



INDEPENDENT
CANDIDATE

ERICA SPENCER FOR RAMSEY



Dear Voter,

I am standing for election because I would like to bring about positive change in Ramsey. I believe that all of us who live in this town care passionately about it and that our strength is in our proactive attitudes and community spirit. The changes I would like to see brought about are a greater number and variety of jobs on offer locally, affordable housing for young people and community space, where group events and entertainment may be staged.

We want to see our town grow with more opportunities for business, health, education and leisure without compromising the integrity of the assets we already have such as the harbour, townscape and, of course, the South beach.

I have set out my manifesto below and I know that if I am fortunate enough to be your democratically elected representative, I will also be democratically accountable to YOU.



Health and wellbeing

This is fundamental to us all. Covid 19 has changed the way our doctors and hospitals operate sometimes leaving people feeling unsupported by the health service. We must work to change this and find ways to live with the pandemic while still allowing people access to hospital for follow up treatments and care.

We must find ways to support people with mental health issues and chronic illnesses as well as promoting general wellbeing by recruiting the essential medical professionals.

Health and wellbeing should be woven into our daily lives with information freely available helping us all to make informed life style and fitness choices.



Housing

This may always be an issue on a relatively small Island but it is time that we took a realistic look at how we support first time buyers. The IOM Governments 2020 Housing Market Review highlights a significant rise in the number of properties being sold for over £250, 000. House prices are rising sharply preventing first time buyers from entering onto the property ladder. We need to take a more realistic view of how we help young people to buy their first home otherwise we will lose them and become an Island with a diminished up and coming generation.



Education

Children aged between three and four should have access to affordable nursery places as this prepares them for school. Secondary school children, who are not hoping to go on to university, need to have more non vocational openings such as a greater range of training courses and work apprenticeships.

Training also needs to be available to allow people to gain new skills which are often necessary with the advance of technology and the digital era. To do this and to provide opportunities for those returning to the work place we need to have a greater understanding of current skill shortages and set clear objectives on how we will overcome this.

Initiatives to support disabled people return to the work place have been rolled out across parts of the UK, not only giving employers the opportunity to tap into their skills but returning a sense of independence to those who have specialist needs. This is something we should look further into.

Economy

The Island needs a clear and robust strategy, with a clear understanding of the challenges and opportunities we may face to take us through the years ahead. The key sectors on which to focus will be financial services, digital, technology, leisure, tourism and renewable energy. The Island needs to build on its strong economic framework to achieve and maintain a credible presence in the world market place. Covid 19 has changed the pace of how technology has influenced our lives and we must all embrace this if we are to maximize economic opportunities.

The local market is growing and we are witnessing small businesses diversifying in new and exciting ways. Local businesses are the bedrock of our economy and we must continue to find new and innovative ways to support them.



Climate change

This is the greatest challenge facing our planet and our future generations. We need to put environmental sustainability at the heart of everything we do. The Government is working to have the Paris Agreement on environmental change extended to the IOM. This agreement focuses on ways that countries will put finance and the mechanics into place to capture greenhouse gasses and adapt to an almost emission free world.

The IOM Climate Change Bill has passed through Tynwald and is awaiting Royal Assent. The bill sets out ways we can achieve zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. However, scientists are now warning that 2050 may be too late and we need to act faster.

We need to heed the warnings of accelerated climate change and critically examine the ways we currently heat our homes, methods of transport, our dependency on imported food and goods and maximizing our Islands potential to provide for much of our needs.

We need to ask ourselves how every action will affect climate change from the loss of upland peat, wetlands, and marine habitat to the services which we could harness from the ecosystem such as hydro, wind and solar power. Funding new initiatives is never straightforward but we need to ways of achieving this is we wish to be able to pass a healthy world onto our children.



Ramsey Town

The town has much to offer and many of us would like to see further regeneration. Economic initiatives should be considered that will offer incentives for businesses to relocate to the area. Government offices could be decentralized allowing small businesses, such as cafes, to benefit from the extra foot fall and breath prosperity to our smaller towns whilst relieving congestion in and out of Douglas.

Facilities for entertainment, support groups for the elderly, exhibition centres and attractions for our towns teenagers are badly needed, especially throughout the dark winter months. Buildings such as the Courthouse could provide a number of functions aimed at bringing our community together.

The proposed inner harbour marina could be a spring board for attracting interest into the town. In addition to moored boats we could develop shops and small, marine based businesses, such as paddle boarding and diving which would bring new life into the area and attract tourism.



The South Beach

The beach forms the landward margin of the Islands first Marine Nature Reserve. It was designated to 'provide a full range of protection for horse mussel reefs, maerl (a type of hard seaweed) and sea grass beds'. Sea grass is known to be particularly beneficial at capturing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and storing it away as well as providing habitat to a large number of marine creatures.

Ramsey Town Plan does not identify the south beach as residential or indeed for any development and the All-Island Strategic (Development) Plan, sets out a number of environmental protection policies designed to protect our environment. Policy 4 states that 'Development will not be permitted which would adversely affect a proposed or designated nature reserve'.

Whilst I am not against development it needs to be sustainable and in areas where it can have a positive impact on our community, I don't believe the beach is that place!



About me

I live in Ramsey where we have brought up our son and daughter. I work full time and have studied throughout my career having attained a teacher training certificate, Degree in Environmental Science through Manchester University and a Doctorate through Liverpool University, studying Manx ecology, at what was once Port Erin Marine Biological Station.

I am a member of various organizations and have been involved in a number of fund-raising activities over the years such as making Poyll Dooey into a nature reserve (with Manx Wildlife Trust Northern Group and Ramsey Commissioners), undertaking surveys for the first campaign against Ramsey Marina and co-founding Ramsey Heritage Trust.

Thank you for taking the time to read my manifesto.

Erica