

c/o 14 Victoria Place
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Dear Candidate

As you are standing in the elections in September the group would be grateful if you would find the time to let us have your considered views on a range of environmental issues.

We realise that your time is at a premium but if you could identify the **practical steps** you would take in each of the four areas below, we'd be very grateful. We hope that the range of questions will be of assistance.

It is our intention that the views of yourself and other candidates will feature on the Isle of Man Friends of the Earth website and assist people in making their choices.

1. Renewable Energy.

Friends of the Earth believes that the Isle of Man government should develop a renewable energy strategy to enable it to meet its climate change obligations and secure its economic resilience in the face of rising oil and gas prices.

I fully agree. Energy costs have a massive impact on inflation so it is important to secure energy resources which we have control over – use of renewable energy such as wind power and biomass should be embraced and measures to reduce energy waste encouraged.

In relation to energy costs I feel it is important that Government works to wean the Isle of Man off its massive reliance on imported energy (around ninety five per cent imported). Government has a good record in insulating public sector properties and offering grants to private households for insulation. While the 'energy champions' established through the former Department of Trade and Industry have had a major role in changing cultures across businesses, more can and should be done to incentivise reduced energy consumption particularly through grants for use of low energy technology.

What do you see as the chief challenges for the island in this regard and how could these be overcome?

The main hurdle is lack of awareness of the scale of our reliance on imported fuel and lack of public support for wind power. More needs to be done to explain the costs and risks associated with being wholly reliant on imported fuel.

Tynwald voted in favour of having 15% of Manx electricity generated by renewable sources by 2015. Most of this would depend on 10 or 12 turbines of on-shore wind generation. How can this target be put back on track?

This isn't really off track as much of the preliminary work has been done by the Council of Ministers' Energy and Climate Change Sub-Committee. This largely depends on the willingness of the new House of Keys to embrace the strategy previously agreed by Tynwald and Government.

How could we further encourage the development of a 'clean tech' sector on the island?

The Economic Development Department needs to offer financial encouragement to business to develop and/or use energy saving devices. Currently any activity of this kind is done without any Government support.

How could the government encourage and promote improved home insulation and energy saving?

Government has a good record in insulating public sector properties and now needs to expand the provision of grants to private households for insulation. While the 'energy champions' established through the former Department of Trade and Industry have had a major role in changing cultures across businesses, more can and should be done to incentivise reduced energy consumption particularly through grants for use of low energy technology.

2. Waste management.

Friends of the Earth believes that levels of resource-consumption, world-wide are at an unsustainable level.

What can be done to reduce the amount of waste generated on the Isle of Man and how should the waste be best tackled?

The Department of Infrastructure has been working with Zero Waste Mann and others to answer this question. Clearly better recycling and reuse facilities would help.

Would you like to see the policy of kerbside recycling adopted more widely?

Yes.

How can the public be best encouraged to recycle and reuse?

Kerbside collection and improved education would both help.

Should waste management be centrally controlled?

Ideally local authorities would fully take on this role but if this can't be delivered then centralisation should be considered.

Should we follow Ireland's lead and impose a tax on plastic bags?

Yes.

3. Transport

The production and use of vehicles is responsible for a huge proportion of 'greenhouse gas' emissions.

Friends of the Earth believes that climate-change reduction agreements and the rising price of fossil fuels will mean that transportation must become more energy-efficient and sustainable.

What are the implications for vehicle emissions & taxation, public transport, cycle networks, or the current level of air travel?

Increasing costs of fossil fuels will bring about changes in behaviour as conventional means of transport become less affordable.

What actions would you support to bring about the necessary changes?

I will continue to support measures to encourage greater use of more sustainable means of transport. For example a cycle to work scheme could be introduced with funds raised from increasing charges on higher polluting vehicles. When renewably sourced electricity becomes available in the Isle of Man I will support greater use of electric powered vehicles.

4. Biodiversity and the natural world

Friends of the Earth believes that the Isle of Man must play its part in reducing world-wide loss of biological diversity.

What current initiatives and designations (e.g. ASSIs, marine reserves, financial support of the Manx Wildlife Trust) meet with your greatest approval, and how should these be improved upon?

As DAFF Minister I was very pleased to expand the number of ASSIs and areas of seabed closed to dredge fishing. I established the Wildlife forum and began the work to get the IoM signed up to the Rio Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Existing work should continue to ensure that our biological diversity is retained, working with farmers and fishermen to better manage our natural environment.

Does the current system of Environmental Impact Assessments give sufficient weight to the value of wildlife and the natural world for its own sake, as opposed to its utility value for humans?

I believe that it is hugely difficult to get the right balance between the often conflicting interests of human activity and the natural world. While I would personally like to see more support for our natural environment I think Government has probably got the balance about right for the society it represents.

How could all government departments be required to consider their impact on biodiversity, and ensure that their actions are positive?

Signing up to CBD would provide the necessary incentive to government departments.

On behalf of the IoM FoE group, many thanks for your time and best regards

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