

MANX LABOUR PARTY

FOR AN ISLAND STRONG & FAIR

MANX LABOUR PARTY MANIFESTO

2021

manxlabourparty.com

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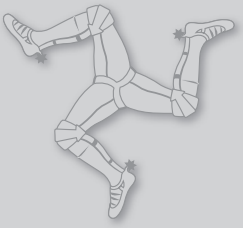

MANX LABOUR PARTY MANIFESTO

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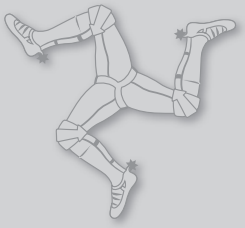
MANX LABOUR PARTY
FOR AN ISLAND STRONG & FAIR



MANX LABOUR PARTY MANIFESTO

Welcome – *Failt Ort* – to the Manx Labour Party Manifesto 2021

Introduction: Let's Work Together

The Manx Labour Party has a long history of being there for all Islanders. Our Party was formed in 1918 after the turmoil of the First World War. They worked then, as we do now to unite Manx people behind a common goal of creating a fair share for all, supporting the vulnerable, making life easier and better for the majority and creating hope for a better tomorrow.

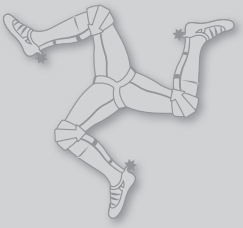
These are uncertain times. We haven't yet been able to evaluate the impact of the pandemic – both health- and economy-wise – but it is certain that they will be of concern for a long time yet. Our Island isn't immune to global forces, and we need to be in a position to not only ride out the storm, but to come out of it stronger.

We have strong roots across the Isle of Man and our Party has continued to progress with increased membership, collaboration with other organisations and standing up against unfairness.

We are incredibly proud of our members for all working together to produce this policy document which I hope you feel reflects positively on the determination, strength and underlying principles of our party.

We are stronger together.

Our Core Values



Equality

We don't want anyone to be left behind and we hold the basic belief that everyone should be able to achieve their potential. An equal society is built on inclusion, respect and cooperation.

Sustainability

We believe that it is our absolute duty to safeguard our world for our children and grandchildren. Importantly though, we are driven not just by safeguarding, but also the desire to leave a better Island for future generations; one we can be proud to bequeath to them.

Solidarity

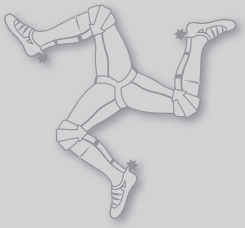
'Stronger Together' has become well-used in recent times and it has always been a defining value of the MLP. We see it as self-evident that each of us is only as strong as our community. By looking after each other, we look after ourselves and find the means of feeling secure with our place in society.

Progression

Knowledge and our research ability expand with each new generation, but politics often seems to lag behind. All policy should be evidence-based and built around global best practice. This is the only way we can ensure that we are moving forwards in line with our current understanding about what works. 'Know better, do better'.

Democracy

Democracy is literally government by the people. All citizens should be supported to take part in democratic elections; this includes understanding the electoral system and feeling knowledgeable enough to take a role no matter your age. We endorse the principle of checks and balances to strengthen the democratic system.



Our Core Aims

The Manx Labour Party will fight for:

- Policies that end poverty and homelessness.
- The sharing of our island's economic success among all parts of our society.
- A Green New Deal, ensuring that the island is at the forefront of the emerging green economy and that the wealth it brings is shared by all of us.
- Comfortable, fit-for-purpose housing as a right for all people, regardless of their economic situation.
- Greater democratic accountability and more transparency throughout Government.
- All decisions to be led by research and based on proven statistical evidence..
- Government services being delivered in an efficient and fair manner for everybody.
- The best possible healthcare and consistently high standard of education.
- The decriminalisation of marijuana use and an end to drug addiction being treated as a criminal issue.
- The ongoing development of a society where social justice is paramount, based on equality and human rights regardless of age, race, sex, gender, class, sexual orientation, neurodiversity, religion, disability, personal health or nationality.

Housing

Aims

We believe that a safe home is a fundamental human right and we are committed to playing our part to realising this objective.

We support the principles put forward in The Landlord Registration Bill 2020 and believe that further legislation can be made to bolster tenant protection in the renting sector including a deposit protection scheme, engagement policies and open-ended tenancies for long term renters. It is important that obligations and responsibilities are made clear for all parties and that future legislation is brought in to bring public sector housing up to the same standard.

We are encouraged to see that this legislation would result in a registry of rented accommodation. We would want this to be the beginning of more data collection and information that is publicly available on who owns land and property in order to inform and develop future policy.

We continue to strongly support community owned social and sheltered housing and would want any future government to commit to working with local authorities across the island to build more to alleviate waiting lists.

In the longer term we would want to look into transferring management of social housing to an island wide not for profit housing association ultimately answerable to the tenants.

We support high quality, environmentally friendly urban regeneration, in collaboration with local residents, to revive our town centres.

Additionally we are increasingly concerned with the amount of foreign speculation occurring in our housing market driving the costs of owning a house too high for most to afford and would aim to put a stop to this.

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Housing *(continued)*

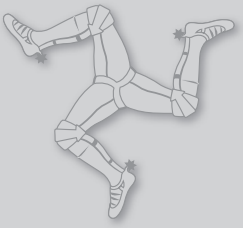
Objectives

Priority will be given to:

- Expanding the principles put forward in The Landlord Registration Bill 2020 to include public sector housing.
- Creating a system of training for landlords and tenants in instances of unintentional breaches.
- Better collection of rental data so that housing legislation can be more informed.
- A one off loan offered to local authorities the explicit instruction to create more fit-for-purpose social housing.
- An investigation into setting up an island wide housing association ultimately answerable to the tenants of social housing.
- The use of less traditional revenue streams such as housing bonds offered to current tenants to fund new social housing.
- The banning of off-island speculation in the Manx housing market.



Education



Aims

We believe that good quality education is at the core of solving inequality and we are therefore committed to the concept of lifelong learning, where education and training are readily available for all our citizens.

We believe that the individual should be at the heart of any educational process, where appropriate support, guidance and educational pathways are available, when required, to ensure personal development, growth and fulfilment, irrespective of: race, gender identity, neurodiversity, additional, or complex needs.

To deliver the lifelong learning framework for future generations, greater investment in education is needed. We are committed to increasing education spending to align with other developed nations.

We trust our education professionals to deliver this agenda and as such we are committed to the recruitment and development of a highly qualified workforce, one that is appropriately remunerated for their expertise and their selfless commitment to the wellbeing and development of others.

Objectives

Priority will be given to:

- Increasing education spending to a minimum of 4% of GDP.
- The re-establishment of free pre-school education for all.
- A reduction in class sizes in primary schools to meet the needs of the individual.
- The development of vocational pathways in secondary schools and apprenticeship schemes which lead to professional qualifications.



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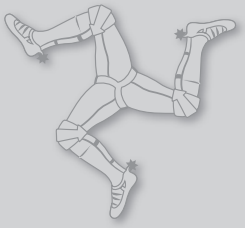


Education *(continued)*

- Delivering high quality training and development for all education professionals to meet the changing needs of society.

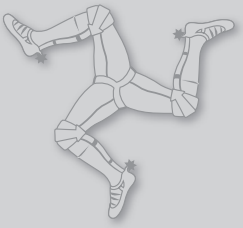
- Developing and delivering a comprehensive "Wellbeing" framework for children and young adults, to support their access to appropriate educational provision.

- The development of a comprehensive post-16 education package which allows opportunities to access pathways which deliver academic and vocational qualifications, as well as courses for self-improvement and enjoyment.

- The establishment of an independent elected group to serve on the Governing Body of all schools with a remit to ensure fairness, equality, support and entitlement are delivered for all in compulsory education.



Employees' Rights



Aims

As a party we have always stood for the rights of employees, for them to have a greater say in how work gets done and for employers to create environments where people can take pride in what they do and provide for their families.

Jobs and the families employees provide for have changed a lot since the party was founded with increases in zero-hour contracts, unpaid internships and a growing gig economy.

Sadly employment legislation has not kept up with the times and many people entering the workforce now are doing so without the same protections their parents had.

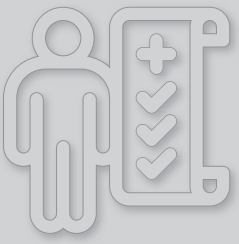
We want to modernise the rights previous generations won to the benefit of new generations.

Additionally, we believe that employee representation in decision-making is often overlooked as a way to alleviate wealth inequality, encourage community support and encourage corporate good governance and would want to encourage its use more going forward.

Objectives

Priority will be given to:

- Continuing the increase of the Manx minimum wage towards a living wage.
- Reviewing maternity and paternity leave taking into account the different family structures that exist today.
- Implementation of statutory bereavement leave following the loss of a loved one, including miscarriage.
- Updating employee rights legislation to fit our modern economy, with particular attention to ending abuse of zero hour contracts and of unpaid internships.



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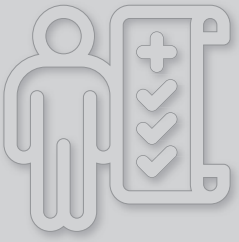
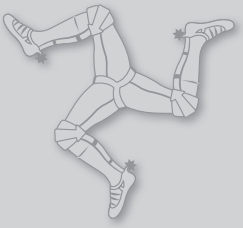
Employees' Rights *(continued)*

- Establishing statutory recognition of trade unions.
- Encouraging the creation of worker cooperatives and ensuring that business support schemes are extended to include employee-owned entities.
- Passing co-determination rights, allowing employee representatives to participate in the management of larger companies.
- Ensuring that everybody has access to the skills training and support needed for thriving in an increasingly dynamic global economy.



Health and Social Services



Aims

The Manx Labour Party, as always, remains committed to a full and free National Health Service and will resist as strongly as possible the ongoing trend towards private health care provisions.

We believe that while healthcare on the Isle of Man is not perfect, it is kept to a good standard by hard-working skilled professionals who should be treated as such.

We believe in a policy of prevention, of early intervention and the promotion of healthy lifestyles to ensure individuals can get well, get back to their lives and provide for their families.

We want to ensure carers are properly valued by our society both socially and financially and believe they are too often missed out of support.

We would want to ensure greater efficiency regarding the management of repeat prescriptions and an end to prescription charges on medicines.

We support an ongoing programme of education and advice including island wide family planning services and would also like to provide access to both free birth control and menstrual products where necessary.

We believe that further government resources and working with the third sector will be essential to help prevent drug and alcohol abuse and are committed to treating addiction as a public health concern instead of a criminal one.

Reducing unacceptable waiting times for medical appointments has always been, and will continue to be, a priority for the party.

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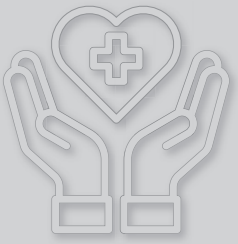

Health and Social Services
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We believe in the importance of patients rights and would want a commitment to treat patients with respect and dignity at all times, putting them in charge of their own treatment plans wherever possible.

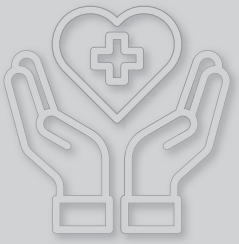
The Manx Labour Party believes that the Island is failing those with mental health issues. For too long mental health has been considered of lesser importance to the rest of health. We would want both to be given equal footing for current laws regarding care to be reviewed and brought up to a modern standard, for more social workers and therapists to be trained and for treatment and prevention services to be resourced accordingly.

We would want a dedicated lifelong service to support neurodiverse people at all stages of life and for a movement towards using the social model of disability, rather than currently used outdated models.

Objectives

Priority will be given to:

- Blocking as strongly as possible any privatisation attempts on our health service.
- Ensuring salaries are high enough to attract more specialists to the Isle of Man.
- Providing a living wage for carers.
- Reallocating resources to treat illegal substance abuse as a health issue instead of a criminal one.
- The legalisation of marijuana used for medicinal purposes.
- Creating a more user-friendly repeat prescriptions system.
- Ending the prescription charge.



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Health and Social Services
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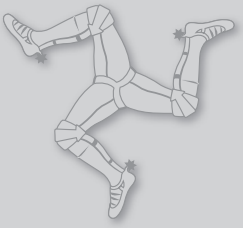
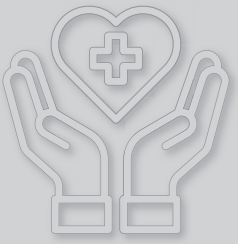


- Providing free birth control and menstrual products.
- Creating a dedicated lifelong service to support the neurodiverse.
- Moving towards using the social model of disability which highlights societal barriers and reframes attitudes towards those with disabilities.
- Annual training for GPs to ensure they are kept up to date on various referral criteria.
- A review of dental care on the Island and a commitment to increase spending.
- Creating a support service for those with long term conditions including M.E, Fibromyalgia, Polymyalgia and long COVID.
- Training new mental health professionals to cut the average waiting time in half.
- Ensure that prevention and postvention services for suicide are fully funded and staffed by trained professionals.
- Reducing waiting times across the service.



Poverty

Aims

We are very concerned at the continuing increase in homelessness, hunger and overall poverty in the Isle of Man. While we believe that countless community initiatives to help the hungry, homeless and economically disenfranchised are ones we should be proud of, urgent questions need to be asked about why it has fallen to volunteers and the generosity of numerous members of the community to pick up the pieces rather than our taxes being used to help the least privileged among us.

We would ask for much better data to be collected on poverty and its causes and would want to implement policies with the explicit intent of narrowing the increasing wealth gap between the Island's haves and have-nots.

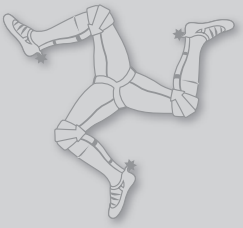
We are a close-knit wealthy nation with no excuses for foodbanks.

Objectives

Priority will be given to:

- The continuing increase of the Manx minimum wage towards a living wage.
- Ensuring Government and contractors pay their employees a living wage.
- Investigating the leading causes of poverty nationally.
- Trialling of free public transport with an aim to expand across the whole service in future.

Environment



Aims

We accept the advice of experts that mitigating global warming and protecting the environment should be the priority for governments across the world. We believe that ensuring our children and grandchildren have a future is an absolute duty.

In May 2019 the IOM Government recognised the climate emergency. Whilst we welcome this first small step, we would also expect that an official declaration of emergency would mean fast and meaningful measures being taken.

As a founding member of the Isle of Man Climate Change Coalition, we accept and endorse their aims of reducing carbon emissions, investing in renewable energy sources, and embedding sustainability into our way of life. Our programme for the future covers the protection of the natural environment, enhancing wildlife, increasing food security and delivering warmer, energy-efficient homes.

Across the world we have seen that green ventures can bring quick profit and stimulate the economy. We are committed to these financial benefits being shared fairly throughout our society.

Our government commissioned a report in October 2019, the Isle of Man Programme for Achievement of Climate Targets (IMPACT) which gives us a detailed plan of action. The report by Professor Curran identified two pathways - the higher, and the lower, ambition. We want to see the Curran recommendations implemented in their entirety and we will encourage following the higher ambition pathway. To do this, we need to channel urgent resources and financial support.



We believe it is essential to protect and restore our natural farmland, wildlife habitats and wild areas, and ensure that everyone has access to clean water, air, green spaces and a healthy environment.

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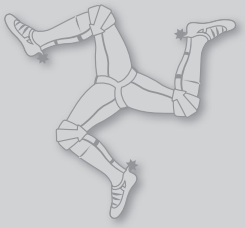

Environment *(continued)*

Objectives

Priority will be given to:

- Developing a transition strategy to ensure the move away from carbon is fair to everyone.
- Trialling of free public transport with an aim to expand across the whole service in future.
- Incentivising both individuals and businesses to cycle and walk instead of using their car.
- Using the planning system to develop areas in a manner that will reduce the need to drive.
- Supporting high quality, environmentally friendly urban regeneration, in collaboration with local residents, to revive our town centres.
- Strengthening the energy grid – initially increasing cable capacity, storage and connection for renewable regeneration.
- Initiating development of both onshore and offshore wind farms and other suitable renewable energy schemes.
- Support community ownership of renewable energy through co-operatives.
- A commitment throughout the Government to embed sustainability into its processes, including approving or denying projects based on environmental aims.
- Passing a Future Generations Act, which will bind future governments to sustainability.
- Introducing a Clean Air Act and measuring air quality in pollution hotspots.

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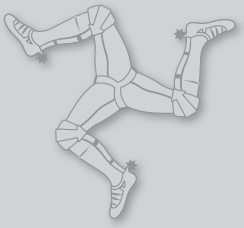
Environment *(continued)*



- Improving flood mitigation and waterway management.
- Measures to enhance biodiversity through urban and suburban landscaping schemes.
- An equity scheme to help homeowners to improve, insulate, or adapt their homes.



Policies For The Older Generation

Aims

The Manx Labour Party continues to champion free TV licences for those over 75.

We renew our call for an Older Persons' Champion giving the issues facing that demographic on our island to advocate for their independence and wellbeing.

Our aim is to enhance the richness, health and quality of life of everyone in their senior years and for all to be treated with respect and dignity. We will support policies and actions to this effect

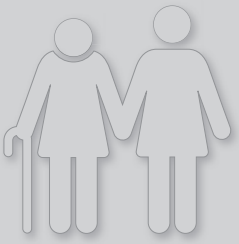
We believe that the private ownership of nursing homes have led to increased costs and oftentimes worse services that have been placed on some of the most vulnerable in our community and believe movement back towards public ownership would be preferable.

Overall, our aim is to enhance the richness, health and quality of life of everyone in their senior years and for all to be treated with respect and dignity. We will support policies and actions to this effect.

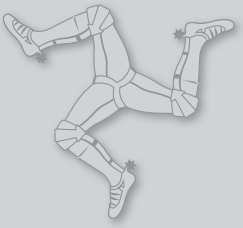
Objectives

Priority will be given to:

- Ring fencing enough savings to leave to relatives upon passing.
- Creating an Older Persons' Champion.
- A greater investment in sheltered housing, with an aim to modernise stock.
- A movement towards public ownership of nursing homes.



Justice and Policing



Aims

The community of the Isle of Man is 'self policing' in many ways due to the good nature of its citizens and our policing style must reflect that.

Our safety on the roads is important, death or injury in a road traffic incident is one of the greatest risks on the Island.

Our international standing as a reputable jurisdiction for financial activity is vital and our approach to identifying and dealing with money linked to criminality must always be exemplary.

The science is clear that early interventions and the use of social workers and mental health experts before criminality occurs leads to less victims of crime, is better for society as a whole and is often cheaper. For this reason it has always been our priority.

When crime does occur, our judicial framework must be designed to meet the needs of the community and our courts must act proportionality where sentencing is combined in an agency approach that serves the needs of the victim and rehabilitates the offender.

The criminalisation of marijuana possession and usage has had too much of a negative effect on society. It has criminalised young people, required increasing resources to combat and contributed to organised crime. We believe it is essential to rethink our strategy in this regard.

Objectives

Priority will be given to:



- Establishing true neighbourhood policing with an engaging, pro active and continuous style.

- Making our roads safer by working with road users and those who are responsible for our highways and

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Justice and Policing *(continued)*

byways. Ensure that the 2019 Road Safety Strategy implementation is maximised.

- Creating true multi agency coordination and cooperation. Redesigning how social problems are dealt with and identifying the root causes to solve them at an early stage.

- Enhancing operational effectiveness in dealing with issues relating to mental health.

- Reviewing charging standards and court process to achieve solutions that meet the needs of the victim and ultimately rehabilitates offenders to break the cycle of offending.

- Establishing greater public confidence in the police and judiciary with the introduction of a fully empowered and truly independent policing authority comprising lay persons representing the community. A truly independent complaints process must be instilled.

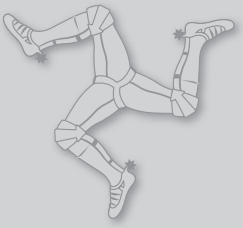
- Be smarter in how we allocate our resources. Improve on joined up working amongst our emergency services.

- The setting up of a dedicated sexual assault unit with expert training needed.

- The immediate decriminalisation of possession and usage of marijuana with a commitment to move towards full legalisation.

- Better psychological services offered to offenders and a better support network when leaving prison.

Legislation and Government Accountability



Aims

The Manx Labour Party continues to promote the direct election of all Tynwald members. While there are always limitations our belief is that democracy is a good thing and there should be more of it.

We would want any government to do all it can to encourage local authorities to share resources when possible and would encourage merging them where appropriate. We would want them to be more empowered to act on local matters and for rates to be fair across the Island.

We support the seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership and demand that anyone holding public office is held to high standards based on these principles.

The party believes that a review and elimination of outdated legislation to provide a modern code fit for purpose is overdue. We would also ask that interactions with Government are made as easy and as simple as possible and that a single central helpline is set up to receive and triage any questions related to services.

Objectives

Priority will be given to:

- Changing the Legislative Council to be directly elected.
- Devolution of powers to local authorities from the DOI when requested.
- A review of local authorities with a plan of merging smaller ones together.
- Setting up a single line of contact to receive and triage any questions related to services.



The Economy

Aims

The world around us is changing. To respond we need to maintain an increasingly vibrant island economy which builds on the skills and strengths of all our residents. We should ensure that policies encourage a wide range of different industries to flourish and that our government is flexible and knowledgeable enough to adapt to any change that might come.

Business opportunities and vast new markets are emerging every day, and it is exceedingly important to ensure that any gains we can make are shared fairly by all of us.

We, like many economists, believe in a modern interpretation of the economy where growth is one of many factors used to determine its health rather than it being the definition of success.

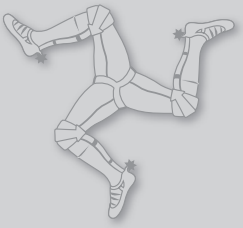
Objectives

Priority will be given to:

- Greater sharing of our island's economic success among all parts of our society.
- Upskilling our workforce to match the demands of the current global market.
- Bringing an end to the austerity mindset, and a recognition of smart government spending being a driver of further economic activity.
- Getting ahead of the curve when it comes to transitioning into a new greener economy and taking the initiative in projects that create greener jobs.



Agriculture and Fishing



Aims

We believe our countryside, fisherman and farmers are all precious assets and are vitally important for sustainably feeding the nation. The pandemic highlighted how essential many of them are for our community and they should be supported by the Government accordingly.

We believe Manx produce acts as an edible ambassador to the world. Cheese, meat and seafood from the Island can be seen throughout the UK, on Emirates Airways flights and in the USA and Australia. We would ask that all is being done to ensure this is continued, that the goods are the highest possible standard achievable and that any aid the Government can give in exporting is given.

Lastly we would hope that local supermarkets who don't currently give their customers an option of buying Manx can be encouraged to do so and would explore options in achieving this wherever possible.

Objectives

Priority will be given to:

- Increasing exports of our world-class produce worldwide.
- Ensuring food goods we produce are of the highest standard possible.
- Committing to better support for fishers during periods of fishing restrictions.



Retail

Aims

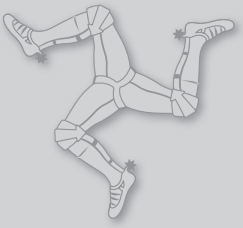
A lot of the retail sector is suffering terribly from both online competition and losses suffered during the pandemic, we would want the Government to offer as much support as possible to these services and businesses that are essential to our community whilst ensuring that no person is left without a way to keep a roof over their head.

Objectives

Priority will be given to:

- Improving transport links to commercial centres.
- Hosting more local and national community events.
- A national program of investment and regeneration of urban areas.
- Rate reductions or exemptions for companies who are having temporary monetary issues but are overall economically viable and a benefit to the community.

Tourism and Travel Links



Aims

Our tourism sector has great potential in the coming years and must be a significant feature in our economic activity. It is our aim to see an industry that creates meaningful employment all year round and adapts to market needs in a dynamic fashion.

The Isle of Man must recognise the continued value of the tourism sector and make growth decisions in a way that compliments the quality of Island life based on accurate data that can be trusted to identify travelling trends and opportunities.

Our style must represent the green credentials we seek to achieve and our marketing messages must be appropriate to attract a type of visitor who will truly give value to the economy and provide long term returns.

Objectives

Priority will be given to:

- Measuring the market accurately and establishing the true value of the visitor economy.
- Improving our current attractions. Make our footpaths and cycleways safe and accessible.
- Continuing to improve our accommodation offering. Collaborating effectively with new ideas and developments that will deliver a service which generates an all year round tourism market.
- Continuing to host and promote World class events in sport and culture.
- Engaging appropriately with the private sector, employing expertise and knowledge to improve our tourism standards.

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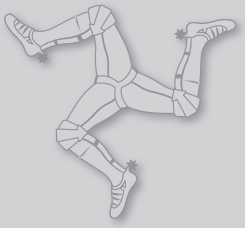

Tourism and Travel Links

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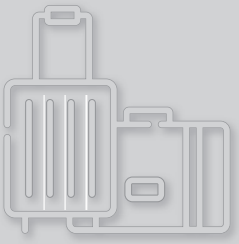
- Making use of Government control of the Steam Packet fleet to prioritise helping the tourism sector as a whole instead of strictly for short term profit making.



E-Business and IT

Aims

We believe E-Business and IT play an essential role in our Island's future and that fast and affordable internet access is a requirement for modern social engagements. Because of this it is crucial that all residents have the physical access and knowledge required to thrive in this new environment.

Ensuring that we have the knowledge to fill the roles emerging from this growing sector and to make the most of our increasingly digital world is of the highest importance as is ensuring our infrastructure can keep up with modern demands and expectations.

Objectives

Priority will be given to:

- Ensuring that everyone has access to a fast affordable internet connection.
- Providing internet for low income earners and the unemployed.
- Striving to remove accessibility issues as a barrier for essential information.
- Continuing the work of the digital inclusion strategy to help those being left behind by our new digital age.

Tax

Aims

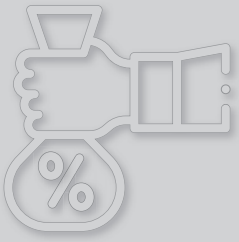
We continue to advocate for a progressive tax system to help alleviate income inequality and ensure that those who have the most wealth are consistently socially responsible.

We acknowledge that tax reductions and exemptions can be exceedingly important to attract companies to the Island and wish to continue providing them, but we also believe it sensible to look at adding additional requirements in regard to social responsibility, employment opportunities and economic gains to make sure granting these exemptions are always truly in the interests of the Island.

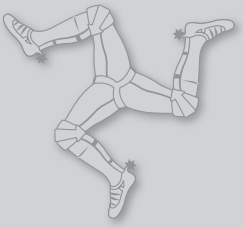
Objectives

Priority will be given to:

- Raising and adding additional requirements on the tax cap with an investigation into abolishing it.
- Closing tax loopholes for corporate entities that don't benefit the Island.
- Actioning the tax recommendations made in the James Curran report.



Our History



The Manx Labour Party grew out of the turmoil and hardship of the First World War.

Even before 1914, men and women were protesting against the injustices which resulted in many living in poverty, but the pressures of war caused an increase in the price of food while wages stagnated.

In 1917 a group of men asked Alfred J Teare, a printer working for the Isle of Man Times to help form a trade union. After some soul searching, Alfred Teare took them up on their offer and set up a local branch of the Workers' Union with a mission to fight for improved wages and working conditions.

Since there was no other organisation publicly standing up for poorer people, the union leaders quickly decided to use their power politically to push for such reforms as an old age pension.

Early in 1918, the UK Government agreed to subsidise the price of flour so as to hold the price of the 4lb loaf to 9d (old pence). At once, there were demands that Tynwald do the same for the people of the Isle of Man, since 8,000 Manx men were fighting in the British armed forces: *'equal treatment for equal sacrifice.'* was their rallying cry.

With some reluctance, Lt Governor Lord Raglan agreed to do so for six months. At the end of June 1918 however he announced that the subsidy would be withdrawn as Tynwald could not agree to a raise in taxes to pay for it. The price of the loaf would rise to 12d.

The Workers' Union were organised enough to rally the workforce and announced a general strike. It instantly gained a surprising amount of public support.

That year even Tynwald Day was cancelled as all means of transport had been shut down by strikers. On his own initiative, Raglan announced that the subsidy would remain

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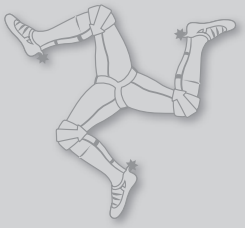

Our History *(continued)*

in place and would be paid for by the introduction of income tax.

Around the Jubilee Clock on the Promenade, the news was announced to a mass meeting. As A J Teare wrote later *'this was a strike for a principle which was to mean much in the bringing about of old age pensions and other social legislation in the future.'*

In September 1918 members from the Workers' Union established an independent Manx Labour Party. Its first Annual Conference was held on 7th September 1918 and in the General Election held in 1919, four members of the MLP were elected to the House of Keys; A J Teare (South Douglas), J R Corrin (Rushen), Christopher Shimmin (Peel), Gerald Bridson (Middle).

Pensions and many other social reforms soon followed thanks to reformers and radicals either in the party or with close links to the party and its membership.

For over 100 years now the Manx Labour Party despite always being a minority within the House of Keys, has achieved things far out of proportion to its numerical strength.

Getting Involved

The Manx Labour Party always aims to be a party for all people who call the Isle of Man their home. If you believe we have missed something important or have another point of view we have not considered please come and get involved!

Browse to **https://join.manxlabourparty.com** to see how to join or come along to any of our monthly public meetings.

Our policies are always being added to or updated as more people get involved in the process. Please see **https://policy.manxlabourparty.com** for up to date changes and to leave any comments.

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MANX LABOUR PARTY

FOR AN ISLAND STRONG & FAIR



MANX LABOUR PARTY MANIFESTO

2021