



Name: **David Ashford (Douglas North)**

Occupation (before politics) **CEO of a local project company, also worked within Finance and Insurance sectors.**

Name just one specific thing we should do to cut the island's carbon footprint. **Change to building standards to ensure that homes have to be energy efficient.**

Would you vote for an increase in income tax to pay for social care? **Not income tax specifically as I think that is the wrong tax, but there are options that can be looked at around National Insurance.**

What extra measures should be introduced to persuade more people to have Covid-19 vaccinations? **Continuing education and messaging. There will always be people who will not wish to be vaccinated, or indeed can't be vaccinated due to other conditions. But needs to be continuing education and messaging around the dangers of not being vaccinated so people can make informed choices.**

The government payroll has grown as more staff have been employed. Name one cut you'd support to reduce headcount and expense. (A chance to be specific rather than just saying something generic like "bureaucracy"). **I believe in government becoming a single legal entity. This would allow for more cross department functions such as Finance and also the establishment of a centralised capital projects unit rather than departments duplicating these functions.**

Should cannabis for recreational use be decriminalised? **It's important to point out that decriminalisation does not mean something becoming legal, legalisation and decriminalisation are two different things which often get confused. So if its in relation legalisation the answer is no. While I support medicinal cannabis being available for medical use if properly prescribed I do not support full decriminalisation for recreational use. I have seen first hand as Minister for Health & Social Care the impact it can have on certain individuals as a gateway drug. I would however support the decriminalisation of possession of small amounts. To criminalise people for small amounts and putting them through the courts system is to my mind wrong.**

How many local authorities should there be in the Isle of Man? **Five. North, South, East, West and Douglas. My position has never changed on this and has been the same throughout my political life.**

If we keep the Legislative Council, should MLCs be elected by the public? **Yes. Again, it's a position I have long held that the voting members Legislative Council should be publicly elected.**

Should the Bishop have an automatic voting position in the Legislative Council and Tynwald? **No. While I have no objection to the Bishop having a seat on Legislative Council, like the Attorney General they should not be a voting member. I voted for the removal of the Bishop's vote in the Lisvane Tynwald debates in 2017.**

Did you support the abortion reform legislation introduced by Dr Allinson? **Yes. I also became Minister for Health & Social Care as the Bill was progressing through the House of Keys and have helped drive forward its implementation within DHSC.**

Did you support equal marriage? **Yes.**

Will you support the principle of legislation to permit assisted dying? **This isn't as simple as a yes or no answer unfortunately. This is a complex area and what is crucial is what safeguards are proposed to prevent people being bullied, psychologically talked into it or generally put under pressure by others. Also, strict procedures around how the persons consent will be verified and recorded. So while I have no immediate objection to the issue being discussed or proposals being brought forward any support would depend on what safeguards are proposed and what is being proposed.**

How would you encourage young people to return to the island? **We need to show the benefits of starting and bringing up a family on the island and show that island is a good safe place to both live and work. But we will only do that if we tackle head on issues such as affordable housing which you ask about in your next section.**

What measure(s) would you back to make it easier for first-time buyers?

1. Relaxed planning regulations to make it easier to build more houses? (We'll take it as read that you'd prefer brownfield development over greenfield, but we're happy to be surprised.) **There needs to be incentives to build on brownfield sites but also stipulations around size of dwellings and future proofing of the build. People want a long term family home not something they will have to move on from in years to come.**
2. A residency qualification for property purchase? **For multiple property purchase then potentially yes. But we also if we are going to diversify the economic base we need to encourage new people to come to the island and raise their families here.**
3. Punitive taxes on second home owners – **This has been tried by other jurisdictions over the years and from what I can see none can point to it being successful or having fundamentally changed the property market or decreased costs for others.**
4. Much more generous government schemes to subsidise the cost of homes for first-time buyers. **What we need to look at is the over schemes and having a mix of schemes. Shared equity schemes, rent to buy and also schemes for those wishing to downsize as they get on later in life. First time buyers is only one element of the housing market and it shouldn't be being looked at in isolation.**

Should we introduce an all-island speed limit? **This is one where I can see both the pros and cons of the proposal. Rare for me not to have an immediate opinion but its one I remain to be convinced of by both sides of the argument.**

Guernsey has a nationalised airline. Should we? **No. Airlines are very expensive to run and carry massive financial exposure particularly if passenger numbers fluctuate. Guernsey is an example in point where in 2019 the taxpayer losses on the airline were in the region of £7m and in 2020 nearly £10m. In April Guernsey confirmed that overall losses could reach an historic high of £70m and the airline is currently estimated to cost Guernsey taxpayers**

**£50,000 a day. So no, I don't believe it would be a prudent use of taxpayers monies.**

We know it's too early to say for definite, but indulge us. Who should be the next Chief Minister? **It would depend on what the candidates are offering. I see the problems of the next five years as being domestic ones such as affordable housing, climate change and economic diversification. I would be looking for a candidate who was willing to tackle those problems. But not to be seen to avoid the question assuming they are returned at the election I would see the two frontrunners for the post as Alf Cannan and Alex Allinson.**

To how many Afghans should we offer refuge? **I don't the island is geared up to be able to support refugees appropriately and I think we would be doing them a disservice by taking them in. We are a small island with no cultural support or community level support for them. We are not entitled to any of the UK funding as we are not part of the UK and nor do we have access to the UK health support networks. So while we can access the relocation scheme itself we have had confirmed by the UK we can't access the funding that goes with it or the priority healthcare. Many refugees after what they have been through and suffered have specific medical needs that can't be met on island, even for our own current residents and need to be met in the UK. So it means them travelling to the UK for the support they may require. Equally, the law as it stands does not allow for benefits or housing to be claimed for the first five years of residency. To allow this for refugees we would have to change the law and would to meet legal equality obligations have to do so for everyone coming to the island. The monies to support refugees would also have to come from the international aid monies decreasing the external support the island currently provides.**

What piece of legislation would you like to bring to Tynwald? **Local Authority Reform Bill. Its well over time to reform our local authority system with five local authorities of decent sizes. This would allow government to decentralise and place many services where they belong in the hands of local representatives. This allow government to get on with concentrating on national and international priorities. The last major restructure was in the 1890's and its time to get on and get the job done, its one of issues where the argument is always "now is not the time" well if after 120-130 years its not now the time when is it!**

If you could vote in Great Britain, which party would you support? **It would depend what the parties were offering in any given election. I tend to be very independently minded and my support wouldn't just automatically go to one party.**

If you had a vote in 2016, would you have voted for Brexit? **Yes. I believe it opens up trading opportunities around the world and it gives the island as well an opportunity to take part in those deals that we believe are beneficial to us.**

If you were a professional athlete, would you take the knee? **No. I don't believe it actually achieves anything or has had a direct impact on changing anything. Although it shows solidarity for a cause it doesn't actually physically create the changes it seeks to promote. I'm a firm believer that if you support a cause you should be campaigning for that cause and seeking to create change not simply signifying support via a gesture.**

Who is your favourite writer? **Stephen King.**

Who is your political hero? **One most people have probably never heard of! Lord Liverpool who served as Prime Minister from 1812-1827 (fifteen years, a record no one since has surpassed). He took over the office after the first and so far only assassination of an**

**incumbent. It was a time of revolution, social turbulence and not forgetting the Napoleonic Wars were in full flow as well. As with all governments his was not without controversy with the Six Acts and Peterloo Massacre, but he helped steady the ship of state at was an exceptionally uncertain and dangerous time. He also brought a level of stability to the country after the Napoleonic Wars, built the economy and his administration set the ground work for what was to become a decade later the foundations of Victorian Britain. Now very much a forgotten Prime Minister compared to other more famous modern day figures.**