

# TOWN OF RAMSEY GENERAL ELECTION

Thursday April 24th 2008

A general election for the election of six members of the Ramsey Town Commission for the north and six members for the south ward will be held on Thursday April 24<sup>th</sup>. Poll cards will be provided to all registered voters.

## PROVEN SERVICE TO THE TOWN

## YOUR CANDIDATES

### RICHARD RADCLIFFE



**Richard** is an investment manager with Anglo Irish Bank. Prior to joining Anglo he worked for The Isle of Man Bank and Dutch merchant bank MeesPierson. He is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Bankers, an Associate of the Institute of Financial Accountants and a Member of the Securities Institute. He was first elected to the Commission in 1984 and has the longest record of service on the Commission in the history of the town. He has had the honour of serving as Chairman of the Commission in 1993/94. He has been Lead Member with responsibility for Finance and Establishment for 21 years. He is a **member of the Isle of Man Sports Council; is a regular competitor in the London Marathon and helps in the organisation of the National Week events** in the town. He regards serving the town as an honour and accordingly does not claim any attendance or travel allowance.

### GEOFF QUAYLE



**Geoff** was born and lived in Ramsey all his life. He is a retired Bank Manager, first elected to the Commission in 1994. He has had the honour of serving as Chairman on four occasions and he has been the Lead member for Works and Development for nine years. He is a Community Governor of Albert Road School where he successfully instigated the process that saw the Arts Council incorporate a **Performance Theatre** in the new School, achieved by quiet diplomacy and a sound economic case. He is involved with several local service charities. He instigated and organises the **Ramsey Lantern Parade** and the **Ramsey Heartstart Initiative**. Geoff worked closely with Yamaha over several months to ensure a significant presence in the Town for the Centenary TT with the economic benefits that went with it. This saw the Commissioners, staff and the Chamber of Trade all **working closely together for the benefit of the Town**

### KEVIN CROWE



**Kevin** is a Manxman; born and bred in Ramsey. He has a long record of public service; he was a **member of the Ramsey Lifeboat crew for 20 years** and has been a member of Ramsey Town Commissioners for 22 years. During his time as a commissioner he has served as Chairman of the Health and Works; Housing; Parks and Leisure committees. He has also served on the Finance Committee. Kevin was Chairman of the Board in the 1998/9 civic year. He has represented the board on the committees of the Royal Manx; Yn Chruinnaght and is presently chairman of the Ramsey Endowments Committee. During this period Kevin gained substantial knowledge of legal matters and the running of the town; he wishes to continue to use this knowledge for the benefit of the town.

## THE TOWN OF RAMSEY

**The Commission is charged with the management of the assets that the Town owns and the provision of services to the people.** Some of the key facts relating to the town are:

- The population of the Town is **7,309** (2006 census)(**7322**- 2001 census)
- There are 3,300 households in the town
- The estimated value of the assets owned by the Town is £65,000,000
- The total turnover for the Town is in excess of £7,500,000; of this £2,200,000 relates to rate-borne expenditure.
- The administration and maintenance of the Town's assets is effected through a multi-skilled staff of 50, led by Town Clerk and Chief Executive Peter Whiteway.
- **The Commissioners that are elected at this election will be effectively the board of directors of the Town and responsible for the management of its affairs and finances for the next four years.**
- **Much of the work of the Commission is in the public domain.** However, we are conscious that the media have limited space/time available to fully report the public business of each Town, Village or Parish. **To make such information much more readily available** a web site is the course of being built; this will be on-line during the current year.

## HOUSING

**Housing is the main responsibility of the Commission.** Over the past 24 years the Commission has been active in refurbishing and replacing the Town's housing stock. The replacement of the Lezayre Housing Estate is by far the most ambitious scheme to be undertaken by the Commission. The timescale for the work on the estate itself was shortened from ten years to five due to the Commissioners being able to secure the co-operation of DOLGE and the Treasury. **This is just one example of how the Commissioners have over the years; through face to face meetings; been able to effect a positive result for the Town.** The project has involved the building of transit units; Close ny Chibbyr Ghlass was the first such scheme; Faaie Wyllin has been completed; whilst Yew Tree Apartments at Walpole Drive are nearing completion. Having put much time and effort into the project, it is our wish to remain on the board to see the re-development of Lezayre Housing Estate through to its conclusion. **The scheme was highlighted by DOLGE at a recent seminar as an example of how a scheme should be managed; with tenants kept fully informed of what was happening by means of a regular Newsletter and being given the opportunity to have their ideas incorporated into it where possible.**

The Commission has been successful in obtaining approval for some smaller capital schemes that have enabled it to install central heating; new doors; new windows and better insulation at a large number of properties. A further scheme is about to begin. Being able to fund such scheme from capital means more of the maintenance allowance is available for ongoing repairs and replacements.

## FUTURE EXPANSION OF THE TOWN

The cost of providing services has risen sharply in recent years, refuse collection, energy and building material cost inflation has been markedly above the headline rate of consumer price inflation. The transfer of costs from Central to Local Government has also had to be absorbed. The provision of new facilities inevitably involves extra ongoing maintenance costs. Due to a lack of increase in the rateable value of the town these increases in costs have resulted in the commission having to defer projects that it would have liked to progress for the benefit of ratepayers; **as the need to contain rate increases to the minimum is accepted by all in the current environment of rising food and energy costs and the impact on those on low incomes who do not pay tax but have to pay rates..** If elected, we shall continue to ensure that the Town's finances are managed correctly.

**The West Ramsey Plan** has finally been completed. The time taken to bring this to fruition by the planners was excessive. It is our opinion that the planners' time should be spent on the drafting of area strategic plans. The consideration of local developments; other than very large scale developments would be better dealt with by the Local Authority. As part of the plan, business park use is allowed on part of Ballachrink; such development would bring much needed employment to the town; **we shall continue to work with our MHKs towards this end.**

We support the development of the area covered by the plan provided that surface water drainage and flood defences that cover every foreseeable eventuality are put into place first. It is disappointing that the requirement for Pooidhooie Road to be extended to service this area during its development and afterwards has been removed. This means that Greenlands Avenue and Lezayre Housing Estate will remain the sole access to the area during the motorcycle race periods.

The Town needs the provision of new employment opportunities and affordable housing to give it a more balanced demographic profile.

## **QUEEN'S PIER**

Our opinion regarding the pier remains exactly as it was when Richard wrote the petition that led to the founding of the Friends of the Queen's Pier. The latest survey; to which Richard was a contributor; reinforced the view given by that petition; namely that **the pier is an important part of the heritage of both the Town and the Island and should be refurbished.** It is a registered building but no enforcement action has been taken; it is a concern that one Government Department will apparently not take enforcement action against another. Hopefully something positive will come from the latest Tynwald initiative.

## **IRIS**

**The Commission has been involved in discussions with the political members of the Department of Transport.** It is known that IRIS as originally envisaged will not progress. New technology means that regional schemes are now a viable option. A scheme for the North of the Island has been designed and will be progressed subject to land purchase for the treatment works being agreed. The depositing of raw sewage in Ramsey Bay will become a thing of the past.

## **CAR PARKING**

It is recognised generally that Ramsey has a parking problem and several years ago Geoff and Richard met the then Minister of Tourism on site to propose such a development which it was hoped would incorporate a motor cycle museum. The business case for the provision of a multi-storey car park and combined bus and tram station has been finalised and approved. Work on the scheme is ongoing and approval has been received for the design work to begin; it is expected that this will take approximately one year to complete. Due to the involvement of three Departments of Government and the Commission this has been a complex project and therefore more complex and time consuming than if just one body had been involved.

## **STREET LIGHTING – CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION**

There is an ongoing programme for the improvement of the street lighting in the Town. Parliament Street has been improved in terms of street lighting and decorative lighting for the Christmas period. Some small areas require attention to complete the programme. In addition to improving street lighting closed circuit television coverage is to be expanded and improved; in particular it will aid the police in the identification of miscreants. It has so far proved to be a wise investment acting as a deterrent to the various forms of anti social behaviour. **The Commission has worked closely with the Police and we are in favour of this continuing.**

## LEISURE FACILITIES

The Town's facilities for the young are now the envy of the rest of the Island. The skate park and new water feature in the Mooragh Park have proved to be very popular; drawing in large numbers of visitors from outside of the Town. **The ideas of the young people of the Town were incorporated into the skate park where possible**, taking into account advice received from operators and professional skaters from the UK. **We support the proposal to incorporate a young persons facility (The Shed) into any multi-storey car park/transport hub development.**

It is now time for some attention to be paid the needs of the older generation; the leisure survey will give a good indication of their leisure priorities. The provision and management of such facilities may be best provided by way a joint venture with Departments of Government which have a responsibility in this regard. The most cost effective route should be pursued; to ensure best use of public money; whether raised by way of rates or taxation.

## MEDICAL SERVICES

We are very pleased to note that greater specialist use is being made of the Cottage Hospital, something recommended some five years ago in a paper we handed to the then Minister. Ophthalmic operations and endoscopy are currently undertaken and we would welcome any further extension of specialist disciplines. The facilities ensure that it provides a high quality patient experience with the added benefit that it provides a positive environment that enhances the working lives of the people who work in it. Using the Cottage has enabled the Health Services to add significantly to its capacity to treat additional clients successfully. Out of hours services have been a source of concern but as we understand that most calls for this service would normally be classified as see within 4-8 hours a single session of 4hours on a weekend and Bank Holiday would allow most of the weekend "rush" be dealt with and cost perhaps a tenth of having a full time Doctor. However, this would be subject to negotiation and unlikely in the short term.

## PEVERIL PLOT – SWIMMING POOLS

The Peveril Plot was chosen as the site for the new swimming pool. Under the terms of the deal that allowed the new swimming pool to be sited there the town will have the existing swimming pool transferred into its ownership. **A survey is being conducted by the Commission**; in conjunction with Manx Sport and Recreation and the Arts Council; to ascertain exactly what facilities are identified as being needed for sporting and leisure activities. This will give valuable information when it comes to deciding the future use or uses of the existing swimming pool site and the vacant areas on the Peveril Plot. We think it essential that public money is not wasted on duplicating facilities already in existence or those that are to be provided by other agencies. **We believe that it is essential that Town extracts the best value from its assets**; this does not mean simply monetary value; it must take into account social value also.

The Town has no further use for its yard on Old River Road; we continue to be in favour of this being sold for development. This would raise capital to repay outstanding borrowing and provide much needed rate income for the town. It is an ideal site for a corporate headquarters and we hope that it can be used for that purpose; ideally to bring new employment in.

## HARBOUR

**We continue to support the provision of a water retention scheme / marina within Ramsey harbour.** The failure of the Dean & Dyball scheme appears to have sent out the message that Ramsey did not want investment; something that affects us to this day. For the avoidance of doubt; the commissioners voted by 8 votes to 4 to continue with this scheme; but the vote was lost in Tynwald. The schemes in Douglas and Peel have both been catalysts for investment in the areas adjacent to the harbours. Our favoured scheme would involve that part of the harbour basin alongside Old River Road; as envisaged in proposals from the 1970s and 1980s. However, all options will be **subject to public consultation before any decision is made.**

## **RELATIONSHIP WITH GOVERNMENT**

**We have always tried to work with Government Departments to effect change;** preferring negotiation to confrontation. This can be a very frustrating enterprise; with the proposed multi-storey car park and combined bus and tram station a case in point. Recently Richard has been involved in meetings with the Minister for Tourism and Transport and the Chamber of Trade to map out a way to help to reduce any negative effects of the temporary closure of the M.E.R. northern line, the jewel in its crown and Geoff will shortly be meeting with the Arts Council to consider possible activities. Whilst it is disappointing that the situation was allowed to arise, the Minister is to be commended on his very positive response to the concerns raised.

**We are always willing to lobby Ministers and Department members to effect change when we are not happy with policy.** One example was in the siting of the new schools, which will create a campus environment at the start of the next school year, rather than the two separate locations originally envisaged by the Department of Education. The campus arrangement will make it much easier for parents to bring children to school and collect them from school in addition it will considerably reduce the stress when a child moves from one school to the next. The arrangement means that certain school facilities do not need to be duplicated; thus saving public money.

After discussions with DOLGE the Commissioners successfully opposed the siting of a civic amenity site off Gardeners Lane.

## **TOWN CENTRE**

The Commission has two representatives on the Ramsey Chamber of Trade. Relations between the two bodies are good and we have worked to try to encourage inward investment. The recent planning approvals given for the East Street / Parliament Street area and on the Mooragh Estate are a breath of fresh air. However, we are extremely disappointed that Douglas has been given priority for monies from the new Regional Development Fund. Ramsey has a much greater need of Government investment in its Town Centre than Douglas and the lack of investment from Government in the Town needs to be redressed before more businesses are lost to it. **It is essential that we now produce a strategy to revitalise the Town Centre taking full advantage of any Government initiatives that are available.**

This matter was recently taken up with the town's MHKs at one of our regular meetings with them.

## **SUMMARY**

The past twenty four years have seen many challenges and changes. Undoubtedly many more lie ahead and we hope to be able to play a small part in facing them. We want Ramsey to be a thriving and attractive environment for people to live and work in. **Standing still is not an option, we can only go forwards or backwards; our enthusiasm for progress remains undiminished.**

We thank you for taking the time to read this leaflet. Please use your votes on April 24th regardless of whether you wish to vote for us or not.

If you require transport to the polling station please call 814370; 813690 or 814868.

## **PROVEN SERVICE TO RAMSEY**

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