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WESTERN NEWS

FROM YOUR

MHKS

Spring 2017
Glenfaba & Peel



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Welcome to our first newsletter from the West of the Island. We both gave a commitment during the election to stay in touch, part of that commitment revolved around hard copy newsletters as we are aware that not everyone has access to websites, Facebook and Twitter.



OUR ISLAND:
A SPECIAL PLACE
TO LIVE AND WORK

PROGRAMME FOR
GOVERNMENT
2016-2021

GD No: 2017/0002

Programme for Government

One of the most important tasks for any new administration is to put together a Programme for Government for the next five years. In the past this has been a lengthy process, sometimes taking up to 18 months. After the election in September and our appointments to the Council of Ministers, the Chief Minister was determined we echo his sentiments by putting together a programme as quickly as possible but as inclusively as possible.

Consultation with all MHKs started almost immediately and there were invitations for participation in the preparation for the programme to interested external parties including businesses.

As a result a 100 days after the election the Programme for Government 2016 – 2021 was approved unanimously by Tynwald. The programme is available on this link www.gov.im/media/1354840/

[programme-for-government.pdf](#) and it is not our intention to go into great detail in this newsletter but there are three strategic objectives which are overarching aims of the Council of Ministers in the long term and approved by all members. These are: **an inclusive and caring society, an Island of enterprise and opportunity and a financially responsible Government.**

Since publication, all departments, boards and offices are expected to produce service delivery plans which set out how they plan to achieve the outcomes identified in the programme. This is a great step forward and one that is hoped will create the processes required to achieve the aims.

The recent unanimous approval of this administrations first budget is evidenced by the way in which we are working together.

Geoffrey Boot

It seems a long time since September 22nd although in reality barely six months. I made it very clear during the election that despite the obvious differences between the two constituencies we are now combined and represent the whole constituency which we now refer to as The West.

I would like to take this first newsletter as an opportunity of thanking all those who voted for me in the new combined constituency. Glenfaba really got behind me this time and I hope this is a reflection of the effort I put into the latter part of the last parliament. I would also like to thank those in Peel who supported me, I took nothing for granted and made it my task over the two month run up to the general election to knock on every door – a formidable task but one that in the main I completed with help from my wife and a small dedicated team who very kindly delivered leaflets and helped in the back office.

The new House comprises 12 new members, exactly half of the Keys. Some were pessimistic about the lack of experience but so far what I have seen is a refreshing new take on matters with a real feel that we are pulling together rather than back biting as has happened in the past. This is evidenced by the inclusive way in which our new Programme for Government has been put together in a very short while.

Our new Chief Minister Howard Quayle continues to reinforce this inclusive theme and I thank him for appointing me Minister for Department of Environment Food and Agriculture (DEFA). I had served as a department member in the previous administration so to a certain extent it was like coming home, but now the buck stops with me. I have also been able to appoint three department members; David Cretney MLC who was in the department previously and two new members Tim Baker MHK and Martyn Perkins MHK. This is a good team with a useful business background.

Whilst small in budgetary terms responsibility for Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Food as well as regulatory functions the Office of Fair Trading, Planning and Building Control, Health and Safety, Government Laboratories and Road Traffic licensing are an all encompassing brief.



I have to say I had a bit of a baptism of fire with regard to King Scallops. When the fishing season opened I am pleased to say we were able to introduce a sensible bag limit which has not only conserved and preserved our fishery but extended the season whilst sustaining the price and enabling our processors to cope with the catch.

From the agricultural side the Meat Plant continues to be a cause for concern but new solutions are being sort. We are at present revisiting the way in which agriculture subsidies are allocated which will be subject to consultation with the farming industry.

There is also much work going on behind the scenes with regard to better public access to our forestry, upland areas and around environmental matters. DEFA were key movers in getting biosphere status for the Isle of Man. We will continue to work with all stakeholders to uphold this great accolade and make sure we benefit from the branding.

We have been working at DEFA with DOI looking at a number of problematical waste issues and hope to have solutions to some of these in the near future.

Our planning system comes in for much criticism, this sits within DEFA and an aim of the Programme for Government is to update and streamline the process, another priority for DEFA.

Finally, if you do have access to the internet then please visit my website www.geoffreyboot.org or follow me on Facebook www.facebook.com/geoffrey.boot.iom or Twitter [@geoffreyboot](https://twitter.com/geoffreyboot) I post an almost daily blog and flag up interesting news items that keep you in touch with what I am doing.



Ray Harmer

A huge thank you again to all the constituents who supported me in the last election.

In October I was appointed Minister of Infrastructure and in November I relinquished my position as Chairman of the Isle of Man Post Office.

The Department deals with roads, ferries, airport, buses, waste management, heritage rail, housing, estates and local authorities. The Departmental political team is made up of David Anderson MLC, Tim Baker MHK, Julie Edge MHK, and Jason Moorhouse MHK.



My first role was to review the vision and strategy for the Department which has subsequently been fed into the programme for government.

Fundamentally we need to develop a 50 year National Infrastructure Strategy for the Isle of Man which considers the public and private infrastructure required to deliver long term economic growth and social wellbeing.

The Douglas promenade is a key area and sees 6 million vehicle movements each year. For the sake of road users it was necessary to implement a short term fix to the road surface whilst designs were being progressed. In January the principles for the Douglas promenade were agreed which included a cultural quarter. A double horse tram track would remain in the centre of the promenade to Broadway and a single track thereafter. It has been a busy few months which also included a new Sea Services Policy, which was unanimously supported by Tynwald.

In addition to this, other projects being embarked on include:

- Provision of a replacement landing stage in Liverpool for our ferries
- Maintaining and improving our air services, such as implementing the new radar system, reviewing our operations
- Creation of a demand responsive transport service, which would mean a more flexible bus service based on need, so reducing the number of buses with only a few passengers
- Development of a strategy for active travel, so that through the creation of safe routes, more people choose walking and cycling to get around
- Investment in better design and layout for our residential streets



- Revision of our waste management strategy to encourage more recycling
- Work with housing providers to identify and develop suitable alternative types of housing to meet the Island's future needs
- Assistance for tenants in privately rented accommodation through the development of a rent deposit protection mechanism and measures to improve standards
- Modification of the eligibility criteria for housing so that access is prioritised for those who are most in need. Work in partnership with Local Authorities for example in establishing shared public sector housing waiting lists. To this end we have been able to transfer operational responsibility for DOI stock to Peel Commissioners.

Manx Credit Union

The first Manx Credit Union was finally opened on January 26th 2017. There is still work to be done to bring the legislation up to date, but a huge milestone has been reached. The Island can now offer financial help to those most in need through an affordable secure loan system.

Standing Orders Committees

Through my role on the Standing Orders committee which looks at how Tynwald is run, we are making some reforms, such as televising in the chambers. A debate may in future be paused and go to committee where explanations can be given. We are also looking into proposals to improve the election process of future MLCs.

Local Issues

Peel and St Johns Sewage update

The Programme for Government confirmed the commitment to complete the regional sewage structure. The renewal of the St Johns sewage plant is now confirmed for 2019, this will replace the outdated plant and create a cleaner output into the River Neb, as well as hopefully remove any unpleasant odours in the area.

The Peel Plant is in the financial programme for 2019. The site location still needs to be finalised but it is vital to ensure that momentum is not lost. The reconstruction of East Quay will be co-ordinated to fit in with planned works.

Some people may not be aware that the sewage from the new houses around Peel is treated in a separate plant provided by the developers near the QE11 School, this means they are not adding to the burden of the outfall pipe - what is being released into this pipe is basically treated water.

Foxdale Main Road

Promised for a long time this is now well progressed, albeit with a fairly lengthy time scale but for legitimate reasons. It started with a consultation with the local community who realised the need for the scheme. As your MHKs we worked hard to ensure the shortest timescale and best access with periphery roads.

The work is proceeding well, credit to the DOI team who have stayed in touch with Foxdale residents to ensure the least impact. Problems have been solved as they have arisen and it is hoped that the whole scheme will be completed by TT week.



Peel Harbour Silt Problem

After a joint meeting between DEFA and DOI the licensing issues around silt disposals are being examined in some detail and further sampling of the sediment has taken place. DOI have now received the okay to dredge and dispose of the silt in Douglas Harbour at sea but there are still issues around contamination in the silt in Peel Harbour. As we go to press with this, solutions are being examined which maybe revolve around some dredging and some moving of the silt within the Marina area pending a more permanent solution. Independent consultants are reporting, a full report will be available shortly

which will enable an informed decision on a way forward.



Earlier work enabled reusable material of 95% of the total dredge being recycled back into useable aggregate. We have to be very conscious of the effect of any contamination of our valuable fisheries.

Regeneration

Both of us are engaged and committed to Peel regeneration and have attended meetings of the Regeneration Committee to further the process. Whilst the Market Place Scheme has generated some controversy, work is due to be completed in the next few months. It will be good to see the finished product and the area flourishing.

In the meantime discussions have been ongoing and revenue funding secured to resurface a number of streets around Market Place. The scheme is now being extended to the Post Office and resurfacing work in Douglas, Castle & Market Streets.

There is still much work to be done but this is an excellent step in the right direction. Most of the work should be complete by the end of the summer. Unfortunately regeneration funding in capital terms is in short supply, but we will be bidding for funds wherever possible.

Commissioners

We are both great believers in joined up government and that means being in touch and working with, whilst not treading on the toes of, our local Commissioners. This has been particularly relevant with regard to ongoing works in Foxdale, the ongoing regeneration in Peel and silt leachate problems.

Raggatt Leachate

One of DEFA priorities is to deal with problematical waste such as Raggatt Leachate. Much work is being conducted on not only the contaminants within the leachate but their concentration levels and the possibility of better disposal methods.

DOI and DEFA have been working together on the practical side of disposal and it has been agreed that during the summer months an experimental amount of Leachate will be put through a trial process to see whether this can be contained and then incinerated. We will report further in due course.

Constituency Issues

Being MHKs and in particular Ministers comes with a heavy constituency workload. However we both endeavour to deal with queries within 48 hours, or at least acknowledge the same, and we hope to keep this up.

Joint Surgeries

Peel Town Commissioners kindly make the Town Hall available for joint surgeries on the second Saturday of every month (11am to 12pm), attended by one of us and a Commissioner. This is being used more widely by constituents as an effective opportunity to meet and talk. We have both attended a number of functions engaging with various sections of the community.