

Liberal Vannin

Policy Discussion Paper

On

Agriculture, Fishing, Forestry & the Environment

Manifesto Pledge (What we will do)

The Liberal Vannin Party will develop a sustainable agricultural policy which will build the future of the industry in the long term.

We will develop food processing and marketing initiatives giving the Island a broader base and adding value to local produce catering for modern food markets.

Our policy is for 'quality over quantity' as far agriculture is concerned and we would investigate the possibility of the Island becoming totally organic.

We would develop a sustainable fishing industry clawing back control and accountability for our territorial seas.

Policy Statements (How we will do it)

Farming

The Liberal Vannin Party recognises a great opportunity for the farming community to create a new market in the provision of high quality, high value foods and to follow and promote compassionate farming methods. The Party will investigate the possibility of the Isle of Man becoming the world's first totally organic farming nation and a centre of excellence in small-scale agricultural methods.

We would work closely with other interested groups already established on the Island and bring in external expertise as required.

The Party will investigate the possibility of a covered market for high quality local produce. Animal health and welfare has to be of the highest priority and we would guarantee this as part of the Manx product name. We will help put in place the infrastructure to grow and develop agricultural produce and provide a more secure future for the Manx farmer.

The Liberal Vannin Party will develop a strategy to support diversification into new markets such as a national distillery to broaden the base for the grain sector and a natural herbal and scent industry like lavender farms which would also enhance tourism on the Island. We recognise that industries like these offer opportunities to further develop and widen the agriculture base on the Island.

Fishing

The Manx waters are a national asset and the Liberal Vannin Party would continue to develop and promote a sustainable fishing industry. We recognise that we need to claw back control of this asset not

only for the Manx and traditional users of the fishing areas but also to protect fish stocks for future generations.

To this end, the Party will encourage the re-development of the Port Erin Marine Laboratory as an Irish Sea Centre of Excellence to lead the way on conservation methods of fish management and pollution. Long-term management of marine life would be part of the package, as would working alongside the UK and Irish authorities with regard to fishing and pollution.

Forestry

The Liberal Vannin Party will develop a sustainable forestry program which encourages the extension of the Island's glens which adjoin populated areas rather than submitting them to the clutches of the developers.

We would welcome and support the creation of a new National Glen as a green lung for Douglas being developed on Douglas Head for the benefit of the population of the capital and designed to give recreational facilities to all members of the public.

The Party would perceive this as part of a wider and comprehensive forestry policy to maximise the use of public land for the diverse array of special interest groups in our society. Any new strategy would take into account the needs of all members of society including access for the disabled.

The Environment

The Liberal Vannin Party recognises the commitments made by the previous administration for incineration. Whilst the Party would not support this proposal if it were presented today, we believe that we have a public duty to investigate ways of making this facility work as effectively as possible and show a return on the investment of public funds.

The Party is committed to 'Sustainable Development' for the protection of our environment and supports the encouragement of a culture of recycling and environmental awareness towards developing a greener strategic agenda. We recognise the need to develop and invest in the appropriate technology and infrastructure to support this important environmentally friendly goal in the spirit of the United Nations 'Agenda 21'.

We will investigate tidal and wind power as a means of generating energy for the Island. When the gas turbine power station comes to the end of its life (long before we have paid for it) we will have an environmentally sound and cost effective alternative means of providing the Island's energy and being in a position to export surplus power when it is available.

We would maximise the Island's public transport systems and make them more attractive to use in an effort to discourage the use of private cars for all journeys. We would reinvestigate the possibility of using the already upgraded railway system which will allow trains to run at higher speeds and we would aim to provide a fast and efficient express service to outlying towns and to augment the bus service.

The Liberal Vannin Party recognises the positive impact of efficient housing on the environment as a whole and would therefore advocate a progressive insulation policy and the utilisation of alternative energy sources. We recognise that we must deal with the real issue and threat of energy poverty and the effect this will have on the members of our community most at risk, such as those on fixed incomes.

Sellafield

We believe that a policy of working much closer with the Irish Government to see what is happening with regard to monitoring Sellafield is in the long-term interests of our nation.

Overseas Aid

The Liberal Vannin Party would encourage a policy that ensures the effective and efficient spending of these funds. We believe that giving money to Governments in the Third World is not the answer.

Instead, the solution has to be training programmes that bring people from Third World countries to the Isle of Man and sends them back to their own countries when trained with new skills.

The Party will investigate ways in which our small nation can take its part in contributing to UK initiatives when national disasters are happening. The purchase policy for Fair Trade products should also be part of the equation for Overseas Aid with the Government supporting a 'Fair Trade' Island status.