

# In Touch

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## ELECTOR'S SURVEY ~ RESULTS



Dear Elector

What a great response I've had to the Elector's Survey. Nearly 10% of you have replied, either by post or email, which to me shows an appetite for political engagement but, better still, gives me a good idea of where people believe we should be going in the future. It will be a great guide in preparing my manifesto in due course.

Rather than ticking boxes I asked you to write replies, which undoubtedly took a lot longer and has taken me a lot longer as I have personally been through every reply to try and get a real feel to analyse your opinions, which will be useful for you as feedback from me in due course.

So here goes. These results are expressed in percentage terms of the people who answered any particular question, as some didn't answer all of them :

## Are you happy with the level of independence from the UK? **No....**

This polls about 60/40. There are some on the extreme who would like complete independence and autonomy and others who think that we don't get some of the benefits that we should, as we seem to sign up for everything the EU throws at us through the UK, although we aren't full EU members.

This is a difficult one to call. From my personal perspective, having seen the way the UK treated us with regard to the common purse/VAT agreement and the reciprocal health agreement, and maybe it was the fault of our politicians and civil servants for allowing it to happen, I can understand people's frustration.

More independence is feasible; in fact I spoke to our Chief Minister about it some time ago and he said it is completely possible, but it's not for the timid. We should bear in mind that a lot of our agreements with other countries are negotiated on the back of the UK, so perhaps the answer here is to stand up for our interests. One thing I find, as I have a lot to do with UK politicians, is that most of them hardly know where the Isle of Man is, let alone what our constitutional agreements are.

Our fault perhaps!



## Do we need local government reform?

**No....**

Around 65% of you believe that the present system seems to work and offers reasonable value for money.

This is indicative of the good work done purely voluntarily by our Commissioners.

For those who were in favour of change, the suggestion that German and Patrick should amalgamate seemed to be the favourite but people did not want to see us joined with Peel; whilst at the other extreme a very small minority thought we should have

a larger western or southern region.

Our present member has publicly stated he wished Glenfaba and Peel constituencies to amalgamate with a 12 x 2-seat constituency for Tynwald.

Would this result in Glenfaba's electors being absorbed by Peel? I tend to think so.

Peel's interests before ours?

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## Do you want an elected Chief Minister? **Yes.....**

**A**round 75% think that some sort of elected chief minister would be better for the island. The question is, how do you do it? Do

you go for a presidential/mayoral system such as the London Mayor, for which anyone can stand, or do you go for a closed system in which only elected

members stand? The Positive Action Group carried out a similar survey with similar results: it does seem that there is a majority in favour of change.

## Do you want more or less immigration control? **More.....**

90% were in favour of more immigration control one way or another. Even those who were against it expressed views about the present situation not deteriorating.

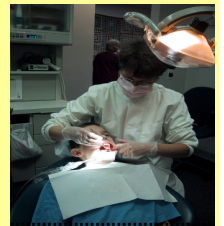
## What is your view of the present planning system? **Inadequate .....**

**T**here was a diverse spread of comment but around 70% feel that there are inadequacies in the present system one way or the other.

Lack of transparency, perceived favouritism to certain groups and basically illogical treatment of smaller applications with larger ones seeming to slip through.

## Is there adequate provision of National Health Service dentists? **No .....**

**T**his came out at around 60% saying no, and in fact some not even having a dentist, and others not having treatment as a result of the cost, even under the National Health Service.



## Would you like to see island-wide referendums on key legislation? **Yes!**

85% of people said yes. Perhaps we should have a referendum on this particular subject!

A lot of people against expressed the view that elected members are there to make those decisions.

Whilst I agree with this and hope to be an elected member, it would be better if elected members consulted more with their constituents,

something I am greatly in favour of.

This might negate the need for a referendum if they truly reflected the electorate's opinions.

This, however, isn't going to work when it comes to major items of legislation that result in constitutional

changes, where I suspect a referendum of some sort would be a far fairer way of carrying out business.



## Is public transport provision adequate? **Yes, but .....**

70% said yes but unfortunately 60% who answered the question felt that the re-scheduling and possible price rises did not reflect the service required by people and that there had been a lack of consultation over the recent changes.



## Is preservation of the Manx language important? **Yes and No .....**

**T**his is about 50/50 but even those who said it wasn't important felt that it would be very sad to lose our heritage and the culture that goes with it. Of those who said it was important, many said they didn't want to see us go down the route of the Welsh and start spending money on duplicating everything in two languages.

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## Is the balance right on green issues or should we be spending more on recycling and green energy? Nearly .....

**A** substantial percentage of you are signed up to green issues in one way or another but a lot questioned the viability of recycling and whether it was worthwhile on the island. Quite a high percentage were sceptical about green energy without a lot more investigation. Around 40% felt that the balance was about right.



## What do you think of TV provision and coverage by the BBC and ITV? !!! ....

**T**here were some expletives on this one but around 65% believe that we do not get our fair share of regional coverage, particularly from the BBC to whom we pay a licence fee. "Poor relations" was commented by a number and "token gesture".

## What single thing in your area would you like to see the government or your local community facilitate?

**T**his attracted a diverse range of replies, including doing nasty things to MHKs!!! On a more serious note, the state of the roads came in for a lot of comment and better communication between the electorate and MHK.

## What would be your spending priorities?

- ✓ Health
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Police
- ✓ Roads
- ✓ Immigration



**No surprises here!**

## Any general comments or wish lists?

**T**his brought about a diverse number of replies, most of which I've noted on a local area basis and will explore more on the doorstep during the campaign.

One I will comment on, and this is a definite theme, is that it would be nice to have an MHK who kept in regular contact with his constituents.

A considerable number of you also commented on "health and safety creep", especially the way in which

we are all becoming risk averse: we are quickly becoming infected with the American/UK model restricting our activities in fear of getting sued, even where we are aware of the risk.

In other words, we cannot even make the decision to take risks!

The state knows best!



## Should we cut taxes or cut public spending? 50/50

**T**his brought forth comments on both extremes, one that we should tax the rich more and another at the other end of the spectrum, with draconian cuts in public expenditure advocated.

The majority, however, seemed to be on the side of leaving taxes where they are, particularly with the recent VAT hike.

Overall the cost of living is higher than in the UK and we should try and continue to cut public expenditure where possible.

**T**he final question was one where a lot of you seemed unsure what I was asking.

It was about the dividing line in world politics between people who favour continued dynamic open societies such as we

have in the Isle of Man at present, although it could be more progressive, and those who want to close the doors and turn back the clock.

80% said that we can't stand still and must move forward, which is indicative that people don't mind

change. There were a number of caveats: it must be change that people are comfortable with and which brings benefits to us all.



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## Local Issues

**M**y doorstep campaign has only just begun but is already reinforcing findings in the Elector's Survey. The Number One issue seems to be that people want an MHK who will stay in touch, let them know what's going on and hold local surgeries to deal with local problems.

No problem there from my perspective, that's how I like to work and if you decide to elect me that's exactly what you'll get.

They also want someone who will work with the Local Commissioners in joined-up government fashion to get the best results for the local community. Once again, I'm fully signed up to that.

Then, when it comes down to what needs doing locally you want to be able to phone someone who won't refer you to the Commissioners or say "it's not my responsibility". It's not rocket science to answer correspondence and steer things in the right direction.

It's obvious that last winter has taken its toll on our roads and pavements but why, for instance, has it taken five years since the last election to get the Mines Road scheme up and running in Foxdale? Even now the issue of demolition of the Tackle Shop to improve visibility has not been solved.

Simple things like better consultation on the new bus timetables would help. It wouldn't cost the bus company much, if anything, to provide what people actually want.

Then there are issues

around NHS dentist provision.

Planning is always a favourite, we certainly need more transparency in the planning system: a lot of you believe it favours certain sections of the community, in particular some big developers.

When people want to put up small extensions or change windows it seems to be a massive mis-match.

That's just a taste. I'm sure I'm going to pick up more issues on the doorstep and I will report back in due course.

## CONCLUSIONS

**I** should stress that the answers and the views expressed above are those from you, apart from my personal comments. I will, along with comment received on the doorstep, bear these in mind when preparing my manifesto. If you elect me I will continue to ask questions and want feedback from you.

I often hear the words "it's a cosy club that runs the Isle of Man" and there does seem to be a feeling of "them and us" (I'm in the "us" category). Sadly we are all losers as a result and not much has changed in the last five years. The UK government has treated us in an absolutely arrogant way but we should perhaps ask ourselves whether our elected representatives should take a good share of the blame.

In business, would you negotiate a contract that two years later can be torn up, with arbitrary reduction in our VAT refund of 20% which has

actually led to our austerity measures on the Isle of Man?

Then there's the arbitrary termination of our reciprocal health agreement. How did that come about?

The winds of change can



blow through Tynwald. All it requires is for you to make the big decision and put in new blood. The island desperately needs people who have business and off island political experience. I put myself in that category and hope that you may think along the same lines.

Thank you very much all those of you who contributed to the survey. The campaign has barely begun but I already

have empathy with over 10% of the electorate and will build on that in due course I'm sure.

Many of you kindly let me have an email address or telephone number. Don't worry, I won't inundate you with spam mail, but will let you know of any significant happenings. If you'd like to go on my list then email me at [geoffreyboot4mhk@gmail.com](mailto:geoffreyboot4mhk@gmail.com).

I would stress that my door is always open. If you wish to meet me on a face-to-face basis then don't hesitate to telephone me on 801027 or look at my website [www.geoffreyboot4mhk.org](http://www.geoffreyboot4mhk.org).

Finally, I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible during the canvassing campaign as the election draws nearer.

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