

# **Key Campaign Priorities**

**May 2010**



**Mebyon Kernow**  
– The Party for Cornwall

## **OUR CORE VALUES**

Mebyon Kernow – the Party for Cornwall is a modern and progressive political party. It is a party of principle, campaigning for a better deal for Cornwall and a fairer, more equitable World.

We exist to fight for ALL the people of Cornwall, with a political programme that puts Cornwall first and offers an alternative to the London-centred parties.

It is our belief that the historic nation of Cornwall, with its own distinct identity, language and heritage, has the same right to self-determination as Scotland and Wales. We should have more say in how our lives are run and Mebyon Kernow is leading the campaign for the self-government of Cornwall, through the establishment of a legislative Assembly.

We will play our part in building a confident and outward-looking Cornwall, that has the power to take decisions for itself. To achieve this, our detailed policies are founded on the core values of prosperity for all, social justice and environmental protection.

## **PROSPERITY FOR ALL**

Mebyon Kernow is committed to a society based on real equality of opportunity, helping people to achieve their full potential in life. We want Cornwall and its communities to be successful, with all residents sharing equally in that success through thriving businesses, worthwhile and secure employment, decent wages, access to genuinely affordable housing and good quality public services.

## **SOCIAL JUSTICE**

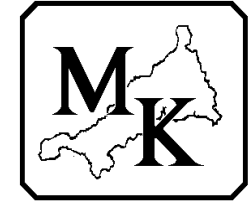
The Party for Cornwall is committed to a just and fair society. We believe that effective public intervention is needed to combat poverty, tackle social deprivation and fight for the disadvantaged. We will strive to build strong inclusive communities with free and equal access to well-funded education, healthcare and welfare services, run for the benefit of everyone.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

Safeguarding the environment is central to Mebyon Kernow's policies. The World faces severe environmental crises, which require radical action on a worldwide basis to promote real sustainability. Mebyon Kernow – the Party for Cornwall will not shirk from difficult decisions to protect and enhance the environment for future generations.

Mebyon Kernow is international in outlook. Our vision for Cornwall and the World is underpinned by respect for the diversity of the planet, both its human cultural traditions and its natural environment.

We believe that nations and regions must work together to promote greater understanding, foster peace and help reduce global inequality, so that all peoples, families and individuals can live their lives free from conflict, poverty, exploitation and environmental degradation.



## **MEBYON KERNOW - THE PARTY FOR CORNWALL**

Mebyon Kernow – the Party for Cornwall is different from the mainstream London-based political parties.

We are based here in Cornwall. We are not funded by big business or a few wealthy individuals. Our policies are not determined by focus groups, policy advisers or vested interests. We will always fight for what is best for Cornwall and answer only to you – its people.

MK is a member of the European Free Alliance, a federation of moderate autonomist and regionalist parties from throughout Europe, including the SNP, Plaid Cymru and the Union Democratique Bretonne from Brittany.

For more detailed information on MK and its policies, contact:

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## **KEY CAMPAIGN PRIORITIES 2010**

For this election campaign, Mebyon Kernow – the Party for Cornwall is focussing on ten key campaign priorities:

- 1. A legislative National Assembly for Cornwall**
- 2. Fair funding for Cornwall to improve public services**
- 3. A long-term strategy for a sustainable economy**
- 4. A fair tax system based on ability to pay**
- 5. Affordable homes for local people**
- 6. Reduction of the public debt**
- 7. An Environmental Action Plan for Cornwall**
- 8. Accountable democratic government though radical political reform**
- 9. A more just and peaceful World**
- 10. Recognition for Cornwall**

## **KEY CAMPAIGN PRIORITY NO 1**

### **A legislative National Assembly for Cornwall**

**Mebyon Kernow is the only political party campaigning for the recognition of Cornwall as a distinct national community for all forms of governance and administration.**

**MK is leading the campaign for a law-making Cornish Assembly. We believe that the people of Cornwall should have more say in how their lives are run and that locally elected politicians should be taking the key decisions about Cornwall's future – not unelected bureaucrats in the wider South West or disinterested ministers in London.**

Mebyon Kernow – the Party for Cornwall is committed to:

- Bespoke legislation to create a National Assembly for Cornwall with powers at least equal to those of the Scottish Parliament which would include responsibility for Health, Education, Training, Local Government, Housing, Economic Development and Transport, Energy, Law and Home Affairs, Environment, Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, Sport and the Arts.
- The abolition of the network of bogus unelected and unaccountable South West quangos which have removed democratic control from Cornwall.
- A Cornish Civil Service to support the new democracy in Cornwall.
- A return to local government in Cornwall that reflects the needs of local communities.

## **KEY CAMPAIGN PRIORITY NO 2**

### **Fair funding for Cornwall to improve public services**

**Cornwall gets a raw deal from Westminster. Our hospitals, schools and vital public services receive less funding than other parts of the United Kingdom. We also lose out to unelected South West quangos and agencies.**

**In this election, Mebyon Kernow is demanding a Commission to investigate the full extent of this Government under-funding of Cornwall, just as the recent Holtham Commission (organised by the Welsh Assembly) found that Wales is under-funded by £300 million a year.**

MK is pressing all of the London-based political parties to support our call for a Commission and to agree to abide by the Commission's findings, thereby guaranteeing Cornish communities their fair share of central government funding, which will help us cope with the difficult economic times that lie ahead.

## **KEY CAMPAIGN PRIORITY NO 3**

### **A long-term strategy for a sustainable economy**

**The Cornish economy continues to lag behind that of the rest of the United Kingdom. Our gross domestic product per head is only 64% of the UK average and our workers earn 20% less than elsewhere.**

**MK will establish a Department of Economic Development within the Assembly Government, charged with the task of developing a long-term strategy for a sustainable economy to deliver prosperity for Cornwall.**

MK is committed to improving Cornwall's economic performance, whilst protecting our exceptional natural environment.

The Department of Economic Development will play a major role in securing much higher levels of both public and commercial capital investment to improve our skills, productivity, infrastructure, housing stock and public services.

Particular commitments include: increased local production to meet local needs; more value-adding processes within Cornwall and positive support for the use of local produce or raw materials; investment in Green and high technology industries such as research into renewable energy projects; and the development of an independent Cornish University.

MK is committed to tough regulation of the big supermarkets to prevent them operating as a virtual cartel to force down farm prices to uneconomic levels. An economically viable farming sector is fundamental to security of food supply and the character of the Cornish countryside and way of life.

## **KEY CAMPAIGN PRIORITY NO 4**

### **A fair tax system based on ability to pay**

**Mebyon Kernow is committed to effective public intervention to tackle ills in Cornish society such as unemployment and poor housing. This means that there is a need for a sufficient public resource and this implies fair and redistributive taxation.**

**Fair taxation based on ability to pay, with increased spending to be partly funded by shifts in taxation onto the better-off, lies at the heart of our policies.**

Since 1979, there has been a major shift in taxation from direct to indirect taxation. Tory and Labour reforms have meant lighter taxes on wealth and profit, but a financial squeeze on the poor. Income-tax cuts have resulted in disproportionate gains for the well-off, while other tax increases have fallen hardest upon the poorest in society.

Mebyon Kernow – the Party for Cornwall is committed to:

- Support for the less-well-off through the development of a living wage for local workers, an increase in the personal tax allowance to £10,000 and a reduction in indirect taxation which falls most severely on the less-well-off.
- An end to the inequitable council tax and its replacement with a progressive local income tax.
- Action to crack down on tax avoidance which is costing the Treasury billions each year.

## KEY CAMPAIGN PRIORITY NO 5

### Affordable homes for local people

**Mebyon Kernow – the Party for Cornwall believes that local families have a fundamental right to good quality and affordable housing in their own communities.**

**MK opposes unsustainable government plans to build 70,000 houses in Cornwall by 2026, which has nothing to do with meeting local needs. We are working hard to deliver new housing policies that focus on the needs of local people – not speculative house-builders.**

An out-of-control housing market means house prices in Cornwall have rocketed, leaving a clear mismatch between local wages and house prices. Private rented properties have become extremely expensive and getting a “council house” is but a distant dream for the many thousands in housing need.

MK wants radical action to tackle this crisis. We would:

- Set up a Department within the Assembly Government to devise the strategy for housing provision in Cornwall.
- Only allow housing developments which can demonstrate local need through an “assessment of community need and acceptability.”
- Increase the number of affordable homes, through planning and increased financial support for Community Land Trusts and the construction of council houses.
- Introduce planning restrictions to stop and then reverse the spread of second “homes.”

## KEY CAMPAIGN PRIORITY NO 6

### Reduction of the public debt

**The massive deficit in the UK’s finances has to be tackled. Unnecessary and inappropriate government spending and waste needs to be eradicated, but front-line public services and the needs of the vulnerable must be protected.**

**MK would support radical reform of the financial sector in order to prevent City risk-taking jeopardising the global economy.**

People and communities are suffering because of the economic policies of the London Parties. We have had a recession because of irresponsible levels of government borrowing, the failure to regulate the City and an over-inflated housing market.

The banks would not have had to be bailed out, and public services would not have been jeopardised as a consequence, had government acted properly. But now that the government has heavily invested public funds in the banking sector, the people’s money must be safeguarded and made to work in our interests as shareholders – not the interests of the banks’ imprudent risk-takers.

Mebyon Kernow – the Party for Cornwall believes that savings should be made by cancelling government plans for the £78 billion Trident replacement and ID cards. MK also believes that the taxation system should be reformed so that the wealthy contribute their fair share in tackling the deficit.

## KEY CAMPAIGN PRIORITY NO 7

### **An Environmental Action Plan for Cornwall**

**The threat of climate change is the defining issue of modern politics. Countries all over the World are facing environmental threats and we must meet this challenge head-on and put the issues of sustainability at the heart of policy-making.**

**An Environmental Action Plan to tackle climate change would set out actions to reduce greenhouse emissions and develop a truly sustainable, low-carbon economy.**

Unsustainability is truly global and must be tackled through action at worldwide as well as local levels. Mebyon Kernow understands that to achieve real sustainability we must foster radical changes to every aspect of our lives. Our policy commitments include working towards:

- A Green New Deal for Cornwall that creates high-quality jobs in environmental sectors, through initiatives such as an enhanced programme of home insulation, green electricity through renewable energy schemes and the development of a green integrated transport system.
- A decentralised and sustainable economy which provides local needs as locally as possible, invests in local food production, and reduces levels of long-distance travel and dependence on imports.
- A zero waste strategy, aiming at the elimination of landfilling and incineration, which invests in the radical reduction of waste and increased re-use and recycling.

## KEY CAMPAIGN PRIORITY NO 8

### **Accountable democratic government through radical political reform**

**Faith in politics is at an all-time low after the MP expenses scandal. Discussion about reform between the London-based parties has generated hot air and little else.**

**Mebyon Kernow is different. We are involved in politics because we want to win a better deal for Cornwall. It is about doing what is right for our local communities – not personal aggrandisement.**

Mebyon Kernow – the Party for Cornwall believes that radical political reforms are necessary to put faith back into the democratic process as a matter of urgency. As well as a powerful National Assembly for Cornwall, we support:

- Fixed term Westminster Parliaments to give certainty to the electoral process.
- Introduction of proportional representation through STV (Single Transferable Vote).
- The abolition of the unelected second chamber.
- An end to the power and influence of unelected and unaccountable quangos.
- The strengthening of local government and an end to the dictatorial top-down control of Whitehall.



## KEY CAMPAIGN PRIORITY NO 9

### A more just and peaceful World

**Mebyon Kernow believes that nations and regions should be working together to tackle global inequality and build a more just World.**

**We are committed to the eradication of nuclear weapons and greater controls on arms sales. We support campaigns for justice for the peoples of the developing countries.**

Mebyon Kernow – the Party for Cornwall spoke out against the military invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. We support a phased withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, as well as improved support for military personnel who have participated in the conflict.

MK is committed to a Nuclear-Free Cornwall. There is no strategic rationale for the retention, still less the renewal, of the British nuclear arsenal and accordingly it should be disarmed immediately.

We also support all moves to control the arms trade, which is having such a terrible impact on developing countries.

MK supports the immediate implementation of the United Nation's target of 0.7% of GDP for overseas aid. It is absurd that poor countries are being forced to destroy their environments and ransack their natural resources in a vain attempt to pay back unfair debts. We believe that Third World debts should be written off.

## KEY CAMPAIGN PRIORITY NO 10

### Recognition for Cornwall

**Cornwall has a unique national identity, grounded in its culture, language, traditions, history and distinct constitutional position. This could be our greatest asset, nourishing a real sense of place and purpose, providing a unifying element for the whole of Cornwall.**

**MK exists to win greater recognition for Cornwall, its traditions and the rights of its people**

Mebyon Kernow supports:

- The transfer of responsibility for work currently undertaken in Cornwall by agencies such as English Heritage and Natural England to the National Assembly of Cornwall.
- A National Curriculum for Cornwall, that ensures subjects such as Cornish history, culture and language are taught in all local schools.
- Increased investment in the Cornish language (Kernewek) for the training of language teachers, the provision of courses and its wider dissemination.
- A full Inquiry into the Duchy of Cornwall and Cornwall's ambiguous constitutional relationship with the Crown, and the contradictions between our constitutional status and current administrative arrangements.
- Recognition of the Cornish people through the Framework Convention on National Minorities and a tickbox on the 2011 census.