**MANIFESTO – PETER FERBRACHE**

**GUERNSEY**

Guernsey is a unique place and a unique society. Many places pretend to make that claim, but for Guernsey, it can be said that these are truisms.

The Island is beautiful. The entrance to St Peter Port Harbour is beyond compare. People speak to each other. They greet each other in the street daily. They welcome people who do not originate from these shores. They respect other people. They value hard work. They value integrity. They want people to succeed. They want to look after their elderly. They want to give their young the opportunity to prosper and thrive. They want to develop talent in whatever form that talent may take. They want people to be happy, healthy and prosperous.

**About me:**

I am a product of Guernsey. I was born here. My father was the youngest of fourteen children. My paternal grandfather worked until he was eighty as a stonemason. My maternal grandfather, amongst other things, was a Police Officer.

Guernsey gave me every opportunity. I was educated at Vauvert Infants, Amherst Junior School and Elizabeth College as a Scholarship boy. I went on to Law School and was called to the English Bar on the day after my twenty-first birthday. I qualified as a Guernsey Advocate in 1981, and I am still practising as such. In various capacities, I have served over ten years as a States Member. I have held senior positions in the States.

I also have business interests, which I have been able to develop in this Island.

I am grateful to those who came before me for the contributions they have made. I am grateful to those who have worked with me. I want to ensure that Guernsey allows the youngsters of today and tomorrow and the future to continue to thrive and have the opportunities, and better, that I have had.

**GUERNSEY’S POLITICAL SYSTEM**

The States of Deliberation now consists of thirty-eight Deputies and two Alderney representatives. In my time, I have seen the system develop. I have seen the reduction of States Members but the expansion of States of meeting. I have seen the reduction in Committee numbers, but the expansion of time spent in Committee meetings. Not all of that can be satisfactorily explained by the increasing complexity of the world and Guernsey’s place in it. We have a consensus Government. At the moment, it is operating at the lowest common denominator and it is preventing us making the decisive and positive decisions that we need to make. Many of the candidates will make many promises in their Manifesto. Even those that are joined together as a group will find those promises difficult to deliver. That does not mean you should not have hopes and aspirations, but what any candidate should do is refrain from making assurances to the Public that they will be able to achieve this, that or the other. What they should say is that they will work towards the goals that they seek to achieve.

**WHAT DO I WANT TO ACHIEVE?**

I want to make sure that Guernsey keeps its uniqueness. I want to make sure that young peoples’ enterprise is not stifled. I want to make sure that every young person, and indeed every person, is given the opportunity to maximise their talents, whatever that talent may be. I want to make sure that the elderly can lead a dignified and financially secure retirement. I want to make sure that those, who through their own efforts have bought their own property, can keep hold of it. I want to make sure that those people what they wish can pass it down to their children. I want to make sure that we do not engender the politics of envy. I want to make sure that we try and improve our standards, rather than equalize downwards. I want to make sure that we do not supress and depress initiative and enterprise generally. I want us to be positive rather than negative. I want us to be endearing and welcoming rather than jealous and dogmatic.

**WHAT ARE THE MAIN ISSUES OF TODAY AND TOMORROW?**

What I set out below is not necessarily all encompassing. This list will change in order of priority and will have additions made to it, no doubt, over the four and a half years, which will be the life-time of the next States.

1. Education:

The States that I am currently a Member of and the previous States decided to dismantle our education system without having any idea of what was going to replace it. The States have spent the last four years still not deciding the way forward. It has left many parents and, more importantly, children and young people in a state of limbo. My position has always been clear. I regretted the demise of the 11 plus. It needed alteration and variation, and it should have gone back to what it was, which was giving opportunity to people from ordinary backgrounds to further develop their lives. It was not only a matter of educational attainment, it also increased social mobility. My current position is, and I state it unequivocally, that I favour the three school model. I favour a sixth form College. The three schools should be Les Varendes, Beaucamp and St Sampsons. I favour the new tertiary proposals in the sense that there is a new Centre built at the old St Peter Port School site. The building of that will:

1. Encourage so many young people in their further education; and
2. Also at this time give a welcome boost to our construction industry.

I am not convinced that just generally following an English comprehensive model is the best, and we should still, but in early course, be looking for the best educational model; whether it is academic or vocational.

Like all matters (and this is a general comment) we need to be able to do something and make the important decisions in the very early life of the new States.

1. Finance:

Without money you can do nothing. We have had a balanced economy. We need to continue that otherwise we can make all of the promises in the world, but none of them are achievable without the money to do it.. As I have said in the States, and I have said otherwise, there are no money trees. Money has to be earned before it can be spent. The States’ finances were in reasonable order. We had some savings. We had though some major problems which have not been addressed. We need financial prudence going forward, but what we do need is to open the economy and to expand it. That is not an overnight answer to all our problems, but it can be done progressively, and if we create a welcoming environment, it can happen quicker here than most places. It is not the intention of this document to be over critical. I will though, and do make comments, where I believe appropriate. The Bond which was agreed by the 2012-2016 States has turned out to be ill thought out. I anticipate that the intention was that the money would be borrowed and all existing States’ commercial debts would be repaid and the money would then be available to meet those with something left over for other investment projects. Basic research though was seemingly not carried out. It was undoubtedly under used. The States has been scratching around for projects to try and use the same on an economic basis. Much of it is still available. The cost of setting it up was too expensive. The interest rate at the time was reasonable, but we are now saddled with a Bond which we cannot redeem and we cannot use as we may now want. We should be much more prudent in the future and astute in relation to such commercial vehicles. The States has lacked that financial acuity over many years. We are often wrong footed. We cannot afford to be in the future. We will need to be alive to all the opportunities that may avail themselves to us. We can have as many policies as we like, like education, the environment and anything else, but unless there is the money there to pay for them, we will not be able to follow them through.

1. Infrastructure:

In the recent life of the States we have only invested about £63 million in infrastructure projects and £32 million of that was for the Waste Management facility, and those again who were leading us wanted that to be paid for in a different way. Unless you invest in your infrastructure, albeit in a sensible and intelligent way, you are heading for disaster. We need to have an urgent decision and an urgent course of action setting forward infrastructure projects for the next several years.

1. Regulation:

There is too much of it. It is too detailed. It stifles opportunity. It stifles inventiveness. It creates fear. An example of bad regulation relates to one of our Public utilities, Guernsey Electricity. Its financial position is far from what it should have been, because of the undue and restrictive regulation that it is subject to. Before we introduce any regulation we have to examine whether it is absolutely necessary. We now have legislation concerning data protection, our financial services industry, our way of life in the sense of health and safety and other aspects of our way of living. Some has been foisted upon us by International requirements. Some of it is self-imposed. It would be foolish to say that no regulation is justified, but we should scrutinise every single time every piece of regulation that we have to bring in. It all cost money, and some of it is not beneficial. No regulation can ever make you smile!

1. Travel links and Tourism:

The States that purchased Aurigny had more foresight than it probably ever thought it possessed. Without Aurigny, particularly in the recent crisis, we would have been in an absolute mess. We are smaller than Jersey. We are less attractive to airlines. I am no apologist for Aurigny though. That said, I believe that our key routes, I am not just talking about Gatwick and Alderney, in the foreseeable future can only be properly serviced by one operator and in most circumstances that is likely to be Aurigny. Airlines travelling here in the summer from other destinations are most welcome and should continue to be so. We cannot just survive though on those, and we have to make sure that the people of Guernsey and those wanting to travel here on business or holiday or to visit relatives have the opportunity so to do. They are key to our financial future. They are key to us enjoying our lives as citizens of this Island.

In relation to sea links, again we should now be sitting down with Condor (or its successor) and negotiating a long-term contract which will suit the needs of this Island.

None of that will be easy but, again, this is something the States needs to do in the next few months. It also needs a transport strategy. It needs a tourism strategy. There is no point in keeping hotels which are fallen into disuse in the tourist industry if there is no market for them. We cannot have policies which do not meet the needs of ordinary people in pursuing their own businesses. The States must speak and listen to those who operate and work and invest in the Tourist Industry.

1. Businesses generally:

Most of our businesses are small. Statistically a lot of people are self-employed and employ a small number of people. They need to be consulted about their concerns and needs. The States again in its first few months needs to sit down with a representative body across a wide sphere of activity and ask those people what they want and be frank with them as to what can be delivered. We cannot keep heaping social insurance rise upon social insurance rise upon such people. We cannot make their businesses more and more unproductive and uneconomic.

1. Size of Government:

Guernsey people are going to have to decide whether they want an ever growing all-embracing Government, or whether they want to rail that back and say we want a smaller Government, and we would rather it concentrated on key services. Again, with the aforementioned that needs discussion by the States in the first few months of its term.

1. The Environment:

We all want green fields. We all want a good bus service. We all want to ensure that Guernsey is a pleasant place to live in. We want to ensure that our beaches are clean and our air is pure. We have to balance what is realistic with what we can achieve, but we can make a sensible balance and a constructive contribution towards the environment of our Island.

1. Alderney and Sark:

I have been very impressed with the four Alderney representatives who have represented their Island in the States in this term. They are all intelligent, balanced and decent individuals. They promote properly the interests of Alderney but they realise that the relationship with Guernsey is very important. We need to foster that. They are not the eleventh parish of Guernsey, but they are an important part of our Bailiwick.

As is Sark. Sark has a joy and a spirit which must never be trampled on.

Both Islands, and indeed all the Islands in our Bailiwick add considerably to our lustre and our way of life and our values.

**THE WAY FORWARD GENERALLY**

I believe that the States should:

In the first three or four months, and no longer, of its life sit down and address all these issues and come up with policies for years to come. For example, and I have not touched upon it as a separate topic, but there is the east coast development. None of us want fifteen storey high hotels. None of us want bulldozers and lorries driving up and down the roads of our coast for years to come. That said, there are things we can do now, which includes the Tourist Office and La Vallette, just to give two examples. We are though going to need a wider development, which may well stretch over many decades. That does not need to be a talking shop, as it has been for several years with nothing happening. Again a common theme and common policies can be adopted in a very few months, which could then be developed over a longer period.

I would thus like to see a more proactive and purposeful States. Only the Electorate can deliver that. If it delivers much of the same, then that will simply not occur.

I conclude by saying that I am optimistic. We are going to face considerable challenges in this Island and in this Bailiwick. We can overcome most of those and we can provide people with a way forward that probably nowhere else in the world could achieve. We can do that if we elect the right people and give them a mandate.

Many thanks if you have taken the time to read all or part of this.

I will be around trying to make myself available during the election period. You can also telephone me on 07781 127932 or email me on pferbrache1@gmail.com