

# RAY HARMER MHK

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## NEWSLETTER SPRING/SUMMER 2016

*Moving forward together*



Welcome to my Spring/Summer newsletter as MHK for Peel. I would like to bring you up to date with what has been happening and my involvement since being elected last September. I would also like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to those residents of Glenfaba who do not already know me.

My aim from the start has been to get up to speed as quickly as possible with the huge mechanism of government, to listen, to learn and subsequently to make right decisions.

More than ever I am conscious of the huge responsibility to work hard for the benefit of the people of Peel and the West, as well as for the good of our whole Island community.

Over the last eight months I have been working with the Commissioners on many projects including the sewage treatment plant, regeneration, roads, the creation of a Western Housing Authority and improvement of the Food Park, in particular the drainage. I am also working with Patrick and German Commissioners, David Talbot, David Anderson MLC and the Glenfaba MHK Geoffrey Boot on issues such as Knockaloe, the Foxdale clock tower, Tackle Box, the DOI planned road works for Foxdale and the Dalby Woodland Scheme.

As a result I have secured a sewage plant for Peel and funding for regeneration. I have also helped to push forward the establishment of a Manx Credit Union.

I have been given roles in two departments: the Department of Infrastructure and the Department of Health & Social Care. Also since April's Tynwald I have been elected as Chairman of the Isle of Man Post Office.

Looking to the future, I am pleased to be standing for election this September 2016 to serve in the new combined constituency of Peel and Glenfaba which will have two MHKs.



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## Department of Health and Social Care

With the growing demands of healthcare, we are progressing plans to become more efficient, particularly with regard to expensive hospital care. By adopting an early intervention approach, the aim is to treat people before problems become greater and provide better preventative care. In February a new five year health strategy was launched at a number of roadshows across the Island, including one at the QE11 School. The strategy will channel more care and resources into the community, rather than simply into Nobles hospital. My plan is to contend for an expansion of the present Peel Medical Centre to better serve the locality in this way.



## Department of Infrastructure

To tackle the immediate silt problem in Peel harbour, dredging is at the moment required annually. A proper controlled site for the sludge has been identified and is due to be agreed. As part of my role within DOI, we have also been working on long term solutions, such as silt traps and are making plans to create a channel to divert the river alongside the marina.

I have been part of the Sea Services Strategy working group to identify a long term solution for the ferry services to the UK. With the loss of the Liverpool landing stage due to the installation of a new cruise liner terminal, we have been looking into purchasing a new berth close by.

## Education

I have been in a number of early exploratory talks to expand the provision of pre-school places and to release financial support, particularly for those on lower incomes. I also support plans for a new Science Technology Engineering (STEM) block at QE11.

## Economy and Government Finance

With the loss of VAT income, the Government is currently running at an £80 million deficit. A key to addressing this problem, is to reduce costs and grow the economy. To grow the economy, it is vital to diversify. One of our Island's strengths I believe, is that because we can make our own laws, we can potentially bring things to market more quickly. This might include developing bio-medical products and creating data storage centres.

In Peel I am working with the Commissioners for better use of the Food Park and for new start-up units.

## Pensions

It is deeply concerning that the public sector scheme is not adequately funded. The annual deficit in public service pensions is set to rise from £44 million to nearly £100 million by 2034 as many come to retire over the next 20 years.

Having been involved in several workshops where various options were explored, a proposal will be put forward from the government in June to help reduce the deficit by raising existing pension contributions to match expected pension payouts.

More work is needed though to find the best solutions to this problem, which affects all our lives.

I will be pressing the Government to bring forward schemes for non-government employees, who have not supplemented their state pension and who will consequently not have sufficient to live on.

## Manx Credit Union

In the February Tynwald I brought a motion to support the legislation and creation of a Manx Credit Union (which has been David Talbot's vision for the Island for many years), to help those in financial need. This was unanimously supported. After all David's hard work and dedication, the Manx Credit Union is now finally becoming a reality. Access to this facility should be available to the public over the next year.

## Sewage Treatment Plant for Peel and St John's

Last September it was clear that money had not yet been set aside for a sewage treatment plant in Peel and that the work had stalled. After I expressed strong concerns in Tynwald and through further representations that the sewerage infrastructure for Peel needed to be brought up to modern standards and meet the needs of a growing population, the Treasury brought forward funding in the Budget for the design fees of a plant.

Significant progress has now been made. Manx Utilities have confirmed that Peel will have a covered sewage treatment plant by 2019. An environmental impact survey has begun. The location of the plant is being finalised.

A new sewage treatment plant will also be built at St. John's in 2019.



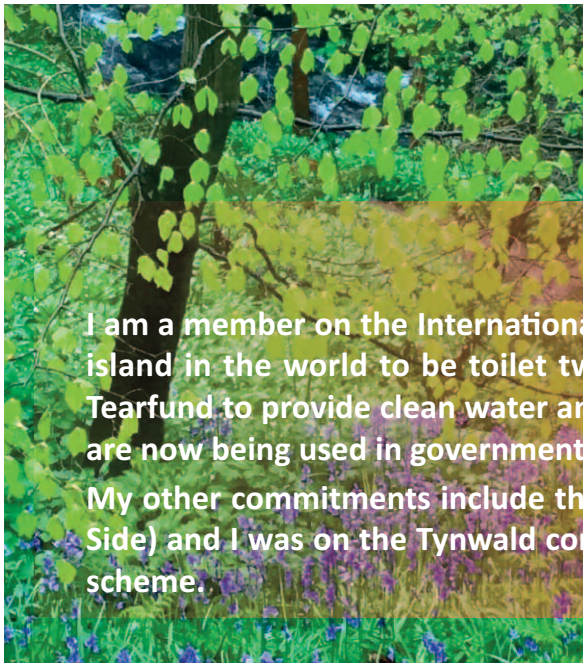
*I was delighted to open the Arts Festival at the beginning of May as creative industries are a sector of the economy which can be much further developed.*

## Regeneration for Peel

Government investment was available specifically for improving infrastructure. So while other areas around Peel need attention, the government stated this money could only be used for Market Place. If I hadn't contended for this investment for Peel, the money would have gone elsewhere on the Island and Peel would have got nothing. The scheme will restore the current road, which was previously a substandard layer of tarmac over a dirt track, to a standard road surface. It will create a town square of buff-coloured natural sandstone paving, complementing the surrounding historic buildings and reflecting the colours of Peel. The entrance to St Peters church will be opened up and made accessible for all. Pavements will be widened where possible to create more space for pedestrians. Existing granite kerbs will be retained and reused within the overall scheme. Infrastructure in dire need of repair, such as old sewers and power lines, will be updated. The repairs to Looney's building will also coincide with this work. The plan is to complete the work as quickly as possible with the least disruption.

As Chairman of the Peel Regeneration Committee, we are also looking at the creation of a long term vision for Peel and the West, to see economic growth and employment. Workshops are planned for Monday 11 July @ 7pm at the Corrin Hall and will be open to all who are interested in participating.





I am a member on the International Development Committee. The Isle of Man is now the first island in the world to be toilet twinned. Toilet twinning is a project created by the charity Tearfund to provide clean water and safe sanitation to needy countries. More fair trade goods are now being used in government.

My other commitments include the Vice Chair on the Public Services Commission (Employers Side) and I was on the Tynwald committee reviewing the Harcroft Meadows First Time Buyers scheme.

## Other responsibilities

## Surgeries and Constituency work

I hold a joint surgery with Peel Commissioners at the Town Hall on the second Saturday each month between 11am and midday. This is a great opportunity to meet and discuss any issue or concern. (Please note in June, the surgery will be held on Tuesday 14 June at 7pm)

Surgeries will also be held at:

Patrick Hall – Wednesday 24 August  
6pm - 8pm

St Johns Methodist Hall  
Wednesday 7 September 6pm - 8pm

Foxdale St Paul's Church  
Saturday 17 September 6pm - 8pm

Or if you prefer you can contact me on  
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My website is [rayharmer.im](http://rayharmer.im) and Facebook at  
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## My Profile

Having attained an Engineering degree at Cambridge University and later an MBA with the Open University, I have worked in business on the Isle of Man for over 20 years. This has included responsibility for setting up offices worldwide and implementing systems and processes to enable companies to expand and become more efficient.

I was elected a Peel Commissioner in 2009 and have served as Chairman four times. It has been an exciting challenge to bring people together to try to make things better; a playground was constructed at Clothworkers School, Marine Parade was updated and Commissioner Housing was improved. More recycling sites were set up and many events, such as the Soapbox Derby, were organised to attract visitors. The aim has been to reduce costs in creative ways and even offer free library membership, free WIFI and free tennis courts.

Being involved in local life is very important to me; I am Chairman of the Peel Heritage Trust, Chairman of the Regeneration Committee, Vice-President of the Peel Gardeners' Association, Committee Member of Western Live At Home, co-opted member of the Friends of Peel Centenary Centre, and a member of the Western Athletics Club and Peel Golf Club. More widely, I support the Manx Wildlife Trust and Manx National Heritage. I enjoy running and have completed the London and Paris marathons for charity. I play saxophone with the Manx Saxophone Ensemble and enter the Parish Walk each year, finishing at Peel several times and completing it twice. I am married to Adele and my son, Nathan, attends QE11.