



- ✓ **Strong Economy**
- ✓ **Value for Money**
- ✓ **Accountability & Transparency**

VOTE WATTERSON

“If re-elected, I will continue to strive for value for money.”

Public finances

The latest “VAT bombshell” will require significant changes for the public sector. I believe that we will have to look again at the way that services are delivered. Over the next five years I would want to see a smaller public sector, greater investment in IT and where services can be delivered more efficiently by voluntary or private sector bodies, I would like to see a greater degree of outsourcing.

Our VAT arrangement is a cause of much recent anxiety, but it is important not to be reactionary despite the actions of the UK Government. Leaving the customs union is a “one way street” and would have significant impact on the Island’s manufacturing base, ability to move goods freely between the Island and UK. It would mean us having to raise a similar sum of money and administering the system ourselves. The future of the agreement is a decision we should take carefully when in possession of all the facts.

In my last 5 years I have opposed what I have considered to be grandiose, unnecessary and ill thought-through schemes; Queen's Pier, Richmond Hill and the Ballakillowey Roundabout to name three examples. If re-elected, I will continue to strive for value for money. Working with the Finance Director of the former DHSS I established an audit committee, which led to the Department remaining within budget for the first time in almost a decade. It is, after all, your money, and elected representatives should be careful how it is spent.

Government has done much to earn its AAA credit rating, mainly because of our reserves and our requirement for a balanced budget. I will only support the use of our reserves to invest in projects that will have a long term return to the Manx economy. We must not use difficult times as an excuse to spend reserves to prop up unsustainable spending.

Representing the Island

The Isle of Man has to work with senior UK politicians and decision makers to ensure the future of our Island. This does not mean sacrificing our independence and certainly does not mean copying the UK's disastrous social policies. However, the UK is our closest political and economic partner. Government has not been good at getting this balance right, as was shown over the Reciprocal Health Agreement. I have experience of working in the UK: I am a member of the Public Sector Advisory Board at the Institute of Chartered Accountants in London; I have given presentations and written articles for the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. I have also graduated from the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme which gave me a good exposure to military life as well as an opportunity to press the Island's case with MPs.

“We should ensure that the Office of Fair Trading has the powers it needs to prevent profiteering and artificially high prices...”

The Economy

The Manx economy remains the envy of many in Europe, with estimated growth of 4.5% this year. Creating the right environment, founded on low tax rates, will promote economic diversity and maintain this growth. In Government, we should encourage sectors that are doing well such as financial services and manufacturing, as well as those industries which are suffering such as agriculture, construction and retail to ensure that the our Island supports a diverse range of vibrant businesses.

As Political Member responsible for financial services, I have started the move from a civil service led approach to market all aspects of the Island’s financial sector, towards a public-private partnership with the Chamber of Commerce. This arrangement will mean both Government and private enterprise together winning business for the Island across the world.

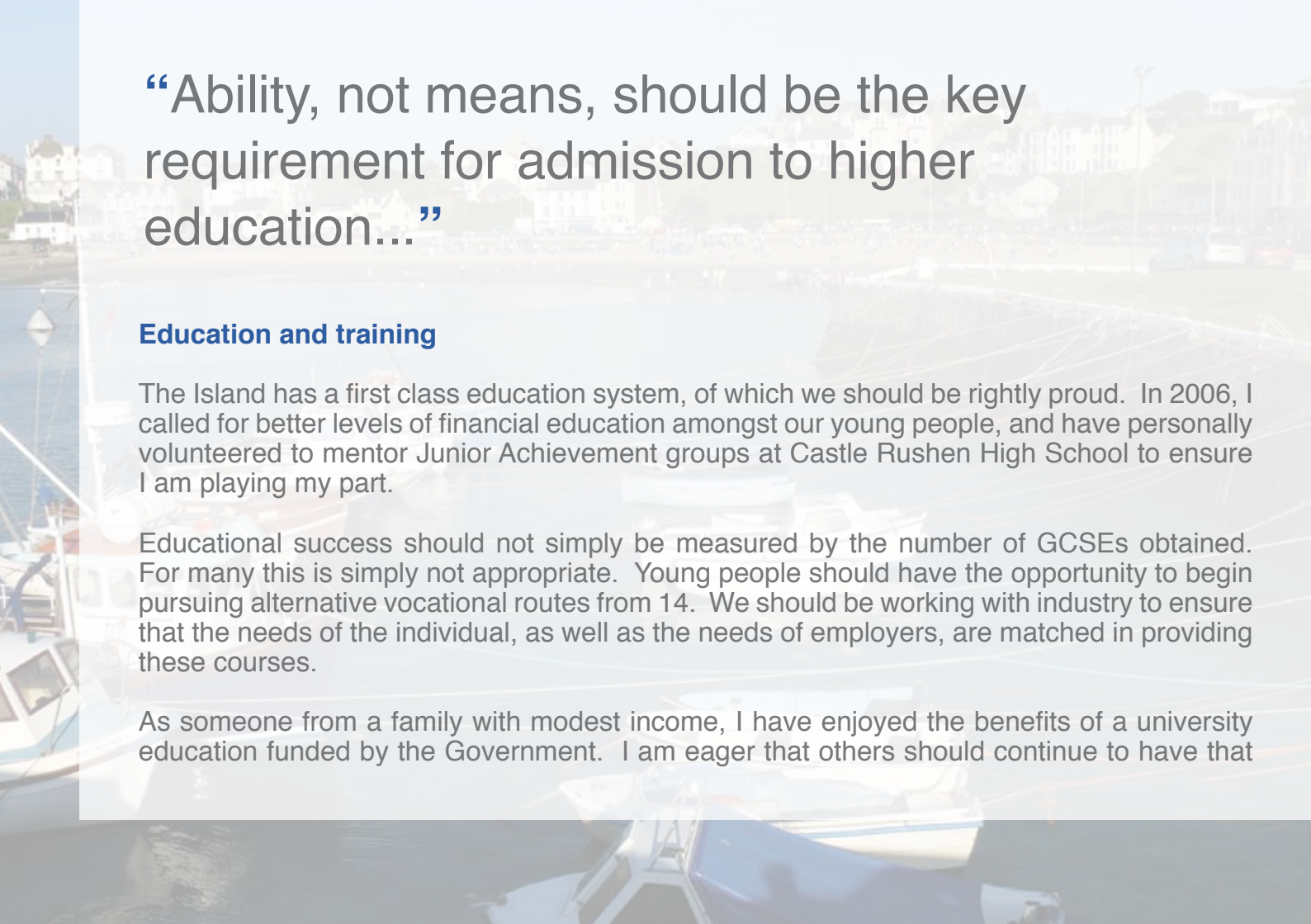
I have urged for reform in legislation, in particular amending the Financial Services Bill to maintain a good balance between business interests, regulatory interests and the wider public interest. I am currently working with Treasury to update the Island's antiquated company and insolvency legislation.

While it is Government's role to support businesses, monopoly providers should not be left unchecked. We should ensure that the Office of Fair Trading has the powers it needs to prevent profiteering and artificially high prices by those with a dominant market share.

Immigration

As a nation we should not be easy to 'walk into', but where there is a genuine shortage of workers, organisations must not be prevented from recruiting the staff they need. I strongly support the work permit system, but accept it is not perfect. After the last election I voted for and sat on the Immigration Select Committee that proposed reforms such as improvement of English language skills and a points based admission system. I also prepared and contributed a research paper on the economic impact of immigration.

People coming to the Island should be coming here to work, not relying on the Manx Government for benefits or housing. I support the 10 year residence requirement for public housing. During my time in charge of Social Security, I initiated changes to Income Support and Family Income Supplement that now restrict entitlement to Manx Workers. We also cross referenced child benefit claims to the school rolls to ensure our benefits system was helping only children on the Island. It is this sort of joined up, common sense approach that I have been keen to deliver.

The background of the slide is a faded, light-colored image of a harbor. In the foreground, the hulls and rigging of several boats are visible. In the background, there are buildings and a large open area, possibly a park or a sports field, under a bright sky.

“Ability, not means, should be the key requirement for admission to higher education...”

Education and training

The Island has a first class education system, of which we should be rightly proud. In 2006, I called for better levels of financial education amongst our young people, and have personally volunteered to mentor Junior Achievement groups at Castle Rushen High School to ensure I am playing my part.

Educational success should not simply be measured by the number of GCSEs obtained. For many this is simply not appropriate. Young people should have the opportunity to begin pursuing alternative vocational routes from 14. We should be working with industry to ensure that the needs of the individual, as well as the needs of employers, are matched in providing these courses.

As someone from a family with modest income, I have enjoyed the benefits of a university education funded by the Government. I am eager that others should continue to have that

opportunity. In difficult financial times, I would increase the grade requirements for those seeking funding rather than railroad students into courses that are not motivating or rewarding. In addition to grants, borrowing for students should be made available through either student loans or local banks. Ability, not means, should be the key requirement for admission to higher education for those who choose it.

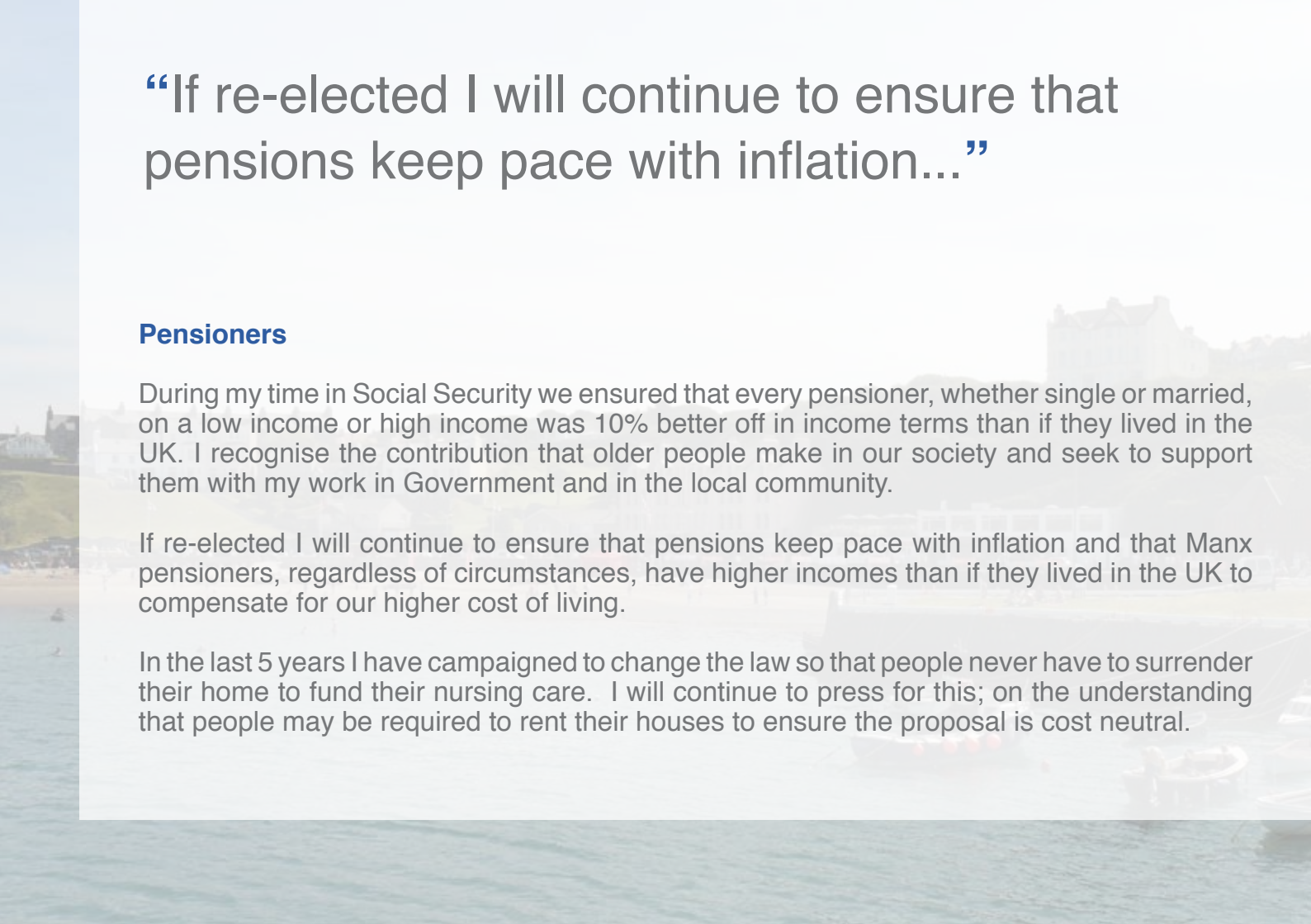
We have heard a great deal recently about those not in education, employment or training (NEETs). Government can and should assist those young people into appropriate training or work; however there is a responsibility on all those claiming job seekers allowance to actively engage with the employment market. Failure to do so should lead to actual work or work experience being provided to ensure a 'work ethic'. Deliberate failure to undertake work or work experience should lead to benefits being withdrawn.

Environment

As an individual, I regularly use public transport and, like many of you, try to save energy at home. In Tynwald I have spearheaded a number of initiatives, which have contributed to a 20% reduction in Government's carbon emissions since 2005, including:

- Improved insulation and heating systems in public sector housing
- Installation of wood chip biomass heating for Phase 3 of Reayrt y Chrink
- First solar heating schemes on larger public sector housing
- Waiving of the planning fee for solar heating schemes

If I am re-elected the environment will stay at the heart of my policy making for the Island for the sake of future generations.



“If re-elected I will continue to ensure that pensions keep pace with inflation...”

Pensioners

During my time in Social Security we ensured that every pensioner, whether single or married, on a low income or high income was 10% better off in income terms than if they lived in the UK. I recognise the contribution that older people make in our society and seek to support them with my work in Government and in the local community.

If re-elected I will continue to ensure that pensions keep pace with inflation and that Manx pensioners, regardless of circumstances, have higher incomes than if they lived in the UK to compensate for our higher cost of living.

In the last 5 years I have campaigned to change the law so that people never have to surrender their home to fund their nursing care. I will continue to press for this; on the understanding that people may be required to rent their houses to ensure the proposal is cost neutral.

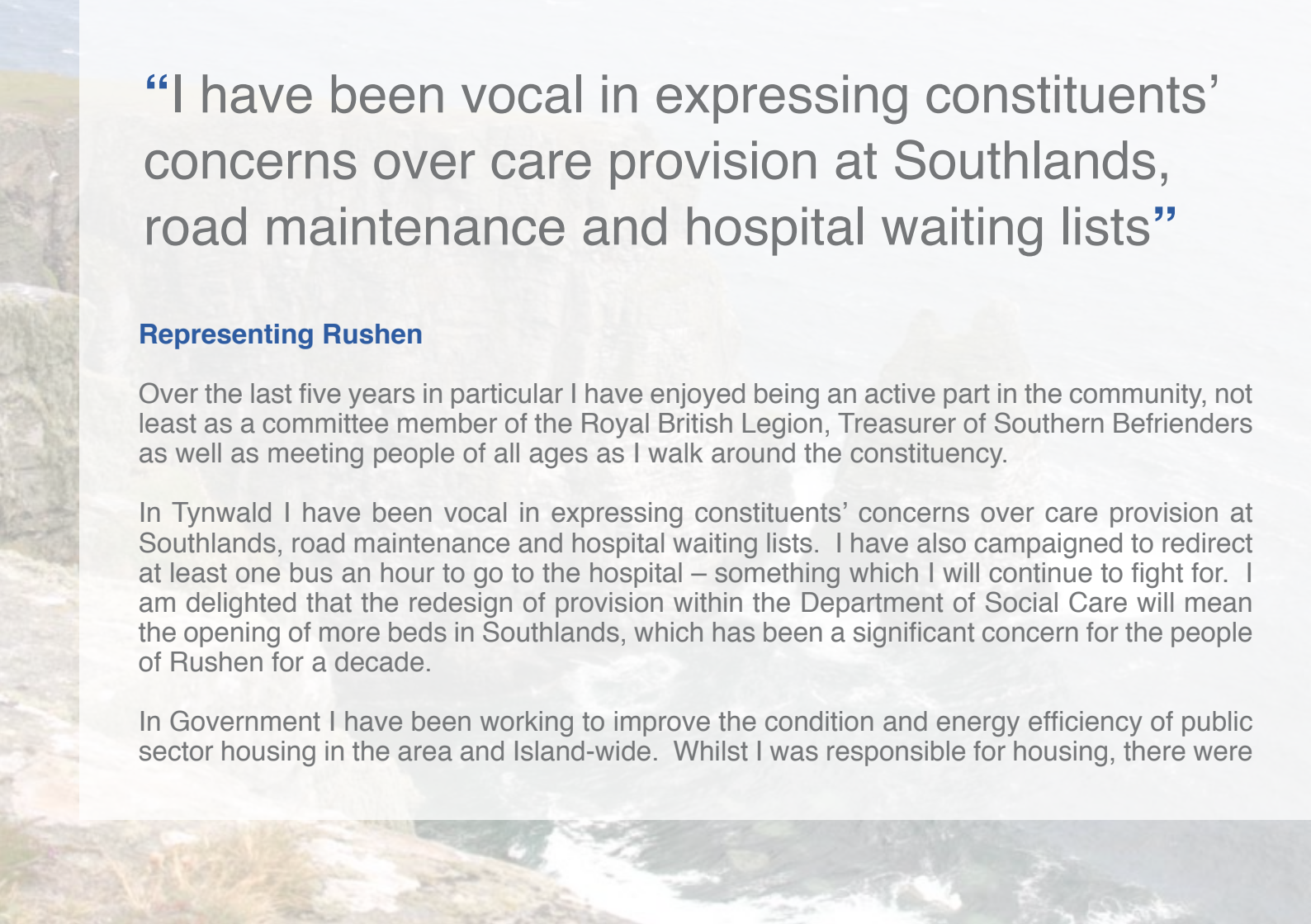
Accountability and transparency

In 2010 I introduced a Private Member's Bill to improve transparency in the Government's budget process. It would have allowed MHKs time to discuss the budget with constituents before the vote and also to seek advice from outside Treasury. The Government budget is the most important annual decision in Tynwald and it is undemocratic that the public have no chance to lobby or question the Government's proposals before they are voted on. The Bill was opposed by Council of Ministers and was lost. If re-elected I will reintroduce the Bill to try and improve accountability and transparency in Government spending.

I have supported moves to introduce an Auditor General; I have been frustrated by the lack of a Freedom of Information Bill. As a member of the Public Accounts Committee I have assisted in investigations over budgets, reserves and as a Chartered Accountant also provided effective audit training to the other members of the committee.

Five years ago I identified a need to change the bizarre scrutiny system within Tynwald. I am delighted that Tynwald has supported this move, and in the next House we will have an effective Parliamentary scrutiny system to shadow the work of Departments.

I co-authored the 2007 Constitution Bill that would see Legislative Council elected directly by the people. It failed by the narrowest of margins. I stand by this principle, but do not think it will be a priority for the next administration.



“I have been vocal in expressing constituents’ concerns over care provision at Southlands, road maintenance and hospital waiting lists”

Representing Rushen

Over the last five years in particular I have enjoyed being an active part in the community, not least as a committee member of the Royal British Legion, Treasurer of Southern Befrienders as well as meeting people of all ages as I walk around the constituency.

In Tynwald I have been vocal in expressing constituents’ concerns over care provision at Southlands, road maintenance and hospital waiting lists. I have also campaigned to redirect at least one bus an hour to go to the hospital – something which I will continue to fight for. I am delighted that the redesign of provision within the Department of Social Care will mean the opening of more beds in Southlands, which has been a significant concern for the people of Rushen for a decade.

In Government I have been working to improve the condition and energy efficiency of public sector housing in the area and Island-wide. Whilst I was responsible for housing, there were

improvements such as new kitchens in Edremony and cavity wall insulation in Station Park and Vicarage Close.

Property owners should be responsible for looking after their properties. I would also like to see punitive rates for long term empty buildings, and a more rigorous standard for such buildings to ensure that they do not have to be “ruinous or dilapidated” before local authorities can take action. Paying a multiple of the standard rates bill for empty properties may also encourage more people to bring properties into use or dispose of them. I hope these initiatives, alongside my contribution to the Regeneration Committee will breathe life into our Ports.

I want to see more jobs and first time buyer houses in the South so that people can live and work in the local area. We have already changed the business grants scheme to allow more funding for start up businesses outside Douglas.

Five years ago when visiting each house, I heard about how little there was for young people to do. When I was elected I established a Youth Task Force to get to the root of this problem. We put together 14 recommendations for Government’s Young Persons Working Group. A copy of the full report is available on my website. Sadly, many of those recommendations have not been picked up. Not one for giving up, with the support of my fellow Rushen MHKs, we have applied for an Activity Hall to be built in the grounds of Rushen Primary School. This facility would provide an area the size of a five a side pitch and would be the only hall of its size south of Castletown.

“I will continue to work for the people Rushen and the Island with the same honesty, enthusiasm and commitment that I believe has characterised my work over the last five years.”

My commitment

I have spent the last five years as a full time MHK for Rushen. I have tried to keep in touch with voters by being ‘out and about’ as well as via my mid-term postcard campaign. And I would like to give my thanks to the many of you who responded.

Since 2006, I have worked with my Rushen colleagues for the good of the constituency whenever possible. If you re-elect me on 29th September I will continue to work for the people Rushen and the Island with the same honesty, enthusiasm and commitment that I believe has characterised my work over the last five years.

Being an MHK is challenging, fascinating and frustrating. Nonetheless it has been an honour to serve you in Rushen since 2006, and I hope you will support my re-election.

Thank you for taking the time to read my views. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss any policy further. I hope to see you on 29th September to VOTE WATTERSON.

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