

Answers to Questions for Durrell Event: Preamble

I am an environmentalist. I believe in the fundamental importance of protecting and enhancing the natural world partly because it is ultimately our life support system, partly for the role it plays in our physical and mental wellbeing and partly for the sheer love of it.

As a child I spent my time climbing around the cliffs, swimming up gullies, and making camps in the gorse. In my career as a television producer I made many programmes about the environment, and I was involved in making almost all the BBC's television output on climate change over the last 20 years. The environment is a cause that is fundamental to who I am.

Perhaps my biggest disappointment about the government's approach to the environment over the last few years is that there has been such a lack of passion and excitement about the opportunities that championing an explicitly "green" agenda could bring. Jersey is in a prime position to become a green "beacon" - an inspiring example of how to protect the environment and reduce carbon emissions, in a socially inclusive way.

There are multiple "wins" to be had, with self reinforcing synergies. Active travel improves mental and physical health and reduces pollution and congestion. Regenerative farming reduces watercourse pollution and turns the soil into a carbon "sink". An island that is taking a lead on carbon reduction and habitat protection will enhance its status as a 21st century tourist destination.

In fact, championing the environment offers an inspiring route to renewing all our major economic sectors; finance, construction, tourism and agriculture. It is a unifying project for the whole island.

NOTE: I have chosen to answer some questions, rather than tackle every single one.

Setting an example

The States Assembly have declared a Climate Emergency. In order for GoJ to expect and encourage Islanders and businesses to decarbonise, it must lead by example and do the same. *What areas do you see as the priority areas for decarbonising within your Parish?*

Referring to the parish is something of a red herring. Most of the heavy lifting on decarbonisation is going to be done at an island wide level. At its simplest, decarbonisation involves electrifying home heating and transport, along with measures to increase active travel and insulate homes. These require a strategic government overview in order to be effective.

At a parish level I have been involved in the St Brelade's parish climate change action group, where we have focused on small scale measures such as creating pollinator patches, replacing parish vehicles with electric alternatives, and the potential for micro-forests within the parish. Now that Covid is less of an issue, we will also begin encouraging car sharing - a campaign which was put on hold because of the pandemic.

Energy

Jersey is fortunate to have a low-carbon nuclear/hydro mix electricity supply. However, the local energy market has not been immune to factors such as global price insecurity, geopolitical impacts, mismatches in supply and demand, the rise of renewables and the implementation of Brexit, with recent substantial increases in the price of all energy types. It seems that the interplay between energy security, sustainability and affordability is more relevant than ever.

Energy supply and agency over the Island's own production of electricity is a growing issue, which was exacerbated by the fishing disputes in 2021. *What is your stance on Jersey's current energy supply, would you change it and if so, how and why?*

Jersey is lucky to have an essentially decarbonised electricity supply - it means that one of the single biggest steps we need to take on our journey to net zero has already been taken. However, this also creates problems.

First, it means that the easiest step has already been taken - decarbonising electricity supply is the one action that requires us as citizens to do absolutely nothing.

Second, we cannot be sure that our electricity supply is secure. No government can stand by and do nothing when another government threatens to turn off its electricity. Even though our current contract with EDF runs until 2028, we need to start planning now.

Fortunately, Jersey is in a good position to diversify its electricity supply. We should explore the possibility of wind power in our southern waters. Large scale wind power is now the cheapest new build electricity generation available, so it would not involve subsidies. We should also connect with the Shetlands and other locations that are pioneering tidal and wave power, so as to be in a position to take advantage of these next generation clean power technologies. Finally, we should encourage the installation of solar panels in Jersey.

Energy and heating

The transformation of energy systems to low-carbon is fundamental to decarbonisation. Jersey's electricity source is already low-carbon, however a large

number of Islanders homes are run/heated using fossil fuels, such as oil or gas. There is a large infrastructural cost associated with switching to electric/low-carbon systems. The CNR has outlined policies to support the installation of residential low-carbon heating systems. However, the proposed subsidies only cover a fraction of the cost of switching. *If you secured your seat in the Assembly, what would you do to support the switch to low-carbon heating systems for residents on the Island?*

I believe we should explore the option of introducing a tax deduction scheme for zero carbon investment. Anyone installing a heat pump, or solar panels, or electric car charger would be able to pay for it out of their pre-tax income. (This is how the “cycle to work” scheme works in the UK.) This would immediately cut the cost of low carbon investment by 20%. (I would suggest that the size of the tax free sum should be capped.)

Transport

The most recently published IPCC report, titled: Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change, highlights the need for governments to look at the provision of low carbon transport in order to reduce carbon emissions and limit warming 1.5°C. The Transport Sector is Jersey's largest source of emissions, with road transport accounting for 32% of emissions (2019). Therefore, transport is a priority sector to address in tackling the Climate Emergency and Jersey achieving net zero by 2050. *What do you believe are the key areas within the transport sector that need addressing in order to achieve a reduction in emissions and benefit local Islanders?*

In a nutshell, we need to encourage active travel, make public transport a far more viable option, and support the shift to electric vehicles. These measures will have multiple benefits in terms of public health, reducing congestion and reducing pollution.

In terms of active travel, instead of the current piecemeal approach to adding cycle lanes here and there, we need to develop an integrated footpath and cycle network. In terms of public transport, as well as reducing the cost, we need to explore hybrid bus/taxi options that would involve bookable minibuses running on set routes (see for example Katch). This kind of innovation would integrate well with our ambitions to be an innovative digital economy.

What initiatives do you plan on implementing within your parish to support the Sustainable Transport Policy and encourage increased sustainable transport amongst your Parishioners.

There are some measures we can take at a parish level, like encouraging car sharing and working on safe pedestrian and cycling routes. However, the heavy lifting is going to have to come at an island wide level, where we need a strategic

approach with joined up planning of cycling and walking routes across parish boundaries. We also need to think about how we re-invent a bus service for the 21st century, with a much more hybrid taxi/bus model.

What would you do to address the gender gap for active travel and encourage cycling for all young people on the Island?

Repeated research in the UK has shown that the single biggest obstacle to women and young people cycling is safety, and perceptions of safety. This is why creating safe routes is so important. Work can also be done to create cycling mentors. I am particularly impressed with the way that Les Landes school has pioneered safe cycling to the school by organising large groups of children and parents to ride together.

Sustainable transport week was a huge success, with schools adopting 'walking buses' from town/an initial meeting point and walking through town to school. This week has proven that if you put the appropriate procedures in place, it can be a success. *What are your views on walking routes to school and would you do want to develop this within your parish? If so, how would you implement it/what is your priority for developing safer walking routes to schools within your parish?*

I'm in favour of safe routes to schools, but the implementation is a matter for fine grained discussions with schools, the parish and the government.

Carbon Neutral Roadmap - carbon neutrality

What initiatives will you put in place to bolster the green credentials of your parish, or constituency, in order to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030/Net Zero by 2050?

Again, I think reference to the parishes is a red herring. Parishes do not have enough power to drive the transition to net zero. We can do various things at the parish level: make the parish vehicle fleet electric, create pollinator zones, install solar panels on parish buildings where possible. But the heavy lifting has to come from government.

Carbon neutrality / net zero

Most scientists and experts agree that a target of 2050 to achieve 'net zero' carbon emissions is nowhere near ambitious enough and will have catastrophic consequences around the world. In their most recently published report on the Mitigation of Climate Change, the IPCC says that there must be "rapid, deep and

immediate" cuts in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. *What will you do to ensure that Jersey takes action to significantly reduce carbon emissions during the next term?*

This has largely been answered already. We need to keep pushing hard on the home heating and transport sectors, with my ideas on how to do this outlined above.

Biodiversity – increased biodiversity / greening of your parish

Increased biodiversity and greenery can provide many physical and mental health benefits to users of an area, as well as the draw down of carbon. *What role would you play in implementing the greening of your parish?*

I have already been involved in initiatives to increase the use of pollinator patches and the rewilding of parish owned land. We can push further in this regard, and encourage parishioners to go down these roads as well.

What measures will you put in place during the next term to ensure that environmental biodiversity will be protected and enhanced?

I will seek to protect wild land and encourage regenerative farming. This will be particularly important as a new Island Plan will be in gestation during the time period of the next Assembly.

Do you think that we need more habitat protection, in order to conserve wildlife? If so, what type of land areas should be protected and what would you do as a potential Deputy to implement this?

Yes, we need stronger habitat protection. As for the details of what land and how, that should be a subject for consultation - I don't have enough knowledge about particular habitats that are in need of more protection than currently provided.

The Taskforce for Nature-Related Financial Disclosure, endorsed by the UN, provides a framework for risk management and disclosure for organisations to report and act on nature-related risks. *Once this is officially published in September 2023, would you support the adoption of mandatory introductions of nature based financial disclosures for organisations based in Jersey, particularly within the Finance Sector?*

In principle, yes. I believe that there is already a strong desire on the part of Jersey Finance to champion this kind of agenda. To an extent they are looking for a lead from government, and for long term support so they can follow the "Jersey for Good" agenda.

Blue Marine Foundation briefing

'How to Make Jersey a Marine Sustainability Leader in Europe'. The proposed protected marine area was rejected by the current States Assembly despite its sequestration and biodiversity potential. *To those sitting representatives, how did you vote on the recent Marine Spatial Plan proposition, and why did you vote as such, and for those new candidates how would you have voted and why?*

I am supportive of the Marine Park idea, but I also recognise that voting for it this year may have caused significant problems with the French over fishing rights, at a time when the dispute with France has only just quietened down. In the next term I would expect to support the creation of a marine protected area.

Agriculture

Agriculture is a core part of Jersey's heritage, economy and some Islanders livelihoods. *What are your thoughts on pushing the need for sustainable farming practices, particularly policies of regenerative agriculture?*

I am supportive of moving to regenerative farming, but I think we need to move forward in cooperation with the farming sector. I am in favour of relating farming support to the adoption of sustainable farming practices. The rural strategy announced in May 2022 is a good basis on which to move forward.

Local food security

The UN has warned of a global food crisis that could last for years, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Additionally, India's recent ban on exporting wheat puts further pressure on the global food market. We are an Island with a fragile system at the mercy of weather and infrastructure to deliver good and services to the Island. *What are your views on the Island's level of food security, and would you change anything? If so, what would you want to change and how?*

This question is asking for an entire farming and food strategy. It is simply not possible to answer. In general we need to encourage greater diversity of food production in the island, and greater levels of food security, whilst recognising that we can never be self-sufficient.

Financing our future

The Assembly has declared a Climate Emergency, however, it is currently not allocating appropriate funds internally within GoJ to deliver on this. What would you do to ensure that the CNR receives appropriate funding to reach net zero by 2050?

There are a lot of issues to be addressed within this question. It is at the moment unclear how much funding will be required, and what the best mix of measures to achieve carbon neutrality will be. In general I support the principle that charges should be levied on carbon emissions. One obvious source of income for the climate emergency fund would be a tax on private air travel, which is highly polluting, and used by those who have an ability to pay.

Circular economy

What are your views on the circular economy and its applicability to Jersey?

The principles of the circular economy are in many ways made for an island like Jersey. We live within finite boundaries, we have a strong tradition of self reliance and a shared island-wide commitment to the environment, so we should be well placed to transition towards an economy based on re-use and recycling. Many entrepreneurs are finding clever ways to bypass throwaway commodities. We should encourage this kind of innovation in Jersey.

Some initiatives are already underway. In St Brelade, a parish “repair cafe” has helped promote the re-use of what would otherwise be disposable items.

We are increasingly going to be forced down a circular economy route anyway. For example, La Collette is filling up, there is soon going to be nowhere to put the building waste that comes from major demolition and construction projects. Rather than searching for somewhere else to dump, we should be looking at how our construction sector can become much more circular.

Waste/Recycling

Waste is an ever growing issue within a high consuming society. What are your views on parish recycling and what would you do to develop recycling rates within your parish?

We need to recycle more, that is obvious. Recycling rates are terribly low (less than 30%) and have if anything declined in recent years. The key to improving rates is to make it easier to recycle. When I lived in Windsor and Maidenhead, all recycling went into one mixed bin (glass, paper/card, tins, plastic bottles), which was collected every week along with non recyclable waste. We need to work with all the parishes to standardise on a system like this which is simple and easy to use.

In addition, we need to have a green waste recycling option. And we should encourage the composting of food use, both on a small scale and at a commercial scale (food guzzlers), whilst looking to modernise the rules that currently prevent composted food waste from being used more widely in farming.

Finance

The UK has ambitions to become the “first ever net-zero-aligned financial centre” - it’s clear there is a real space for us at the table given Jersey’s expertise and progress in this sector already - *how do you plan to support Jersey's finance industry in collaboration with the UK to provide a solution in their decarbonisation journey?*

As already mentioned, Jersey Finance has travelled a good distance down this route, as detailed in its “Jersey for Good” report. The need will be to keep championing this direction of travel, and working in collaboration with Jersey Finance to make sure barriers are removed. The danger of “greenwashing” is ever present, but at this stage I prefer to focus on the expressions of positive desire for change that are emanating from within the finance industry.