

**Name: Joe Davies**

**School: Island Innovation VI**



### **About Me**

My name is Joe, I'm 17, and I'm studying History, Politics, Law and Film Studies at the VI Form Campus in Newport. Before that, I studied my GCSEs at Medina. I had no idea what the Youth Parliament was - or who our MYP was - until, back in November, I saw a clip on Facebook of an MYP from Northern Ireland furiously advocating for Votes at 16 in the House of Commons. That really inspired me, and it made me wonder why no one was standing up for young people like that here on the Isle of Wight. I think the island is a pretty great place to grow up, but there is a lot that needs to be changed - and, at the moment, nothing is being done about it. Our MP has never, in his 16 year parliamentary career, spoken in the House of Commons about any issue affecting young people on the Isle of Wight - despite voting to scrap the EMA bursary that many 16-19 year olds living here need. I think that's pretty shocking. Something needs to change.

### **If I were elected as MYP, these are three main areas I'd tackle:**

1)

Young People and Brexit: We live in tumultuous times. Whoever is elected as the island's MYP this April will serve their term as Britain negotiates Article 50 – our withdrawal from the European Union. Whatever we think about Brexit, it is happening. This does not, however, mean the government should be allowed free-reign over the terms. At the moment, young people on the island are without a voice on Europe. We were denied the right to vote in the referendum - despite the success of 16 year olds taking part in the Scottish Independence referendum in 2014 - and our MP refuses to criticise the government's actions at all. This cannot stand. Some people will tell you MYPs have no power, but - at the moment - they're all we have to express our views on the future of this county. If I am elected, I will campaign day and night to ensure that the views of young people are heard.

2)

Discrimination and Xenophobia: There are many people who will tell you that the Isle of Wight is a place of intolerance and hate. And, in fairness, there's much to support that argument. This Youth Parliament election, however, gives us the chance – as progressive young people - to reject discrimination and hatred. Earlier this year I was honoured to attend the 'Refugees Welcome Isle of Wight' rally in Newport. Despite the rain, it was an absolute success. Whilst cynics will laugh and describe it as pointless, it sent a message: the Isle of Wight, and the voiceless young people who live

here, are progressive and accepting. Elect me and I will do all I can to show Britain First, Liberty GB, the BNP and all those like them that hatred and xenophobia have no place here.

3)

Political Representation for Young People: As I said earlier, young people on the Island are, on many issues, voiceless. The Youth Parliament doesn't decide foreign policy, public spending, or the NHS. This makes sense - the government has been elected by the people, so it must be allowed to govern. However, no government in the history of this county has ever been elected by young people. There's a reason the 2010 coalition increased tuition fees but didn't touch pensions - the government doesn't have to please those who can't vote it out of office. Every time you buy almost anything in a shop - from chocolate biscuits to calendars - the government take 20% of it as VAT. If you earn more than £155 a week in your job - which, during the summer holidays, many of us do - you will pay National Insurance. If you leave school and earn more than £917 a month, you will pay Income Tax. Young people pay tax - whether it is VAT or based on their income - so we must be politically represented. The core principle of democracy is no taxation without representation - under 18s in this country are paying tax, but aren't allowed to vote. This, I believe, is criminal. Something must be changed. My first step would be to be incredibly vocal as MYP - speaking up for young people against the actions of the government at every opportunity. However, I think it needs to go deeper than that. Whatever it is, be it votes at 16 or increased political education - I will fight for representation of young people on the island, and across the county.

#### **What do I want to achieve as MYP?**

If I were elected MYP for the Isle of Wight I would work tirelessly to tackle the three issues explained above. I think it is crucial that we have a representative who makes sure that the voices of young people are heard - be it on Brexit, equality, or government policy. Our MP does not do that, so I would.

#### **Why should you vote for me?**

I think many people aren't going to vote in this Youth Election. Normally, I wouldn't either. I've never voted in one before. I understand people who are cynical about the work of Youth MPs - until a few days ago I had no idea who ours was - but I think now, more than ever, young people on the Island need representation. I want to put the voices of progressive young people across to the people who make the decisions which affect our lives, but I can only do that with your vote.