

# Foxdale In Touch

GEOFFREY BOOT  
Prospective MHK for Glenfaba

[www.geoffreyboot4mhk.org](http://www.geoffreyboot4mhk.org)  
[geoffreyboot4mhk@gmail.com](mailto:geoffreyboot4mhk@gmail.com)  
801027



ELECTOR'S SURVEY April 2011



## Elector's Survey

The strength of response to my Elector's Survey, especially from Foxdale, has prompted me to do a special In Touch. Many of you will recall I stood at the last election and despite fantastic support failed to win by a small margin. Just 116 people changing their vote would have changed the result. In the meantime, as there are no prizes for coming second in an election I have continued my business career, including involvement in politics across, building contacts and experience, as well as keeping in touch and building support in the local area.

At the last election one of the big complaints was the lack of communication between our MHK and the electorate and also cooperation with and help to our local commissioners.

Sadly this seems to be a prominent theme in the Elector's Survey and although a full analysis will be circulated in due course there is a common thread of people feeling let down and basically unconnected with their MHK. Many refer affectionately to the Walter Gilbey era. Walter, as we all know, kept in touch and was willing to address and respond to people's concerns and problems.

Having been elected in the UK in the past as a councillor, council leader and mayor I am only too aware of the importance of staying in touch and being proactive, as well as forging links with national government. In business I have worked with a number of voluntary organisations and the same principles apply — listen to what people are telling you and act accordingly.

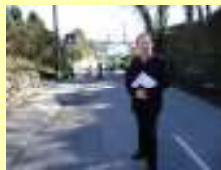
## Passing through

Like most people who don't live in Foxdale I have what one might term a passing acquaintance as I negotiate the village's congested and sadly neglected roads, either to top up the car or pop into the post office for a newspaper and stamps on the way to somewhere, etc. A few weeks ago I spent a very pleasant morning with Ada Cubbons and Paul Lemaire discussing some of the issues raised in the Elector's Survey and then had a good walk round the village to confirm for myself issues that require some attention for the future.

In no particular order, I'm sure some of these things will strike a chord almost immediately.....

## Mines Road

For want of a pun, this seems to be a bit of a minefield. Whilst improvements have been a long time coming and are welcome, surely a bit more local consultation and explanation as to what was happening and how it would happen would have been useful. Work seems to be painfully slow and when I was on site the issue of whether the old Tackle Shop was going to be demolished or not was still hanging and this means that the top of Mines Road can't be completed.



Consultation has recently closed on the same and maybe by the time this is delivered there will be some decision made. However, many residents believe the matter could have been more expeditiously dealt with, not only in terms of the work going on but programming and coordination.

## Dental provision

Whilst this is an island-wide issue, I have come across several people who are simply not having treatment because they have no allocated dentist under the NHS. This simply isn't good enough and also ties in with public transport issues for Foxdale.

## Foxdale continues to grow

Sitting on Ada's balcony it is obvious how Foxdale has grown in the last five years.

When I last canvassed, most of the houses visible in the background were either shells or didn't even exist.

Growth is not always bad: another 40+ houses are planned, there needs to be a balance between house types. Whilst low cost housing is good and will keep people in the area and make the local shop and businesses more viable, there needs to be diversity.

Not unnaturally people are concerned at the continuing escalation of traffic.



There also seems to be a disconnect between the older village and the new development.

Whilst the school does provide a form of community centre there is no real village or community hall — a project perhaps for the future.

It's an idea I will no doubt find out more about during my house-to-house canvassing.

## Planning

Planning seems to be a contentious issue throughout Glenfaba. It seems to me that the local commissioners have little power when it comes to making recommendations and that the planning committee, although now slightly more transparent, by UK standards is still very secretive and comprises appointed rather than elected members.



Many seem to think it is time this was changed.

**Time for positive change. Manx solutions to Manx problems**

# Foxdale School

Mrs Jessopp, the headmistress has inherited an excellent legacy from Mr Lambie, the former headmaster who retains his links with Foxdale. I am arranging a meeting with Mrs Jessopp to talk about the school, her aspirations and those of the parents. I will also endeavour, if elected, to be involved in school events and functions and wherever possible provide my assistance at national level to maintain the high quality environment the school provides.



Incidentally I will, nearer the election, be holding a public meeting in the school but will let you know about that in due course.

## Bus service

Those who use the buses regularly will be aware that the timetabling and scheduling have changed in the recent past. A number of people have complained about routes buses take during the day not providing access to the areas they used to, particularly in Douglas. I know there has been a recent meeting in Douglas to discuss the same but frankly I think the government could do more, particularly with some local consultation, to provide the service that you want and require, with no real cost to the service provider.



It seems to me that the previous timetable worked well and if it ain't broke, don't fix it! Several of you have also pointed out that smaller feeder buses working off-peak might be more cost effective. As bus fares are due to increase then value for money is a difficult imperative to avoid.

## Manx solutions to Manx problems

A number of you have asked me exactly what this means as I am not Manx born.

For a long time I have been shocked and sometimes appalled at the way in which the UK and EU regulation and legislation has been adopted with little thought as to whether we indeed have a problem to address or how it will affect us, either as individuals or in business. I get the feeling that sometimes it's pure laziness on the part of our elected members, or civil servants not applying enough scrutiny or being willing to consult and stand up

and say "We don't need this in the face of UK pressure".

I've been involved for many years with aviation regulation and legislation and have learnt the hard way that acquiescence in the belief that everything that comes from Europe is good is not only foolhardy, but costs you dear.

So Manx solutions means just that — I want to see regulation and new legislation that is right for our country not the one size fits all that has come across and been acquiesced to over the last 10 or 15 years.

## Parking and access

This was a major gripe at the last election. To be honest, apart from Mines Road and the removal of the telegraph pole on the corner, not a lot has happened.

I'm appalled at the state of some of the roads particularly running down to Lower Foxdale, with cars forced into the centre of the road to avoid the potholes.

The issue of parking outside Brookfield through the centre of the village has not really moved on and is a difficult one. There may be better ways of managing the parking if the road is repaired but I think this is an issue that's going to run.

The last thing I want to see is people not being able to park, which will just make the village more of a rat-run and have a detrimental effect on property values and the amenities.

Speeding traffic up could make the area more dangerous.

I know there have been consultations in the past but I think perhaps the time will be right during the new administration to look at the problems again in conjunction with the commissioners; after all, the money spent on Richmond Hill where personally I didn't think there was a serious problem makes you wonder about priorities.

## Cost of fuel

Foxdale is very fortunate in still having a functioning service station but looking at the sign outside certainly brings home the high cost of diesel and petrol on the Isle of Man. In fact let's be honest, everything seems to cost more on the island, including electricity, gas and water.

The cost of fuel, however, is to a certain extent a function of the way government controls it and whilst there have been mutterings about a 5p differential, I know that this has been exceeded on many occasions. I find it bizarre that no one seems to be willing to tackle the issue. If elected I will seek answers.



## Foxdale's heritage

Foxdale has come a long way since its mining origins and much credit should be given to those who have done much to preserve Foxdale's heritage in the old railway station.

However, Foxdale's heritage is still living: a walk round on a sunny day in the older parts reveals a pretty variety of different cottage property types and Brookfield Terrace itself is a wonderful piece of architecture. This requires careful planning consideration when allowing new builds and encouraging people to retain original features.

## Positive change

Rather like Manx solutions to Manx problems, a number of you have asked me what I mean by this. Like most people I don't like change that brings negative results, either for us as a community or the Isle of Man in general

For instance, is local government re-organisation necessary? We shouldn't be doing it just because it's been done elsewhere. What do you think of your local commissioners? Might they work better if they amalgamated with those in German? But don't let's do it unless there's a real, demonstrable benefit.

I always start from the premise that, if it

isn't broken then don't fix it and if it does need fixing then let's make the changes required work for us in a better way.

Good examples of bad change are the re-organisation of bus timetables and, something I highlighted in the paper a few months ago, the re-arrangement of the Podiatry Service (chiropractic for those who work in old money) whereby instead of one individual attending a clinic in Peel where there are around 350 people using the service, all those people now have to go to Douglas. That neither saves money, helps the environment, or improves the service.

The same applies to things like recycling. Let's make sure it makes sense for a small

island community rather than just doing it because they do it elsewhere.

When it comes to Foxdale, let's ask some questions: does it as a village need a community centre? Is there a disconnect between the new development and the old village? Is the type of development permitted right for the village and what should happen in the future? Why not ask you, the community? Consultation and communication just takes a little effort and time: it's not always that costly and it brings about better results for everyone.

My commitment to you, if elected, is just that: communication, consultation and contact.

**Time for positive change. Manx solutions to Manx problems**