

HOUSE OF KEYS BY-ELECTION 23 MAY 2013



Chris
Thomas

POLICIES FOR OUR COMMUNITY,
2020 VISION FOR OUR ISLAND



415820



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YOUR REPRESENTATION

We cannot look back and stare; as important choices are being made, you need an MHK with the heart and mind to establish and interpret the facts and to take political responsibility that decisions are made in the best interests of all of us.

I can be that person with your vote. Thank you for reading my manifesto and for considering my approach to representing you, my capability and my policies when deciding your vote.

Policy matters. Candidates should make it clear where they stand. Later in this manifesto you find my:

- Vision for our Governance, Economy, Government, and Town in 2020; and
- Sketch of what needs doing to realise it.

We will have new Directors in Education, Infrastructure and Treasury and are promised a government reshuffle. Any by-election which is decided on policy should be taken into account by a government.

My approach to representing you

I would represent you in Tynwald as I have provided representation in Council this last year; for instance to get the £13 million Cambrian Place car park postponed, at least until it is integrated with other development in Lower Douglas, something for which I have lobbied. Then I voted against the 2013 Council budget because it made Douglas rates even more expensive than those of Onchan and Braddan, unnecessarily.

Working with others, I have been involved in various planning applications (e.g. Ballakermeen TT Tents, CCTV and phone mast), bins and street cleaning, lighting, and with things like trade cards, clinical recommendations and other health service provision, government employment grievance and aids and adaptations.

I pledge to continue to:

- Apply my financial analytical skills, local knowledge and international experience diligently to ensure that light is shone on options;
- Force real policy and budget debate in the interests of the whole community;
- Work with others to bring better alternatives when necessary;
- Follow up issues and complaints to enhance public administration; and
- Communicate online and face-to-face in public meetings.



POLICIES FOR OUR COMMUNITY

MY APPROACH AND CAPABILITY

Professional and political capability

Qualified as a financial analyst in London whilst providing bond investment advice to central banks, I moved to Douglas in 2001 to run the franchised Financial Regulation MSc in the start-up International Business School following a decade spent as Principal Lecturer at City of London Polytechnic.

Alongside my employment I have been a self-employed technical specialist for international financial system, regulation and IT projects. For instance, last year I led a team, working with the Governor of St Kitts, carrying out a study with recommendations for bank boards and national governments to help the local Eastern Caribbean banks more fully exploit synergies between them. Previously I was Chief Technical Advisor for Luxembourg's financial sector project in Vietnam and Project Director for the EU-China Financial Services Co-operation Project.

My office in Beijing briefed the first Isle of Man delegation to China in 2004, and I made technical arrangements for the 1st EU-China Financial Services Roundtable and much other co-operation. As examples I arranged Chinese banking supervisor internships in the Isle of Man in 2006, and always use the Island as a case study for information exchange.

In terms of politics, I have submitted detailed consultation responses, and joined on and offline discussions about many things including the economy, housing, electoral reform, broadcasting and planning.

Through my membership of the Health Services Consultative and Legal Aid committees, I am trying to contribute in the internal audit and other processes of Department of Health and legal aid system review. I also petitioned 2012 Tynwald for better human resource management in government.

Personal

Brought up in Millom, Cumbria, I graduated from Balliol, Oxford. Now I am occasional lecturer for the Centre for Manx Studies MA, teaching about the Island's economy, and was recently made chairman of the Isle of Man UN Association. I play double bass and am training for the short TT Triathlon. I am married to Tania and our children are Sasha, Max and Kitty.



Call me: 415820

ISLE OF MAN 2020

The public is disappointed that politicians seem incapable to reform aspects of our political institutions, rightly so. The CoMin decision on Sefton loan and land repurchase was camouflaged, parliamentary committees investigate after the event with little result, and Legislative Council reform or abolition has been put off again.

My vision for our governance is centred on people, parliament and knowledge. Everyone will not agree with everything a government does but at least they should have the facts and understand the government's reasoning. Public representatives need to make and honour commitments to the public, and need to do their job in parliament well.

"The requirement to become an MLC seems to be little more than having enough mates in the Keys to get electedit really does stink of being an 'old boys' club' and that undermines the Legislative Council's credibility as well as its legitimacy", Examiner Comment, 3/2013

"Abolish Keys and LegCo and just have a 32 seat Tynwald popularly elected" @DudleyButt, 3/2013

Referendum on parliamentary reform

- Petition 2013 National Day Tynwald for parliamentary reform
- Establish independent commission to consider i) how policy and legislative scrutiny would take place without Legislative Council, ii) introduction of direct elections to Tynwald (rather than Keys), iii) new public nomination process for any indirect elections from 2015 and iv) review of voter registration and election rules
- Hold a referendum in April 2016, on the same day as local authority elections
- Change constituency boundaries so everyone has an equal number of elected members
- Enhance operation of parliament and its committees

Cut the cost of politics

- Reduce the number of full time politicians from 33 to 24, with additional part-time 'elder statesmen' and outside experts for policy review and development
- Limit the number of political members to one per department
- Review Tynwald remuneration, allowances and pension schemes, replacing annual fixed sum of £6,415 with refund of actual expenses, reducing pension benefit given current taxpayer subsidy of 40% of salary, and abolish the 30% supplement for departmental membership
- Merge Speaker and President roles as Tynwald is reformed

OUR GOVERNANCE

- Legislate to reduce the number of Douglas Councillors to 12 (currently 18)
- Encourage consolidation of synergies and governance for Douglas, Braddan and Onchan

Open Government

- Publish better information about government performance on www.gov.im and legislate for freedom of information
- Widen participation in policy debates and budget process
- Make Tynwald debate available as 'listen again' audio
- Require candidate Chief Ministers to publish a national manifesto

Oversight

- Appoint independent Auditor General and Ombudsman
- Reconsider role of statutory committees (e.g. Health Services Consultative, Education Council, Legal Aid)
- Separate political oversight and direction of MEA and other statutory boards

"... we do not require the number of members of departments on all occasions. It has been a case of giving people positions to keep them in Government and to give them the 30%..."

"... members ... (should) try and ensure that scrutiny is seen as being positive and not something which is negative and detrimental just to score points against Government..." John Shimmin MHK, 7/2011 Tynwald

"A public representative is not qualified to run a department, he has only been given the opportunity to ensure that the department carry out the policies in the best interest of the public as a whole"

Dominic Delaney 8/2011



Tynwald 1900

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ISLE OF MAN 2020

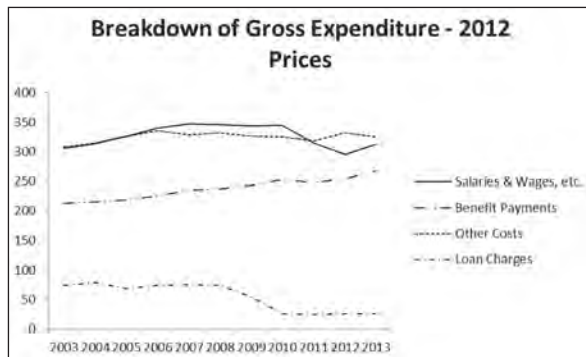
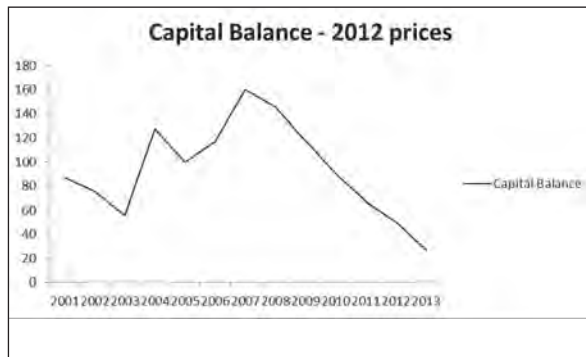
Now many feel that their incomes have become insecure, the cost of living needs tackling, the housing market is out of kilter, and our built environment is shoddy.

Moreover the capacity of politicians to deal with the situation is questioned, particularly following the spending of £40 million of our precious reserves on Pinewood and Sefton. Our capital account balance is forecast to fall to £1 million by 2015 from over £150 million 5 years ago, in part caused by the 'temporary' 0% interest charged on internal Government borrowings in recent years to reduce current expenditure by Government.

"70% or so of new jobs were created by small and medium size businesses, and for every £100 spent with a Manx business the Island benefits by £183", Chamber of Commerce presentation, 4/2013



Opportunities for local business certainly exist in food, manufacturing & building materials. Sport, culture and heritage all have economic value if promoted properly. Perhaps Year of Culture can be followed by years for the Lord of Mann and Parliament, as the Queen would become the longest reigning monarch in 2015 and 2016 is the centenary of the People's Tynwald?



My economic vision is based on rebuilding people's trust and confidence as it is people who earn and spend money, people who decide where to locate business activity and expansion. Local business can flourish to provide income for owners, employees, government and suppliers. Distribution dominates costs for many products so import substitution should reduce prices. For instance, beachcast seaweed can produce gas for the power station.

OUR ECONOMY

Tackle the cost of living by:

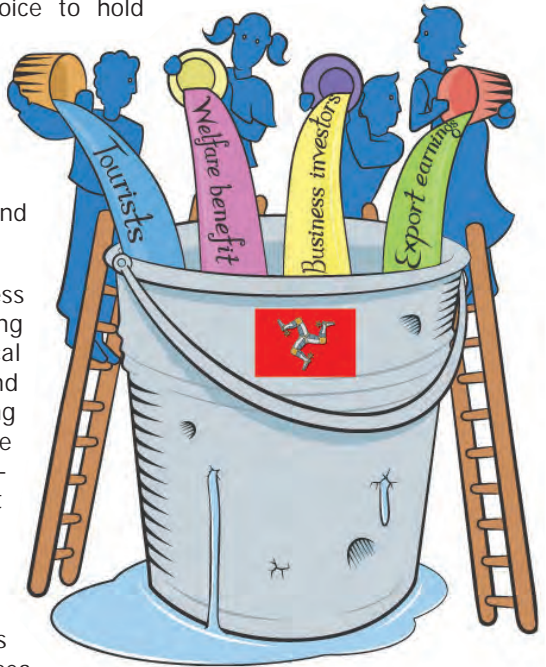
- Giving all local people a stake in a new MEA, and refinancing part of its debt with local bonds
- Extending the Steam Packet User Agreement only after an open tender and getting value-for-money fit-for-purpose Douglas outer harbour refurbishment
- Bringing Douglas rates to the all-Island level and reform the rating system before charging for any government-provided utilities using current rateable values
- Joining up sewerage and incineration processes better to achieve economies



To assist international negotiations could the Island re-join the European Free Trade Association - which Isle of Man left when UK joined EU - or a similar body?

Sustain diversified economic growth by:

- Targeting finance and other clusters in which the Island's firms are important participants by i) promoting the Island as a location of choice to hold intellectual property ii) creating suitable premises iii) supporting education, training, apprenticeships and real jobs and iv) accommodating reasonable requests for tax, legislative and regulatory measures
- Facilitating local business through i) encouraging collaboration to match local production and demand, and international sales ii) making public procurement more accessible iii) minimising red-tape and regulation, but joining up enforcement to deal with 'cowboys'
- Preparing a contingency strategy to secure the Island's strategic lifelines of air and sea transport and utilities



Localise to plug the leaks

Email me: click@manx.net

ISLE OF MAN 2020



"...on occasion attention to cost effectiveness may not have been as high as it possibly could have been..."
new Government
Chief Financial
Officer, May 2013



Even planning for the old Noble's side school has expired now as the project has been so long in preparation

The tripling of VAT revenue during the film and shipping 'own code' decade bankrolled the 0-10 corporate tax strategy, huge capital projects and gave us a bloated civil service. Fortunately it also gave us proportionally greater national reserves than our neighbours, but government finances need to be managed wisely as real government income is back now to its 2000 level following the UK-Island VAT-sharing changes. We cannot just hope for better times.

Neither Pinewood spending nor privatising pre-schools was mentioned in the Chief Minister's manifesto. That was misleading, and has meant that cuts, closures, and lay-offs have been unnecessarily divisive, especially as they came alongside the Sefton hand-out and diesel loco purchase. Why focus only on £300,000 savings from bus-driver conditions when a £6 million subsidy is paid to keep big buses running around the countryside providing free travel for 2/3rds of passengers? Reserves transferred to Pinewood could have been used to repay MEA debt.

My vision for government is that it presents facts and options for the public to make choices about the outcomes that are purchased using taxpayer funds. We set priorities and live within our means, our government should too. Wherever and however possible, the public should participate in the policy and budget processes.

Re-balancing needs to be re-balanced so that all contribute equally. The public sector is top heavy; but child and other benefits have been frozen.

Government for the community by:

- Prioritizing health, education and community care in budget and policy
- Merging DCCL and DSC to form a new Department of the Community
- Improving infrastructure by using and maintaining what we have already whenever possible
- Building new community primary school at Old Noble's including pre-school facilities
- Re-aligning terms and conditions of civil servants and the private sector
- Re-building morale in teaching, health and other front-line public services

OUR GOVERNMENT

Care in the Community by:

- Assisting the elderly and disabled to remain at home with adequately funded aids and adaptations, direct payments and carers assistance schemes
- Making effective the Disability Discrimination Act and introduce Equality Bill
- Enforcing current landlord and housing regulations equally in private and public sectors, and inform public better about Rents and Rates Tribunal



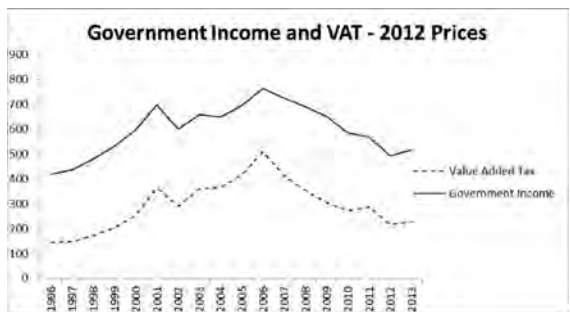
Contribution and benefit

- Improving the work permit regime, consider bringing into force the 2001 Residency Act and reviewing points based Immigration Rules
- Investigate and prosecute benefit and tax cheats
- Monitor the changing UK National Insurance and basic state pension regimes and then review the Manx system recognising the importance of residence in the Island and contribution.
- Establish an independent Tax and Welfare Commission to consider all tax and welfare policy and reciprocal arrangements together, to review how to protect the vulnerable, balance rights and responsibilities, reflect contributions in payments, and dismantle so called 'traps' and 'cliff-edges'
- Protect the grants system for qualified students and cap contributions to fees until 2016

Even with a wonderful sense of community, care in the community is neither easy nor cheap



In 2/ 2013 the Treasury Minister calculated in his Tynwald budget speech that it could be said that government was living beyond its means each year by "£91 million across the Revenue, Capital and Reserves".



ISLE OF MAN 2020

It was not only the cost and risk of the proposed new car park which concerned me when I voted against Council budget and rates increase. I also felt such a major project would distract Council from working with Government during the scope of government and structure of local government review to agree their respective roles in housing, waste management and other local provision.

Council should go back to basics, maintaining street lights and its other assets well, providing well-planned, community-oriented facilities in conjunction with clubs and collecting and using waste efficiently to get the 30% of savings which have been identified.



A traffic free path could be created running from Quarterbridge to Promenade along the disused railway and Quay and through the Nunnery. Volunteers could also work to enhance public access to the Nunnery if government allows it.

My 'big picture' thinking for our town in 2020 is that it becomes a tidier one, with better leisure and public transport facilities. The opportunities of the town centre, the market hall, Villiers Square, Castle Mona, Summerland and Lower Douglas need to be exploited. No pot-holes in the pavements or town streets, and adequate road markings and signs, with joined up car parking and library provision.

Council will have to co-operate with Government and others to achieve this. If elected as MHK, I would continue to attend Council meetings in the public gallery, as more Douglas MHKs used to do, and would try to engage the public in the Council's policy agenda more, including through a Residents Association, an organisation I have helped form.

Back to basics

- Encouraging leisure use of Lower Douglas, beach, parks, facilities and promenade
- Modernising Council procurement, especially regarding publication of information
- Enhancing Council governance by at least giving notice of private meetings of council and its committees, publishing headings of agenda items

Government Council Collaboration

- Transferring Douglas car parks to a single authority and refurbishment of Chester Street before development of a new car park in Lower Douglas

OUR TOWN

- Publishing a list of all council property and land, as well as a plan and policy for maintenance, disposal and acquisition; and consider how council can use the value of its houses to deliver good affordable housing and refurbished social and sheltered housing through new Douglas Council shared equity, self-build and other schemes
- Considering how libraries are provided in Douglas, given Town library costs five times more than either the Family library or Onchan library
- Combining street cleaning and waste management for efficiency and effectiveness
- Investigating the recommencement of Council mortgage bond issuance and the operations of local authority pension scheme
- Reviewing financing and operations of street and decorative lighting, vintage transport and CCTV



Better town planning and investment

- Planning smaller-scale, better-value Douglas regeneration and merging the Douglas Development Partnership and Regeneration Committees
- Re-directing some funds from the proposed new town centre lighting and CCTV scheme to kick start comprehensive town parking and traffic management including Variable Message Signing
- Consulting on parking zones, use and condition of town streets and pavements, then putting in place a planned and budgeted improvement scheme
- Accelerating bottom-up development of the Eastern Plan, fully engaging residents and other stakeholders



Lower Manhattan in Lower Douglas

"...the initial master planning and concept sketches for the Lord Street development proposes a scheme of 8 storeys ..likewise the Middlemarch proposals could result in a scheme in excess of 8 storeys, with the opportunity for a taller landmark building on Lord Street..." Time and Tide, failed planning application, 11/2012



@christhomasiom

SPEND YOUR VOTE WISELY

My priorities for government are to:

- Hold a Referendum on parliamentary reform and reduce the number of politicians
- Give all local people a stake in MEA and issue local bonds
- Tackle the cost of living by dealing with rates, electricity and off-Island travel costs
- Encourage local businesses and training to keep money on the Island
- Facilitate innovation and clusters of businesses
- Review tax and benefits systems together so all contribute to rebalancing
- Merge two departments to create Department of Community, and re-align terms and conditions of civil servants and private sector
- Re-build morale in teaching, health and other front-line public services
- Use and maintain what we have, including repairing local roads and pavements
- Build new community primary school
- Substitute a new parking management system for some of the proposed new town centre lighting
- Plan better-value, smaller-scale Douglas regeneration
- Develop shared equity, self-build, social and sheltered housing schemes
- Negotiate better reciprocal arrangements for health and pensions, and for a fair share of Irish Sea revenues

Please don't hesitate to phone, email or message with queries or if you would like a poster or to offer or request any help. Thanks to everyone for all the best wishes and support I have already received.

Polling is from 8am to 8pm on Thursday 23 May at:

- Garden City, Sea Cadet Hall, Tromode
- Somerset, St Andrew's Hall
- Albany, All Saints Hall
- Ballabrooie, All Saints Hall
- Eastfield, Trinity Hall

