

NEIL CAVE - ELECTION 2020 MANIFESTO

Education: Castel Primary
La Mare Secondary
Grammar School for Boys
College of Further Education
Bournemouth University

Experience: States of Guernsey: 13 years in a variety of roles within States Insurance and Advisory & Finance.
Specsavers Optical Group: 7 years in the corporate secretarial department.
Credit Suisse: 13 years in a variety of roles including becoming the Country Company Secretary.

Qualifications: Member of the Chartered Governance Institute (previously ICSA) since 1995
MSc in Corporate Governance (2009)

ABOUT ME AND WHAT I CAN BRING TO THE STATES

My experience across different sectors and my professional qualifications enable me to provide a balanced and pragmatic view for moving Guernsey forward.

With a background in corporate governance, I promise to act with integrity, sincerity and diligence for an open and accountable government to bridge the disconnect between the States and Islanders.

I was born off-island to local parents and I have effectively lived my whole life in Guernsey and feel very privileged to have done so.

I have a keen interest in local politics and a general interest in economics and statistics (from my time in the Advisory & Finance Committees Economics and Statistics unit).

Understandably with my qualifications, I also have a keen interest in good corporate governance. Unfortunately, this has been sadly lacking in the current States, with Deputies/Committees talking about the importance of good governance but then ignoring it when it doesn't fit with their preferred course of action. To be effective, good governance has to come from the top and become part of the accepted culture for an organisation/Committee.

I am also frustrated by the "spin" [no policy is ever wrong, it was "the message" that hadn't been "communicated correctly"] and lack of accountability in the States. Too much talk and strategies with no meaningful action – focusing on ideological inputs rather than on quality of life outputs.

If I am fortunate to be elected, I would do my best to hold the States to account and challenge poor governance.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Proper thought needs to be given to the direction the Bailiwick is going and what is most important to us. Is it increasing the standard of living or is it increasing the quality of life?

Key questions need to be asked: where are we trying to go? What is a good way to get there? What do we want the Island to look like in 20 years? What are the **measurable** outcomes to monitor progress towards these goals?

We are far more likely to get to a better place as a society if we have systematically thought about what a “better place” might look like.

Fundamentally, we must aim to align policies to create wealth and promote productivity (the bigger the pie, the easier everything else becomes) but not at the expense of our environment nor leave behind the less fortunate in society.

Modern economies are in a constant process of “creative destruction” [breaking things in order to provide something better] thus a meaningful safety net is required to ease the plight of those affected in this way (whilst they retrain). The only cost-efficient way to maintain the safety net is to focus aid more finely i.e. means tested benefits targeted at those who really need them.

Our route to continued prosperity is via an increase in productivity through education and up-skilling.

The lack of strategic thinking, planning and execution has held the Island back. There is no joined up approach to planning, to infrastructure such as fibre broadband to the home, to transport and to the demands of an ageing population on our health and social care systems.

To me, joined up thinking involves working across Committees rather than just within them and would, for example, include linking: environmental policy with taxes – housing with tax on empty dwellings - unemployment with education/retraining - electric bike subsidies with health.

EDUCATION

The schools need to fit our children, not the other way around. I am thus against a two-school model.

The Island needs a strategy for investing in Islanders at every stage in life.

- This must start with targeted high-quality early childhood education as the basis of efforts to create productive Islanders and afford them the best opportunities in life.
- Create programs to supplement traditional higher education; job training; specialised apprenticeships; retraining programs for workers made redundant later in life.
- Encourage continuous “up-skilling” by individuals – as this in turn creates a more robust and prosperous economy.

Consideration of the German schooling model which has the option of a more vocational stream for those for which this is the most suitable path.

The Islands capability to reskill and upskill the labour force will be a key determining factor for our continued prosperity.

Where to start? The last States has been an absolute shamble of idealism over pragmatism with a lot of “spin” added for good measure. We must focus on equality of opportunities rather than equality of outcomes. In my opinion the German model - in which non-academic education is given the same status as going to university - should have been used as the template.

Although I’m reluctant to say this, this strategy needs to go back to the drawing board to determine exactly what the Island needs. Not necessarily to revisit the 11+, but to get some consensus on what the best offering is for our children from year 1 through to joining the workforce and beyond (upskilling and retraining) in a comprehensive joined-up strategy for “Lifelong Learning” in which non-academic education is valued just as much as traditional academic education. **We need to get this right as it is the foundation for the future success of our economy.**

The upskilling and retraining would not only include local training courses but help with access to online / distance learning such as the Open University. Business/career relevant courses could be subsidised for people on lower incomes.

Find out from business what skill shortages we have or foresee – are there existing training programs that cover these skills (or need small adaptations); if not, then how do we create these training programs so that we have the right people for the right jobs. Get business and the education sector (in the largest sense of the word) working together to retrain people for jobs that are in demand in sectors that are growing.

Education and skills do not guarantee lifetime employment but higher skilled individuals, are more productive, more adaptable and more economically resilient.

The growth in University education has come from poor quality courses of little value in the business world. Many of the young have been let down by encouraging them to study for worthless degrees, when they would have been better served training in more practical areas such as plumbing, electrical works, building and carpentry (areas where we still seem to import labour) or going straight into work and studying professional qualifications whilst in employment.

The States do not necessarily have to pay for all this. There are enormous personal gains to education so it is reasonable to expect most Islanders (and/or employers) to invest in their own futures but the States should provide assistance to those who would otherwise be denied access to education or training – particularly in the cases where retraining is necessary because of redundancy later in life.

We can never promise great outcomes for all, but we should be able to promise equal opportunities for all

Private Colleges

There should be no funding of the private colleges. The States should support scholarships (for those that have been in the public system throughout their Primary education) for a few of the “most academic” children but there is no reason to fund what are effectively private businesses that can rely on the support of wealthy benefactors.

The notion that without the funding these schools would close is frankly ridiculous – like any good business, they will raise fees and cut costs accordingly. The “cost per pupil” argument is again a red herring as the marginal cost of adding an extra pupil to the state schools is zero until each classroom reaches capacity.

Schools should become transport/community hubs

Any redevelopment of a school(s) should look beyond the use of the facilities for purely school children. They should be built with ample car parking so that they can be used by the community in the evenings, weekends and during school holidays. The schools also serve as places for public events and should be designed accordingly.

Availability of CCTV and electronic access could mean that swimming pools and sports facilities are available for individuals to use. We have a crazy situation where school children are bused to Beau Sejour to use the gym. If a gym was on site, then it could also be used out of hours for the payment of a small fee - this may allow people to walk or cycle to these venues rather than drive. The children may actually want to use it during lunch breaks.

Schools should be part of the transport network - with ample parking they could be part of the park and ride scheme. There could be several bus routes in the morning and at the closure of school so that parents could either drive or walk their child to school and then take a bus to work and get a bus back to the school at the end of the school day to meet their child - these buses would then become the school buses.

When we are spending large sums of money, the buildings should incorporate flexibility for increased numbers and be versatile to get the maximum usage out of a public asset. Too often States projects are built just big enough for current usage and then soon become inadequate (or require spending on “improvements”) rather than using a bit of foresight and spending a bit more money at the outset to save money in the long term.

BUILD AND MAINTAIN A 21ST CENTURY INFRASTRUCTURE

- Fibre optic broadband must be delivered to all households as a matter of urgency. Internet access is critical to the future of the Guernsey economy.
- Proper maintenance programs for all public assets are essential – it's a false economy to cut costs in this area.

Fibre optic broadband

The lockdown has provided ample evidence of the importance digital connectivity and the need for a truly fast and reliable internet connection. Internet access is critical to the future of the Guernsey economy and fibre optic broadband is now an essential part of a 21st century infrastructure and we have fallen too far behind in speed and reliability of connectivity.

Fibre broadband should thus be delivered to all households as a matter of urgency (that is fibre-to-the-home rather than to the nearest exchange cabinet).

If necessary, the regulator must be used to apply pressure on the providers to make this happen, with a target of, for example, 5,000 households per annum until the Island is covered.

I appreciate there is a cost to the providers but that is the cost to them doing business in Guernsey. The fibre optic cable has been in the Island for over 15 years and we have fallen too far behind other jurisdictions such as Jersey in providing this for households.

I can't help but think that the focus on 5G is just a way for the telecom companies to sell more hardware.

The benefits are not just for households but for individuals who can make a living online (such as vloggers/influencers) and businesses (the pandemic has highlighted the necessity for an online presence and the ability for staff to work from home). When we hopefully return to normal, working from home should be more widely accepted by employers (and this will tie in with the environmental strategy for reducing emissions) but we need a robust comprehensive, high-speed connectivity network to facilitate this on an on-going basis.

Proper maintenance programs

It's scandalous that La Mare Secondary School is now almost unfit for purpose or that the Grammar School has been classed as no longer suitable for use as a school after just 30 years. Any new States project should be built with a view to being structurally sound for at least 60 years and should be built with 10% spare capacity to "future-proof" it to some extent.

Proper maintenance programs for all public assets should be a mandatory committee expenditure as it has been shown to be a false economy to cut costs in this area.

CREATE A WIDER TAX BASE

- Zero/ten to be made optional – double taxation treaties mean that Guernsey is potentially missing out.
- Tax empty/derelict properties – housing is too valuable a resource to be left empty.
- Tax on marine fuel.
- Increase harbour dues for cruise liners.

Taxes do two things; raise revenue and change behaviour. We tend to focus almost exclusively on the former however we should probably think more about the latter. The States should tax activities they would like to discourage. *Working and saving do not fall into that category, yet we tax these activities most heavily.* Given our environmental challenges, particularly climate change, the States ought to lean more heavily on “green taxes” such as carbon tax. Taxing pollution raises revenues so that we can tax productive activities more lightly. However, green taxes are a regressive form of tax and the impact on the less well-off needs to be considered.

Zero/ten. I would suggest zero/ten be reviewed to consider the feasibility of making it an optional tax. Double taxation treaties mean that when money is transferred to another jurisdiction taxes paid in that jurisdiction are offset by the tax paid in Guernsey. Clearly some transactions would only take place if there is zero tax in Guernsey but if there was the option for firms to pay tax on a transaction when the monies were transferred off Island then it should be considered. Any firms that do pay the optional tax should then be favourably considered in the allocation of housing licenses etc in recognition of their contribution to the Island.

Tax empty/derelict properties. There are few derelict or abandoned houses that and not only eyesores but also a waste of a valuable resource. Any tax would only come into effect if the house had not been occupied permanently for 18 months.

I would also support a tax on land that has been given planning permission but no building has been completed. I would suggest a period of three years from the purchase of the land or the granting of planning permission for the tax to start applying. I understand that a builder may need a flow of work but as we have a supply shortage, we need land to be used and discourage speculation.

Marine fuel. I fail to understand why there is no tax on marine fuel as this would be a quick and easily administered tax to implement and should be part of our “polluter pays” environmental strategy.

We should also consider increasing tax on aircraft fuel, again as a green tax.

Increase harbour dues for cruise liners – again as a form of environmental tax but also as a direct contribution to cover the expense of the staff used to help them disembark.

Goods and Services Tax. I am against this tax as this strikes me as being a very “lazy” way to raise revenue. An initial 5% level will soon rise to 7.5% then 10% as the States want to fund projects through raising this tax rather than through cost savings. I also believe that the administrative burden it will place on retailers will stifle small businesses and impact local spending. It is also a regressive tax that will hit the less well-off hardest.

CONTROL PUBLIC SPENDING

- Zero based budgeting for each Committee at least once every political term.
- Transparency on all spending – seem to be numerous QUANGOS.
- Are there overlaps where services can be streamlined?

Zero based budgeting. I would suggest that zero based budgeting should be applied on a regular basis so that a comprehensive review of all aspects of a committee's work/expenditure is considered and justified and items does not become “because we’ve always done it”.

Transparency on all spending. Regular reviews of expenditure by QUANGOS [Quasi-autonomous non-governmental organizations] that receive funding from the States. How that money is spent and how that fits in with the overall strategies. The more QUANGOS there are the more management/administrative expense is incurred to run them.

Efficiencies. There seems to be an overlap of various subcommittees (such as having health promotion units and active travel unit for schools) and a joined-up approach should be considered to avoid duplication, and more importantly save administrative costs.

There also seems to be a view of short-term, low-cost spending rather than bigger initial spending for long-term savings, for example putting gravel down in carparks (that then need resurfacing every year) rather than tarmacking them and being done with it.

I also believe there is wastage in terms of PR and “spin” for example the repainting of the recycling lorries every time there's a change in the recycling rates. The odd £500 to £1,000 here and there soon adds up and in my opinion could be better utilized.

With a zero based budget these types of expenditure would have to be justified rather than being spent because it’s “in the budget” or spent before the end of the budgetary year to avoid “losing it”.

There may be more efficient ways of doing things, for example, the Overseas Aid Committee invite organisations to submit up to 4 separate applications for consideration. This has administrative costs for collating and presenting the projects, time making decisions and paying out funds and oversight of the projects. I would suggest that the States instead make a lump sum donation to the International Red Cross and contribute an additional £50,000 for each UN emergency appeal when necessary. There would then be no need for a permanent Committee and the associated administrative costs.

I would add that no money should be paid to the more political relief organisations that now consider it part of their remit to issue statements attacking Guernsey – we are effectively funding our critics.

Consultants. Off-Island consultants should be used as a last resort. Wherever possible they should have “skin in the game”. For example, would the consultants that recommended removing the L’Ancresse sea wall be so confident in their opinions if they had to guarantee that there would be no flooding for 30 years and pay out £1m towards reinstating the wall if they were wrong?

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

- Good governance requires transparency of the decision-making process – Freedom of Information legislation would force the States into becoming more open to scrutiny.
- Third party contracts to include clauses permitting details to be made public.
- Utilise blockchain technology to engage with the public via electronic polls to get views on major decisions.

Freedom of Information Legislation

From the actions of the current States, I believe Freedom of Information legislation is the only way forward to achieve good governance and get Deputies to be fully accountable for their actions.

Freedom of information legislation will have a cost but that is the price of good governance. A committee should welcome scrutiny - they should be confident that their decision-making process was appropriate; all the assumptions made were valid; all the options available were considered; and the correct criteria was used to judge them against one another. Then be willing for that information to be published. I understand confidentiality will mean most of it won't be published but if they acted as if it were then we would have a lot more trust in our Deputies.

Ideally there would be an agreed set of parameters for every States decision. A consistent framework (not just the cost but categories such as the social, reputational and environmental impact) against which all options are evaluated to produce a ranking.

The final report should then clearly state - what the problem is that is to be solved. All the options available (including not doing anything). Why the option selected is the least worst.

No decision will please everyone but a clear explanation of the process will give the public transparency to help understand what has happened and why.

Major decisions have been made without the full facts being given to the States (let alone made public). This has been made worse by the current States effectively acting as two parties to protect one another from proper scrutiny.

Third Party Contracts

I would also ensure that all third-party contracts with the States do not have a clause restricting publication due to "commercial" or any other reason. I see no reason why the States cannot insist on this if a business wants to receive public money.

Public engagement

I would like to utilise blockchain technology to engage with the public to get views on major decisions. This technology allows people to register and vote on certain matters, this still relies on correctly phrased questions, but it would allow the States to get a proper feel for the public mood on important projects/decisions.

ENVIRONMENT

The environment is our most fundamental asset. We have a moral obligation to pass this asset on to future generations undiminished.

At the same time, we cannot afford to have an ideological view of Environmental Policy. The activities that create comfort and prosperity (e.g. transportation / heating our homes) always have some environmental costs. The logical way to balance growth and environmental responsibility is to build the price of pollution into the activities that cause it to reflect their true “social cost”.

We must respect the environment as a long-term asset. People rightly criticise States borrowing for the burden it will pass on to our children and grandchildren but reckless environmental policies will have the same effect. We are consuming what belongs to the future. In the case of climate change, we are knowingly exposing future generations to significant harms by refusing to make modest changes to our own lifestyles.

Rational people respond to prices, and rational prices should reflect the true “social cost” of any activity. However green taxes are a regressive form of tax and thus the impact for the less well-off needs to be considered.

Pollution taxes, particularly on carbon emissions, would encourage cost effective conservation; consumers and companies can respond in whatever ways makes the most economic sense to them. Any tax on pollution would also make cleaner sources of energy more economically viable. The market is a powerful mechanism for creating sane environmental policies - if we give participants the right price signals, which we have failed to do so far.

However, Guernsey does not need to lead the way or try and be the gold standard, our environmental policy/impact will be dictated by what happens in the UK and EU (designs and efficiency are determined in their legislation) we just need to be sure we won't be a dumping ground for environmentally unfriendly products.

Fundamentally we need a clear understanding of what carbon-neutral means to the Island. How is it calculated – for example does it include transport of people/freight to and from the Island? The disposal of our waste abroad? Visiting cruise ships? International flights taken by locals? The production of goods imported into the Island? The environmental impact elsewhere in the world from making any changes?

This is the first step in determining what target we are aiming for – I don't believe this is straightforward and certainly not easy.

I am wary of the carbon credits systems – this seems to be a money-making exercise by the men in the middle and very difficult to determine that all the money they take is actually used for the purposes they say it is. I would prefer that any policy that had this concept of paying to pollute was kept local i.e. used to subsidise electric cars/bikes or solar panels for the less well off in the Island – or even invested in tidal energy or trials of electric planes (which would be feasible for flights between the islands).

Transport policy

Even if public transport is reliable, modern life is more complicated than just getting to and from work and thus private transport is essential (even for bicycle users). The topography and aging nature of the populations means a “short” journey as the crow flies is not necessarily that simple.

So much anti-car sentiment is clouding the judgement of decisions being made – private transport [even environmentally friendly] of one form or another is a part of modern living and sufficient space must be allocated for its use. The current planning default of don't put in car parking spaces and people won't use cars is a naïve and an illogical way of “tackling” the problem, all it does is move the problem somewhere else such as on street parking. Planning decisions should take into account people's requirement to own and park their vehicles; if anything, planning policy should be based upon giving more parking spaces to new houses and ensure these are in front of the house to allow access to electric charging points. Even if future vehicles are carbon neutral they will still have to sit somewhere.

Sadly, there is a lot of “virtue signalling” around the environment – it's seems ok to use a bicycle and criticise car users but this judgement doesn't take into account the individuals whole carbon footprint e.g. one long distance flight is greater than any person's annual car use in Guernsey. The production of electric vehicles isn't as environmentally friendly as we are led to believe – we've just moved the problem to other countries.

We need to be wary of investing too much too soon in electric vehicle technology. Do we have enough capacity to generate all the power needed to be entirely electric (and how exposed would we be to a power cut)? It may be that hydrogen fuel cells or some other technology will eventually be the way forward.

Renewable Energy

New builds should include solar panels and small wind turbines (helix designs are fairly unobtrusive) and brown water recycling wherever possible.

If we ever build a deep-water berth, tidal power should be incorporated into its design.

Organic Farming

Guernsey has the ability to become completely organic. This would need discussions with the farming community but with the benefits for both farmers and the wider community becoming more widely accepted I hope this would be viable. We should gather seaweed to use as a fertilizer to start reducing our need for man-made alternatives.

I don't believe in subsidies, but the States must support the dairy industry and protect the Guernsey Cow.

Green Field Sites

Every green field site we build on today is lost forever for future generations. We must target brown field sites and derelict dwellings as starting points for development. The green field sites in the North of the Island are particularly important, not only for our wellbeing but for wildlife.

REVIVE & THRIVE

- Create a three-story underground car park at North Beach – the top being level with harbour-side wall / toilet block. The top story would be a communal area and “reserve” parking area.
- Move cruise ship disembarkation point to harbour terminal – increase footfall through Town.
- Revive Fortress Guernsey to tie-in with opportunities from the forthcoming WWII anniversaries and documentaries.
- Expand the West Coast cycle path.
- Create a Marine Conservation Zone off the West Coast to incorporate Sea Bass breeding grounds.

The Eastern Seaboard Plan contains too many ‘nice to have’ rather than ‘need to have’ items necessary to revitalise the economy. My proposals would be:

1. Make the North Beach an underground multi storey carpark

Excavate the North Beach so that it has a lower level car park underneath the current level and create a third tier, level with the top of the current harbour side wall that would be used as either a communal space or additional parking. If the States are bold enough, the underground parking should extend across the whole area including where the freight is currently parked (although it could only be underground for one level) and this area would be separate for use exclusively for harbour workers and day trippers to Herm & Sark thus freeing up space in the harbour area for other uses / give more space for cruise passengers.

As well as additional underground parking the flexibility of the covered top will create more space for social events such as Liberation Day with the option of additional parking at other times e.g. Christmas shopping.

Hopefully local contractors would be used.

1a. Build a multistorey carpark at the Odeon

The top of the car park would be level with the road at the back and dug down from there to create possibly three levels of parking. The roof of the top level would be grassed to make a communal space. The sides of the car park would be landscaped so it was not a concrete wall for residents.

Creating extra parking in Town may be seen to be anti-environment but my hope would be two-fold:

- Firstly, extra parking would revitalise Town and help maintain/increase footfall and encourage local spending.
- Secondly, the availability of parking should avoid the need to drive around to find spaces or have to move and repark from short term spaces thus reducing emissions. It should also remove traffic from the centre of Town.

States planning policy has been to concentrate offices and retail in Town and so it makes sense to provide parking for those workers and customers. If we don’t do something soon the vibrancy of Town will be lost and possibly never recover.

2. Move cruise ship disembarkation point to harbour terminal

A lot of expense and manpower is used to guide the cruise passengers from the Albert Pier. It would make more sense if the cruise passengers disembarked at the harbour terminal. The visitors would be encouraged by the Visit Guernsey personnel to walk through Town to get to the bus terminus to get the circular bus route – the increased footfall can only help retailers. The harbour would also have more room for coaches and Le Petit Train to pick up passengers.

3. Revive Fortress Guernsey

The Island is missing out on potential visitors from the forthcoming anniversaries (every 5 years) marking both the start and end of the Second World War that will inevitably take place up until the 100th anniversary of the end of the war. There are now numerous TV documentaries highlighting Guernsey's unique position in the war and the extensive fortifications here and thus an opportunity to tie in with these programmes is being missed.

Guernsey could exploit this market by restoring and opening up the different types of bunker, for example, the entire network at Fort Houmet. If nothing else the program would stop these fortifications falling into disrepair and becoming unusable.

A specialist tour company could be used to advertise historical military holidays in the Island. I would envisage that the tour operator would have special access to certain bunkers as a unique selling point for the tours (using local tour guides). Holidays of varying length could be offered with the longer tours incorporating Alderney.

4. Expand West Coast Cycle Path

If we have a large number of unemployed following the pandemic, I would suggest employing some to widen and extend the coastal path. The West Coast is a major selling point for tourism and a more extensive walking/cycle path should be seriously considered for this reason.

Currently the West Coast path is approximately 1 metre wide and this is not suitable for cyclists and walkers to mix. Wherever possible the path should be widened to about 3 metres. Ways to extend/join-up the path should be investigated to make as much of it as possible a designated off-road path along the coast.

A longer-term goal would be to try and make a cycle path along the coast along the South Coast cliffs (all be it for the more adventurous cyclist).

5. Create a Marine Conservation Zone on the West Coast to incorporate the Sea Bass breeding grounds.

The fish population requires protection and a marine reserve would give the population the chance to mature and increase. I would compensate fisherman with tapered payments over five years.

After five years the fish and crustacean population should have recovered enough to make fishing outside of the reserve viable. I would also sink boats around the outskirts and within the reserve to protect it from illegal trawling and create opportunities for recreational wreck fishing on the outskirts and diving within the reserve.

As fish are economically a "common good" (i.e. no one owns them), the cost of this could come from the Overseas Aid Budget as by preserving and increasing fish stocks we are helping the whole sea fishing industry.

A brief summary of my views on other topics:-

I would support:	I am against:
Maintaining L'Ancrese sea wall	Goods & Services Tax
Extending airport runway	Development on Green Field sites
Assisted dying	
Investigation of land reclamation around Mont Cuet	
Medical use of cannabis (undecided about wider use)	

L'Ancrese Sea Wall

I support the maintenance of this sea wall. It seems contradictory to have an environmental policy based on rising sea levels to then remove a major sea wall from our infrastructure.

Airport Runway Extension

I would support an extension to the runway primarily because air links are critical to the Island. If we restrict the options for airlines our presence will diminish and we will become a satellite to Jersey. It's not so much "build it and they will come" it's more "if we don't build it, they won't be able to come".

A longer runway would provide extra safety and allow the airport to function in foggier conditions than it currently can.

Assisted Dying

When private behaviour does not affect the rest of us, then we ought to let individuals decide what is appropriate and what is not.

I personally would like to be able to have some say in my ultimate demise. I would like to have the choice of how I go and give these instructions before that time arrives so that I can go painlessly and with dignity at the time of my choosing. I do not want to be in a position whereby I have no meaningful engagement with anyone and rely on someone feeding me and taking me to the toilet or any other possible situations where I have no quality of life and I've been kept alive for no other reason than I can.

I realise this might offend people's moral reasonings, but I don't feel there is any need to keep people alive against their wishes especially if they are in pain or where they are no longer fully 'compos mentis' [sound mind, memory, and understanding] with no quality of life.

Obviously, there would be safeguards, such as living wills, to ensure that life is not taken without proper authority and protection for medical staff.

Land Reclamation

With population pressures and a finite area of land I believe consideration should be given to land reclamation, possibly off Mont Cuet. I would like an investigation of tides and currents so that any proposed reclamation would come with an environmental impact assessment.

I believe that even if there is no predetermined use for the reclaimed land, we should start the reclamation process by using baled inert waste (if this became part of our waste strategy) as it might take decade(s) to create any meaningful area. The key is to start this process sooner rather than later so that we have the option, whether that be for a proper sewage treatment plant, new airport, extra housing or just recreational activities.

Cannabis Use

I fully support medical use of cannabis and CBD if prescribed by a doctor.

However, the recreational use of cannabis is something I have some concerns about, especially for the under 25's. Although more research is still needed, there is some suggestion that there is possible impact on brain development when used during adolescence (memory and learning problems) but it's unclear if these effects are permanent.

I understand the economic argument – cost savings, revenue generation but I would like more details of where this has happened in other parts of the world – social impact / under-age use (effect on their education) / use “hard” drugs / black market to avoid tax – and if there are long term effects from regular use and the additional cost of treatment for drug misuse.

My understanding is that there are different strengths of cannabis available (dependent on the amount of THC) - would all strengths be available and if not, would there be a black market for the stronger strains.

Ultimately, we will need a proper discussion based on all the information and experiences from other jurisdictions before deciding to relax the current laws.

OTHER ITEMS

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The only way to keep prices down is to increase supply.

With this aim I would suggest that the States need to:

1. Consider utilizing empty States sites (or old hotel sites) to create:

a) a bigger supply of specialist retirement/sheltered housing for older people. These should be of sufficient size for them to feel comfortable and entertain family. It is important for the accommodation to be spacious and secure with plenty of parking to encourage people to give up their homes and make it is easy for family to visit. Too often this accommodation is seen as a place where an individual needs little space and will only have one car, the option to entertain family and friends is overlooked and I believe is off-putting for people who see themselves missing out and becoming isolated as a result (I would suggest that these sites should have a Community Centre for that reason).

and

b) flats/apartments for single parents which would have a creche on site to allow the parent to continue their education or work – having a child should not be seen as a way of getting a States house.

2. Introduce a tax on empty dwellings. Please see my suggestions on creating a wider tax base.

3. Undertake a comprehensive analysis of the current housing stock to determine our housing needs – it should be a pyramid from manor houses down to bedsits – to ensure the houses being built are what is needed i.e. not too many first time buyer houses are built without building the three or four bedroom houses that are needed to allow families to move into.

Our inability to keep building enough houses to match demand has pushed up rents to excessive levels. That is why we must consider a land reclamation project to give us room to have housing built to reasonable standards and not crammed in to make a quick buck / meet demand.

BUILD AN EFFICIENT SOCIAL SAFETY NET

As previously mentioned, capitalism is a constant process of “creative destruction” [*breaking things in order to provide something better*] thus a meaningful safety net is required to ease the plight of those affected in this way (whilst they retrain).

- The only cost-efficient way to maintain the safety net is to focus aid more finely i.e. means tested benefits targeted at those who really need them.
- But having a child shouldn't be a lifestyle choice to get a States house.

Social Care – unfortunately there is no such thing as a free care system – we either pay now or pay (sell assets) later; every solution is either unfair, unpopular or expensive and often a blend of all three. All too often people feel that if you put in and contribute, you get less than your fair share. Whilst we all support a welfare state, it has to ensure that those who look after themselves and families are rewarded not penalised.

WASTE STRATEGY

This needs to be brought back onto the agenda so that a comprehensive strategy can be created in good time before the current contracts run out. Our current policy relies on the use of thousands of plastic bags which seems at odds with our carbon neutral environment policy aims.

If this strategy is not fully discussed and agreed in good time we will once again find ourselves in a position where our hands are tied like the last time this unpopular item was kicked down the road until the Island effectively had no options left.

It is important that we have time for a thorough debate and a “least worst” decision be made without any consequential U-turns. I would suggest that a baling plant for inert waste be considered as part of this new strategy so that we can use it for land reclamation.

Reclamation Yard - as part of the waste strategy I would also recommend that the Island has a fully functioning reclamation yard to give Islanders the opportunity to recycle/upcycle things that are currently being dumped. It is wrong that one organisation gets to say what is recycled or dumped (I understand that they can have priority but if they do not want an item then it should be placed somewhere where it can be used by someone else) e.g. it may not see any value in CD's but that shouldn't mean that someone else cannot have the option to use them.

A team could visit house demolitions to “save” useable items for sale from the reclamation yard.

There are numerous other issues that need discussing for which there is not room here. Please feel free to raise them with me by email, phone or Facebook.

I don't have all the answers to the Islands problems but I will commit to seeking out the opinions of those more knowledgeable on specific items to help me better understand them and do my best to ensure the best outcome for the Island.

I hope you exercise your right to vote and I would be most grateful if one of them would be for me. I won't let you down.