

島嶼活力行動

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LIVING ISLANDS
MOVEMENT

SUSTAINABLE ISLAND DEVELOPMENT

District Council Elections

Candidates Election Questionnaire

Dear District Council Officer Candidate

The Living Islands Movement is sending this Questionnaire to the four candidates standing for election at the 2015 District Council Elections.

The purpose of the questionnaire is to understand the position of the candidates regarding the key issues of concern to the LIM membership, as they affect South Lantau (Mui Wo to Tai O). The issues are listed below and are in the form of questions for candidates to express their position on each issue. The issues are not ranked in any order of priority or importance.

Responses to the questionnaire shall be summarised and published to the LIM members for them to make informed decisions about voting on 22nd November.

We trust that you will answer the questions candidly and with integrity.

Please send your responses by email to info@livingislands.org.hk to arrive no later than 5pm on Wednesday 11th November.

The Issues

1. Pui O Wetlands

- a. Preserving Lantau's wetlands is a concern. The issue is about preventing destruction of the wetlands caused by the dumping of waste. Please explain how you would resolve the issues of dumping construction waste on wetlands?

I believe that the only solution to waste issue is reduction and recycling of waste. I remember seeing a documentary which mentioned about a recycling facility in Hong Kong for construction "waste", where such "waste" can actually be separated and reused. So if there could be incentives to facilitate this kind of recycling, there should not be a construction "waste" problem in the first place. The government is totally capable of and responsible for facilitating such recycling, plus it should be using its muscles in legislation. I believe strict reinforcement of prosecution is necessary in the meanwhile.

2. Transport on South Lantau

- a. The Transport Department propose extending the issuing of Closed Road permits to private cars and buses. There has been little or no thought given to the infrastructure needs or to road safety. How will you address the concerns?
- b. Parking in Mui Wo continues to be a problem. Do you have a solution to reduce the parking problem?

Let's look at this issue on a higher level. What is the real issue at hand – patching up infrastructure for ever-increasing vehicular access, or should we really be looking at what Lantau should become, and from that vision decide what kind of infrastructure is actually needed.

The Transport Department certainly does have information on the maximum capacity of Lantau's existing road infrastructure and parking facilities. I propose to use this figure as the upper limit and from thereon restrict new permits to electric cars/buses only. Old permits can only be renewed if the applicant also switch to zero/low pollution standards. This will eventually shift Lantau to the first of Hong Kong's green zone where only electric or zero/low pollution vehicles are allowed. Imagine a Lantau where only bicycles and electric cars can access. This will stop further devastation of our environment and restore the ecological balance. Lantau will be a first and best example of Hong Kong of an alternative to "economic growth" based on property and infrastructure development at the expense of our environment, natural resources and heritage.

Then there is no longer an issue of "inadequacy". Our earth never has a issue of inadequacy. It's just that our earth has been exploited in the wrong way.

- c. Public transport on South Lantau is often inadequate, particularly at weekends. What will you do to address the needs for improved public transport (bus, ferries and taxis)?

On buses: I believe that the Lantau Bus Company should have a permanent reserve pool of drivers/buses to meet holiday and special event needs.

On taxis: I believe there should definitely be much more taxi licences issued. But fair competition should be introduced, in the form of Uber-like competition. Because we're not talking about territory-wide changes, Lantau is certainly a good experiment ground for introducing quality options such as Uber or the like.

On ferries: I believe that the service and frequencies of inter-island ferries should be improved. I believe that the management of the ferry company can definitely be much much better, in terms of deployment of human resources, efficiency and cleanliness. Our daily ride to and from town can be a much more pleasant journey if only the ferries can be kept clean and well-ventilated.

I believe that the holiday surcharge of ferry/bus services is totally unfair and should be abolished. It discourages the flow of visitors and residents and practically works against what everybody is trying to do – ie encourage people to come visit and experience the beauty of Lantau, and for local families in Lantau to be able to get together especially during the holidays.

3. Engagement with South Lantau Residents.

- a. Residents often feel uninformed on important environmental and social issues affecting them, and are suspicious of the lack of clear action taking place on issues affecting them. Will you commit to holding public discussion meetings on a regular basis (at least twice each year) to explain issues to the public and to listen to their concerns in an open forum?

Definitely, this is exactly what I am standing candidacy for. It is one of the top priorities in my election platform. I believe in community participatory governance and that all residents here should be encouraged and facilitated to participate more actively in shaping our home together. I am proposing to have regular public meetings in which there will be reportage of DC updates, plus Q&A sessions for the residents so that residents will be kept fully-informed about issues related to them. Also this is the best opportunity for DC members to collect views and suggestions from the residents. Also such sessions should be bi-lingual. I am also proposing for DC minutes to revert to being bi-lingual as well (it used to be bi-lingual before the handover).

4. East Lantau Metropolis Proposals.

- a. There is much talk about structural developments affecting the east side of South Lantau (Mui Wo connections to North Lantau, reclamation of Silvermine Bay etc). Please explain your position regarding the ELM.

NO NO NO to ELM!! The proposal itself, including the compromised proposals (like leaving a ring of water around the island to “conserve natural life”) is totally ridiculous and completely ignorant.

- b. LANDAC is an organisation that seems to have a strong opinion about the development of South Lantau (and North Lantau). LANDAC meetings are documented but not attributable to individuals. This makes the organisation appear suspicious. Do you support the principle of LANDAC operating in a more open and transparent way, including attributing comments to individual LANDAC members?

I have been strongly opposed to the LANDAC since its inception. The composition is totally biased for narrow-minded development, excluding participation by civilian and environmental experts/groups. There is such a serious and obvious issue of conflict of interest among members that the LANDAC is totally illegitimate and cannot be trusted. We know that the government is only paying lip-service in saying sustainability bla bla bla when it dares to appoint such members to the LANDAC.

I am for an advisory committee with representation from the community, plus experts who truly knows about the environment and sustainability.

I hope to have more discussions on this with LIM members because I could get really long in this answer if I go on writing here!

5. Incinerator on Shek Kwu Chau

- a. If the Government proceeds with the planned incinerator, will you support or oppose any further expansion of the facility on Shek Kwu Chau?

Of course I am opposing! Incinerators are NOT solutions to the waste issue. In face of climate change and global warming, we should again be looking at this from a higher level. We need a daring approach and quick real actions in waste management in terms of separation and recycling of waste (eg collection of different types of waste by day of week, the banning of certain packaging and charging for waste treatment). We need bold measures to turn around all our habits of creating waste and expectations of dumping/burning them “somewhere”. Contrary to what the government has been telling us, going back to the origin and the reduction of waste is a much quicker way and the only real solution to our waste issue.

In the scenario if Shek Kwu Chau is a go-head, we still need to separate the waste, otherwise we will still be producing toxics into the air and a massive waste of energy.

6. Broadband Internet on South Lantau

- a. Residents are very unhappy with the slow speed and relatively poor support services of broadband on South Lantau. What will you do to address this issue?

I am not a technology expert but could 4G mobile data be our alternative to the traditional broadband internet? I mean instead of setting up new infrastructure for broadband (which damages our environment and is very wasteful) can we use our mobile infrastructure to also answer our need for internet and data access?

7. Prison Closures / Sea Ranch

- a. There is discussion about the possible closure of prisons to further facilitate the development of South Lantau for tourism and for leisure. What is your position on this?

I don't think there is such a need. We have no problem at all co-existing with the prison all these years. We have enjoyed the neighbouring environment and I see no conflict in letting the prison stay there. In fact, I think letting the prison stay where it is will stop any plans to "develop" the area and save the environment (in Lantau or out of Lantau) from a second bulldozing to build a new prison anywhere.

- b. Sea Ranch has long been an underused resource. Do you have an opinion on development of this unique location?

I think residents of Sea Ranch have chosen this place because they love this secluded place. It should be them making the choice or plans, not outsiders opining what should be done to their home.

8. South Lantau Development

- a. Please describe your 20 year vision for South Lantau. How will the development affect the living environment of residents?

I hope to see Lantau a place where different peoples from different cultures make their home, cherishing it and conserving it. Lantau is a place where residents naturally participate and actively decide in shaping the path of Lantau through democratic, participatory, transparent and efficient community governance.

I hope to still see Lantau a place where there is bio-diversity (hopefully better than even now), where peoples, animals, plants can live in harmony together and make it their beautiful home together.

I imagine that the white dolphins and other rare species would have returned by then and feral cattle/buffaloes roam because of good ecological policies that really make sense and understand our place as the last natural reserve of Hong Kong.

I see more sophisticated and ecologically-awared visitors coming to Lantau because this is the unique place in Hong Kong where the environment and our heritage strives the natural way it is, instead of being manipulated artificially, and because this is where the residents have fought hard to conserve the way it is.

I imagine that Hong Kong will be the top 5 best cities to live in, because of Lantau where people go around in a beautiful, green environment on foot, on bikes or electric cars only. Our beaches are clean, our rivers clear. Our community is a progressive one with liberal views, strong on our common stand to conserve our ecology.

I hope to still see Lantau a place where there is bio-diversity (hopefully better than even now).

The Issues

This summarises your position on each of the issues

1. **Pui O Wetlands**
 - a. Do you support the concept of the long term preservation of the Pui O wetlands? Yes or No ___Yes_____
2. **Transport on South Lantau**
 - b. Do you support the TD proposal to allow the number of closed road permits to be increased? Yes or No ___No_____
 - c. Do you have a workable solution for the Mui Wo parking problem? Yes or No ___Yes_____
 - d. Do you support the idea of improved public transport for South Lantau? Yes or No ___Yes_____
3. **Engagement with South Lantau Residents.**
 - a. Will you commit to holding public discussion meetings on a regular basis? Yes or No ___Yes_____
4. **East Lantau Metropolis Proposals.**
 - a. Do you support the ELM proposals? Yes or No No No No
 - b. Do you support the principle of LANDAC operating in a more open and transparent way? Yes or No ___Yes_____
5. **Incinerator on Shek Kwu Chau**
 - a. Will you support any further expansion of the facility on Shek Kwu Chau? Yes or No ___No_____
6. **Broadband Internet on South Lantau**
 - a. Do you agree that action must be taken to improve the broadband service to South Lantau? Yes or No ___Yes and no, please see my above answer_____
7. **Prison Closures / Sea Ranch**
 - a. Should prisons be closed to allow development for tourism on South Lantau? Yes or No ___No_____
 - b. Should Sea Ranch be developed? Yes or No **Not for us to say**
8. **South Lantau Development**
 - a. Is South Lantau worth preserving in a condition similar to today? Yes or No Yes_and in a better way

Please add any further clarification or points you would like to make about the above issues: _____
