

TOWN OF RAMSEY GENERAL ELECTION

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 26th**. Poll cards will be provided to all registered voters.

PROVEN SERVICE TO THE TOWN

YOUR CANDIDATES

RICHARD RADCLIFFE



Richard 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 began his career with the Isle of Man Bank; then went on to work as investment manager for the ABNAMRO Group and finally as a mutual fund manager for Anglo Irish Bank. First elected to the Commission in 1984 he has the **longest record of service** on the Commission in the history of the town. He had the honour of serving as Chairman in 1993/94. He has been Lead Member with responsibility for Finance and Establishment for 25 years. He has served on the **Ramsey Regeneration Committee** since its inception. He has been a member of **Isle of Man Sport** (formerly Sports Council) since 1998 and is the secretary of **Ramsey AFC**. He was a coordinator for the **Commonwealth Youth Games**. He became the treasurer of the **League of Friends of Ramsey and District Hospitals** in 2011; following the sad death of Howard Penrose.

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 served as the Lead member for Works and Development for ten 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**.

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), there are 3,300 households.
- The estimated net value of the assets owned by the Town is £70,000,000

- The total turnover for the Town is in excess of £8,000,000; of this £2,400,000 relates to rate-borne expenditure.
- The administration and maintenance of the Town's assets is effected through a multi-skilled staff of 47, 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 availability of space and time to provide the public with information regarding the business of the commission. The commission has a website that provides some key facts for ratepayers.

HOUSING

Housing is the main responsibility of the Commission. Over the past 28 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 building works were completed on time and on budget. The failure of some building blocks in the first phase of the development was a most unwelcome setback. A financial settlement has been reached with the manufacturers and remedial works are now ongoing. It was a great disappointment that such a problem should arise and cause inconvenience to the tenants of these properties. During our time on the board we have been involve in many projects such as the building of Close ny Mooragh, Close ny Chibbyr Ghlass, Faaie Wyllin and Yew Tree Apartments at Walpole Drive. Having put much time and effort into the project, it is their wish to remain on the board to see the re-development of Lezayre Housing Estate through to its conclusion.

The management of the schemes mentioned above and the board's property maintenance template have received high praise from government; the property management template has now been adopted as best practice by government and other authorities.

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 kitchen replacement scheme is about to begin. The ability to fund such schemes from capital means that more of the maintenance allowance is available for ongoing repairs and replacements.

The dramatic cut to government revenues means that the housing deficiency will have to be cut in the near future. Rents have risen at above the rate of inflation for the past four years; but continuing this will inevitably cause the greatest pain to the families of workers whose incomes are just above the threshold for assistance from the Department of Social Care (which sets the rent levels). It is inevitable that rents will become directly linked to the ability to pay of the tenants and we would not argue against such a method of fixing rents; provided that rents did not exceed the amount needed to cover the costs of providing the housing.

FUTURE EXPANSION OF THE TOWN

The cost of providing services has risen sharply in recent years; 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; especially in respect of refuse disposal 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. Some projects could be deferred no longer; station road car park has had a major refurbishment project completed recently; within budget and ahead of schedule. Works on the main driveway in Mooragh Park will be undertaken in the spring. We are acutely aware of the need to keep rate rises to an absolute minimum despite the effect of inflation and transferred costs. Family incomes are being squeezed by historically high consumer price inflation whilst in most industries pay freezes are in place. **If elected, we shall continue to seek more cost effective ways of managing the work of the commission to ensure that the Town's finances are managed correctly.**

PLANNING

The present planning system is not in our opinion working as it should. The time taken to complete the West Ramsey Plan and Island Area Plans has been 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. We shall press our MHKs to bring in legislation that would put first stage planning in the hands of local authorities. Those authorities not willing or able to employ a planning officer would buy these services from the larger, functioning authorities.

As part of the West Ramsey Plan, business park use is allowed on part of Ballachrink. We believe that planning should ensure that economic development is spread around the island; not concentrated around the outskirts of Douglas. We want to see Ballachrink developed to provide employment opportunities for the people of Ramsey; **we shall continue to work with our MHKs towards this end.** The town needs new employment if its demographic profile is to become more balanced.

We were disappointed that the Dandara Group was allowed to amend the road layout along Gardener's Lane; from that originally envisaged in the West Ramsey Plan. This means that traffic pressure will continue to adversely affect Greenland Avenue and Lezayre Housing Estate during the motorcycle race periods. It is very disappointing the developers have been allowed to tear down hedgerows; despite their preservation being a condition written into the West Ramsey Plan and subsequent planning consents. It is obvious that planning enforcement needs to become the responsibility of local authorities. One Douglas based officer cannot conceivably cover the whole of the island.

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. It is a registered building and quite how a planning inspector could allow important elements to be removed and the structure then to be left for an indeterminate period is open to conjecture. Such works would not have been allowed to a privately owned registered building. We remain sceptical that a full refurbishment will ever occur; what has happened could as easily be the first step to eventual demolition as to refurbishment. A full refurbishment of the first section of the pier would have made a definite statement of intent. We hope sincerely that our scepticism is ill founded.

Sewerage

The commission was involved in discussions with government for some time. We are delighted that a scheme for the North of the Island has been designed and will be progressed on land at Balladoole. The depositing of raw sewage in Ramsey Bay will ultimately become a thing of the past. The Water Authority has given notice that its agency arrangement with the commission is to be ended in 2012. This will have financial and human resource implications for the commission. If elected we shall work to ensure that the effects on the rate payers and staff are minimised.

CAR PARKING

Car parking has been a concern for many years. The loss of 30% of government's income means that the construction of a multi-storey car park simply cannot be financed for the foreseeable future. Maximising the number of spaces in the current parking areas is being addressed by the commission, the Regeneration Committee and the Department of Infrastructure. We favour the introduction of kerbing alongside the harbour and along Queen's Promenade which at present gives an unappealing first impression of the town for visitors. We do not favour the introduction of charging for parking, the Portas Report (for the UK government) states quite clearly that charging is very negative for retailers.

STREET LIGHTING – CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION

The regeneration scheme will give the opportunity to try new low voltage lighting systems that will enhance the areas covered. There are many attractive lighting schemes that could be utilised; dependent upon the cost. There will be an opportunity to effect a phased replacement of the aging Christmas lighting that is suspended above

Parliament Street at present. Modern projection lights could provide displays in keeping with the time of year e.g. motorcycle related during the TT.

Closed circuit television coverage has been expanded and improved; it has been successful in aiding 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. Perhaps the biggest draw is the new Buffalo Bowling facility. We are delighted that the commission was able to reach agreement with the directors of Buffalo Bowling and welcome their investment into the town.

The commission accepted the 2002 – 2012 Sporting Strategy and has acknowledged the benefits to the people of a healthier lifestyle. The provision of adult fitness equipment in the Mooragh Park has been a great success. Other local authorities are now following Ramsey's lead. We believe that encouraging healthier, more active lifestyles is of benefit to society as a whole and that investing money in facilities can be justified.

MEDICAL SERVICES

We are very pleased to note that greater specialist use is being made of the Cottage Hospital, something recommended several years ago in a paper we handed to the then Minister. The new Martin Ward is a wonderful addition to the hospital. Major works are soon to be started on further enhancement of the facilities. The hospital is the provider of endoscopy services for the island. We should all be proud of the hospital and its dedicated staff. 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.

SWIMMING POOL – OLD RIVER ROAD

The new swimming pool is proving popular with residents and non-residents alike. The budgetary cuts imposed by government mean that financial support has been reduced, forcing operational changes to be made. The commission has no say in the running of the pool but is fully aware that cuts and changes to services are never popular. **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 initially raise capital to repay outstanding borrowing, or pay for a low cost sports hall. It is an ideal site for a corporate headquarters and we hope that it can be used for that purpose; ideally to bring much needed new employment into Ramsey.

HARBOUR

We continue to support the provision of a water retention scheme / marina within Ramsey harbour. The schemes in Douglas and Peel have both been catalysts for investment in the areas adjacent to those harbours. Our favoured scheme would involve that part of the harbour basin alongside Old River Road; as envisaged in proposals from the 1970s (Leslie Salts) and 1980s (Flagstone). 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; but it is the only way to have the views of the townspeople kept to the forefront of the minds of the politicians in the government. We have good working relationships with the town's MHKs and if elected, will continue to work closely with them for the benefit of the townspeople.

We are always willing to lobby Ministers and Department members to try to effect change when we are not happy with policy.

TOWN CENTRE

The Commission and the Chamber of Trade each have two members of the Ramsey Regeneration Committee. The committee for Ramsey has been very active and was the first to secure monies from the fund established by Tynwald. The Dyke Starkey mural in East Street was the first small project to be completed; this helped to change an eyesore into a popular open space. Following on from the lanes the first major works will be undertaken in the area surrounding the Court House. The area identified as being the Heart of Ramsey in the extensive public consultation exercise. The works when completed will provide a much enhanced ambience for the people visiting the area. We favour works being undertaken on the market square that would improve the ambience there; whilst retaining some parking provision and allowing for a properly managed market to return to its natural home.

TOWN HALL AND LIBRARY

When the current town hall was built it was with the intention of it becoming the focal point for public services. To this end we welcome the decision that the Police Station is to be sited there. This will be beneficial financially to both the police and the commission, but more importantly will bring about a much closer working relationship.

A review is being undertaken of the library service and how it can be improved to embrace new technological developments and provide a more welcoming environment for young and old alike. The days of dusty racks of books and silence are over.

SUMMARY

Our time on the board has seen many challenges and changes. Loss making enterprises were closed and properties leased to private sector providers. The town boundary was extended; wheelie bins were introduced, the former tip at Poyll Dhooie was transformed into a nature reserve and the new town hall was built. Many more challenges and changes lie ahead and we hope to be able to play a small part in facing them during the next four years. We want Ramsey to be a thriving and attractive environment for people to live and work in. We will continue to challenge the way in which the commission provides its services; looking for better ways to achieve the goals. We believe in embracing new technologies, investing capital in these can provide long term benefits to rate payers and staff alike. **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 26th regardless of whether you wish to vote for us or not.

If you will be unable to attend the polling station in person on polling day, **absent voters' forms** can be obtained from Ramsey Police Station, the Town Hall, or by telephoning the Town Hall on 810100.

If you require transport to the polling station please call 814370; 813690 or 491672.

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