

# Directors of Tomorrow – Guernsey IoD Convention 2018

## My Experience

I was lucky enough to have the chance to attend the Institute of Directors convention, as well as an insightful lunch with Alastair Stewart OBE. We were aiming to get stuck into the topic of “what Guernsey’s place was in the world”, and whether it was “plain vanilla, or something more exotic”. I personally believe that this topic was a very interesting one, and that it was extremely relevant to us as the younger demographic, as Guernsey’s place in the world in coming years could have a serious reflection on what happens within the island economically and in terms of immigration.

We were lucky enough to see a debate lead by a group of panellists with a vast amount of knowledge on a very broad spectrum of topics. Both keynote speakers/panellists, Simon Anholt and Hannah Laikko gave us, the attendees, very in depth talks on how they believed Guernsey’s place in the world could be perceived as important, and how they believed we could make a difference to the planet. Mr Anholt believed that if Guernsey, as 63,000 people, worked together as one, then there would be a significantly larger hope that we could change the perception of us as an island. Ms Laikko suggested that Guernsey could be known for renewable energy, electric vehicles, marine conservation or a testbed for artificial intelligence. This was an extremely thought provoking comment, as it made us young invitees start to wonder what potentials were really on the horizon.

I personally believe that the panellists were extremely knowledgeable, and were fascinating to listen to. Mr Richard Holmes was a personal favourite of mine. His comment on the fact that he found the Economic Development’s 20 step vision document generic and “a bit boring”. This was a particularly assertive comment to make, and certainly got the attention of everybody in the room. I believe the panellists answered the questions as best as they could, despite having to be very tolerant with certain members of the audience going off on a tangent from what the actual topic was.

The topic that was the most common occurrence was the change in the education system. This was not really relevant to Guernsey’s place in the world, and was not the place to debate something that cannot be returned to what it originally was. The local referendum was another prominent topic at this dinner, and I believe it was a topic that was necessary, albeit not primarily relevant to Guernsey’s place in the world. It allowed us students to gain a better knowledge of how the states members felt about the upcoming election, and how we had to play our part in it and vote. Another topic that was regularly surfacing was the fears of the ever closer mystery that is Brexit, and what it holds for us as an Island. This was an important topic for us as students, as it is our future that it jeopardises, if there are negative effects from Brexit. It was said that as it becomes more difficult for outsiders to gain access to the United Kingdom, we should look to do the opposite, and potentially allow a vast amount of new migrants with potential broad skill sets to live here and work with us to allow innovation to take place, and new ideas to flourish. I believe out of all of the topics covered, this was the most pertinent. This opened up a whole new window of opportunity for development in years to come that I personally had never even thought of. Perhaps the answer to finding Guernsey’s place in the world and being recognised for more than just being a “tax haven” comes from welcoming new people into our communities and allowing fresh new ideas to blossom.

Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed my time at the Institute of Directors dinner and would recommend it to any student looking to broaden their knowledge on Guernsey’s politics. It is a fantastic opportunity that does not arise very often, and I am yet to see such an immersive activity similar to it.