

Craig Bougourd - Manifesto - Make a Difference to Our Future

Age: 34

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Resides in: St Peter Port

Family: Married with 2 children

Education: St Sampson Infant School – Vale Junior School - St Sampson Secondary

Qualifications: Self-Employed - Local Tradesman

Interests: Family, Music, Extreme Sport, Growing, Historic Building's (Medieval structures)

Reasons for Standing:

I am a locally born islander and have lived in Guernsey my whole life. Presently I do not feel the island is what it once was. Therefore, I have decided to stand in an attempt to change our island's future, for the benefit of our community. Life experiences have taught me hardships and I present myself as a genuine people's deputy, who represents the vulnerable members of society who are vastly under-represented.

Being a new Candidate I do not have a wealth of experience in politics, so I am not going to claim to be a know it all (*nor do I claim to have all the answers to the issues that Guernsey is currently facing however I do see them*).

I believe we face many challenges over the coming term and there will be a range of views on how to tackle these and like you I care passionately about our island home. I want it to be a place that we can all enjoy, one that we and our children can live and thrive in. I'm a firm believer in equality and that is what drives me to stand for the 2020 election, I will be committed full time to the best interests of the community and be proactive in my approach. I will be a voice for the working class who understands hardship and is passionate about the quality of life for all islanders. I recognise that there will be a lot to learn and some very difficult decisions to make over the next term some of which we may not all agree on, with that being said, one of my biggest assets is the ability to listen, learn and think outside the box and speak up for what I and you believe in.

I don't want to make the electorate promises then fail to deliver on any, so I can only give my views and represent your wishes moving forward, we must be realistic in terms of what can be achieved in a term but that should not prevent us taking any action at all, especially as these decisions are the things that will help make Guernsey a healthy and happy community,

I appreciate you taking the time to read my manifesto and thank you for your support and your vote

Why vote for Craig Bougourd?

Craig is: Committed, Determined, Passionate, Energetic, Open Minded,

He has: A desire to pursue the issues and ask the Relevant questions, willingness to listen, learn and seek out answers, solutions and an ability to research, scrutinise and analyse matters in order to reach informed conclusions.

Social Wellbeing

Care for Elderly People

I oppose the States, forcing elderly home owners to sell their property to help cover the cost of moving into a care home or extra care properties, as part of the supported living and ageing well Strategy. Property assets should continue to be safeguarded. There has been a strong feeling amongst islanders that houses should be protected as assets and not taken into account where people are asked to contribute towards care costs. As a community, we need to look at other ways of supporting our older community, whether this be introducing more State's funded care homes and working with States Housing and the Guernsey Housing Association (GHA) to introduce some mixed age community projects. I also feel that the States pension should be raised offering a better quality of life to our older demographic considering their past contribution to building our community.

Mental Health Service

I feel that our mental health service are under funded, under resourced and over complicated. Being referred from your GP to one department then having to go back to your GP to then be referred back to another department, when this can all be done in house. These specialist staff know the course of action to take for each individual patient however, they are battling against their own system at the best of times to the detriment of our community. Many members of our society feel let down by this service and we need to find ways to improve it for better mental health & community wellbeing and this should be prioritised as a matter of urgency.

Child Care System

Having been through the care system myself this is something I'm passionate about. In recent times I have had the opportunity to work with some individuals through GREX in an attempt to guide them into employment and apply life skills to their lives, this has taught me a lot about the residential services in terms of vision and I agree it's not to the benefit of young people to institutionalise them. The states have decided to adopt a more at home, family approach with 2 staff members and smaller clusters of YP's using rental properties and states housing. However, it is my belief there is still no transition from care to normal life for many who may never return home, I feel it would be more beneficial to create a new large home feel residential care home with additional transition flats on the site giving young people the ability to have some independence and the ability to learn life skills. However, this would also give young people immediate support should they require, assistance and guidance setting them up for more structured and fulfilling life.

Homeless

This is an issue which seems to be brushed under the carpet, but needs to be immediately addressed. Homelessness comes in various forms, YP's, single adult's, single parents and even intact families, admittedly there are various charities which do an amazing job in assisting the homeless but the demands on their resources are astronomical. In most cases there are waiting list's which indicates this is a severe problem within our community. People would not be applying for immediate refuge if they are not in immediate need of assistance, we need to do more in terms of combating this issue. One way is by possibly introducing a purpose built centre ranging from 1 - 3 bedroom apartments.

Tax & Social Security

Personal Income Tax

I believe in increasing the personal income allowance. Our current allowance is set lower than the UK and other crown dependencies. Guernsey's living cost is **35%** higher than the UK, however our allowance is less. We need to increase the personal tax allowance to assist lower income earners.

I also believe in introducing a tiered tax system, to assist lower income earners.

Sole Traders / Self Employed

Covid-19 highlighted problems with the social security system failing the self-employed. However, these problems were apparent prior to these unprecedented times. We should look to adopt a more supportive social security system for self-employed people, to avoid losing some of the more seasonal and bespoke businesses. One idea is to create a pay as you go system using the returns creator platform (ETI) for insurance contributions & tax, which can then be reconciled against audited accounts to determine an individual's liability.

This system would also be more beneficial to understand the financial position of a self-employed individual to determine if they qualify for income support from of social security in times of hardship. Unfortunately, for many self-employed, workflow can be inconsistent from one minute to the next and these individuals may fall into a position where they require some financial support but currently there is no help.

Housing

Ownership & Partial ownership

The high cost of housing in Guernsey has been a persistent problem for many years. Which has made it particularly hard for first-time buyers to get onto the housing ladder. I would like to look at further initiatives to assist first time buyers.

- **Assisting first-time buyers with deposits by a States-backed loan scheme**
 - **States Backed Community Self Build Projects in Collaboration with States Housing & Guernsey Housing Association**
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Economy

1 Unemployment

Firstly the benefits system itself is broken, and for too many people moving from benefits into work simply doesn't pay. Secondly, the back to work provision has been inadequate for a long time and has consistently underperformed and failed to break the cycle of long term dependency for many claimants. They end up being shunted around from dole queue to training room and back again. These centrally designed programmes lack the individuality of approach that is needed. The people on Incapacity Benefit receive no support at all to see whether they could do something more than simply spend the rest of their life on benefits. For too long they have been stranded on the margins of our society. These deeply entrenched problems require radical solutions and those solutions lie at the heart of the work of the Government. To make work pay we need to completely review the minimum wage to a minimum living wage and overhaul the benefits system and ensure that we achieve a smooth transition between benefits and work. Above all we need to get rid of the claim that "I'm better off on benefits". It will draw upon the best of private, voluntary and third sector expertise to deliver truly tailored support based on individual need.

2 Minimum Wage

We need to increase the minimum wage to a minimum living wage. Why should the taxpayer support employees of businesses through income support who exploit the minimum wage law. The current minimum wage set out by the states of Guernsey is **£8.50**. The current minimum wage set out in the UK is **£8.72**. The most vulnerable Guernsey man / women are expected to survive on **22p** less per hour than the UK when Guernsey's cost of living is **35%** higher than the UK. This would indicate that the minimum living wage in Guernsey is too low and needs to be reviewed and increased to a minimum living wage.

3 Nurses Pay

Healthcare staff are at the frontline of our community, whether this is out in the community or in the hospital. During the Covid-19 pandemic the Public were asking more of these staff than ever before, they are the backbone of our society and we cannot thank them enough. We should appreciate them and thank them with the wage rise they have been requesting for a considerable period of time. If elected, I would urge the states to commit to ending this dispute promptly and engage in negotiations with staff unions so they are paid what they so richly deserve.

4 Create & Revive Industries

Re-establish a States Works construction division providing work & training opportunities to residents, in addition, this division will appoint smaller resident sub-contractors creating growth & job opportunities. This Increase in positions would provide opportunities in existing Industries where the jobless would have the opportunity to pursue their dreams & aspirations. We should offer more support with on the job training, college incentives for employers and training that is available on island.

We should work to revitalise the growing industry to provide locally grown fruit & vegetables to be supplied to local supermarket franchises creating jobs for manual workers.

The exportation of Dairy produce to Supermarket franchises would help promote growth in the farming industry, creating more jobs for manual workers.

We should also look to create new Jobs through capitalising on the growing cannabis industry when legislation allows us to do so.

5 New Business Start-ups

If elected, I will be urging the states to look at assisting small business start-up's urgently. We should be encouraging small business start-ups & working with them to establish themselves, if elected, I believe it would be in the interest of the States to offer an initiative where sole traders can register with The Guernsey Registry as a Ltd entity for the first year free of charge.

6 White Van Man

This needs to be regulated to ensure that contractors are not undercutting local tradesmen through not paying income tax or social security contributions which is currently happening. I believe we should introduce a work permit system and within this system upon application contractors will also have to provide proof they are qualified and can provide some indemnity for the work that they are carrying out.

Education

When the subject of school models surfaces again I will vote in favour of what the Community & Teachers would like to see & will bring this to a public meeting for debate & take everyone's opinions on board and make a majority decision based on the facts presented by the public & education.

I would like to see the States provide a greater Further and Higher Education provision on island, this would hopefully encourage more of our young people to remain in Guernsey, ultimately ending up in gainful employment contributing to the economy and rebalancing the ageing demographic of the workforce. The overdue redevelopment of the College of FE following the merger with the GTA and IHSC forming The Guernsey Institute needs to be expedited as part of the revive and thrive strategy adopted by the current States. Development of this new establishment with fit for purpose facilities to meet the needs of the whole community should be a priority, enabling us to develop and retain skills on island.

Apprentices & Higher Education

We need to increase the minimum starting wage for apprentices to encourage more young people & adults to take these opportunities in all sectors, I also believe The States should raise the grant subsidy for the 2 year period to assist the employer in preparing that individual for skilled qualifications. Apprentices & Trainees are a vital asset to the community and we should be focusing our concentration on supporting them. With that being said, this depends on how much we value our apprentices and how much we feel they will contribute to the economy in the years to come, I feel apprentices re a vital asset to our community.

If the grant is still available for apprenticeships – then should this not be extended to any further training, i.e. Higher Education on island and be means assessed to ensure that it is affordable and available to those who need it most.

Tourism

The point of a break away is to immerse yourself in relaxation, for families, children are often one of the main considerations when planning a holiday. One problem airlines encounter is the fluctuating popularity of certain destinations – whether it be based on season or a destination has just fallen out of favour with the masses. We can all accept Guernsey for its beauty, beaches & rich heritage, however we do lack many vital pieces of infrastructure when considering a family vacation. If we are seriously trying to encourage people here, we need to spend on the infrastructure to encourage people to visit, not only for tourism but for islanders to enjoy alike. Some of these ideas will come to light under **Recreation & Entertainment, Reciprocal Health Care & New Law Reform** within my manifesto. Some of these ideas will give good reasons to come to Guernsey for a relaxing holiday and put us in a favourable light as a quality tourist destination once again benefiting Guernsey financially.

Reciprocal Health Care

The Lack of a reciprocal health agreement with the UK is contributing to deterring visitors. Over eight years ago in April 2011, the other Crown Dependencies signed Reciprocal Health Agreements with HMG which provided an entitlement to specified free health services to visitors to all the parties to the individual agreements. However, Guernsey did not sign such an agreement. This has been of concern to many islanders, particularly the lower paid, those who are retired and those with pre-existing medical conditions. The local hospitality and tourism sector also point out that visitors from the UK are disadvantaged, in comparison to those staying in other Crown Dependencies. Recently, the Committee for Employment & Social Security has been researching options to provide cover for Guernsey and Alderney residents who require medical treatment while travelling in the UK. One of the options is to negotiate a new Reciprocal Health Agreement with the UK & If elected, I would urge the states to keep moving forward on this.

Recreation & Entertainment

If elected, I would like to see the States spend some money on attractions and recreation. If we want to encourage tourism we have to we spend on the infrastructure to support it. But also for the good & wellbeing of our own community some ideas to consider would be:

A heated Indoor Water park incorporated at our current leisure centre - traditional arcade - Trampoline Park - Adventure Park - indoor skate park dedicated bike / trail parks in different areas of the island.

We could look at slowing down the island down for 1 week of the year in the peak of the summer for a staycation & party like other islands around the world celebrating Guernsey together giving everyone a much needed break. During this time we could hold a music festival bringing in acts for the duration of a week within our fortress's & other suitable iconic locations, encouraging people here to enjoy our new infrastructure's, laws & replenish the Bailiwick financially.

There are so many options to be explored & more of these will come from public opinion, but I truly believe the island needs to spend some money on its people's enjoyment, which would also help revive the tourist industry, giving attractive things to do.

Renewable Energy

Being self-sufficient in energy is our first step to providing subsidy free energy. Renewable energy is collected from renewable resources, which are naturally replenished. Through wind, solar, rain & tides, renewable energy systems are rapidly becoming more efficient and cheaper and their share of total energy consumption is increasing. As of 2019, more than two-thirds of worldwide, newly installed electricity capacity was renewable. Some places and at least two countries, Iceland and Norway, generate all their electricity using renewable energy already, and many other countries have set a goal to reach 100% renewable energy in the future. While many renewable energy projects are large-scale, renewable technologies are also suited to rural & remote areas & developing countries, where energy is often crucial in Human development. I feel these technologies are suitable for the island however, require more investigation in terms of sustainability, suitability & environmental impact. The model we adopt must be the right for our community.

Law Reform's

Bankruptcy / Regulated lending

I do not feel the current bankruptcy and unregulated lending is serving our community as it should, Citizens Advice Guernsey has said that many islanders are just one pay cheque away from being bankrupt. The charity has been lobbying politicians to make it easier for people to declare bankruptcy and make a fresh start. It is one of three key issues, along with improved guardianship and tougher consumer legislation with regulation of lenders through the Guernsey financial services commission (GFSC). Unfortunately, the current legislation traps people in a demoralising and harrowing downward spiral. It's very difficult, and almost impossible, except by using an ancient 1932 law written in French, to make yourself properly bankrupt, to wipe the slate clean. I would prompt the states to adopt these policies to help protect vulnerable members of our society.

Cannabis

Medicinal Cannabis Should be declassified & decriminalised and be available on-island for a wide set of illnesses, from multiple sclerosis, cancer. Nausea, PTSD, insomnia, mental health & wellbeing. There is also the potential to capitalise on the growing cannabis industry, which would in effect create jobs, boost tourism and create a new tax revenue. However the model we adopt is very much for public debate & opinion, I personally favour a system similar to the Canadian system. The war on cannabis has been lost and these funds and resources would be best used within the public protection unit (PPU) fighting domestic crime & child abuse.

I would urge the states to look at an amnesty for our community until the regulatory framework and legislation is implemented against the model we adopt.

Public Meetings

As I have said I present myself as a people's deputy and a voice for the people. I feel where big decisions are to be made that affect the whole community; for example education & large capital projects these should be brought to public meetings where everyone has their chance to give their opinion & share information in relation to the subject up for debate. I would like to make informed choices in the best interest of the community based on fact and what the majority would like to see providing the evidence supports it. If elected, I would hope fellow deputies would support these meetings of public debate & attend & work with me in the public's interest.

Thank you for taking the time to read my manifesto should i have not covered any of the issues that concern you or wish to know more please feel free to contact me on the details below.

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