

Emma Brook election manifesto 2021



I am a 6th generation Falkland Islander, born in England and just turned 50. I was elected to council in 2009, but resigned in 2011 as I was getting married to Mark, who was employed in HM Forces and he was to be posted to the UK following our wedding. I have a number of qualifications including degree and postgraduate level qualifications in Geology, History, Strategic Leadership & Management, Education and Careers Guidance. I have worked in the Islands as a Geologist, Customer Service Manager, Teacher and currently manage Falkland College. For 19 years I was a Reserve Police Officer and for 10 years I worked seasonally on the Clipper Adventurer as Expedition Staff.

The Falkland Islands is my home. I love it with a passion, but today I am worried about what is happening to our home. It has been a very difficult decision to stand for this election as I have worked hard to get to the position I currently enjoy in the Civil Service. However, I cannot stand by and watch our heritage and culture be undermined and lost. If elected I will listen and do my best to make sure the people's voice is heard.

To review immigration policy

I understand we have a labour shortage, but we need to be stricter about who comes to the Islands. We need an English speaking workforce, with qualifications that are recognised and can be used across the Islands. We need to encourage people from the UK to settle in the Islands. The process in place though is cumbersome and very slow. We must ensure that those entering the country are medically fit, but should they fall ill would be able to receive medical treatment at no extra cost to the Islands. We need to slow the speed of status to ensure those becoming Falkland Islanders understand our culture and traditions. I do not see a problem with short term work permits to allow development to go ahead, but not all immigrants need to bring family, as this is putting extra stress on our bulging infrastructure problems.

To look again at ALL the proposed major projects and the infrastructure challenges.

I understand we need a port, but not at any cost. This is a project that will potentially put our islands into debt, a position we have not been in since the 1880's. Has the last council got their priorities, right? I don't think so. We need to invest in the Power station, we need to ensure we have water and we need a sewage network that works. I believe we need a new hospital and new schools. The current sites are not big enough and we hear of many structural problems, that would make a new build more cost effective.

To review the civil service powers and structure.

£37 million on salaries. Departments that are empire building and a directorate that believes they run the Islands. I would support a reduction in the size of the Civil Service and would like to see many of the new posts dissolved. I certainly would not support any additional directorate posts as I believe the civil service to be too top heavy. I have been horrified when I hear senior Management decide what EXCO papers go to MLA's; bring back GPC. The power of the directors needs to be reduced and the Chief Executive and Directors need to understand they DO NOT run our little country, but are employed as civil servants to ensure the policies created by MLA's are made to happen.

To ensure the Islands are not left behind due to poor telecommunications.

Sure SA Ltd I feel are providing a good service (although it is expensive and has limits), for Stanley. Camp is a very poor service and hinders development. It is no fault of those who work for Sure, but the limitations of the Islands and external infrastructure. We need to look at alternatives and I hope Starlink lives up to expectations.

To ensure we have a housing policy that allows young Islanders access to the housing ladder.

Our young people are our future. Ensuring they are able to get onto the housing ladder is essential. I was fortunate in being able to purchase a heavily subsidised plot in the East of Stanley, and would support a similar initiative. Not everyone can afford a house and I would like to see rents offered by Government to young people to encourage them to save to build their own house, but I would also like to see Government offer a rent to buy scheme. Rents are currently crippling people and a housing ombudsman is something we should look at.

To revise the pensions for the civil service

I was lied to in 1996. I was told my pension with the Hay Management review would certainly not be any worse and possibly better. Civil servants of a certain age will be receiving a pension that is 40%+, less than the pension they would have been offered if remaining with the old scheme. Pensions need to be revised to ensure those retiring after working for the civil service all their life are guaranteed a certain level of pension; otherwise we will see an aging population on the poverty line. Plus the 10, 20, 30 year bonus shouldn't be taxed and what happens after 40 years of service?

To have a police force that is Island friendly

After 19 years in the police here, I know what it is like to police these Islands. I have never known the image of the police to be so low. We must encourage these Islands to be policed by Islanders, if we have to employ overseas, we look to the Highlands & Islands of Scotland or Devon & Cornwall.

To seek investment and development in camp

Camp is a vital part of our Islands heritage and hosts two important industries, agriculture and tourism. For me Camp is the Falklands. We need to encourage better tourism developments and diversify the economy of Camp, so more people can live there. This needs good infrastructure in roads, a dedicated ferry service and faster, more reliable telecommunications. The TRIP scheme has demonstrated people want to visit Camp, and I would support the use of the £1 a day scheme to encourage people to continue visiting and exploring our beautiful Islands.

To ensure the return of flight links with South America do not result in stop overs in BA, but to strengthen our links with other South American neighbours.

I will be honest, I do not like Argentina and the less we have to do with them the better. All agreements with them are fickle and they refuse to recognise me or any Falkland Islander. They are muttering already about when flights return after Covid, they stop in BA. This for me is not acceptable. We have long standing relationships with Chile and other South American nations and I would be happy to see these be built upon.

To not allow salmon farming in Falkland Waters

Our environment is precious. We have seen the impact of invasive species (the earwig, thistles, rats) and I do not want to see the deliberate introduction of what would be very invasive, should any escape, let alone the damage to the marine environment created by Salmon farming.

To look after our heritage & natural environment

We must look after our history, from graveyards to stone corrals, all are important aspects of our social history. Where these are not being looked after the Government has a duty to maintain them. We live in one of the most beautiful places on earth, we must look after the wildlife and the natural vegetation.

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