



Short Manifesto – Jonathan Crossan

5 minutes

Facing the Future – the Challenge of Change

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- Our challenges – COVID, Brexit, constitutional threats, climate change
- The way out – sustain the economy by playing to our financial strengths
- Sustainability – future-proof Guernsey by developing green finance internationally and building a green economy locally
- Get things done – increase the States' efficiency by instituting clearer lines of authority, more effective decision-making, and tighter collective discipline

Personal statement

I was born in Scotland but am married to a local girl and have lived in Guernsey nearly 30 years. I have a degree in Modern Languages, Graduate Diplomas in English Law and Legal Practice, and qualifications in investment and compliance. I have worked in Guernsey's Civil Service and at the Guernsey Financial Services Commission, and I now work in industry as a compliance specialist.

Manifesto

I would describe myself as a finance professional with an environmental and social conscience. This manifesto concentrates on my core interests, which are practical and economic. If we do not get these fundamentals right, then all else is just a wish-list. That said, my values are those of tolerance, respect and concern for all – and, within the limits of the possible, it will be my goal to promote a fair and secure society for every islander.

The crisis and the challenges

We face a unique set of challenges from multiple crises. COVID-19 has adversely impacted States' finances with knock-on effects on employment, productivity and revenues. We also face pressure from outside – a worldwide slump, Brexit, international tax reform, and climate change. We cannot meet these challenges without major change.

Turning challenges into opportunities

We start with great advantages. Guernsey is agile, innovative, and business-friendly. We set our own policies and take our own measures. The States have realised the scale of the challenge and devised the Future Guernsey Plan 'Revive and Thrive'. This deserves our support – the support of a 'critical friend', scrutinising policies for flaws or unfairness and keeping those responsible on track. During COVID the actions of the Civil Contingencies Authority showed that important decisions can be taken swiftly and effectively with the right structures in place. We need to learn that lesson to equip ourselves to meet these challenges. Within the States A detailed overhaul of the machinery of government is needed. But this cannot be rushed and must be worked on during the new term. Meanwhile, to achieve efficiency, we must give the senior committee a more binding mandate and set timeframes for execution and implementation. Within the Assembly itself, more discipline is required: tighter agendas, timed speeches, and stricter rules of debate to prevent policy overturns through last-minute amendments.

Business policy

The finance industry will remain Guernsey's economic mainstay for the foreseeable future. On it substantially depend almost all other sectors of the economy, from hospitality to construction. We have built up an excellent standard of regulation and a flexible regime, adopting and even leading on standards for tax compliance and fighting financial crime. This message needs persistent reinforcement in our contacts with the United Kingdom and beyond. Guernsey's constitutional status is the foundation of our success, but it is not immune from challenge by our competitors, often large players who can turn in an instant from partners to adversaries. We must therefore protect our position and extend our reputation as a 'safe haven' not a 'tax haven'.

We are even now becoming a centre of excellence for environmental sustainability, pioneering the regulated Green Fund and leading on green finance at the British-Irish Council. This process must be invigorated and the message emphasised that we are the domicile of choice for the green finance wave. There is no better opportunity to stimulate growth, aid recovery, and manage the environmental transition all in one.

Education

It is time to put the pro- and anti-selection debate behind us. We have made our choice and need to move on. Whatever the chosen model for our new schools, we must now focus on building a system fit for the 21st century. We must ensure that the entire workforce is educated to their full potential, since this will prove vital to Guernsey's future competitiveness as a knowledge-based economy.

Transport and Communications

Aurigny was acquired as a lifeline service, and so it proved during COVID. Now it could become an 'economic enabler', affording an opportunity to generate income and promote a national brand. The States' subsidy requires protection but should cover the core lifeline only, with Aurigny free to develop other areas at its own risk and discretion. Meanwhile, interisland links, particularly with Jersey, need to be improved – at sea and in the air. Thought should be given to rationalised arrangements for sea travel, perhaps together with Jersey's government.

On land, environmentally friendly modes of transport should be encouraged – walking and cycling, with their attendant health benefits, as well as wider use of public transport. Electrification of private road transport should be a long-term goal, perhaps assisted through soft loans and tax breaks for the purchase of electric vehicles, and the installation of more recharging points. Digital communication facilities must improve to meet modern expectations. The Future Guernsey Plan encourages the roll-out of 5G to build a digital economy, but we could go further and look at fibreoptic cables for a seamless interchange of data.

Energy

Our energy supply is vulnerable, as we saw in 2018 with the interruption to the fixed link. Now GE plan to install a direct link to the European Grid while encouraging local renewable generation. We can and should go further. Energy demands and household costs need to be reduced at source with a realistic revision of planning and building laws and financial support for home improvements such as roof-mounted solar panels, insulation, and electrification of domestic heating systems.

Health and Social policy

We face serious budget pressures from health and social care. The Partnership of Purpose and the Supported Living & Ageing Well Strategy will spread some of the load, but with an ageing population and more expensive medical, care costs will rise. So, to pay for it all, it is vital to create good jobs, generate real income and sustain sufficient tax revenues. Our population deserves no less: a healthy population can only be built on a sound economy.