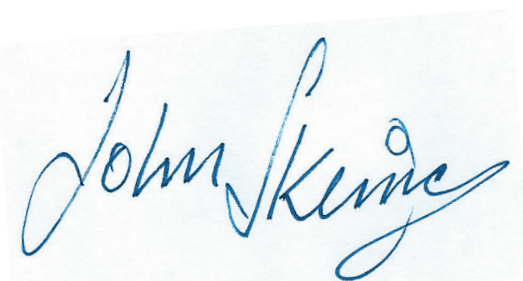


## WHAT I CAN OFFER FOR THE FUTURE

Building on the positive contribution I have made as a member of Douglas Council I would undertake to continue to work hard in order to protect the enviable standard of living that the community and the Island currently enjoy. A lifetime within our community has kept me in touch with your views and I will continue to be accessible and prepared to listen to your concerns.

No individual can pretend to have all the answers or claim they can change everything alone, but with your support and carefully made decisions, we can all work together to ensure that our island remains a good place to live and our future is safe.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for reading my manifesto which I hope you feel reflects the issues affecting Douglas West and the Island as a whole. I do hope you find me to be a worthwhile candidate and promise if elected I will always represent the interests of all constituents within our community.



## VOTING - 23RD MAY 2013

The By-Election takes place on Thursday 23 May 2013

There will be four Polling Stations – please check your polling card for details, if you have not yet received one, you should receive your polling card very soon.

The Polling Stations will be open from 8.00am until 8.00pm

This Election is for one seat only therefore you should put one X on your ballot paper.

If I have not managed to meet you and you would like to discuss anything with me, please telephone me on 487888 or email [jeskinner@manx.net](mailto:jeskinner@manx.net).

If you require transport on Polling Day, please don't hesitate to give me a call.

I am doing my utmost to call and see all constituents, however if you have a specific issue you wish to discuss please contact me:

**Telephone: 487888 or email [jeskinner@manx.net](mailto:jeskinner@manx.net)**



## Douglas West By-Election Thursday 23rd May 2013



# VOTE JOHN SKINNER

## MANIFESTO

### WHY DOUGLAS WEST?

Throughout my life I have always lived within Douglas West. I grew up in Albany Street before moving to Berkeley Street where I have lived for the past forty years. I was brought up with a desire to help others starting as a St John Ambulance Brigade cadet through to being secretary for the Fire Services Benevolent Fund and am now a Douglas Councillor. I am married to Gill and we have four children three living and working in Douglas and the youngest is still at university in Belfast.

Motorsport was a great passion of mine and together with a small team I ran the very popular Manx National Rally for twenty five years. Four years ago I stepped down from this event and eager to remain involved with the community I now enjoy assisting backstage with various amateur dramatic companies. Last year I was stage manager for the highly successful summer production of 'Evita' by Taylorian Productions.

Encouraged by the number of votes and support I received in the 2011 General Election, I put myself forward as a candidate in the 2012 Douglas Council Election topping the poll in Murrays Ward and I am now proud to represent the people of the area which comprises 50% of Douglas West.

The Council elected me to the Housing and Property Advisory Committee where as a new member the Committee had the confidence in me to serve as vice chairman. I am also member of the Council's Standards Committee.

As a member of the Douglas Council, I have supported the retention of the Noble's Park Bowling Pavilion and have

spoken out strongly on the need for a fire sprinkler system in the new sheltered accommodation about to be built in Pulrose. In the Housing Committee I have responsibility for the Commercial Lettings portfolio.

CONTINUED OVERLEAF >>

### As an independent candidate my main priorities will remain:

- Protect Vital Services and the vulnerable
- Support the continued growth of Economic Development
- Support widening the opportunities for the future workforce
- Further communication between Government and the electorate
- Review and Prioritise Capital Schemes and Projects

Prior to this by-election I was approached by a number of local residents and asked if I would stand for Douglas West again. I believe that it is essential for elected representatives to be a part of their community. Having spent all of my life in the constituency, I have learnt through meeting and talking to others that they expect the essential qualities they want for an MHK are to be honest, local, accountable, visible and

accessible and who cares about both their community and the island.

Douglas West is a major constituency in terms of population and over the past few weeks I have tried to visit as many of you as possible. If I have not met or visited you, please accept my apologies, however, I shall continue to make visits right up to the election.

**Education and Health have to be the cornerstone of any government and we cannot afford to reduce the services in either of these areas. Financial cuts should not just be made across the board by reducing budgets in proportions to all Departments.**

## EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE

In my 2011 General Election Manifesto I stated "There is an opportunity to review the possibility of bringing together the Island's Higher and Further Education faculties under one effective principal whilst still maintaining their separate identities". This has now happened resulting in huge savings and increased opportunities now and into the future. The Isle of Man College of Further and Higher Education is continually developing and improving relevant and accessible courses for education, commerce and industry and improve its engineering workshop facilities if we are to remain competitive in new areas such as the aerospace industry. Continuing cross departmental co-operation is vital to develop skills required to ensure we continue to identify the skills needed to grow a workforce fit for the 21st Century.

***Our children are our future – an old cliché but nonetheless a statement of fact***

We are blessed to have many young people who are a credit not only to themselves but also to their families and society. Our young people are the heart and soul of today and an accessible and balanced Education delivered to them secures our future and beyond. In order to help achieve this goal young people need role models not critics.

Many students continue to achieve excellent academic successes, a fact of which we should be rightly proud. It is unfortunate that financial support for Higher Education was reduced – education cannot be allowed to become the domain of the wealthy.

Conversely it must also be recognised that for many the "traditional" academic route is simply not realistic and education should always be accessible and appropriate at all levels. The proposed provision of more varied options at all levels including additional degree provision and engineering apprenticeships within the College of Higher and Further Education must be applauded and show what can be achieved by cross-Departmental co-operation.

Although not situated within the constituency I fully support the building of the new long awaited and much needed school on the old Nobles Hospital site which appears to be continually being put back in favour of other projects. Many children from West Douglas attend both Ballacloan and Fairfield Schools (both of which are older than the recently demolished Park

Road School) and their merging into one unit is long overdue. It is time these children were provided with a fit for purpose building with a more conducive learning environment together with proper recreational facilities which could be enjoyed by the wider community. In the interim I have been trying to secure for school use access to a Council owned recreational facility nearby.

## HEALTH

We have to decide what kind of a health service we would like and what provisions it should offer the public. It is vitally important that we continue to deliver a high quality service. Preventative health measures must be supported and the long term benefits of this must surely be obvious to us all.

For many years I have actively and openly supported and promoted organ donation and the carrying of donor cards.

## WORKING WITH THE THIRD SECTOR

Government is now working with many organisations and charities, currently known as the "third sector", that provide expertise in a number of areas for the benefit of some of the most vulnerable in our community. These groups very often have a wealth of experience, resources and expertise available to them.

Upon entering Douglas Council I successfully opened up discussions and lines of communication with Third Sector groups. This is not a means of off-loading everyday tasks but rather a way of improving services to the public such as the "Live at Home" schemes which allow the elderly to live, with support, in their own homes and communities for much longer than previously.

## TOURISM

Welcoming visitors to our shores is not a dying custom, rather one that can and should continue to be encouraged not only in "peak periods" but also through "off peak" short break and specialist holidays with the obvious advantage of making hotels, guest houses and countryside self-catering accommodation more sustainable. We are rightly proud of our heritage and scenic beauty yet we appear to be reluctant to

share it. The Island has much to offer through heritage, sport and its beauty and short stay visitors are to be encouraged not only through established events such as motorsport with which I was involved for many years but also new events such as the upcoming TT Triathlon. It is unfortunate that dogs are demonised because of a few irresponsible owners. Visiting walking areas such as the Lake District one cannot help but notice how many dog owning tourists there are - all adding to the local economy.

## GOVERNMENT

Communication is essential in any democratic society. Government has taken some steps to improve this with the electorate through the introduction of the Council of Ministers' "roadshow". However, there is still a lack of communication with the public and there still remains a feeling of mistrust amongst many.

I will be fully supportive of any move to introduce an all Island rating system particularly in view of the current boundary reviews. I have previously proposed a minimum of five year tenancy agreements for local authority housing tenants which I believe is a more realistic term than the current two year proposal and support means testing for public sector housing.

## TRAFFIC & ROADS

Road safety remains a major concern to many constituents and as traffic in Douglas West can be particularly heavy at times, measures need to be taken in order to make it safe for everyone. The Department of Infrastructure has responsibility for our roads and pavements, of which many are in a dreadful state. I am currently and will continue to work with the Department of Infrastructure and a fellow Murrays Ward Councillor to improve road safety particularly within the areas near to schools.

**With an increasingly disabled, visually impaired and aging population there is a real concern from constituents about the number of pavements and kerbs which are in poor condition and present hazards to all pedestrians. Immediate repairs to unsafe footways must be carried out even if funds are not available for a rolling maintenance programme.**

## HOUSING

Currently there are seventeen public sector housing authorities on the Island of which Douglas Council has the largest stock with over two and a half thousand properties. I would support the introduction of amalgamating public housing authorities with a reduction down to five with Douglas Council retaining sole responsibility for its own properties. This move would be fairer, cost effective, and manageable giving housing authorities the powers to set their own rents which would make more money available for maintenance programmes.

A further benefit to such a move would provide a base on which to commence and build the reorganisation of local government reforms.

I fully support the Government's "first time buyer's scheme" encouraging and allowing those who, without this assistance, would simply never have the opportunity to invest in their future within our communities. There is much to consider when approving housing developments and a balance must be struck to enhance communities with the inclusion of all

manner of housing. More could also be done to encourage and assist people to purchase and modernise older "town house" properties. This would breathe life back into the town and would be a fine example of imaginative regeneration at its best.

## ECONOMY

The Isle of Man economy has continued to grow for over twenty years currently running at 3% and we can rightly be proud of this. However, this does not generate sufficient income to meet the demands and standards we have now come to expect and we still face challenging times and decisions. This is made more difficult as we are in the middle of a six year rebalancing programme following the restructuring of the VAT sharing agreement with the UK. Reductions in expenditure will be required for the next three years. A major source of Government income is derived from tax and the tax-payer, who must be recognised as a major stakeholder in the Isle of Man must be kept fully informed at every stage. We have one of the most successful economies in Europe and the competition is becoming fiercer. We need therefore to support economic growth if we are to make up for lost revenues and create more employment. To increase economic growth greater assistance and encouragement should be given to those planning and starting up new small businesses coupled with a reduction in red tape. I would support and encourage greater backing being given to growth within the tourism industry and further diversification away from the finance sector to broaden the base of our economy.

## ENVIRONMENT

We are very fortunate that we live on an island which is free from the major causes of pollution experienced in larger more industrialised countries. Our air is clean; the water quality good and there is rich agricultural land. There is an infrastructure to remove our waste and provide our water.

However we have one of the lowest recycling rates amongst developed countries, with high car ownership. Little is being done to promote green energy, either nationally or amongst our householders. There can be a financial benefit to recycling with materials being sold on helping reduce waste charges paid by local authorities.

I support the development of renewable energy such as the recent proposal to develop bio-fuel from sea weed from our beaches. Through encouragement and educational programmes we have an opportunity to improve and increase recycling. Consideration must be given to the implementation of an innovative green policy with Government leading by example.

## LAW & ORDER

The Police cannot achieve their strategic aims without the assistance from the community to ensure and retain a safe environment. Through establishing relationships with the public via Community Policing we can encourage trust and achieve the aims of maintaining low levels of crime and high levels of confidence in the Police.

As well as enhancing our quality of life, I believe that being recognised as a safe community in which to live and raise our children is a key factor in generating new economic activity to bring increased employment to the Island.

**"Not always is it possible to build the future for our youth but we can and must build our youth for the future."**