocate for change, that is because I'm an advocate I'm a professional representative of the interests of others. I've been advocate for change because there was so much dissatisfaction within the constituency and the island more broadly unconcerned about the direction of the island and concerned about the size and scope of government and concerned about red tape. I'm concerned about waste if elected I would address these issues head on thank you.

Ann Corlett

I've had the privilege the central for the last five years and I really want to continue to do so with priorities for the next five years have got to be economic recovery health education safety housing and climate change and passionate about social policy and serving in health and education for the past five years has really given me an opportunity to start to make changes. My continued aims for the constituency of Douglas central include suitable primary and secondary education at decent rate decent road network lower speed limits in residential areas particularly around schools reforming and the planning regulations to provide a fair and equitable system and to continue to work hard and represent you with enthusiasm integrity and commitment.

Sara Hackman

Hello, my name is Sara hackman I'm standing as a candidate for MHK for Douglas central because I'm also passionate I've been in the council for eight years and I stood last time five years ago and I feel that nothing has really changed in the last five years. I'm standing because I'm passionate and I'm also a good listener and I feel as though I can drive us all towards a better Isle of Man.

Chris Thomas

If I get the mandate from the good people of central Douglas aiming to continue the campaigns the representation and the advocacy for the people of central Douglas following the plans inside this document my manifesto my policy agenda 2021 which include action to address health issues and so many more things.

Andy Wint

OK to the candidates now, Ann Corlett what can be done in the future to make the government more efficient and use less public money?

Ann Corlett

Well the first thing I think and what I'm getting mostly on the doorstep is over over spending on capital projects delays on capital project the impact that has on businesses. My answer to that would be to create a capital projects unit management unit that had the right people in there to negotiate contracts to make sure they carried out properly and actually to sanction when they're not.

Damian Ciappelli

I would advocate a change by way of organic reduction in the size and scope of government and I would achieve that by ensuring that as people leave as contracts expire and as people as people move on from government, that those roles are not replaced unless absolutely necessary so that would be an organic progression rather than a slash and burn approach. I think it's vitally important in relation to the management of capital projects that we have a three line of defence approach, so that we have in the frontline we have the civil service who know that you know that public money has to be protected at all costs and then you have the senior management to must review and oversee what exactly is going on at the frontline to ensure again that the public person the public interest is protected and then thirdly we've got the government legal service and Comin is the third line of defence to ensure that as we go forward that the calamities that we've seen unfold over the past three years are not repeated and that there is a proper programme of legal risk assessment and a legal policy that is fit for purpose. That you would have in a PLC we've often referred in the past two Isle of Man PLC well I want to see things done more professionally and more appropriately going forward to protect the taxpayers interest.

Chris Thomas

Very good points we made good progress in setting up the capital projects unit suggested unit, suggested by Mrs Corlett. Now need to implement that message please made a very good point as well they strike the trends that are in process with the public service needs to continue and they need to be intensified and what I'd add in is that we've got to stop buffeting the public service from this place to that place we've got to stop battering them forgot to give some clear direction from the Council of Ministers and from Tynwald and then we've got to support them to do what the direction is and to what it implies and most importantly we need to challenge them professionally. I think we've probably overstated the capability of politicians in some of the technical areas to challenge the professionals doing it and that's why I'm a big advocate of the concept of putting boards around key topics like Manx care like something in education similar like something in buses similar. You could argue we're going back to the 1980s and this but what was lacking in the 1980s was political direction and conflict about politics if we can get it right and we can have political direction and we can have professional management will be in a better place than we have been for ten years or so.

Sara Hackman

At the moment the department aren't working together and that is causing money loss and also working in silence they're building up walls between each department so they're not actually talking to each. There's some strange ideas that come out the you think if they all worked together then they would have been dealt with. We're not encouraging the government to actually save money we are paying the senior management because they have large budgets they have lots of people there's no incentive to actually save money and save people so we need to perhaps give less long term contracts so fixed term contracts state three years and then if they've actually done something as in they save money or rather not spend as much money they've cut stuff organically, as Damien says, then we would then reward them then rather than just keep promoting them.

Andy Wint

Now to the image of Douglas the potentially Douglas central image case although as the potential image case now first of all Damian Ciappelli, do you think Douglas is a world class centre is it world class?

Damian Ciappelli

No I'm afraid I don't believe it is it's very clear when going round the doors doorstep and talking to the constituents that they are extremely unhappy about the condition of roads and pavements. These are fundamental infrastructure issues and we've seen decades of neglect I've seen it first-hand myself as I walked around, I've been really shocked I've been really quite moved at times by the passion and the distress caused to Douglas central constituents. As we look around the camp clear that they have relates to the fact that there's been a failure to address key priorities that matter to people there has been it seems to me a drive, from where I'm not quite sure, but a drive for these seriously large and extended capital projects that are to some extent flights of fancy. Whereas at a grassroots level there are people screaming for improvements to roads and pavements, parking infrastructure, the issue of speed and so forth to improve the quality of life.

Andy Wint

well the add amount is an international finance centre you've lived in Luxembourg how does the Isle of Man compare to Luxembourg?

Damian Ciappelli

Well the infrastructure is much better the condition of streets and pavements and the parking infrastructure is at another level. There are far more Wi-Fi zones for those who are just wanting to connect to the Internet and more particularly public transport is free completely, so whether that's a tram a bus or a train it's completely free and of course that's very attractive to visitors as well as residents. It's also more environmentally friendly because it discourages people from using cars. I found myself rarely using my car because of the excellent public transport and you could connect with an app but here we're so far behind the curve we have timetables aren't fit for purpose if you do see a timetable you need a magnifying glass to read it and then you need a degree in semantics to understand it we're just so behind the curve here it's unbelievable and it would it would it would profit us by sending some of the senior management in the Department of Transport to a place like Luxembourg to see how it's done properly.

Chris Thomas

I don't think there's any need to send them to Luxembourg though been to Switzerland and that's pretty good as well. Basically we've got world class people in Douglas and so many of them come here stay for a little while and then leaves. I want it I want to build on the Luxembourg example coz Luxembourg benefits from hundreds of thousands of people commuting to Luxembourg everyday and sadly the Isle of Man's coming a bit like that in some crucial areas not everyday but on a weekly basis or a fortnightly basis. Far too many people in our healthcare do effectively live here sort of but go back quite regularly in far too many people in our civil service and in our industrial sectors do that so we've that was different 20 years ago something's gone wrong we've got to recapture the spirit and the hope and the pride in our town and in our in our island and actually reverse that. One of the biggest drains on public finances is the use of agency staff and the need to bribe people to come just to come here.

Andy Wint

On the appearance of Douglas when he get off the sea terminal, you see brand field sites obviously the promenade is coming to an end it's going to be there but but compared to St Helier, Gibraltar and Luxembourg the Isle of Man doesn't really look up to their standard and I'm just wondering why Douglas is like that?

Chris Thomas

The basic reason is the demand for used to those lands because something hasn't been quite right about Douglas in the Isle of Man for 10 years which we need to address this election basically young people everybody in fact the brownfield sites and the ageing working population and opportunity and this next five years are going to be a renaissance taking us back to some of the golden periods of the Isle of Man. What we've got to do now is we've got to get government policy solid and then use that to actually encourage people to understand that those brownfield sites will be filled up with the right thing at school in Park Road leisure facilities around Lord street and then proper housing run by housing association

Sara Hackman

I agree with Damien the fact that the streets and the road system the pavements are absolutely atrocious. It' is not suitable for wheelchair users it just looks the whole of Douglas actually looks add and dated I was on the council for eight years I mean did the government take Douglas council seriously, no I'm not all the time. We did the regeneration there was money available we used it and we didn't carry on there was in 2000 we did the quay you look at the state of the quay now with the paving we don't seem to revisit schemes we do them walk away and that's it and they're gonna stay like that forever but they don't they deteriorate so we should have money in capital schemes to be able to carry on like a rolling contact really to keep addressing because well the paving down on the quay you can trip very easily because there's gaps.

Ann Corlett

Well it's already been identified in the most the most popular thing on the doorstep is roads and pavements and the state they're in and I think you know the answer to that is that all elected Douglas MHKs sought to get together at the very beginning of the next administration and push for a scheme a plan scheme for five years for five years to see to the roads people

Andy Wint

What do you think should happen to public transport?

Ann Corlett

I'd like to say it we would we could provide a free public transport, it would absolutely fit with the green agenda. But we've got to be able to afford these things it's all very well we're talking about brownfield brownfield sites and Douglas it's got two many brownfield sites but everything needs to be funded and that has to be strategically planned over a period of time so that nothing's gonna happen overnight but we have to have strategy and policy that builds towards placement to be

Andy Wint

Okay let's go when you mentioned green agenda let's come to the green agenda the government has a agreed agenda, what's your green agenda?

Ann Corlett

Mine is to do as much as we can as soon as we can to climate change I think that we have to target resource is towards what will benefit insulation for example housing buildings are the cause of the most missions so insulation. Grants loans to help people do it but they will directly see the benefit of that warmer homes cheaper heating. I'm really disappointed in government with the Summerhill build been on the department for five years we were very keen to have ground source heat pumps website I mean...

Sara Hackman

I totally agree I'm on my manifesto it says that we we should make sure the new builds are environmentally friendly as you see the the one on peel road I have looked that and I can't see any environmentally friendly. The thing is there are no cars allowed there you have to have a bicycle I know because there's only 28 parking places for 60 so they thought that far ahead. Oh yes but don't forget the bus stop bus stop and the bus stop what time an yeah at 11:00 o'clock

Chris Thomas

To touch on the Summerhill point cause that's very specific because there were a lot of people who had doubts about Summerhill when the money was being allocated and we were promised that it was going to be a heated in a different way other than gas I move to have to have an investigation and social care including this sort of thing was voted against because promises were made that Summerhill is going to be leaders. Let's look at good signs because, in Bradden down in Castletown they've actually done good things in terms of the housing. Beyond housing we need to look at how electricity is generated and the extent to which we use electricity on the island so that's the first priority for me in that space is actually making no regret decision certainly about laying an interconnector the UK and probably as well then we've got to decide how long we will have gas on the island so there are two major things house housing and electricity generation, and also like to be without you need to make sure that they have extended basically furnishment of houses to make that proof getting wet they say yeah just get some issues without downtime the other point is basically community group or is anybody in fact for any scheme inside the boundaries of Douglas could is neither culture land and that is absolutely ridiculous and absolutely discriminatory and that needs to be changed urgently.

Damian Ciappelli

I think like charity I think that the green agenda starts at home. We heard tonight about initiatives that would encourage homeowners to improve the insulation value of the property the energy consumption perhaps by way of the use of solar panels and more efficient heat generation within the household I think it would be wise of the government to do two things to encourage that green agenda starting with the home. That would be to offer free energy audits for example in order that there is an assessment an individual home needs to be brought up to a satisfactory standard and at the same time to offer appropriate levels of grant supports to ensure that people are able to achieve those upgrades, so we don't get a form of if you like energy poverty. So that we can reduce energy consumption because I think the home is the starting place. On the other side of the coin of course government must also take responsibility and be seen to demonstrate that. That would be in the form of energy audits on all government buildings and to identify ways in which power consumption could be reduced and limited so that they are more efficient. I think it's very important to contextualise the whole green agenda. I think it with you know it's very easy to sort of beat oneself up particularly looking at things from an island perspective and you know when one talks about the

climate emergency and climate change both of which are real phenomena we've got to recognise that we work in an interconnected world. We've got to recognise that you know our efforts will come to nought in the overall scheme of things unless we are working with other nations towards these goals and I think that the Isle of Man should not become an outlier of itself, because it seems to be then we would be at a disadvantage of compared to other jurisdictions. We've heard about how the UK is starting to reignite the coal powered fire the coal fired power plants, and we know that other major economies like the USA and China are still burning coal We must also remember too but you know when you look at the smartphone in your pocket your iPad and other electronic devices most of these are made in China, or contain components made in China - of course China is a massive polluter where do we go with that? Do we have to have an order on all the things that we buy in government in our households because if you looked at it you'd be excluding so much you've got to be terribly careful where you go here and I think that it's very important to be principled proportionate than to do it step by step

Andy Wint

OK thank you let's talk about housing now, Ann Corlett how much is the affordability of housing come up on the doorstep?

Ann Corlett

It is a huge issue it's impacting in so many areas not only young people first time buyers it's keywords in actually work enticing people into the island. If they can't afford to live here. I think we need firstly actually add there is a review going on now of the shared equity scheme capping of earnings and prices to buy that has to be put into a realistic into the market you know looking at the market as it is currently. Secondly I think we need more rent to buy schemes mid rent schemes because that helps people get over the initial hurdle of a deposit, because that's the goal posts are just moving on to positive or do you think there should be more social public sector housing built I think we need to look at it yes I think I think actually we we haven't increased social housing for quite some time so I think that we have to because there isn't private housing out there and the rentals on private rentals are also gone.

Sara Hackman

I believe that high rises were being outstripped of affordable housing by people buying up the house is from not necessarily people from here. I believe that this should be regulated illegal though is it is not illegal but in Jersey they actually regulate it, and they have to register their buying these houses because obviously they buying nice houses and then the renting them and then they can put then then they can rent them for more or less what they want because they haven't brought in the landlords.

Andy Wint

Are we storing trouble up though by not allowing young people young families to get onto the property ladder and also blocking the way for older people to downsize?

Sara Hackman

I totally agree that we have to do something and social housing because there there's a stigma from probably my age that you have to buy an asset you have to buy one. You don't become successful unless you buy. Whereas we shouldn't all consider that not everybody wants to buy a house so we should increase social housing as well.

Damian Ciappelli

From the limited discussion I've heard tonight I think it's very important that we don't create a bogeyman I think to the extent that there is a broken man at large this created this problem I think it's the current administration. There is nothing new about housing crises on the Isle of Man you can go back to the late 60s when the Isle of Man as a matter of policy encourage settlers here there's a huge demand for housing at that stage post prices basically doubled between 1967 and 1992, the same thing happened in the late 80s as the economy took off and then again in the late 90s between 1997 and 2001 when I bought my house I saw house prices double also. I think that it is basically add issue of supply and demand I think talking about financial options and government intervention using shared equity and so on is all very well but unless you address the fundamental issue of supply and demand you will not get anywhere more houses. I talk about brownfield sites being developed such as the Park Road site that was allocated some seven years ago with a sheltered housing in the first time buyer units and other brownfield sites went through a lack of leadership and determination these issues have been allowed to lapse and so yet another housing crisis looms it is at the doorstep of the current administration I placed this because it is about supply and demand. You've also got other issues such as an very valid points have been made in other hustings such as the fact that there are unoccupied properties, clearly it as a national resource we need to adopt measures such as a carrot and stick approach by virtue of rates or maybe some kind of adjustment in the tax system to ensure that properties are not just left abandoned and so to me brownfield site construction I think we could look at developing and re purposing the growing quantity of unused office space particularly post Covid. I don't think that a lot of that office space is going to be used up. I've talked about the talked about you know more construction first time buy units and of course unused property.

Andy Wint

So just would you make partner at the park roadside a priority?

Damian Ciappelli

I think that along with sites like the former Victoria Rd prison absolutely they need to be investigating a proper discussion add not simply the fruits of internal discussions between civil servants concurrent admins

Chris Thomas

I agree with two things that still is suggested the first one is it is a full of the last government but also the one before that and the one before that. In 2013 three ideas were firmly on the table none of which have been taken forward. The first one then was to set up a housing association we still need a housing association to locate professionals and do professional things. Number two housing as a social policy is not an infrastructure policy and it was we went wrong for 8-8 years. Number three we haven't had a joined up housing policy and strategy and plan an action plan since 2013 which we should have done since 2013 and I did everything I could to sort that out but infrastructure hung onto it in a departmental way the second point I got to create the timing is is that we've we need to have a carrot and stick approach. We need to not only look at brownfield sites where we need carrot stick approach but we also need to look at vacant properties so previously in the island we have had a vacant property initiative and we need to start that again for office space but also for the mass is probably the 1000 under occupied or unoccupied premises and to do something about them.

Andy Wint

Do you think something should be done something should be mandated about unoccupied properties long term unoccupied properties?

Chris Thomas

I think so and that's part of the vacant property initiative but the first next year the first year of the next administration should be should be working with the council in Douglas using their wardens and the information the council has cause they think they have much more information than the government does to actually get inside the people's heads to responsible for these situations.

Andy Wint

Could the local governments facilitate this?

Sara Hackman

Absolutely, because you know we won government really.

Andy Wint

Any questions from the public?

Ken Corlett

I'm married to Ann, I've got a question how important do the candidates think you also live in the constituency?

Damian Ciappelli

Well I live just outside the boundary constituency to be completely transparent, but for over 40 years I was part of Douglas West and you all the MHKs is going back to Victor Neal, the late Jim Kanem John Shipman and indeed I knew Chris because I actually supported Chris when he was first elected. I think I have a very strong connexion to the constituency I've lived and sorry so I've lived it Douglas West, I attended school in the constituency I've also worked in the constituent.

Sara Hackman

I do live in the constituency so then it was all separated out we were in Douglas South for a while so um but yes I feel it is important because you are representing the people.

Andy Wint

You feel a connexion with the area you know the place back to front but?

Sara Hackman

Mostly yeah so yeah it's a lot easier to work with the people because you should be seeing them everyday.

Chris Thomas

I lived in the constituency in 2016 I did and in 2013 and that wasn't because I move that was constituency move so I think it's important to understand and to know the area in which you live and represent. One of the same that Mr Corkish was a well known representative for Douglas Weston he did just outside the constituency united for for three years as an important issue but it's not the paramount issue.

Ann Corlett

I think it's good to be connected to the community into the constituency but I think living outside the community at the constituency doesn't prohibit you from representing it

Andy Wint

Okay by me we live in that a special part of the world where our politicians are close to us and you think it's important to know the area to know the pavements on the roads and the roofs and the council it's important to know that - do you know what's going to happen to All Saints Church by the way? I wonder if anybody knows they could tell us any other questions from the floor

Ian Wright

Next chief minister is going to be important position who of the returning MHKs there successfully likes to see like this if we did and, who would you support and or any of you planning to stand yourselves?

Sara Hackman

No I won't be standing myself. I want to get to know the job before you become the Chief Minister. I would say you don't have to but if you do have a preference is in the paper so might still say, Juan Watterson.

Ann Corlett

I have to say that I supposed to Howard Quayle last time and but I was very tempted to Alf Canon, I think what's most important is that we have some leadership now and some passion going forward, because we're heading into an uncertain period. They will have to have backbone and and leadership qualities but we need to forge ahead.

Damian Ciappelli

Well I don't want to be drawn on personality because I don't think it's helpful. I think I could focus on with that that the person I would vote for if I were returned is the person most aligned to the policies which I would have a mandate, and I think that's very important. I think in terms of personal qualities is very important that whoever is the chief minister is somebody who can listen to a variety of views and can accept that sometimes the views differ but to try and take people on board nevertheless there are differences of opinion. I think it's very important to foster a very good team spirit amongst the members of comin and the broader House of Keys at membership because without then you can so disaffection very quickly if people don't think they are being listened to I talk about the power representation that's what about advocate by profession and so it's very important that you feel that your representation in this case made on behalf of constituents are being taken into account for policy and decision making.

Chris Thomas

You asked me that 6 month ago, and I made a flippant comment about the IOM having a female chief minister - that's grown legs and I think there are quite a number of chief minister candidates selected in the newspaper answers. More importantly, come to the question that you asked and dismiss your question as being the right question at this stage in my favourites before I say that whoever is chief minister or first minister has got to win one of the 12 constituencies they've got to get most votes in their constituency. So there are twelve candidates for chief minister the second

why why couldn't they come second because it's ridiculous that you can't even persuade seven and a half thousand people you're the leader and you've got the mandate that suits the people inside your constituency how can tend to be the to be the person who's won the popular mandate in the national general election. I cried, it was sad for democracy. The chief minister is not presidential, they've got to be an authentic listening leader with the team behind them in the House of keys and the wider Tynwald in the wider Manx public and that's characteristic. There a few of those around but none of them as yet it's come to the fore in the way that they will need to win 13 MHKs votes.

Andy Wint

Education and called attracting students back to the Isle of Man who are at university what can we do to attract people back from university those people who go to big cities in the north of England perhaps in Scotland and think I'm going to stay here it's far more fun and I'll get a better job.

Ann Corlett

Actually I was talking students preparing to go next university and I asked them why or what would make them stay and their answer actually was about nightlife, and things to do. I think it's broader than that it is about housing and accommodation students don't always want to come back and move back in with mum and dad. So an opportunity to have their own place. Some students will not come back initially because the job opportunities are not here and will never be here to develop their careers because we just don't do those sort of things.

Damian Ciappelli

Well I think it's a combination of things and I think it's very important to touch base in relation to the economy more generally and those things that are hampering the economy developing because we need to diversify our economy so that there are the jobs here for the students to return to. One of the obstacles is what is red tape and in particular the dysfunctional banking system we have now you may see you may ask for what's the connexion between young people returning and dysfunctional banking system? Well I shall tell you - it is this that it is hampering investment in the island whether you're looking at hotel leisure and exhibition facilities or you're talking about an investment in terms of housing or or apartments to rent or indeed the creation of jobs we need to tackle the harmful regulatory culture and policies that we have at present, no other candidate is calling this out. I am. I have spoken to a wide variety of leaders across the different economic strata of this obvious island and overwhelmingly they're telling me we need to deal with red tape and we need to deal with...

Andy Wint

there's a government department called the department for enterprise whose job it is to facilitate industry coming to the Isle of Man

Damian Ciappelli

Well if your banking system is not supporting it because the hoops they have to jump through time frame just can't open a bank account from opening a bank account yeah and unfortunately because of a lack of leadership under the current administration because of the I don't know whether I'd call it some sort of fear deference towards the FSA or regulator, we are not making progress. It needs to be dealt with and I am calling it out.

Chris Thomas

He's got a point we do need to look at regulation it wasn't workstream that didn't progress so far enough but. To return the original question about returning graduates keeping people here of all generations in fact we need to look at the real basics and those basics our housing has suggested and we actually probably do need a new institution at least one perhaps even two new institutions we need a housing association to create the right products to let people save for the deposits to share the risk in terms of a different types of accommodation and we probably also need to think about some sort of arrangement with a National Bank and with a national to create some of these projects products. I don't think we should go to all the expensive they've done in Gibraltar to create our own National Bank but we certainly need to have some intelligence coming from government to work with the private sector to create the right sort of products to deal with the gaps in our financial market. If they're caused by regulation we need to get we need to get round them but it's not only about housing it's also about diversity of opportunity - what I mean by that is the lifestyle on the island matters what there is to do in the evening matters, how easy it is to get off of it one of the island matters but what matters most is where your career is going and how happy you are in your underline life. We need to address the career opportunities by having a diverse economy so we don't have most people who work in an office in financial services but we have exciting people from other sectors like the culture like the arts like engineering like so many other things which bring their spice to the island.

Sara Hackman

It's not just students attracting them back it's trying to keep are young people from leaving the island as well I've just lost my son he's just gone to England well he went to England in the middle of a Covid pandemic but he left because affordable housing but more renting rather than buying. For him there was nothing to do there's the Outback. Either you get drunk or you go to a small cinema, what else have we got really to offer them so we need to look at making the island a bit more exciting so if you don't drink and you don't go to night clubs what you do?

Andy Wint

The private sector will do I mean obviously they Douglas corporation gave up the villa Marina and the government is now running the villa Marina we've lost lots of night clubs from The Cave down through the venue the ones that the old Hilton Hotel, we've last not lots of night clubs but there are private enterprises how can we get more people how can we engender a fun atmosphere in Douglas it's going to be representative of the capital?

Sara Hackman

Well we need to encourage it used to be there didn't it yeah but we need to encourage private investment and we did we've seen 2 schemes come forward haven't we. The wave at the end of the prom that old burnt ends and then then there was the one it was going to be a Multiplex cinema on Lord street around Lord street - we need to keep plugging because we gonna lose all their young people.

Andy Wint

Anne Corlett, but what is going to happen to Lord street flats?

Anne Corlett

I don't I don't I'm I'm obviously not whether it's possible to refurbish or whether they have to knock down and start again but actually they should they they need more flats there social housing. I think

what we need to do actually is engagement with young people to actually understand what they need you know. 5 minutes that St Ninnians today talk to people it's all very well but we don't engage enough with young people and youth.

Damian Ciappelli

I think there's a lot of opportunity for change here if only we had the leadership. I would start with me we talk about making the island more interesting place I think the problem is we get we create silos we've got some very good initiatives, the Manx national heritage the Isle of Man Arts Council and Culture Vannin for a kick off we've also got the Gaiety arcade garden and villa complex but I don't think there's a joined up strategy and we need to focus on developing our visitor economy. To that end we need to look at but in particular at the security of air routes because we are buffeted by carriers coming in and out of business and leaving a stranded or maroon. We need to in my view set up a notional national carrier which owns the air routes lots so that as and when the carriers move on we own this lot so we have security of tenure, just like we've decided to do with the Liverpool landing stage.

Andy Wint

Well I just heard today we may not get a route to Dublin until March next year and so the Cove add notwithstanding new cause the island has to have connectivity.

Chris Thomas

The island has to have connectivity so the steam packet was it was perhaps slightly too expensive it was a very difficult situation coz the government was negotiating through officers with a very very combative difficult in a difficult situation with an aggressive counterpart. In terms of air routes it's very hard to manage in an open skies environment around us but we've got to do that but they think open skies as the wait no but we need to be more open we meet we need to be less open than we currently are so we do need to work out a middle way suitable for our island situation. But basically the situation will cure itself as long as there's a buzz about the place you at the Isle of Man was transformed in the 1980s successfully because they became a buzz about the place as soon as we can keep more of the huge amounts of money that spent in healthcare on people who like like living here consultants actually move here nurses stay here for longer than they do social workers actually live here all the time things start happening that will develop its own momentum there be more money in the economy and more excitement can be purchased for that money it's got to be driven by by the population having the right demography and having the right about money that enough money to spend on the right thing on the things that they make their lives worthwhile

Ann Corlett

Connectivity is subscript key and I think actually we we may be missing something key in our Connexions to Dublin to Belfast for key workers for tertiary care for us where we always take tertiary we use the north-westerly care it's a 20 minute hop two to Ireland as well I've got some really good teaching hospital and University Hospitals as well it's been mooted but it's not any had any real investigation as far as I know do you think it's a good idea I think that we're just missing a trick that there's this possibilities there that we just aren't but the reasons were not able to pursue them is the links

Sara Hackman

Well the link to Dublin is very important and even on the doorstep they were saying that we we really do need Dublin link and then. With the Dublin links you can go further afield a lot quicker but it's also the costs going back to the young people they the main reason my son lives in England is he says that you can get anywhere you can get anywhere fast. Here you have to plan and you have to plan again and then there's the fog then you have to plan again and so that is his main reason yeah..

Damian Ciappelli

What I find frustrating is listening to the description of the problem. I've provided some potential solutions in terms of the Isle of Man grabbing the bull by the horns and setting up a notional airline to own the air routes the slots, so that we're not profited when a carrier goes out of business or is taken over if we don't have that connectivity and we have to have concrete plans and concrete steps towards that goal all these aspirations are going nowhere.

Andy Harris

Do you think do you think the hospitality the tourist trade has increased or decreased over the years, including the price of actually getting onto the island on off the island?

Sara Hackman

I think it's it's certainly decrease it and some of the quality has also decreased in the hospitality we we don't have that much choice and yes I totally agree with you it's it's also the cost of getting stuff over here plus staff apparently with the unemployment hospitality staff are one of the biggest. We just can't get them so we only say the quality is gone down what isn't good enough I probably don't mean quality as in quantity we don't have much. In England you've got loads of different like hamburger restaurants and things like that we've got McDonald's, and now we're going to get a KFC...

Chris Thomas

In the sea services area we now have prices linked to Manx CPI rather than foreign CPI and we need to do the same in terms of terms of slots and roots and prices and service levels in there and that's what I meant by halfway house. In terms of the local hospitality leisure sector I would like to think of it as twist it round if it's if it's good for us to live here people want to come here to find out what's good for us to live here so it's a virtuous circle, you don't go to somewhere that's the people don't like so therefore I as I set out in my policy agenda we've got to really think through why people are leaving, which people are leaving and why they're leaving and basically think what sort of people are coming here and enjoying being here we need to build on build on that there are some great things about the island it doesn't suit everybody. Once we get people coming here we want to make sure that they actually enjoy vibrant buzzing Douglas, as we need that for the people who are here got it first.

Andy Wint

Also if we if it's good for tourists to come to the Isle of Man it maintains the infrastructure that's good for the native population as well

Chris Thomas

That's true but we can't go back to those days when we know there were hundreds of thousands of people basically we've got an incredible opportunity with the economic argument for substance you know to make our economy sustainable in the long term we got to have people here we've got to

have the premises here we've got to have court turn over here we've got to make the lifestyle goods satisfactory excellent so that the people here once we have that we can be a little mini Barcelona or Amsterdam or Paris coz people want to come here to find out why it is that we've got the successful stuff ..

Damian Ciappelli

I think one of the issues is about confidence in the island we touched on the connectivity isn't up to scratch we need to take concrete steps but unfortunately the perception that there's been biased towards one particular hotel groups namely the Sefton group, whether it was the fact that they could basically sit on the castle Mona a listed building in Manx terms and that there was seemingly no enforcement action that there was an arbitrary loan granted to them to show them up and we've just seen the standards nosedive and people will look from the outside and see combined with our poor and dysfunctional banking system that why would you invest in the island and I would also say why in 60 years has there not been the grand or award of an additional casino licence. I mean this is the island of E gaming and yet it seems to me again from an outsiders pov one could perceive there being a bias towards the Sefton group that somehow it's so connected to the establishment, but there hasn't been that award - there's still a it took what in 50 years maybe one was granted but it didn't progress so why aren't we granting another because I don't think it's being used properly by the Sefton group

Ann Corlett

I don't think quite honestly another casino licences in Goodman gonna encourage tourism to the Isle of Man there's so much online gambling and it's not a catalyst for other things I things. To go back to the question has tourism improved I think it's changed moved I think it's changed italics changed people's expectations have changed over the last 20 years and the concentration now is more on nice holidays which I think is the right thing to do heritage walking cycling. We're missing out something with the marine and coastal things actually that could be developed more there's a there's a lot of people interested in that sort of thing. Hotel I do think we need to up our game as far as accommodation is concerned people don't want to come and stay now and have to go down the corridor to the bathroom

Andy Wint

And what about those hotels that look like broken teeth on the promenade that close down boarded up sad looking flyblown hotels, what do we say to the tourists would look at those?

Ann Corlett

Well this is this is it isn't it really and and you know how do we get people to invest? It's a bit chicken and egg no isn't it but but..

Andy Wint

I mean the public will see we're spending a fortune on a brand new promenade and there are a dozen or so dare almost semi derelict buildings on Douglas promenade and people said one of the government do something

Ann Corlett

About that just repossess them do something that's an option certainly but it is about once again funding and resource to do something with them..

Ann Corlett

Okay just a final question before we get to candidates summing up, guarding Afghan refugees and the admittance of Afghan refugees do you think they are the man should accept Afghan refugees?

Damian Ciappelli

I don't think it should because I don't think we have the legal or regulatory framework to serve the needs of such people I think it is inappropriate to choose one particular category of refugee if we accept Afghan refugees assuming that we actually put the legal and regulatory framework in place we would be open up to a much broader range of refugees and we would have to consider what infrastructure we had I couldn't leave appropriate to make a donation towards that cause and indeed other refugee causes consistent with relative wealth.

Ann Corlett

I think that we have to get the policy right for the Isle of Man I don't think we can carry on discussing this every time there's a conflict in a country or a disaster happens.

Sara Hackman

I agree with the other candidates we've also got to start concentrating on our own homeless we've got 200 to 400 people who haven't got a bed so let's start at home I agree with the funding but I think we really need to look at our own home.

Chris Thomas

The Isle of Man who is welcome migrants more than half the people in the island came here through choice rather than being born here and participating in an asylum seeking schemes and refugee schemes is slightly different than just welcoming migrants and it's more complicated.

Andy Wint

Okay now is the time we reach candidate will have one minute to sum up why they think you should vote for them.

Chris Thomas

I'm capable I've got a track record to demonstrate that capability laid out clearly the plan for five years of government which builds on my campaign priorities in recent years. If the people of the central trust me again immediately we need to set out to do things the first one locally would be to continue the motions that I started in Tynwald to reverse the plans for a large mast in the middle of our conservation area in Selborne. Secondly to have a rational support for community hubs and libraries to reverse the decisions that seem to be taken for family library and we need to begin that five year plan for pavements and roads. In national priority we need to heal healthcare we need to immediately go to the strategic plan which is integrated with government plans so we get a better settlement we need to sort out the housing crisis with the practical measures but most importantly we need to remember that we're society of many generations, so that we've got to get the economy right and if we get the economy right public service will be right.

Sara Hackman

The biggest issue facing the Isle of Man in the next five years will be the economy and how to strengthen it I believe it is in a very fragile state due to the numerous factors including the vast long

term affected the Covid pandemic the challenges need to be clearly identified and it will then demand strong leadership from men and women in the House of keys who are not afraid to make decisions difficult decisions I am one such woman fully prepared to face stark realities. Areas it will need to tackle our how to retain people on island improving infrastructure education excellence improve healthcare provision fordable housing and environment, all these areas are interlinked by me I will serve the constituency and the Isle of Man with integrity the one person who says what she means keeps her word and I will not lie to you I will always listen to the person on the street understanding what the Isle of man's needs on every level not only for now but for the future of our children.

Ann Corlett

I live in our constituency and I feel a part of our community and proud to be Manx and I want to keep the good things that we have and change the things that are needed to change. The past five years for me have been a huge learning curve and I couldn't have said five years ago that I could hit the ground running but I can now and I just want to use that knowledge and experience that I've gained to represent the constituents of Douglas central to the very best of my ability.

Damian Ciappelli

I am an advocate for change I am Manx born I have a history and heritage that goes way back. I passionately believe in the islands future I believe I could be an advocate a professional representative for the constituents of Douglas central and advance their interests with passion with determination and ensuring that the drive and the leadership is there to ensure that outcomes are optimised. I am very concerned about the waste, about the bloated public sector that needs to be brought back into proportion. I'm concerned about the red tape which I've talked about at length and that that needs to be tackled head on. I am not afraid of having the difficult conversations and challenging those institutions that I believe have been holding us back. I believe that on Thursday you should vote for me if you want to see that change, thank you very much. They your candidates ladies and gentlemen of Douglas central Damian Ciappelli, Ann Corlett, Sara Hackman and Chris Thomas – this was the final of our 12 debates, now that you are informed, go and vote on the 23rd September! I've been Andy Wint, thank you very much!