

## Juan Watterson – Rushen

### Political Questions (2016)

**Why do you want to be a member of the House of Keys?**

To serve the people of Rushen and the Isle of Man. To pursue policies that I believe in which will improve the quality of life for our citizens. I have a strong financial background and strong record in Government which will be a scarce combination in the next House. I am a positive and collegiate team worker providing challenge and support in CoMin and across Government.

**If you were elected, what would your priorities be on a national level?**

Maintaining and promoting our quality of life by protecting the vulnerable, balancing the budget and growing the economy. Ensuring a positive outcome from Brexit talks by using all avenues to push the Isle of Man case.

**If you were elected, what would your priorities be on a constituency level?**

Ensuring we deal with derelict buildings and the quality of our roads. Development of the community facilities at Ballakilley, and growing the capacity of Southlands to accommodate those who need it. I would like to see more employment opportunity in the South as well as the reinvigoration of the Queenie Festival. I enjoy being involved in a lot of community organisations and charities in Rushen, which work towards making

**How well do you think the present administration has handled the major challenges of the past five years?**

Rushen the best place to live on the Island.

The Government has started dealing with controversial issues that needed to be tackled, such as pensions and welfare reform. We have positively concluded the VAT deal with the UK. My record in reducing costs in DHA by 25% whilst preserving core services are the sort of actions that will be required in the next House.

**What are the main political and social issues facing the Isle of Man in the next five years?**

You never know what is around the corner, but pensions and public finances will continue to dominate the agenda over the next five years as will Brexit internationally. This will be coupled with a sustainability agenda to make sure our decision making works in the long term.

**How would you deal with the challenges referred to in the previous answer?**

Experience will be at a premium in the next administration. Learning the lessons from the past, we need to build our connections in the UK internationally to ensure we are not left out. We will also need to continually and rigorously look at what Government provides and what Government spends to ensure that we get the right balance between taxing and spending. Greater use of

**How would you deal with the issue of public sector pension reform and the public sector pension deficit?**

technology, harnessing the experience of the older generation and developing the skills of our young people are the key to our future success.

We need to continue our dialogue with unions over the cost of public sector pensions and ensure it is fair and sustainable for both workers and the taxpayer. It needs to be under constant review.

**What has changed in the past five years for Isle of Man residents for the better? (Please give examples)**

We have seen the lowest crime rates since 1970, the economy has continued to grow and unemployment is at its lowest since the credit crunch. Big increases in carer's allowance for those looking after our most vulnerable, as well as a 13% increase in the minimum wage. Reform of the Safeguarding Children Board and creation of Safeguarding Adult Partnership to protect those who cannot protect themselves.

Greater vocational opportunities combined with support of Youth Justice Team for young people to make transition to work smoother, evidenced by a big reduction in youth unemployment. Combined with 256 first time buyers receiving Government assistance.

Greater access to online services from

**What has changed in the past five years for Isle of Man residents for the worse? (Please give examples)**

income tax to planning.

Due to opposition in Tynwald, we have still been unable to guarantee minimum decent living standards to those in the rented sector. Road standards have deteriorated, despite spending more than the amount raised through vehicle duty. Owners of derelict properties have seemed to think that this poor standards are acceptable, prompting us to develop new legislation to tackle this issue.

**Is the Isle of Man too reliant on any one sector of its economy?**

The Isle of Man has a diversified economy, constantly looking for new markets and opportunities. As banking has declined in terms of jobs, so e-gaming has increased employment.

**If you feel it is, how would you further diversify the Manx economy?**

Continuing to diversify whilst re-energising those core aspects of our economy. That means promoting tourism, fuelling the resurgence of our motorsport attractions as well as constantly being open minded to new opportunities whilst closely guarding our hard-won international reputation.

**Are you in favour of increased**

Where it suits the Isle of Man, I would

**independence from the United Kingdom?**

always support greater say in our own affairs internationally. Sometimes we are better off tying in with the UK and 'piggy backing' their benefits to international agreements and other times we should have the confidence to stand on our own two feet.

**If you are, in which areas?**

Primarily tax and trade matters.

**Are you in favour of parliamentary reform in the Isle of Man?**

This is something of a sideshow. It is far more important to deliver value for money high quality public services. However, I have supported reform before and would do again if I thought it would benefit the Island.

**If you are, which aspects of the parliamentary system would you change?**

Continuing to improve the quality of scrutiny and the training of backbenchers in improving legislation and scrutiny of the executive in a constructive manner.

**Who should have the responsibility of electing the Chief Minister?**

Tynwald. Although I would like to see greater public participation beforehand in a Chief Minister's Debate.

**Are you in favour of the nationalisation of air and/or sea services to and from the**

Not under normal circumstances. I doubt the Government would run them as well

**Isle of Man?**

as the private sector.

**Are you in favour of renewable energy projects in Manx territorial waters?**

Yes.

**Are you in favour of an increase in means testing for financial support and/or services provided by Government?**

We need to look at these on a case by case basis. It needs to lack bureaucracy and serve social need.

**If you are, in which areas?**