

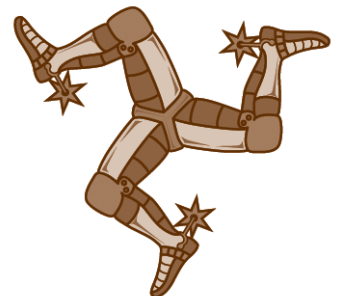
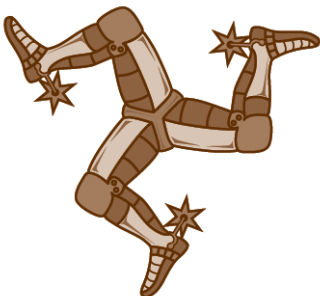
# **BILL HENDERSON**

## **Manifesto 2011**



**For the General Election  
Thursday 29th September, 2011**

**Constituency  
of  
North Douglas**





# Bill Henderson



**For the General Election – 29th of September, 2011**  
**Constituency of North Douglas**

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## Manifesto 2011

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### Election message

*Dear Constituent,*

It gives me great pleasure to present my latest manifesto, having had the privilege of serving the constituency and the Island for this past legislative term.

My manifesto provides a summary of the principle policies and strategies for which I shall be seeking your endorsement in the forthcoming General Election on the 29th of September, 2011.

It is a document that recognises and is resolute in the face of the gravest challenges our Island has ever had to face.

I believe the policies I propose demonstrate my clear vision and commonsense approach to reaching realistic solutions to the many and varied issues which affect us - in the constituency, Douglas, the Island and internationally.

I have moved away from the usual simple leaflet layout and chosen a more in-depth, professional, goal-focused presentation so you can better assess my achievements, commitment and future strategy. I feel it is right that the electorate should have a more meaningful and comprehensive document. My policies cover wide-ranging issues, supported by robust, experience-led and considered actions - essential if I am to serve you as an effective member of the Isle of Man Parliament.

Events off-island, in particular the global financial crisis, the 'UK Double VAT bombshell', worldwide rising fuel prices, the heightened threat of terrorism, and emerging economies such as Asia are having immediate and long-term implications for us all, while freedom of movement within the EU member states is already having an impact on the social dynamics of the Island.

To this end my manifesto sets out precisely where I believe we are now, where we need to be, and how we are going to get there – the three essential elements for successful strategic planning and, importantly, for securing this Island's future economic and social stability. The policies are set against the 'new sombre economic environment' we all have to face. The standards I have set are high in this regard and may not be fully achievable currently, but I firmly believe that to lower aspirations would be detrimental to the constituency and our Island.

The pages that follow set out my vision and reflect the hopes and aspirations of the many constituents with whom I have had the privilege to speak. This document represents my five-year strategic business plan for you, my constituents, and this nation of ours. It details my beliefs and expresses what I feel is right for our community. It addresses not only national issues in a direct way but also the immediate concerns and needs of ordinary people.

I do not make rash promises in this blueprint for the constituency and the Island. However, what I do promise is a 100% commitment to represent your views with openness and honesty and to work towards these policies during the life of the next House of Keys. My role will also be to support government policy where I believe it

to be of benefit to the people and, where necessary, to vigorously challenge it. There is no quick-fix solution to the complex and challenging issues we face, but it is my solemn pledge to you that, if you re-elect me on September the 29th, I will work tirelessly for the common good of the people of my constituency and the Isle of Man.

As your MHK I pledge to:

- Uphold my House of Keys Oath to the people of this Island;
- Give 100% commitment to the job - to be a full-time politician for North Douglas and the people of this Island, with no other commercial or monetary interests to distract from or influence my political work;
- Act without fear or favour;
- Build an effective and dynamic working relationship with my fellow MHK for the constituency John Houghton;
- Remain principled and resolute at all times, irrespective of what government department I may be called upon to serve;
- Always put my constituents first.

As many of you already know, I have helped you individually and collectively. In so doing I have developed an effective professional working relationship with John Houghton, my fellow North Douglas MHK. We believe complex constituency problems require double the effort and our united approach has worked unquestionably to the benefit of North Douglas. Moreover, whenever necessary, questions have been asked in the House of Keys and Tynwald and debates placed to ensure issues, such as road safety and health service concerns, are followed through on your behalf. In the last five years working tirelessly in the House of Keys and Tynwald has proved vital to protect the rights of the people of this constituency and the nation.

In both my work for the constituency and on national matters, I have been very active in the Legislature and covered a vast area of political ground. I have initiated many debates, which can generate a huge volume of work and ultimately cause Tynwald to vote and change government policy. As you will see in this document I have also asked numerous parliamentary questions and proposed amendments to legislation and government initiatives.

I have fought hard and placed the Council of Ministers under considerable pressure in Tynwald and the House of Keys on issues such as:

- Pressing hard for government to think strategically about how best to manage our national budget and scrutinising the attendant impact on our services and community. I have personally placed the Chief Minister and Treasury under heavy scrutiny as to how we are to manage 'the Double VAT Bombshell' and minimise the effects on our community;
- Boosting our economy, support for our local businesses and placing the new Department of Economic Development under pressure in Tynwald 'to deliver';
- Prioritising government spending, speaking out and voting against what I see as non-urgent capital projects such as Richmond Hill. I led the charge to block the multi-million pound flyover that was planned to link Blackberry Lane – through Summerhill Glen to Victoria Road;
- Reducing the size and scope of the government machine – I have campaigned tirelessly on this, which includes cutting out waste, reducing the size of government's carbon footprint and stripping out layers of management;
- Health – reducing waiting lists, improving standards of care and campaigning for medicines that should be available on the NHS;
- Retaining the reciprocal health agreement: I strongly supported the retention of our health agreement and I vigorously opposed the Health Minister – Eddie Teare and the then Chief Minister – Tony Brown on their move in Tynwald to agree 'we can't do anything' and roll over and accept that the agreement was to be severed;
- Retaining pensioners' and others' free bus pass – together with John Houghton I personally intervened on this matter;
- Sarah's Law – I have actively campaigned to have this brought in to better protect our children;

- Breast Cancer – supported Brenda Cannell to retain a full-time breast cancer surgeon;
- I have also placed a successful debate to Tynwald calling for government to redouble its efforts on reducing its own carbon footprint.

In addition I have supported the introduction of important new legislation on education, criminal justice, social services and our National Health service. Examples include:

- Disability Discrimination Act 2006;
- Sex Offenders Act 2006;
- Employment Act 2006.

I have also supported and, conversely, placed government under heavy pressure and scrutiny, to ensure my input helped bring about the introduction of major new policy initiatives on:

- Child sex offenders;
- New schools;
- Support for the economy and business;
- E-commerce;
- The control of drug misuse;
- First-time house buyer programmes;
- Public sector housing improvements, rebuilds and refurbishment programmes;
- Business support initiatives;
- Retention of the Health Service reciprocal agreement.

I wish to place on record my sincere thanks to all those who have encouraged and supported me throughout the last five years and during this election campaign. Please give me your support on September the 29th.

**Bill Henderson**  
**North Douglas**

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## Background

### The Island – our country

Tynwald is one of the oldest parliaments in the world. Our unique political system is the bedrock of our stability and success. So, too, is our unique independence from the United Kingdom, which gives us the freedom to develop successfully in our own unfettered way in recent years and earns us justly deserved international recognition, such as our Standard and Poor's AAA credit rating.

Our quality of life is one of the highest in the British Isles. Our culture, history and heritage are unique and give us our identity, while our natural environment is so special it has gained us worldwide recognition. These distinctive elements of our social, cultural, environmental and political make-up have won us access to the international financial stage and other world markets - vital if we are to secure our economic survival in the new and expanding global village in which we now operate.

However, over the past few years the Island has had to face some of the worst challenges in its political history, causing social unease and very real concern among its people. Our community is angry, dissatisfied and completely disenchanted – in the way it has been treated by the UK and other countries and by the internal political manoeuvrings and misfortunes which have beset our Island. As a result this has left a deep rooted sense of apprehension: unease for our individual futures and that of the Island. There is a sense of being ignored by our government, the community being set adrift and the Council of Ministers being there in spite of, rather than for, us. Our unique qualities and achievements have been masked by events.

The clearest example of this is hiding from national debate on the critical matters that everyone is talking about: Should we abrogate from the common purse? Should we work our way to full independence? What are the positives and negatives in so doing? There has been no information in any great depth to help our community



take a view one way or another on these important national issues. If, for instance, we can't abrogate from the common purse then we should be told in detail why not. Then we could understand the situation. Unlike the present state of affairs where people are worried and don't know what is for the best. Little information and ministers scoffing at individuals who dare to ask the 'big ticket questions'.

**There must be national debate on these critical issues. I for one will be pushing for this if re-elected.**

## Internal problems

Historical problems linked to current issues are causing serious issues needing careful handling. It started with the Mount Murray scandal and has continued with the MEA blowing us almost right out of the water. This has been compounded by childcare inquiries following the deaths of three young people, the IRIS meltdown and a health service bursting at the seams trying to cope and failing in areas such as the ophthalmic clinic and dentistry with lengthening waiting lists for simple operations and procedures - a situation made all the worse with the sacking of loyal staff, and others resigning. Other much needed improvements, such as a digital hearing aid service, have been introduced as a direct result of pressure from me. Compounding this was the KSF bank crash, a direct result of actions taken by the UK – including ring-fencing our KSF deposits under its anti-terrorism legislation.

In the background we have to face a huge public service pension deficit and the national insurance fund requires urgent assessing for its future viability. Further in the background is an increasing, aging population causing health and social services mounting difficulties in coping with new demands placed on already overstretched resources.

## Global financial crisis

The global financial crisis and the 'credit crunch' overshadow all of our internal problems on an epic scale, causing a near-fatal impact on this community.

*"Year-on-year economic growth for the past 20 years has provided a comfort zone and lulled us into a false sense of security. Now we are faced with a stark new - and very different economic reality; one of shrinking income, governmental austerity measures, rising inflation and mounting pressure on our economy. It is vital that we continue to develop strategies to counter these threats that pose a very real risk to our future economic security."*

*This newly emerging economic environment has been shaped largely by two key factors – the global economic downturn and the actions taken in response by the United Kingdom Government.*

*With regards to the global economy, the financial crisis in which we have been gripped since 2007 is considered by many economists to be the worst financial catastrophe since the Great Depression of the 1930s. It was triggered by a liquidity shortfall in the United States banking system, and has resulted in the collapse of large financial institutions, the bailout of banks by national governments, and downturns in stock markets around the world. Many countries' housing markets have also suffered - and are continuing to do so – and in this the UK is no exception.*

*Housing market collapses have become a cruel economic reality, resulting in evictions, foreclosures and houses languishing on the property market for months, sometimes years. Decline in property values has contributed to business failures, erosions of consumer wealth estimated in trillions of U.S. dollars, political near-collapse in some countries – such as we've witnessed in Greece and Ireland - continuing substantial financial commitments incurred by governments, and a significant downturn in economic activity.*

*These effects are still being felt: continued slowdown of world economies, struggling stock markets and relentless price increases in essential commodities such as fuel. These effects are sharply reflected in today's Budget and are being all too acutely experienced Island-wide.*

*Consider our main shopping thoroughfare – Strand Street – where the Woolworth building is still lying derelict, a hideous eyesore and daily reminder of the collapse in business confidence, although I am heartened by recent news that a tenant has finally been secured to breathe new – and much needed – life into this prominent site.*

*The Isle of Man had been weathering this global turmoil well. But this changed when the United Kingdom Government, in trying to resolve its own serious financial shortfalls and woes, lowered its VAT rate, and then dealt this Island a second near-fatal blow.*

*Whitehall unilaterally decided to lop nearly 20% off our national income, £100 million pounds, slicing off a portion of what was due to us from the VAT Sharing Arrangement. We were expected to 'get on with it' and suffer in silence following this bombshell. 'Use your reserves' were the words of (extremely cold) comfort from the UK.*

*The net result of all this, as we are all now well aware, was a national deficit of something like £140 million shortfall in our economy, ostensibly a result of ill-conceived UK decisions.*

*As far as I am concerned that is the act of a Bully - and plainly demonstrates that the UK has scant regard for the Isle of Man, its people and its economy. However, by far the worst and most blatant demonstration of the UK's browbeating attitude towards us is evidenced by its own politicians in Parliamentary Committee - as seen in the pages of the latest House of Commons Justice Committee Report – Crown Dependencies, Eighth Report of the Session 2009 – 10.*

*Now we are faced with having to deal with this unremitting and punishing burden of a VAT financial sanction imposed on our nation by another. A financial sanction that will continue to dramatically reshape our economic landscape and our Budgets for many years to come.*

*I resent that and I also resent the shoddy, discourteous and shambolic way we have been treated. To top it all, we have also had to suffer another of the UK government's infernal investigations: the 'Foot Review', foisted upon us on the back of Alistair Darling's deliberately, in my view, anti-Manx comments. This enforced investigation only served to show yet again that the Isle of Man is a 'blue-chip' financial centre, one of the best regulated jurisdictions in the world, but it illustrated that the Island is being used as a political 'whipping post' for UK and indeed American financial misfortunes.*

*All this has been a recipe for near disaster. Our community has suffered as a consequence and feels, with some justification, disenfranchised."*

#### **(Extract from Bill Henderson's Tynwald Budget Speech, February Tynwald, 2011)**

This has now been almost eclipsed by the second 'H.M. Treasury claw back' of a further £75 million from our share of the VAT sharing agreement. In a statement by the Treasury Minister – Anne Craine to the Tynwald (July, 2011) we were told that 'our officials have negotiated' a further phased reduction in our VAT share. However, I told Tynwald at that sitting that it was not a negotiation, as we had a gun held to our head to agree this further significant reduction. H.M. Treasury instructed our government that if we did not agree they would sever totally the current VAT and Customs agreement, which would be disastrous for the Island. So we have had no choice, and now we are faced with the dire situation of managing this further reduction to our national budget.

The Treasury Minister explained to Tynwald (July, 2011) that the UK is now satisfied that this will put our VAT arrangements on a firm footing and the matter would now be closed. However, I put this government and future governments on notice that we cannot afford any more complacency in this matter. I warned the Council of Ministers that the UK would be back for more – and back it came. The Treasury Minister has confirmed that there is nothing to stop the UK from coming back again, even with this new 'agreement. So it must be a top strategic priority to plan for this and reduce our reliance on VAT returns. There has always been a fear that we were far too reliant on the finance sector, but in reality we have been far too reliant on VAT returns which represent the largest proportion of government receipts.

## **Putting a balance to the picture**

It's not all doom and gloom – far from it: in trying to balance this bleak scenario I offer a further extract from my budget speech this year.

*"This is the most important debate of the legislative year, and one of the most important Budgets in our history. It gives us a detailed insight as to how the Treasury Five Year Recovery Plan is working to close the gap on our emerging financial deficit - a deficiency outside of our control and most definitely NOT of our own making.*

*Given the hostile political and economic environment in which we are now operating, coupled with these turbulent and challenging economic times and the unprecedented gravity of the difficulties we are all facing, this strategy demonstrates unswerving determination, resilience and the 'true spirit of no surrender' as enshrined in our Island's motto – 'whichever way you throw me, I shall stand.' Surely a timely interpretation of those words.*

*Even against this sombre background of adversity and the burdensome problems we have all had to face, and are still facing, we can be justifiably very proud of the implacable stance adopted that will send out an unequivocally positive message locally and, importantly, globally.*

*That message is clear and unambiguous; the Isle of Man is a jurisdiction regulated to exceptionally high international standards, far higher, in fact, than many of its putative competitors. This island has the ability and high-calibre management to combat serious financial threats. The Isle of Man poses no risk to other nations, that's the crucial message. We are a responsible and mature country, economically and politically stable, open for business and one of the best places in the world from which and with which to trade.*

*Even in these testing times this Budget demonstrates a revenue return in excess of £500 million pounds, £11 million pounds of better-than-expected savings and a small surplus. I am also encouraged to note an increase in VAT receipts and lower costs in some areas, all of which are cause for, while not celebration, at the very least modest satisfaction that the economy is being responsibly managed.*

*This report indicates that there will be an increase in income support and pensions, albeit not to inflationary levels. Our reserves, although not infinite, are substantial and have grown. The KSF recovery programme is progressing well. Economic growth is around 4 – 5% higher than predicted, generating better than anticipated tax receipts. We have managed to protect, as far as possible, the Departments of Social Care, Health and Education. Tax rates remain unchanged and NI contributions have not increased. Importantly, this is a balanced budget.”*

**(Bill Henderson, MHK, February Tynwald, 2011)**

It is reassuring that our economy is still strong, and growing, one of the strongest in Europe. We have no national debts. Our quality of life is one of the best in the UK. Unemployment is still relatively low. Despite the challenges we face we can still demonstrate that the Island is a wonderful place in which to live and work, do business with and re-locate business here. We can manage serious economic threats. We have managed to stave off the worst of the economic effects, remain strong and commercially competitive – something that we have to build on as a top strategic priority. A message that needs to be sent out in strong positive terms to ensure commercial and business confidence.

## **Current situation**

However, as a result, we have been left a legacy. It is a fact of life that this Island is not immune from the repercussions of the global economic downturn. This became abundantly clear in 2007 with the collapse of Northern Rock, followed by the demise of other large banks around the world, keenly felt here with the collapse of the local branch of the KSF Bank, and the stock exchange crash of 2008.

The fallout from these events is still being felt by economies worldwide, including our own, which we saw starkly illustrated in our 2011 budget.

## **But it does not end there**

In the near future we may well be forced to change direction more than once, not least in response to a whole raft of factors such as the developing situation with our 0/10 tax regime about which the EU has serious reservations. We have had to withdraw attribution rates for individuals (with unknown consequences) – ARIs – after EU finance ministers met to discuss this aspect of our tax regime that they viewed as 'harmful'. Our VAT sharing 'agreement' may come under further review.

There are some EU countries that still find our 0/10 regime unacceptable. Once again I maintain this is bare-faced hypocrisy and would suggest they look close to home at some of their own fiscal policies.

We still have to combat rising inflation and are faced with the spectre of an increase in interest rates. And this does not take into account the very real possibility of additional pressure that may be brought to bear on us by the OECD, EU, UK and the United States. I say this in the knowledge that offshore financial jurisdictions such as the Isle of Man are neither liked nor trusted in some quarters. In my view this is political and administrative paranoia of the highest order which is unlikely to be dispelled in the foreseeable future.

Events and instability in the Middle East are affecting fuel costs which are set to continue to spiral upwards without check unless direct and urgent action is taken by the world's major governments. We are suffering unprecedented and extortionate price hikes in electricity, gas, petrol, heating oil and phone charges. These are increases affecting every individual and business in our community. The less well-off, those earning below the



national average wage, people unable to work and pensioners will suffer most as a consequence. Additionally, for the first time we are seeing government redundancies.

Fuel poverty is now a very real issue and a sad indictment of this government's - and previous administrations' - failing social policy. Fuel cost increases are being passed on to consumers, directly and indirectly, through rising costs of household goods and groceries, hitting them with a 'double whammy'. This will also have consequences for our business community as it struggles to remain competitive and, importantly, attract new business to our shores, which adds to my and, I am sure, your consternation.

Under pressure (not least from me) to recognise the mounting difficulties rising energy costs are causing, government has just announced a multi-million pound 'energy stability package' for the Manx Electricity Authority to stabilise and freeze electricity prices for the next two years. A welcome move, but one that should have been instituted sooner, and one that may have to be revisited as energy and fuel costs look set to rise further.

Population management is another very real cause for concern. Government figures suggest upwards of 85,000 people now reside in the Island which, coupled with unrestricted immigration, is creating serious challenges.

We are still seen by our larger neighbours, such as the United States, as a 'tax haven' and, as a consequence, a threat to their economy. The Council of Ministers seems incapable of developing and promoting the positive aspects of our international reputation on which the Island's economy depends.

Failed public relations trips to Brussels and Washington have resulted in the forthcoming removal of meat derogations, which will adversely affect our agricultural industry, while US senators from the all-powerful Investigations Committee are vowing to shut tax havens down, including the Isle of Man. We have had to suffer the recent Westminster 'Foot Report' investigation into our affairs being foisted upon us. In tandem with this is the continued fiscal scrutiny we must endure from the EU and United States.

This Council of Ministers and any future government must connect directly with every sector of the community. I believe government has shifted its focus away from the ordinary people of this Island. Instead it is devoting far too much of its attention to its image, concentrating on how it is perceived by others, in particular, those heading the major businesses and financial institutions of this Island. We need a government that is open and honest and gives the facts in detail to the community.

We need a Tynwald and a government of robust individuals, loyal first and foremost to their House of Keys Oath, with the courage to stand firm in the face of challenges - a government that does not pander to outside influences, be they from the UK, Europe or further afield. Simply put, we should never bow to external pressures.

The Island needs MHKs who have the courage of their convictions; perceived not as nodding donkeys, but as people with the moral fibre to make waves and challenge the status quo whenever necessary. People willing to stand up in Tynwald and say what needs to be said and committed to making the difference we need. Politicians stalwart enough not to flinch from losing favour with each other over what matters, but strong and confident to work together in the interests of this Island at a time when we face such grave challenges. I, for one, fully subscribe to this approach.

We must rid ourselves of current stigmas and work towards restoring pride in ourselves, in Tynwald, our Island and in all the special qualities that make us the successful nation we have become. If re-elected I pledge to work towards this goal. I am passionate that our community should, once again, feel a sense of national pride.

## Overview

**The greatest challenge facing the Island over the next five years will be to manage the effects of the 'Double VAT Bombshell' and beyond and ensure that Treasury Recovery Plans succeed, which must also include the successful conclusion of the KSF recovery plan. Strategic planning is crucial for the survival of our community and our nation as is achieving economic growth to offset the grim UK VAT effect.**

We have to come to terms with stark new political and economic realities, nationally and internationally. We must consolidate and build on our economic success, ensuring all trading and business opportunities are



promoted relentlessly. But it is vital this strategy is balanced by sustainability and ensure that any increased economic benefits are passed on in a more direct and meaningful way to the less well-off.

We must also diversify our economy given that currently the largest proportion of the Island's business wealth is still generated directly or indirectly by the finance industry. Other challenges will be to manage internal debts and deficits in areas including:

- Public Service Pension Fund;
- MEA debts;
- Assess the future viability of the National Insurance fund;
- Ability to meet the health and social needs of our growing aging population;
- Other economic threats and liabilities.

Only when we fully recognise these challenges can we create a viable blueprint for the future.

We must:

- Ensure the success of the Treasury's recovery plans;
- Ensure the success of the KSF recovery plan;
- Plan and commence implementation of measures to combat the loss of further VAT streams;
- Re-evaluate government receipts;
- See that the Department of Economic Development is instructed by Tynwald and the Council of Ministers to implement a long-term high-profile programme to increase business and boost the economy, progress and success of which must be under continuous and independent scrutiny to ensure the department is delivering on its promises as claimed so effusively – and volubly - by its PR machine. This has to include better support for local business and further economic diversification;
- Senior management and political representation on the Department of Economic Development must be of high calibre, and replaced if necessary. We need a senior management team, working as a team, not in fragmentation (including politicians) who have vision, drive, enthusiasm and above all – entrepreneurialism.

And take immediate and urgent action to:

- Work up plans to deal with and mitigate against the effects of the 'VAT Double Bombshell'. This unfortunately is reactive management, and precisely what we should not be forced into doing – working on the back foot – as it has been known for some considerable time that this was on the cards. I put the Council of Ministers on notification here that they have been derelict in my opinion of their duties in not planning for this sooner. The signs and indications were all there;

## **The International Picture**

The Island has done remarkably well developing its finance sector, insurance portfolio, shipping registry, film industry and new online gaming businesses, as well as its fledgling aircraft registry and space industry. The Island's Gross Domestic Product is now greater than that of the UK. We are becoming a leading niche market player on the world stage, a status on which we must capitalise if we are to be seen as a serious contender in the global community.

Communication between the Ministry of Justice, responsible for the relationship between the UK and the Crown Dependencies and the UK Government is good, but that with some other UK departments, such as Treasury, is at an all-time low. This has been starkly highlighted by the UK in the recent House of Commons Justice Committee Re-port 2009 -10 and the further VAT reduction, where it is very clear that the Isle of Man is nothing but an irritant to HM Treasury and the UK government in general.

Of further concern to me - and this is a concern shared by the Isle of Man Government - is that, increasingly, the Island is not being represented constructively by the UK government in international forums which, as is well known, is looking out for its own best interests to our disadvantage. The UK is also failing to present our

position to EU and international organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), consisting of the largest industrialised nations in the world, the remit of which reads: *'The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development is the international organisation of the industrialised, market-economy countries. At OECD, representatives from 32 Member countries meet to exchange information and harmonise policy with a view to maximising economic growth within Member countries and assisting non-Member countries develop more rapidly'* OECD Washington. Strong positive representation is vital.

Yet the Island continually emerges as exemplary following unremitting UK and international scrutiny, especially from the Edwards Review (a substantial and major UK investigation into our financial affairs) and the OECD and International Monetary Fund (IMF) assessments, and continues to hold a Standard and Poor's AAA credit rating and was praised in the recent review by a UK team headed by Michael Foot (Foot Review).

Forging robust long-term working relationships with the UK and beyond on a nation-to-nation basis, on an equal footing of mutual respect must be a top priority if we are to promote our international image and remain above criticism. I believe our inability to dispel suspicion is a critical weakness in the Island's strategy, as evidenced by recent media accusations concerning terrorist funds and the persistent general lack of understanding of what we are about - or indeed who we are. This questionable image is furthered, regrettably, by the Island figuring in American finance blacklists, not least in a recent US Senate select committee report. A strategy must be implemented that responds to and corrects any such highly publicised and damaging misrepresentation and, more importantly, ensures no further incidences occur that may compromise the Island's international reputation.

Furthermore, the Island must be able to represent itself in these international forums rather than rely on third parties who do not act in our best interests and are looking out for their own benefit first and foremost.

Our UK, European and international neighbours would have greater respect for us were we more forthright and less acquiescent; if we were seen to be establishing more effective working relationships and communications and, in particular, being more assertive in our dealings with Whitehall. Improved representation in Europe is vital; whatever happens there, they will always be our trading partners. Getting to know our neighbours on a detailed day-to-day working level is critical to the Island's successful future economic development.

My call here is: Europe and the United States certainly do not know enough about us, nor we about them. This situation needs to improve drastically as a matter of urgency, especially when it comes to our farming derogations, finance and other industries.

The European Union continues to expand which, inevitably, impacts on the Isle of Man but, no matter to what size the EU grows, we will always have to work and trade with its member states. We must also rid ourselves of the imbalances that this imperfect relationship has created, such as Isle of Man residents not being entitled to the E1-11 form for automatic health care in other EU countries, or the fact that Manx people who have lived here all their lives will not automatically be permitted to work in EU member states. Of note also is the fact that there is no automatic right of settlement for Isle of Man residents who wish to live within the EU, but EU residents can settle here.

We must:

- Work towards more fully representing ourselves at all international levels;
- Ensure that the European administration and others, including the United States, at every level understand exactly who we are, what we are and what we do;
- Build robust working relationships with relevant administrators across those jurisdictions in which we operate and conduct business, for these are the people who advise the politicians;
- Increase positive associations with relevant politicians;
- Address the imbalances of our relationship with the EU by way of increased direct representation;
- We must bring relevant administrators and politicians regularly to the Island to show them first hand who we are and what we do.

The appointment of the recent Isle of Man European Commissioner has to be supported as a strategically important move in forging better international relationships. Something I questioned the Chief Minister over recently in the House of Keys.

## Constitutional development

The Island must continue to sustain and develop its constitutional status, with a view to enhancing its autonomy. Above all we must increase our constitutional capability to conduct our own external affairs. This will ultimately place the Isle of Man in a far stronger position to sustain and develop its economy and resist pressures from other countries and international forums such as the US, EU and OECD. We must be assertive in the face of any external negative perceptions and respond with a maturity befitting our international status.

The Island is under constant international scrutiny stemming from misconceptions, misrepresentations and 'personal paranoia' from leaders of some of the larger industrial nations. I am well aware that the EU is still 'uncomfortable' with our current economic strategies, the UK has again imposed a further VAT reduction upon us and the United States is forging ahead with its aggressive trading programme. We need to be prepared.

The time has come to review existing and forge new agreements with the UK and realign our constitutional arrangements; also to plan and implement strategies which would bring about a zero reliance on the UK, developed at our pace through negotiation, re-negotiation and redefining of agreements and the establishment of new agreements and protocols. Development of enduring business, social and trading links with countries other than the UK must form part of this strategy.

The time has also come for any new government to alert the community to the consequences of opting for full independence and encourage debate on the matter.

## Working for our community and Island

To do this we have to strengthen and develop our economy, strive for success and engender community and national pride. This has to be balanced with sustainability and what is best for the Island. In doing so, government and Tynwald must also fully recognise and never lose sight of our social and moral obligations to our people and ensure:

- Far greater connection with the community in a more open, honest and transparent administration of public affairs;
- Open communication with the public and business communities, actively canvassing views, opinions and ideas;
- Fuller recognition of the widening social divide currently developing and the impact inflation and price increases have on all our people, especially the less well-off;
- Sustainable population growth. This is essential to our future. No longer should population growth continue unchecked. Government must understand and respond as a matter of urgency to the impact this short-sighted strategy is having on the Island's services and infrastructure. But this must not compromise economic growth;
- Future budgets are managed in more meaningful and direct ways and allocated to where they can be of greatest benefit;
- Stamping out of the culture that 'staff from away are better' and 'new blood is always required';
- Government promotes our local labour force at all levels – from school leavers upwards - encourages a motivated and dynamic workforce, and recognises and rewards local skills and talent in the public and private sectors;
- Young people who leave the Island to study and train elsewhere, or pursue career opportunities not available locally are given incentives to attract them back to the Island. Remember: we paid for their education in the first instance.



## Strategic Planning for IOM plc

Scrupulous, effective national strategic business planning is fundamental to the success of any nation. It provides us with a full assessment of where we have been, what the current situation is, where we want to be and how to get there. It gives us vision, direction and purpose. It informs us of 'what needs to be done' and causes government to connect with all sectors of the community. Sadly we still do not have a national strategic business plan. Little wonder people have grave concerns about the future. The absence of a strategic platform from which to operate is a dangerous situation, one that will cause the Island to flounder and government to resort to reactive political management - a recipe for mediocrity and possible failure. It is my view this represents our current dire situation - a government lurching from one crisis to the next, obsessed with operational demands and far too slow in recognising the threats and environmental changes taking place all around it.

At this point it is my duty to put the Council of Ministers on 'red alert'. We must start strategic planning NOW. The days of national management by reaction have gone; we must be far better prepared for whatever comes our way and know where we are going and what vision we wish our nation to aspire to. I accept that some events will come 'out of the blue', but we must mitigate as far as possible being caught off our political guard. We must also, as a matter of great urgency, ensure that at the heart of our strategy is managing and mitigating the 'Double VAT Bombshell.'

### Vision and direction – a critical part of any national strategic business plan

Current government and previous administrations seem totally focused on delivering the day-to-day operational aspects of public services and economic management. Any planning that is done looks only to the medium term – tactical issues. Targets and objectives set in the current government policy document only represent performance measurement and what is done already and give little or no direction. These performance indicators are all but meaningless as senior managers measure what they have been doing and set yearly objectives to achieve the same. That is not national strategic business planning. It is a lazy way of paying lip service to what purports to be 'national planning'.

Long-term strategic planning and national management are woefully lacking. These are critical as they provide vision and direction - two core objectives government has so far failed to achieve. Allan Bell, Minister for the Department of Economic Development has repeatedly told us that we are sailing into uncharted and stormy waters. I would have to agree and add that this is a ship with no rudder, directionless and running at half power.

The big ticket questions everyone is asking are: 'Where are we going with all this?', 'Where is the Island going?' Government is silent, which is fuelling public disquiet and giving the impression that they don't know themselves.

We need a government with strong, entrepreneurial, charismatic leadership that can fully connect with the whole community and has the ability to drive the Island forward with vision and direction so desperately needed. We need to know where we want to be and how we are going to get there, so need leadership not preoccupied with vague mundane objectives but providing strategic vision to unite the community and bring about change for the better of this nation.

### Gaining a strategic oversight

We must embrace the concept of environmental scanning – being on the constant look-out for threats or emerging problems that may impact upon us, and remaining alert to worst-case scenarios to better inform the Island's strategic planning. This is a strategy demanding meticulous attention to detail, an approach that must become ingrained in the Treasury and Department of Economic Development's organisational culture and psyche - indeed, across this government as a whole.

We must improve our information gathering and develop robust communication links to be better forewarned and equipped to recognise developing situations and the possible impacts they may have for the Isle of Man. Importantly, we must develop greater skills to interpret and react to the information gathered.

Environmental scanning and information gathering must be a higher priority in our budget as they become more critical to our economic survival and key to our being recognised as a responsible trading centre.

A good example of 'missing the event' was when Alistair Darling began adopting increasingly vitriolic rhetoric when referring to the Island. At that juncture I warned our Treasury Minister that the UK was building up to another Edwards examination. I was dismissed out of hand on this as our government initially thought that the



Chancellor was not briefed properly.

How wrong we were. It is my avowed belief we completely misread the impending 'Foot Review' following the UK Chancellor Alistair Darling's negative commentary towards the Island. In my view we gave the impression of a nation slow to grasp the reality and, worst still, the gravity of these matters, which severely compromised our ability to respond proactively and develop an effective strategy to safeguard our economy and the people of the Isle of Man.

In this I would cite the KSF foreclosure, the cutting of our VAT returns and the renegotiation of the reciprocal health agreement as further examples.

Make no mistake; we project a slow-to-react image at our peril. Alistair Darling wasn't just sabre rattling, as was perceived by the Council of Ministers initially; he had drawn his sword from the scabbard and was clearly going to use it. And initially we failed to recognise this.

We must tighten up our procedures as a matter of urgency. Complacency and a stand-still mentality focusing on solely immediate operational issues are no longer options. We must maintain a tactical and strategic overview at all times, scanning for threats and planning accordingly. We need to change government culture and vacate the comfort zone of managing the day-to-day business and managing reactively to impending situations. Government will have to grasp the nettle of contingency planning, more work I know, and doing things in a different way, but at least we would be far better placed to manage challenges and threats. We need to be better at anticipating every possible eventuality and what potential impact they may have on the Island. It is my opinion this budget should have placed greater emphasis on vigilance and thinking ahead.

These factors will force us to move away from the traditional economic model on which we have become reliant and about which, in my opinion, we have become dangerously complacent. But we shouldn't be forced to make these changes; we should be wholeheartedly embracing them of our own volition and on our own terms. These measures may be alien and unwelcome to some, but they will help secure the future economic success of this Island.

For the past 20 years year-on-year economic growth has provided a comfort zone and lulled us into a sense of false security. Now we are faced with a stark new - and very different - economic reality; one of shrinking income, governmental austerity measures, redundancies, rising inflation and mounting pressure on our economy. It is vital we continue to develop strategies to counter these threats that pose a very real risk to our future economic security.

The current government policy document attempts to move towards a long-term approach but is considerably way off the mark. Effective strategic planning will require further development if we are to ensure greater security for our future. To achieve a viable strategic plan we must all be able to support it.

## Contingency planning

Countering these and other threats must form the bedrock of 'Planning for IOM plc.' We must have a well informed national budget with contingencies built in to cope with emerging or potential threats.

## Looking ahead

Robust environmental scanning linked to vision, direction and sound contingency planning incorporated in a national strategic business plan will create a recipe for the Island's success. With your support I will be pressing hard for this if re-elected.

### Recommendations:

- The establishment of a central planning and information division to co-ordinate specialist strategic planning functions. This must work corporately with the Council of Ministers and government departments;
- The Council of Ministers and chief executives of government departments to fully subscribe to the plan as part of their articles of office. There can be no room for separate, bureaucratic empires such as we see now – ultimately ministers and departments have to work for the greater good and be prepared to put aside personal/departmental ambitions and place plans and projects in abeyance when urgent public funding is required elsewhere. This would include the redistribution of budgets when necessary, and certainly more frequently than the lamentably rare occasions we see currently;

- A realistic vision and working towards achievable goals;
- Learning from the Edwards Review, the recent air insurance fiasco, the nearly lost reciprocal health agreement and the UK imposed VAT reduction. We must be proactive rather than reactive;
- Forming strategic alliances with industry and business sectors;
- Government and Tynwald to better connect with the community – residential and business - and move towards a more consultative, partnership approach and demonstrate a greater willingness to listen and respond to concerns of the people;
- Government to draw more readily on local expertise in this process. People are willing to offer their experience but government's current institutional arrogance and aloofness rule out taking full advantage of this wealth of invaluable local resources.

## Population and Future Development

A growing population - now officially estimated to be around 85,000 – cannot be sustained without serious consequences. Government is wrongly committed to pursuing a combined policy of unrestricted residency and economic development. The realities of such short-sighted residency 'non-management' will ultimately become all too clear; busier roads, rising pupil numbers, language barriers, longer hospital waiting lists, amenities under pressure and a housing problem even worse than it is now. We must press for appropriate government policies which can be supported by Tynwald and should include strategies that encourage:

- Stable economic growth that does not compromise our quality of life;
- High net worth/low staffing ratio businesses that maximise employment opportunities for existing Island residents;
- A review of the Island's infrastructure programme and priorities;
- A review and strengthening of the work permit system, with a more vigilant monitoring regime and stricter application criteria. This is currently our only real means of restricting immigrant workers. Liaison and joint working with all our industries is vital to make this work. Our work permit system must be effective but not stifle industry growth;
- Wider use of short-term contracts for immigrant workers – whether from the UK, EU or further afield. Possession of a contract should not constitute an open-ended automatic right to residency;
- A government policy that ensures the Island does not become a repository for asylum seekers and the like, as has been alleged by some UK politicians;
- The Isle of Man Residency Act must be evaluated;
- Development of strategies which accord our workforce - people wishing to return to the Island and young people with appropriate skills - heightened recognition of their experience and training to give them a fair and equal opportunity to apply for local vacancies, rather than constantly importing staff.

Further measures should include:

- Automatic passport checks for every new arrival wishing to stay or work in the Island;
- New arrivals must demonstrate they can support themselves, have accommodation and, if working, must supply details of their employment, work permit and length of contract;
- That there be no automatic right to our benefits system;
- Promotion of our culture, heritage and community values in a way which promotes an inclusive society.

## Government

### Ministerial System

Ministerial government needs to be reviewed, as currently it is a cumbersome managerial body. It is not as responsive as it should be to Tynwald and the wider Island community. It is an institution that can seem aloof

and detached. It carries a powerful block vote and promotes an autocratic process that dictates it should not be challenged or questioned - 'The Jurby Pit', and the parents of children of the Jurby Special Needs Unit being denied a chance to speak at the Bar of Tynwald being prime examples, but there are many others.

Improvements are required to ensure:

- Ministers are chosen by Tynwald;
- No member of the Legislative Council holds a ministerial position;
- Tynwald members of government departments have a formal vote in departmental decision making to provide some check on the current ultimate power the minister of that department holds;
- Tynwald members who sit on the Public Accounts Committee hold no other office, so are as impartial and unbiased as possible when scrutinising the government's financial management.

## Government spending and restructuring

The unilateral action (VAT) inflicted on us by the UK has, in turn, forced the Council of Ministers to respond by imposing cross-departmental austerity measures to make savings of £100 million to cover the first VAT deficit and the potential £40 million shortfall caused by the lowering of UK VAT recently, and more will need to be done to combat the latest £75 million shortfall. Making savings and ensuring efficiencies must be key components in all future financial strategies. They are legacies this Island will have to manage and were outlined last year in the Treasury Minister's five-year plan and in this year's budget.

In the middle of this, the Chief Minister Tony Brown launched his restructuring of Government 'show case'. All this has achieved so far is to upset the entire government work force and cause needless chaos when we should be concentrating on the urgent national business of addressing the loss of VAT receipts. Fiddling while Rome burns. We should have been using the Government machine we had but in a more efficient and effective way.

I had heated exchanges with the Chief Minister during the Tynwald debate to introduce this and voted against it. One point that was made very clear to me was that the cost was unknown! And every other MHK voted for it. I ask you the voter what you think. To disassemble 'a fully working machine' in the middle of a crisis, out of the blue is a sad indictment of the Chief Minister's and the Council of Ministers complete lack of leadership and strategic management ability. Further to this, this almost suicidal move failed to challenge the real issue – the size and scope of government. In my opinion this has only added to our financial troubles.

Strategic financial planning should also be prompting government to consider how it could work 'smarter' and implement internal reform. While I acknowledge that some changes are being made, if those changes are to make a very real difference, we need buy-in and unswerving commitment from every department and every minister. This I see as a national number one priority. No one should be accorded the luxury of 'opting out'; everyone has to 'opt in'.

Budgets and departmental funding must be prioritised and targeted to meet the core needs of our community – health, social welfare, education and safety. Managing public funds also requires a 'cost effectiveness and save' culture where practicable.

As seen in recent years, government and its departments have become used to large annual budgets. This has created a feel-good factor and given rise to spending patterns we would associate with much larger jurisdictions. This is evidenced by some incredibly wasteful government projects and the squandering of large sums of public money: I cite here the unchecked and unknown expense of 'restructuring government' and the £3 million Richmond Hill fiasco as examples. How the budget is managed, prioritised, allocated and ultimately spent by departments is pivotal not only to the success of many of the policies set out in this manifesto, but also to the success in creating a well-balanced public service provision capable of meeting the needs of the community in this current financial climate.

Far greater corporate governance and direction issued to departments by the Council of Ministers is required, especially when prioritising capital expenditure. For example, we saw the near-closure of gynaecological wards and intensive care beds at Noble's Hospital some time ago, but yet, not long after this, the Department of Transport (now Department of Infrastructure - DOI) took the decision to spend millions of pounds of taxpayers' money on a corner plot next to the sea terminal, 'improvements' to Windy Corner and extensions to the departure lounge at the airport. Where should that money have gone? Should the Department of Infrastructure have been given a corporate directive?

A culture of saving, including energy conservation, and efficiency must be embraced across the whole of government and considered in every government decision-making policy, from senior and capital project management right down to the public counter, including stationery and telephone calls.

In tandem with this we are going to have to formulate an action plan to address the immediate effects of the VAT shortfall and, as the highest urgent national priority, to mitigate those effects. In this cold, hard economic dawn, the money will have to be found from somewhere and some testing decisions will have to be taken. Government can pare down to a bare minimum, but in order to maintain essential public services it will be forced to look at items which may well include:

- Government receipts, benefits and other areas;
- Further use of reserves;
- Government services to be assessed. Simply put: Is this service essential or non-essential? If not, it may very well have to be put on the back burner;
- Government services are also going to have to be assessed with a view to restriction and shrinkage; for example streamlining, as in the UK, the Planning Objection and Appeals process which here costs the tax payer many hundreds of thousands of pounds every year;
- Further cross-government pay freezes;
- Voluntary redundancies and retirements;
- Reduction of management structures and collapsing of posts;
- Department of Economic Development requires entrepreneurial leadership and urgent instructions from the Council of Ministers to boost economic and commercial growth. It is a matter of urgency for this department to climb out of its day-to-day operational morass. It has to adopt a completely mercenary approach to aggressively and tactically mine out business for this Island.

*'It is my duty if returned to place any new Government under heavy scrutiny when it commences introducing measures to combat our budgetary shortfalls: which could include increases in tax and national insurance and a reduction in public services and ensure to the best of my abilities that the attempted introduction of any such measures (or others) is done fairly, with minimum impact, on a practical and commonsense approach and with minimum impact to our essential services. It will also be my role to oppose and fight measures which you or I believe to be a threat to individuals, our community, or vulnerable people such as our pensioners,'* **Bill Henderson, Election '11' Speech, July, 2011.**

Recommendations (long term):

Government must revisit how best to apply savings and efficiency directives or 'austerity measures' as I call them. I shall now outline some measures which I believe will address my concerns and which I see as key to the way forward.

To bring about maximum savings and efficiencies rigid protocols must be applied right across government with practicality and commonsense uppermost and have minimal impact on the community.

Greater centralisation of duplicated government services as much as possible, a measure for which I have been calling for a long time. Services including:

- Human resources and the Civil Service personnel division;
- Financial services;
- Estate services, including maintenance;
- The government's vehicle fleet.
- And of course we must always be seeking other cost-saving initiatives.

Other actions must include:

- Reduction of government's carbon footprint, seen by many as a 'green farce' and trendy strap line. The bottom line is, though, that if taken on board seriously, we can make large savings on energy. I pointed this out to Parliament not so long ago in my motion for a cross-government energy assessment. Savings to be made are real and substantial – just look at the wasteful heating in Government Office and Legislative Buildings;



- Adoption of the 'three Rs' principles – reduce, reuse, recycle – seen by many as 'a trendy green thing to do' but not practical. The reality is that we can make substantial savings by adopting these principles as part of government's everyday working life. Look at the tsunamis of paper pouring out of every office in government and Tynwald. Tynwald has been cabled for computers at great expense, yet no-one has the backbone to lead Parliament into the electronic age. What savings could be made! This is one of countless examples of government and parliamentary waste that goes on day in, day out and must be stopped;
- Capital projects must be prioritised and slipped back if necessary. This may mean some departments' hopes and aspirations will have to be dashed – in some instances this could have an adverse effect on the construction industry - but we must be pragmatic;
- The culture of departmental imperialism must die, and die now. I feel this old-style culture, borne out of times of less restrictive budgets, is hampering the changes demanded by the current economic situation and only serves to compound our problems and obscure how best to reach a solution. We need to replace it with a new culture, one where every department is working towards the greater good, willing to make sacrifices and suffer temporary austerity measures. This must be the new departmental objective – to work in partnership towards a common goal for the benefit of the people of the Isle of Man;
- Government and parliamentary travel, seemingly unrestricted. Conferences, training, away days, 'fact-finding missions' and 'fancy junkets': all must come under scrutiny and embargos placed on all but the most essential travel. A model should be applied: must attend, should attend, could attend, to assess the level of travel importance. All too often I have been aware of totally unnecessary and costly trips off-Island. This 'going away culture' must be reined in and only if times improve should we consider relaxing embargos;
- When off-Island travel is unavoidable, then low-cost package bookings with Travel Lodge and other well-known budget hotel chains should be used which offer conference rooms at affordably low rates. Choosing value-for-money accommodation – and not selecting luxury hotels ad hoc at disadvantageous rates - must become the norm;
- Reducing staffing numbers needs to be tackled through natural wastage, voluntary redundancy, improved temporary redundancy packages and enhanced, temporary early retirement packages. As a matter of urgency we need to think outside the box and look at instituting temporary additional packages to manage the current situation – spending to save. We shouldn't need to sack staff. Again, I put the Council of Ministers on notice and demand that they fully assess each department's intentions with regard to redundancies. Once we have a full picture and if it reveals that redundancies will be unavoidable, then employees affected must have priority when any suitable vacancy in government arises and be offered either re-training to have the best chance of re-locating within government, or the option of one of the aforementioned packages. Government urgently needs to review its redeployment policy to include all staff and ensure that it applies right across government.

I realise real progress is being made in some of these areas, such as the transforming government programme and the Chief Minister's business change working group, but these are only two specific areas to which I have been drawing attention over these past two years.

Government must redouble its efforts, become totally focused, results-driven and evidence-led. This has to be by directive and embraced by all departments for it to become a working way of life for us all and deliver real, tangible results.

I want to see efficiency and savings drives that have a maximum effect on government spending yet minimal effect on our community and services, and I want to see our people properly supported during these changes.

## **Our economy, business and industry**

Imposing these austerity measures and standards are only part of the equation. They must be underpinned by consolidating and supporting local business and economic development and diversification. I recognise that some good progress is being made but if the town and village regeneration scheme is anything to go by and 'business incubators' are seen as a solution then I fear for the future economic security of this Island.

## Local business and industry

Economic development and diversification must be key objectives and future financial strategies must secure wider support. One thing is for certain; it is imperative we look after our local businesses which must include our traditional industries and grow existing and new business and create jobs. Mitigating the effects of our own deficit must be a national priority, not only by implementing austerity measures, but also by being proactive to offset those austerity measures as far as possible and, in turn, lessening the ultimate effects on our community.

I feel we have been too reliant on 'business coming to us', I know we have been working to attract business here, but efforts now need to be redoubled. The 'can't-do culture' within the government organisation I come across so many times must be despatched to oblivion and we must replace it - and there is no opting out of this – with a 'we can do, and we will do' culture. I also feel we have taken what business we have here – especially other than the finance sector almost for granted. This is a huge mistake – we need to consolidate our local business and industry and help expand it; rejuvenate it. I cite here Protours and our tourist industry as prime examples of causalities of complacency.

## Increasing new business

We must have high-level joint political and private sector delegations regularly going out and mining business for the Island. Let us not delude ourselves; securing new business will not be easy in the current global economic climate. The decline in markets and commerce, fuelled by the banking collapse and ever fiercer competition will make this objective hard to achieve. But achieve it we must. I refer to my earlier call for a moratorium on all non-essential governmental travel: this is a fundamental measure towards achieving greater business success. Travel must be constantly evaluated for purpose, appropriateness, effectiveness and, importantly, outcome values. Simply put: *'Was this a worthwhile, value-for- money exercise for the tax payer?'*

We should be canvassing large corporate organisations to relocate here. We have the political and economic stability, the environment and most importantly, the space. We also have a blue-chip ICT infrastructure and reasonably efficient but costly, travel links that would benefit from improvement.

Again, I have pointed out that for the successful long-term future of this Island sustainable economic growth is the way forward. However, in managing the current crisis I would urge government to step away from this policy in the short term and encourage large corporate organisations to relocate to the Island, coupled with implementing a whole raft of tax legislation to offset the effects of UK VAT sanctions.

I would like the Treasury to issue regular business updates: reporting activities, initiatives and incentives, what visits were made, whom was seen, what businesses were canvassed and what were the outcomes. This report must also indicate – in outline at least – business and economic growth or decline. In this way we shall be able to gauge performance, obtain a clear picture of what has been achieved and formulate future strategy.

*'We must keep our parliamentary foot firmly on the Treasury and the new Department of Economic Development's neck to ensure we are achieving. I have heard much herald-ing of the new DED and Treasury through media releases and all the other spin. OK, we know you're here; we know what needs to be done; now you go and do it! But you have to show us by way of evidence of performance and, importantly, what you are achieving and what economic growth has taken place.'*

**(Bill Henderson, February Tynwald, 2011, speaking on the Government Budget)**

## Business Environment

We should be creating a more attractive business environment. There will undoubtedly be a cost implication to this but it is vital we present this Island as a business-friendly, business-attractive jurisdiction – all the more important given the stiff competition we face. Our competitors are in the same situation and fighting hard in a shrinking business market, so we must work and fight even harder.

As part of this strategy government must fully engage with our businesses and industries in all their forms. Government have often been accused of not listening, being aloof or keeping a distance when it should become far more involved. This attitude has been to the detriment of business in the past. I strongly believe that it is not right that government should continually state 'we cannot become involved in the private sector'; it should and must to a more appropriate extent when required.

Traveling to and from the Island, times and destinations sought throughout the British Isles are important and provide the critically important life lines for exports and imports. The price of traveling and use of air and sea

services to and from the Island is also critically important especially in terms of private sector business, residents, exports and imports and other services such as the post. Any new government will have to more directly engage with air and sea operators to review the current situation, especially pricing structures.

The current pricing structures have a major impact on everything. They determine the amount of tourists who come here, how business is done and how often individuals can afford to travel. With everything we need predominantly imported then it also has a direct impact on 'prices on the shelves'. We have virtual monopolies on air and sea routes, which must also be reviewed. Pricing structures require to be realistic, affordable, attractive and above all: competitive.

In creating a more attractive business environment the town and village regeneration scheme must be energised, I must concede it has to be supported as the capital, Douglas, is the Island's gateway. Sadly, for the present at least, Douglas presents an uninspiring image to the diminishing tourist numbers, would-be investors, new businesses, workers and residents.

In driving these initiatives forward we must review current legislation and regulation. I have recently been in talks with key figures in our business community where it was made very clear to me in open and frank terms that we are not business-attractive due to what they see as over regulation. Yes, we need to be well regulated, but not regulated out of existence. I would strongly urge the Treasury Minister to go out to consultation on this important matter. The last thing we need is to shackle ourselves by being regulated to extinction.

*'Minister, this requires urgent attention. I bring you very serious concerns from industry leaders who recognise the need for regulation but feel we have gone too far. We need our blue-chip status, but not at any cost. We are in danger of economically sterilizing ourselves if we pursue the current legislative and regulatory process,'*  
**- Bill Henderson challenging the Treasury Minister during the 2011 IOM Budget.**

The FSC empire, the untouchables of Finch Hill House, will have to have their own reality check. They are also going to have to change their attitude. I am sick of hearing of the professional arrogance that exudes from Finch House, and the growing resentment it is causing among the business community. The FSC will have to learn that they are in partnership with our businesses, not their overlord. They too, have a part to play in our economic development.

Some elements of this new finance legislation have not always been welcomed and have caused the industry very real problems, such as the 'know your customer' policies. Larger companies have been able to cope, but some smaller businesses have struggled. There is a danger of eroding relationships with the private sector when implementing austerity measures and when responding to international concerns by way of introducing further financial regulations.

#### Business Champion

It is my belief that the new Department of Economic Development is not functioning as it should. It is a compilation of disparate government sections, culled together. Communications I am advised are malfunctioning at senior management level. This is a recipe for disaster for such an important 'government flagship,' requiring urgent rectification given the current urgency of managing our national finances.

We need a new high level appointment to this Department – a Business Champion. Someone who can pull the team together, including political members and lead that team with authority backed up by appropriate and excellent strategic business experience. This person's sole purpose would be to work with drive, enthusiasm and determination to constantly evaluate business opportunities – both locally and internationally. They must have articles of office that give them the power and flexibility to operate entrepreneurially with vision and decisiveness. This must include the ability to influence legislation and bring about new legislation if necessary. A requirement of this post must be that it is linked to performance and results as part of any contract.

A further requirement would be to ensure strong positive working relationships with current business and industry – large and small and encourage joint working where possible. This will include building up trust and forging joint government and private sector initiatives.

#### Recommendations:

- The Department of Economic Development to be given clear instructions and placed under continuous scrutiny and pressure to 'mine out' the business we need;
- The appointment of a business champion with responsibility to organise and lead up trade or high level off Island delegations with the sole purpose of canvassing and negotiating agreements for new business;

- Improved joint working between government and all sectors of the business and industry communities. This is vital for an Island strategic business plan that assesses where we are now and secures our future economic wellbeing, growth and competitiveness. It is imperative that local business is supported;
- Establish improved channels of communication and understanding;
- Government to adopt a more listening approach and be more willing to make changes in response to concerns expressed by the business and industry communities;
- Department of Economic Development as a further urgent requirement to work more closely with and support local business. This could be through the introduction of measures that are not necessarily monetary in nature but could reap great benefits;
- Government to adopt a firmer approach to outside pressures such as the EU and OECD. Should any legislative or policy changes be required to meet international obligations, these must be negotiated in detailed consultation with industry and business;
- Changes must not be brought in reactively. They must be carefully planned;
- Diversification of the economy has to be supported, and any new initiatives which assist this process;
- Town and village regeneration scheme to be fully implemented with drive and commitment – and priority given to Douglas;
- Government to work with current industry and business to grow what we already have which includes large and small business and niche markets;
- Our traditional and important industries such as agriculture, tourism, fishing and local produce in all its forms must be better supported. These industries require assistance, support, reenergising and a new remarketing strategy applied;
- Government to embrace and use at every opportunity the wealth, depth of knowledge and expertise that our industries and businesses have;
- Government to directly enter into negotiations with air and sea operators, current or new, with a view to establishing more advantageous destinations and links. And to generate a more competitive pricing structure – this could include reducing government charges and fees or introducing further subsidies – to offset prices - spending to promote business and income as but one measure.

## A Charter for health

### Health Service

We have a National Health Service of which we can be justifiably proud, a system that helps many people and, in the main, provides quality care. I must also pay tribute to our hardworking and dedicated health care professionals who often work above and beyond what they are expected to do. We have some of the best health care professionals (all disciplines – medical, nursing and professions allied to medicine) in the world. Our health service is the cornerstone of our society, something to be cherished.

However, we need to work towards an even more patient-orientated service, one more sympathetic to individual needs, a results and quality-driven health service using performance league tables so care, medical competence and performance can be measured. Currently, no performance comparison system exists; complaints about the service persist, medical accidents still occur and waiting lists are lengthening. Certain cancer drugs are not available on the NHS. We need to build on current community health centres that can assist at local level, such as Ramsey Cottage Hospital and Thie Rosien in Port Erin.

To be fair to Noble's Hospital and the health service in general I realise that many of the complaints we have about the health service are not about the hospital but are resource issues – funding and what is allocated to the NHS budget to deliver our health service in all its forms. Funding affects every service and is the underlying cause of lengthening waiting lists. In placing pressure on NHS funding, central government, (the Council of Ministers), is applying direct pressure on the professionals trying to deliver those services. It is grossly unfair that our hardworking and loyal staff should be the government's excuse for poor financial planning and management.



## The reciprocal health agreement with the United Kingdom

The debate surrounding the UK's abandonment of this, which would cause us all to pay for any treatment while in the UK, was a callous, unilateral move by the British Government. The Chief Minister put a debate to Tynwald in October 2009 requesting Tynwald to note the position and that there was nothing we could do about it. The Chief Minister Tony Brown made this bluntly and plainly clear. Further to this Minister Phil Gawne made his now infamous '*No means no*' speech and rounded on Tynwald Members who were infuriated with the UK decision in no uncertain terms to ensure we all got his message: 'There is nothing we can do, so accept the inevitable and move on and our people will have to accept it as well' (my paraphrasing). Your MHK obviously did NOT vote for this and spoke out vigorously and robustly against the Chief Minister.

And look what happened! Once we had the support of some UK MPs, in particular Andrew McKinley who became 'our friend', placing questions about this decision in Westminster, they gave way and we now have the reciprocal health agreement reinstated. We must guard this jealously. The affair made a mockery of the Council of Ministers' stance of 'there is nothing we can do' and 'no means no'. It also proved my point that if we represent ourselves more forcefully then we can make changes. We have to stand up for ourselves, not roll over and acquiesce.

In response we need:

- A central government directive from the Council of Ministers ensuring that our Health Service receives priority in the budgetary process and that other departments cut their cloth accordingly and give up, for the greater good, some of their more unrealistic aspirations;
- Government policy that ensures we will fight for our rights, such as for the reciprocal health agreement and ensures it stays in place for as long as needed;
- Clinical audits which measure, amongst other factors, professional competence, standards and use of up-to-date procedures, techniques and equipment where appropriate;
- Innovative ideas to cut waiting lists;
- A fully independent system which encourages patient input, supports them in accessing the health service complaints procedure and provides for a patients' advocate or health service Ombudsman. Currently no such system exists;
- A path lab and blood clinic meeting the demands of modern diagnostic and treatment programmes;
- A health service meeting both the specialist and routine health care needs of the community, complete with a fully staffed and equipped hospital, with the ability to deploy ALL of its equipment when required including the MRI and CAT scanners;
- A fully resourced diabetic centre;
- A respiratory clinic with a dedicated consultant;
- On-site hyperbaric medical services;
- To build on the current health screening services for men and women;
- Improved health and social service planning taking into account fully the changing demographics and epidemiology of our community. I cite here the changing age profile of the Island and the associated health requirements of our older people – spending to save;
- Establish a full time breast cancer consultant position.



## Cancer care and treatment

There exists excellent provision for patients that works hand-in-hand with Hospice Isle of Man, itself a marvellous service. However, what needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency is that not all treatments are

available on the NHS. There is evidence that some new cancer treatment drugs can help prolong life, but because they do not bear the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) stamp of approval, a clinical committee of the Department of Health service makes recommendations to the department, and, as a result, patients are denied the opportunity to trial some of the latest drugs.

It is also patently obvious from my debates in Tynwald that these decisions are being judged on budgetary, not clinical criteria.

This process must be reviewed as a matter of urgency. Unfortunately my recent Tynwald debate on this matter failed. But the pressure must be maintained and government lobbied on this important issue. This administration recently released the findings from a public consultation on end-of-life care – an insensitive move in my view, considering that every member of the Council of Ministers voted against my motion for cancer drugs.

We must have a full-time breast cancer surgeon. Not someone with an interest in this speciality, or someone who will be distracted from this important work by demands of a contract which is too wide in its remit, requiring that surgeon to perform other duties as well – such as we see currently..... and the public outrage this has caused.

Recommendations:

- Funding must be found to support the introduction of new cancer drugs;
- Closer liaison with specialists in this field;
- Explore a partial funding pilot scheme;
- The Health Services clinical committee who make recommendations to the Department of Health need specialist input to their decision-making process; none exists currently;
- Review the practice of complying solely with NICE recommendations.
- A dedicated breast cancer surgeon

## Dental services

Some people still encounter great difficulty in accessing an NHS dentist. The situation is so bad that the Department of Health holds a central allocation list for people waiting to see an NHS dentist. This deplorable situation arose after a major disagreement between the original NHS dental service and Department of Health senior management. Some improvements have been made, but much more work has still to be done and I am continuing to exert pressure on the health minister.

## Mental health

It is estimated that one in four of us will require assistance from mental health services at some point in our life. Anyone can become ill, yet those who suffer a mental illness can be discriminated against and stigmatised. There is still an embarrassment about seeking help for mental disorders and a tendency to shun people suffering from a mental illness. This is a culture that must be stamped out.

The Mental Health Act needs to be amended to prevent someone who suffers from a mental illness and is incapacitated, from being arrested off the street, handcuffed, bound and thrown in the back of a police van.

The medical model still dominates the treatment of mental illness which means that the doctor or consultant in charge of a patient's care may, even when they have been discharged, encourage an individual to continue to take powerful medication for a very long time and, as a consequence, have to endure the medication's side effects.

Further to that, they have no advocate to watch out for them, advise them of their rights, or make all the right phone calls and contacts for the individual. Nursing staff try their best, but this is not their primary function. If the patient's first language is not English then the problem is compounded. This may smack of a scene from 'One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest', but it does happen, and far too often in my opinion.

This barbaric situation needs to be eradicated. For the individual it is the most frightening and degrading thing that could possibly happen to them.

## Recommendations:

- If it is deemed necessary to detain a person under the Mental Health Act then every effort should be made for a nurse or other health care professional to be present to assist;
- Consider whether an ambulance rather than a police vehicle may be the more appropriate means of transport;
- Other more sensitive approaches need to be examined to deal with a person who has become unwell through mental illness. There should be no automatic right for the police to make an arrest and detain that person. It is a tactic that should be used as a last resort, or in urgent cases where a person is in imminent danger of harming themselves or others;
- Alternative approaches other than continuous heavy sedation must be assessed and trialled in relation to treatment regimes;
- Mental health patients must have the automatic right to an advocate who must be made aware of all the circumstances and has the ability to ensure that the individual's moral, civil, legal and human rights are upheld at all times.

## Social reform

### Background

As a consequence of international and UK pressures this government has had to implement austerity measures to deal with our growing financial deficit. These measures have, in turn, dictated decisions taken by departments forced to manage sudden reductions in their budget allocations. These actions have cascaded from departments into the community, almost imperceptibly but with major impact. And here I would cite government measures such as the rise in MEA tariffs and the possible further increases in vehicle excise duty.

I accept that we must have a fitter, leaner, more effective government, but this must not be achieved at the expense of the most vulnerable members of our community. Most of us will have to bear some pain during the current difficult economic situation, but government's management of the situation demands a considered, commonsense approach.

But it doesn't stop there; these measures have knock-on effects on the prices of commodities and our disposable income. Prices have gone up everywhere, yet for many people wages have been frozen for more than two years. Inflation is rising, running in excess of 6%. Spending power is shrinking, and this is affecting standards of living and families' ability to cope financially.

Our own government's measures to tackle these effects have caused unwelcome close scrutiny of our benefits system and other social services provided by the Department of Social Care. We now see this department applying the Consumer Price Index to the yearly benefits uprating process, as opposed to the Retail Price Index – an unwelcome and antisocial move to save money. The CPI does not include housing costs, therefore percentage increases are lower than they would be were the RPI retained. This may also be applied to our basic state pension where we are linked to the UK via a recipro-cal arrangement. The UK Government is talking of introducing this measure as part of its own pension reform programme.

We have also seen a 5% increase in public sector housing rents set against the back-drop of wage freezes. How on earth does the Department of Social Care - a service-led department charged with the social care of the vulnerable in our society - make sav-ings? A department now in a 'devil's trap' ordered to make savings, but in so doing, is in danger of hurting the very people it is charged with caring for. Surely that can't be right?

We have around 6000 public sector housing units (to rebuild this invaluable asset would cost around a staggering £7 billion), providing accommodation for vulnerable families, pensioners, those on low incomes and others who, together, I calculate represent some 25% of the population. The department has been forced to look at rent levels and is un-dertaking a housing review. This is a process that demands extremely careful manage-ment and consideration, given that many social housing tenants have had no wage in-crease - or are likely to - until the current financial crisis eases, and that many others rely on benefits or modest fixed incomes.

"I charge the Council of Ministers to be sensitive and unwavering in its approach to so-cial care policy. If necessary, other departments must give way far more for the 'greater good'. As it stands you are in real danger of misdirecting your cuts and imposing intol-erable burdens on the most vulnerable sector of society."

**(Bill Henderson, February Tynwald, 2011)**

If Treasury has to draw on reserves, then so be it. Even in his 'State of the Union' address, Barack Obama gave such a commitment amidst calls for further financial cuts, stating: *'I recognise that some in this chamber have already proposed deeper cuts, and I'm willing to eliminate whatever we can honestly afford to do without. But let's make sure that we're not doing it on the backs of our most vulnerable citizens'*.

What I am seriously concerned about is how far do we take these austerity measures, and where and how they should be applied?

As people's standards of living are being steadily eroded there will come a point when people will say 'enough is enough'. We are already experiencing social unease in our community and have had the spectre of industrial action looming on the horizon - a near full-blown strike by Post Office workers.

We have heard the Governor of the Bank of England issue warnings. Mervin King has spoken of *'rising living costs and falling wages'* and went on to say, and I quote: *'In 2011 real wages are likely to be no higher than they were in 2005. One has to go back to the 1920s to find a time when real wages fell over a six-year period'*.

I am also seriously concerned about the effects these measures will have on people whom I term as being in the 'grey area' - people who have just enough income on which to survive but too much to be eligible for benefits; ordinary hard-working people, pensioners and others; people who do not qualify for income support, heating allowances or income tax rebates, but are finding it difficult to close their financial deficit month in, month out.

This 'grey area' represents another large sector of our community and we must seek ways to offer support.

Another sector of society giving cause for concern are those people who were sufficiently well-off to stave off the effects of rising prices and inflation, but whose standard of living is now falling and who are finding it increasingly difficult to cope with pay freezes, lower returns from investments or pensions, prices of everyday commodities and higher utility bills. This same issue was highlighted in a stinging attack on the UK Government by Labour opposition leader Ed Miliband whose keynote speech at the launch of the independent Resolution Foundation's Commission on Living Standards, referred to the *'Cost of Living Crisis hitting ordinary families across Britain.'*

Any future actions taken by government must minimise the financial impact on all these sectors of our community – these are our ordinary working people and pensioners.

As the economy continues to grow, the value of wages, benefits, assistance and pensions are being eroded by rising inflation, locally now more than 6% and the application of government austerity measures: we are now witnessing unprecedented above-inflation price increases on gas, fuel, petrol, telecommunications, electricity and even basic food commodities. This has a direct effect on our pensioners, of which there are around 18,000 in the Island – some 20 per cent of the population – as well as those unable to work, caring for a relative or who have a disability.

65% of our some 40,000-strong workforce earn less than the government's 'mythical' average weekly wage of £590, many earning only just above the national minimum wage of £6.10 per hour. The scale of this problem cannot be overestimated.

There are also families in need of better social support, especially those who have children with special needs.

Energy price increases impact on the entire community. The fact is that the majority of people in this Island will now find it increasingly difficult to heat their own homes adequately. Incidences are already being reported of pensioners forced to go to bed rather than turn their heating on. This insidious social injustice must be reversed by the Council of Ministers.

The Social Services and Social Security systems are under pressure to provide that direct assistance, with a shrinking budget. It should be one of government's top priorities to do more to help the less fortunate.

The starting point must be to recognise the value of family life and provide assistance through reduced tax, increased social benefits and other measures where necessary. People don't want handouts, just help to become independent and pay their way. To this end we need a full range of social and specialist services. Current provision is woefully inadequate and local specialist services, such as the Home Help service, either cannot cope or are not available.

This all costs money, and I realise that. To support these policies I believe that Government has to bring in a range of actions. In essence it will have to prioritise its budget and some departments will have to accept that



for the greater good. Further, government will have to streamline itself and become more efficient and cut out ALL waste.

#### Recommendations:

- The government-set minimum wage is unrealistic and needs to be raised incrementally over a specified period of time to reflect the true current economic situation. The lowest-paid government manual workers earn £310 per week, which should be the minimum target for all employers;
- Support for the most needy in our community is hampered by current policies that include taxing child benefit, lowering the amount of disability allowance for those individuals whose degree of disability the government assumes to be less acute if they 'only' need a hearing aid or spectacles, and discontinuing one element of the single parent allowance. Ill-judged policies such as these require urgent review;
- Our National Insurance fund must continue to be safeguarded for the future good of the community. The fund and its outsourced fund managers must be constantly monitored to ensure optimum performance. As should the fund's ability to cope with pensions now and in to the future;
- The new tax credit/personal allowance scheme should be enhanced and made available to a wider sector of needy individuals, BUT in more appropriate and targeted ways;
- How benefits are paid should be evaluated: is it appropriate to give out large amounts of money to individuals who may not be able to cope with budgeting?
- The viability of an energy rebate scheme should be evaluated;
- A review and evaluation of benefits, pensions and other forms of state assistance is urgently required to reflect and respond to the effects of inflation and rises in the retail price index, instead of the current practice of calculating benefits based on average figures and the consumer price index;
- Widening the 'assistance net' to help people in the 'grey area trap';
- A far greater joint working arrangement, recognition and partnership approaches with agencies such as The Salvation Army, Kemmyrk (charity for the homeless), churches and religious organisations;
- Energy regulation. This is required as a top priority as no such regulation exists currently, leaving consumers open to unrestricted price hikes from companies such as Manx Gas. There must be greater accountability and transparency.

## Housing

Poor strategic planning has led to serious housing problems for young first-time buyers, older people wishing to buy their own home or move to a smaller property. Many are still out of 'mortgage range' and the buyers' market, unable to move and destined to live in expensive rented or cheaper sub-standard accommodation or, in the case of many young adults, having to live at home with their parents for longer. There is also a shortage of public and private sector sheltered housing and I, along with others, have campaigned long and hard to initiate housing programmes for our young people and older residents.

A further problem for those living in private rented accommodation is that they find it impossible, even with the government assistance scheme, to save up enough deposit for a mortgage.

Public sector housing supply is not meeting the rising demand. There are long waiting lists running into the hundreds of applicants as is the case for the Douglas catchment area. People have to wait years to be housed, and in the meantime may have to suffer at the hands of private landlords, live in sub-standard accommodation or are forced to rely on families or friends. All this I believe has been brought about through poor planning and inadequate response to social housing needs.

This problem is exacerbated by the fact that many people in public sector housing who now find themselves in a position to buy a property are trapped as they are older and unable to obtain a mortgage due to the higher repayments required as a result of the shorter time frame in which to make the full repayment.

In addition, in both the private and public sector there are many older people, either couples or single persons, living in large family houses who, if given the opportunity and the right incentives, would move to a more appropriately sized property. We saw this work very well with the new apartments at Reayrt y Sheear in Edmund Chadwick Grove – an initiative driven by John Houghton and me that helped free up much in demand family homes.

Some fantastic work has been achieved both in the public and private sector by way of refurbishment programmes, rebuild programmes and completion of first-time buyer schemes, all of which I have supported. In our own constituency John Houghton and I can see nearly 1000 homes provided at Governor's Hill for families as an example of efforts made by the private sector.

In addition, Janet's Corner and Pulrose are being redeveloped and there is the excellent first-time buyer development at Reayrt y Sheear. Government deserves great credit for its endeavours in this area. However, in the case of public sector housing, the quantity of stock has not kept pace with the demands of a growing population.

There is also a major problem of sustaining maintenance programmes to keep public sector housing up to modern habitable standards. In this I would cite Willaston as an example as it is in urgent need of upgrading. Many properties require new doors and are suffering from damp and a host of other problems, causing families to live in sub-standard conditions. This is totally unacceptable and something John and I are fighting hard for now to rectify by calling for a rolling programme of property upgrades and improvements. We both pledge to carry on with this if re-elected.

#### Recommendations:

- Ensure government housing programmes continue – for first-time buyers and the public sector;
- Continue to support the government's excellent first-time buyer scheme, which, along with the second-time buyer scheme, needs to be reviewed to more realistically reflect property prices and address difficulties in saving for a deposit and obtaining a mortgage;
- For your MHK to work with government and Douglas Borough Council to ensure that the urgent maintenance work required for Willaston is prioritised and carried out;
- Review the first time buyer scheme – currently there is a serious anomaly whereby a partner who is not named on the deeds of the property or if the property owner dies leaving a partner in residence then government can buy back the property, leaving the partner homeless;
- Introduce a joint scheme with the private sector to produce a first-time buyer package including subsidised legal and registration fees, also a mortgage package for young buyers that better responds to the local property market;
- A split equity scheme enabling first and second-time buyers to buy existing housing stock on the open market This will also reduce the need to build housing estates on greenfield sites;
- Government to hold talks with the banks to encourage them to produce better housing loan products. It has been current banking practice to respond to the credit crunch in an austere fashion making it increasingly difficult for borrowers, young people especially, to secure a mortgage;
- Assess the viability of adopting the Scottish buy-to-save schemes, whereby tenants are charged a mid-market rent for a new house then later are given an opportunity to buy the property;
- Availability of land: Urgently requires reviewing to free up land for homes in a sensitive and measured way. We have the space, but we don't want to put our green open spaces and quality of environment under threat;
- New landlord legislation required to bring private rental properties up to a 2011 standard. We now have the Housing and Miscellaneous Bill, but more legislation is needed;
- Provide incentives to encourage those in public sector housing who wish to become homeowners;
- There is a real need to provide more accommodation for single persons, young and old;
- Increase sheltered housing stock;
- Support the Department of Social Care's housing review – private and public - which will help inform strategic housing and planning programmes;
- Empty properties. My initiative submitted to Tynwald was supported, namely to free up empty properties both in the public and private sector as quickly as possible to provide more accommodation. Also the measure to reintroduce property to the market that could be rented out or sold now requires to be re-energised by government. It produced results at the time and should now form part of the new housing review;

- Incentives for developers to maximise the use of brownfield sites.

## Our pensioners

A better deal – *‘Retirement with dignity, support and companionship’* (Professor StJohn Bates, former Clerk of Tynwald)

The foundations of this Island’s success have been built on our pensioners’ endeavours. They account for around 20% of our population and I maintain their contribution to society should be better recognised and rewarded so they can enjoy their retirement with dignity, support and companionship – a cornerstone of my social policy.

Older people have the right to independence and to live in their own homes for as long as they are able, or want to. I also believe strongly that older people have a right to access sheltered accommodation, residential care and nursing support. This demands an improved, more generous, state retirement package to ensure pensioners’ health, safety, care, comfort and wellbeing are more amply met. It is no use comparing us continually to the UK - what matters is our community.

Our elderly population is rising with the advance in medical procedures and research. This is helping us live longer but is also placing increased pressure on public services. Government is to be applauded for recognising this grey or demographic time bomb – a point in the future when we will no longer be able to afford to provide all the public services required for older people. Recognising this is one thing, but the signs have been there for more than 20 years and we need to begin planning now as a matter of urgency.

### Recommendations:

- Planning for the future and exploring ways of ensuring the provision of health and other care for our ageing population. Planning for funding will be one of government’s other major challenges and some difficult decisions may well have to be made as how best to achieve this;
- Difficult decisions may include looking at increasing National Insurance contributions, some form of joint ‘state/private’ health and social care insurance scheme for everyone, and possibly levying contributions based on earnings;
- Working more with the third and private sectors must be the way forward;
- Supplement the state pension in ways that better reflect the effects of inflation and energy price rises;
- Increase pensioners’ personal tax allowance;
- An individual’s home should not automatically be forfeited to pay for residential or nursing home care. The new ‘rent out’ scheme is very welcome, but requires expanding and greater flexibility to ensure a person’s home does not have to be sold to cover their care expenses;
- Care for the confused elderly must remain entirely the responsibility of the Health Service as it requires specialist, intensive care. It is socially and morally wrong that these facilities have been drastically scaled down;
- Wider provision of sheltered housing and accommodation has to be provided;
- Generate ‘good neighbour’ and community schemes;
- Support current schemes such as the Stay at Home initiatives.

## Residential and nursing care

As we get older there may come a time when we require residential or nursing care. For many of our pensioners this is already a reality. Care should be free whether provided in a residential, nursing or domestic environment. Residents have paid their taxes all their lives and it is a miscarriage of moral justice that people end up having to pay for health care in their later years.

This government and previous administrations have let the community down by closing NHS care of the elderly beds, losing the Island around 200 care of the elderly placements over the last 20 years. More NHS care beds are set to be lost, which I will outline below. This has created a climate in which the private care sector is flourishing, with many elderly people and their families now faced with the very real threat of having to pay fees of around £900 a week – a financial burden few people will be able to handle – as there is no alternative.

I believe that companionship and the need to feel safe and secure are paramount. To this end I fully support an older person's wish to apply for sheltered accommodation and their right to request access to residential or nursing accommodation. I am fully aware that with the closure of so many government care-of-the-elderly beds, (White Hoe, Cronk Grianagh, Ard Aalin and others at Ballamona Hospital) there are a growing number of elderly people who are becoming lonely and isolated in their own homes, alone, vulnerable and frightened. Some don't know what to do for the best. If they had a chance of residential or nursing care they would willingly take it. But there are no beds in the NHS system to allow this anymore, and private fees are just too prohibitive for many.

In this, government policy has failed miserably and is ignoring the stark reality in the rush to make savings. It is easier to shut down our large residential homes - Glenside, Cummal Mooar and Reayrt nyBaie - than look after older people in a responsible and humane manner. This will result in dumping many of our elderly and leaving them lonely and isolated in their homes, totally dependent on inadequately funded community care facilities that even now are unable to cope.

I put a debate to Tynwald to stop the closure of our residential homes in 2008 in which I confronted the DHSS Minister Eddie Teare...

*"These are the policies of a Health Service that can't cope, is under resourced, stretched to the limit with a Minister who will not fight his corner with apparently no moral or social conscience other than undying loyalty to the 'collective responsibility' not to our people!*

*Yes Mr. President, Mr. Teare's amazing plan, hatched by UK thinking, pushed onto his table by staff with UK experience – who should know better with the state of the Health Service over there, is nothing but the Titanic in disguise. The effects of this will be on the same scale as that ship, and the way the ship's owners and Director touted her invincibility.*

*Sounds pretty similar to what has been touted around here for the last few weeks. It is a policy that Bruce Ismay, the Director of the White Star Line could have written himself, and similarly, destined to cause a huge moral and social tragedy.*

*Honourable Members, we can do better for our people, please support this Motion, Mr. President, I beg to move."*

**(Bill Henderson, July Tynwald, 2008)**

I was successful with this initiative...at the time. This extract sums up the situation, and I must warn people, the new Department of Social Care is now actively perusing this again. We must be on our guard, and not allow it to rear its ugly head once more.

Worse still there is a policy now being pushed ahead with whereby residents in government residential homes are facing fee price hikes. There is a new policy by the Department of Social Care which is, in essence, to bring the fees of our government homes up to or close to the prices charged in the private sector. It is being touted as making a more competitive playing field. I have vigorously opposed these moves in the department.

Recommendations:

- Government to re-assess, as a priority, its emerging policy of reducing further its provision of nursing and residential care. It has a moral duty to retain its care-of-the-elderly beds, especially for the confused elderly who require specialist care;
- Measures must be taken to offset what are, for many people, unaffordable fees. Government must work towards initiatives which could reduce and/or cap fees as well as provide free nursing care, not just provide a nursing 'element';
- A government/private sector working party must be established as a matter of urgency, which should include representatives from nursing / residential homes and the insurance industry to assess this growing problem and work up practical draft solutions;
- Government must examine whether health insurance packages, such as exist in Guernsey to cover all residential and nursing care costs, may be appropriate in some form for Island residents;
- Findings from The Office of Fair Trading inquiry into the costs of private residential and nursing care must be made public and all appropriate recommendations acted upon. As yet no action has been taken;



- Health officials must form a joint working group with all private residential and nursing operators to improve the current poor communication between all parties and devise ways in which fees can be reduced, or increases kept to a minimum. This could include clinical supplies paid for by the DHSS rather than by the residents;
- Review a 'pay what you can' system, where by people pay what they can afford to with a state top up and/or a link to health insurance.

## Disability

The government is running away from its responsibilities to people who suffer from a disability. The Disability Act 2006 was finally and, in my view, begrudgingly placed before the House of Keys because of acute political embarrassment. The fact is that although law, the orders for it to become 'live' have yet to be placed before Tynwald. It lies in abeyance.

Government is frightened by the financial impacts of implementing this legislation. This has been stated on more than one occasion and is a shocking indictment of our Council of Ministers' view towards those with disabilities. They have now indicated they want an impact assessment of implementing this Act before making any decision. How long will this take? The UK has implemented their disability legislation, and all the fears of it causing immense problems proved to be unjustified.

People who have disabilities have the same moral, human and civil rights as the rest of us. They are people who have been discriminated against for years, and deserve better support. I firmly believe we should be an inclusive society for ALL of our citizens, sharing equal opportunities and a basic human right to be treated with dignity, respect and the best quality of life possible. Listening to the private sector's concerns that it will strangle business is not an option. The private sector should know better and have more respect for all members of the community.

Some people with disabilities require their homes to have aids and adaptations to assist them in their daily activities. Government and local authorities have always played a big hand in assessing, supplying and fitting such equipment. However, we have come to the astonishing point now whereby as of March 2011 the funds for this were depleted! Having no clearly identifiable central fund to cover this has not helped, neither have government cuts to the housing maintenance budgets for local authorities where funding for this initiative was usually found.

### Recommendations:

- Government must implement the 2006 Disability Act, phasing it in to minimise any financial impact;
- Aids and adaptation funding to assist people in public and private sector property to cope with disabilities should be placed on a formal footing; currently there is no single identifiable budget for this;
- A central housing register to be created to allow all housing authorities to easily identify properties which already have aids and adaptations supplied or that require alterations – to ease placements and prevent duplication of alterations;
- Support the review of the aids and adaptation provision; we will then be better informed to produce a clearly defined central policy on this, and hopefully formal budgetary provision. This, in turn, will better support those who require assistance;
- Examine a 'pay what you can towards the work' scheme, which in turn would extend the life of any funding and provide for more people who require assistance.

## Homelessness – an increasing problem

There are currently no hostel arrangements for the growing number of homeless people. This must be rectified. There seems to be a hardening callous attitude towards these unfortunate people and it has to change.

### Recommendations:

- Government must recognise that there are serious problems with homelessness, not only among older people but also young adults, teenagers and children who have serious accommodation issues;
- Government must engage and work in partnership with the third sector, such as the Salvation Army which does amazing work and the charity for the homeless, Kemmyrk.

The people of the Isle of Man deserve a better chance; they have a right to a dignified standard of living, a decent quality of life and to achieve their true potential and aspirations – as government promotes in its Freedom to Flourish strategy. It is deeply unjust that some of our community are only existing and, in some of the worst cases, either getting into debt trying to cope or finding themselves homeless.

The money is here and, if carefully managed, spent and accounted for corporately, there is no reason why the less well-off and vulnerable sectors of our community should not enjoy an improved standard of living and quality of life as befits a caring and inclusive society such as ours.

## State Pensions

The Manx pension supplement is currently under review as it is costly. This must be jealously guarded.

[illegible]

- The Manx pension supplement is important, and it must be retained. It is understood that Social Security is examining the viability of this unique fund that tops up the basic flat rate state pension and, with a view to saving money, which is a social injustice of the highest order, making savings on the backs of our pensioners – the very people on whose backs our success is built. I pledge to fight any such moves to reduce or disband the Manx pension supplement;
- An urgent review of pension payments and the National Insurance fund is required. The recent actuarial report into this must be made public;
- A strategic financial plan is required now to cope with this eventuality. I realise money does not grow on trees, that we all may have to ultimately pay more into the pot and that pensions may have to be reviewed to an extent, but this has to be done with sensitivity;
- Review the viability of second or private pensions.

## Public sector pensions

As is happening in the UK, we are having to grapple with this serious and dangerous £billion pound growing deficit – ‘the pensions black hole’. Government has undertaken its infamous Hymans Roberts review of the public sector pension situation and has come up with some radical ideas to close the gap.

We have to face the reality here of this situation; in general the schemes have been under-funded over the years and there will come a point in the not too distant future where the pension pot will not be able to pay out. The UK is proposing ideas such as working longer, raising the state pension age and paying more in contributions. The expensive consultative exercise carried out here has reached similar conclusions, but has managed to upset the many within this important group of people - nearly 10,000 employees and unions alike – who see this as a lack of real, meaningful consultation.

We have been left a legacy from previous decades of governments who have been, in my view, politically frightened of pension reform despite knowing it was required. I feel that previous administrations have been negligent in their duties and failed us. Now we have to deal with that and I’m afraid the reality is that we may have to make some difficult, yet pragmatic decisions. BUT government must work jointly and collectively with the unions and employees on this, and listen and take on board their concerns.

Recommendations:

- All new staff appointments must be on new terms and conditions – pension arrangements being redefined – we have to freeze the liability as far as possible.
- Fully engaged joint working with employees and unions.

## Charities

We are very fortunate to have a range of charities working for our community in the Island. We are even more fortunate in that we have one of the most generous and giving communities anywhere when it comes to offering support.

The same cannot now be said for government which, under its austerity measures, is reviewing what it distributes in grants and aid to certain charities who supply essential support services to Social Services and the health services. This needs careful management as any cuts to our charities could mean a threat to their existence and, by extension, to their clients. Who, then, would supply that service?

Government is going to have to work in closer partnership with the third sector in the future.

Below are some charities that provide invaluable services to our community and which I support, although the list is not exhaustive.

- Crossroads Caring for Carers
- Stay at Home Scheme
- Salvation Army
- The Children’s Centre
- Age Concern Isle of Man
- Royal British Legion
- Manx Foundation for the Physically Disabled
- Manx Workshop for the Physically Disabled
- Hospice Isle of Man
- Joey Dunlop Foundation
- St. John Ambulance
- Manx Blind Welfare Society



## Employment, industrial relations and supporting our union - Unite

The Island's economic success is created across all sectors by hardworking men and women who are contributing to the Isle of Man's increased international status. Therefore it is vital the Island meets its responsibilities by following internationally recognised employment standards and challenging unfair practices. All employees, at all levels, deserve to be treated fairly and receive fair remuneration for their efforts. In this regard I welcome the 2006 Employment Act, which I pushed hard for and supported, and which goes a long way to addressing some, but not every issue and I have tried to rectify this in the House of Keys by way of placing many amendments.

Addressing these and other industrial relation matters about which I feel strongly, has meant retaining close links with the Transport and General Workers Union (Unite), and representing those matters, where necessary, either independently or as the Unite parliamentary representative. I feel it is vitally important to support our union in helping to highlight issues, problems, holding government to account and, where appropriate, supporting the union in positive negotiations with government and other organisations. And, most importantly, there must be provision to take issues directly to our Parliament – Tynwald.

We must recognise that the best industrial relations, employee pay and conditions and what is right for the employer must be achieved through constructive joint working. Employers have rights too, and a right to be successful in their business, whatever that may be. However, our workforce is the crucial factor in this success and has to be better recognised.

### Redundancies

Staffing reviews are a direct result of government austerity measures. This has had the effect of placing employees on notice that they may be made redundant. I cite the case of the Steam Railway where five staff have lost their jobs – despite a joint effort by the union and me. I feel this has been a knee-jerk reaction and an easy option for managers and Minister David Cretney who ultimately sanctioned this. I strongly believe at this juncture there is no need to make staff redundant; instead government should be examining other options.

However, I realise that inevitably savings have to be made but there are ways to manage this in the short term.

Key recommendations:

- Support Unite (Transport and General Workers Union);
- Retain close links with Unite (Transport and General Workers Union) and retain the parliamentary representative role;
- The right for every employee to apply to the Employment Tribunal for unfair dismissal within the first 12 months of employment; not as set out in the new Act, which only makes provision for a very few categories of employees to apply within the first year. This is a legal farce as the majority of our 40,000 workforce is now discriminated against;
- The right to full paid maternity leave where little or none exists currently, funded through a joint package between government and employer;
- The setting up of an Employment Appeal Tribunal;
- An extension of time to file for a case of unfair dismissal to 12 months, as opposed to the current three-month cut-off point;
- A more flexibly operated government paternity leave scheme.

Further recommendations:

- A government moratorium on redundancies;
- Introduce enhanced early retirement and voluntary redundancy packages;
- Capitalise on natural wastage, enabling collapsing of posts;
- Ensure when redundancies have to be made staff affected be afforded retraining for alternative government posts and offered first refusal to apply for any government vacancies;
- A public and Civil Service employment policy which optimises local labour opportunities, skills and experience;



- Succession training for staff at all levels;
- Allow more flexible and realistic career pathways into the Civil Service; not as we see currently – a restrictive criteria that ‘dials out’ young people and others who are able to demonstrate they have the qualities and experience required;
- Stamp out the current culture that maintains employees from elsewhere are better and new blood from off Island is always required;
- Fill vacancies from the local staff pool first, including school leavers, students, graduates, those from the private sector and those wishing to return to the Island, and combine this with a skills development programme where appropriate;
- Develop local skills and talent across all ages and levels – using them, not losing them!
- Encourage programmes which fund, train and develop individuals locally, and off-Island where necessary, and provide a guarantee of employment upon their return, subject to contract;
- Encourage, motivate and reward local employees and acknowledge workers who possess equal potential as those elsewhere. Promote and incentivise such a policy in the private sector;
- Review government redeployment policy to allow ALL staff faced with redundancy the opportunity of cross-government redeployment; not as we have now where only civil servants enjoy such a facility;
- Support and promote local training and apprenticeship schemes.

## Community Safety

Our population is not only growing but also becoming increasingly cosmopolitan. At the same time crime is on the increase - violent crime, opportunistic crime, robbery, vandalism and drug and alcohol misuse - much of which tends to occur on weekend nights. The police need more manpower: to achieve this requires the constraints of the government staff cap to be removed in order that more full-time officers can be recruited to maintain a safe community – a right to which each and every one of us is entitled.

I must pay tribute here to our current North Douglas Community Policing Team – Charlene Dhooley, Darren Bradford and Mike Taylor. Their help and assistance has been invaluable and shown me that proper community policing does work and must be supported.

Recommendations:

- The new community policing initiative must be fully resourced and supported;
- Community police stations must be adequately staffed and open for longer;
- Policing must be about having the right numbers of officers on duty at the right times. ‘Office hours’ policing must become a thing of the past; at times Douglas only has a handful of officers on duty at night to police the whole town and bay area;
- More officers on the beat – obvious, I know, but vital.



## Offenders

Throwing offenders behind bars is not always the best solution. A person incarcerated for any length of time, locked up for most of the day then released after several years, can hardly be said to be rehabilitated. 70% (UK figures) of inmates come from poor educational backgrounds. But not all criminals will re-offend if given an opportunity to change, be trained and educated. Many can return to the community to make a positive contribution.

Housing and employment after release are also essential to prevent re-offending. An offender leaving prison must be given a realistic chance of re-integrating into the community. To this end there must be a programme that includes accommodation on release and a list of employers willing to accept former inmates; something for which I have been pushing hard and had many Tynwald questions placed to ministers on this issue.

## The community partnership

Closing an eye - or curtains - to an incident for fear of reprisal must become a thing of the past. We must promote safer neighbourhoods by restoring traditional moral values and ideals.

A community working together, properly supported by a dedicated community police unit in partnership with other agencies, should prove a more effective deterrent to criminals and encourage people to report suspicious behaviour. A national anti-crime drive campaign such as this will undoubtedly serve to make our society feel safer.

Recommendations:

- Promote adequately resourced Crimestoppers and Neighbourhood Watch initiatives linked to the crime drive Initiative;
- Install more high quality CCTV systems in consultation with local authorities;
- Move towards more effective and better resourced curfew and antisocial behaviour orders, driven by a multi-agency approach to ensure those displaying such behaviour are dealt with quickly and fairly and receive appropriate support. The current system is failing.

## Serious offences

There will always be a minority of hardened criminals with little or no regard for anything or anyone. Such individuals pose a serious threat to society and are rarely easily rehabilitated so should be subject to a stricter custodial sentencing regime.

Recommendations:

- Mandatory 20-year custodial prison/special hospital unit sentence for serious sex offenders;
- 'Sarah's Law' must be instituted to manage sex offenders and, importantly, to better protect our community. Parents especially have a right to know who is near to or looking after their children;
- 'Three strikes and out': 20-year mandatory custodial sentence for repeat dangerous offenders including drug dealers;
- A general overhaul of what I believe to be inadequate sentencing regimes, especially for violent crime and murder. The punishment MUST fit the crime.

## Education and our Young People

### The current situation

Young people represent a priceless investment in the future. They are the future of this Island and in their hands lies our future economic, social, cultural and environmental success. Our education system must respond to their needs, help them develop their full potential and pursue their chosen careers.

I am calling for a full review of Department of Education and Children resources. The Council of Ministers must be made to recognise that this department is under-funded and under-manned.

I have visited many schools and have often come away with the impression of international institutions looking outwards, rather than that of schools proud to be Manx and drawing on the Island's heritage and culture in their teaching practices. It is my firm view that this should form the bedrock for our young people's learning, equipping them with the life skills from which to gain a global perspective.

For example I find many children, young people and adults have little or no knowledge of Tynwald and how it functions. I find this lamentable and believe the workings of our parliamentary system should form an essential part of the school curriculum. It is my observation that schools are only paying lip service at present and there needs to be a real sense of national pride instilled into our education system where, for instance, the Manx language is better promoted and not viewed as a waste of time.

Currently education packs for teaching staff are based on UK material. For example, in World War Two history children learn about London and the Blitz, important as they are, but not about what effects the war had on the Island. Some schools teach a Victorian theme based on what the UK education system has to offer yet in the

Island we have a rich Victorian heritage, examples of which remain and which could serve to educate students about the Island's past. An Island-based curriculum with which our children could easily identify would widen, encourage and enrich children's interest and learning, yet still meet all their educational needs.

I have given talks and organised exhibitions at our schools and it never ceases to amaze me when I ask children: 'Where is the most important country or place in the world?' They invariably answer England or America. Not their own homeland.

A Manx curriculum would give our children and young people a heightened sense of place and a greater understanding of their unique and special country. A curriculum that would be more meaningful in that it would instil a sense of civic and national pride and community responsibility.

Our schools should be at the hub of promoting Manx community, culture and heritage. Schools should be embedding the importance of our homeland into their everyday activities. After all, the most important country in the world is a young person's home. At times I get the feeling that our community, culture and heritage are woefully undervalued and perceived as inferior to those of other nations. The time has come to change that perception. Other countries instil a sense of community and national pride into their educational environments. So should we. Children should be encouraged to celebrate their roots and recognise the Isle of Man is a nation in which they are privileged to live and of which they can be proud.



#### Recommendations:

- Progress the new schools building programme;
- Remove the Department of Education and Children's staff cap to enable more employment of full-time staff and move away from short-term contracts used to short-circuit current government policy;
- Implement more realistic working hours;
- Implement a better resourced and improved school maintenance programme;
- Pupils' performance must be monitored and improvement encouraged through an acceptable Island assessment system which meets the approval of teachers, pupils, parents, schools and the department;
- The student grant system must continue;
- Nursery nurses must be supported to continue in their current roles; some are being made redundant, a practice I find deplorable;
- Develop skills for the local labour market. In partnership with the Department of Economic Development, Civil Service, public and private sectors we must encourage, where possible, our students to return to the Island to work, as well as those who stay on Island, by offering incentives, calculating future labour market requirements and, where appropriate, funding courses and professional training, linked to an offer of employment subject to their achieving satisfactory results and subject to contract;
- Our national curriculum – this must be overhauled in a staged process to better reflect our Island's community and heritage; a curriculum more relevant and enjoyable for pupils to follow;
- The Department of Education to formulate a working party to examine ways of drawing on local resources, such as Manx National Heritage and other organisations to produce 'local teaching packs' and local subject matter for children to study and learn from;
- For schools to embed a central Isle of Man / Manx core in everyday school life and education.

#### Young people

Our young people, like those everywhere, are exposed to a greater choice of entertainment and life experiences than ever before. Their standard of living has substantially improved. Their needs are changing as our community develops. Modern youth clubs provide a range of excellent activities. The Island has always offered a wide range of traditional sporting opportunities and other activities such as Scouting and Guiding, which are excellent, but young people today also want more modern outlets for entertainment, activities and socialising.

To address my and young people's concerns I have placed many Tynwald questions to various ministers on this subject, caused debates and applied pressure to initiate change to the current limited range of leisure facilities.

My biggest concern is for the safety of our young people, especially those who are at risk or looked after via the Social Services and its agencies. I feel the current Young People's strategy with all its various committees will fail unless we address grass roots problems as identified in the public Inquiry into the deaths of two young people.

Recommendations:

- More outreach workers to work with young people in their preferred environment. (This is an effective initiative with a proven track record);
- Increased resources for youth clubs in response to growing demand;
- Develop young people's alcohol and drugs awareness through education programmes and specialist counselling facilities;
- More mobile drop-in centre youth clubs, on the lines of the 'Buzz Bus';
- Implement a joint working initiative between Social Services, the Department of Education and Children, police and other agencies and draw on results of recent local young people's surveys to better understand and respond to their needs and concerns;
- Develop a realistic youth charter and, ultimately, a youth commission. The current Young People's strategy, committees and working groups are failing and falling into a pit of bureaucracy. We need tangible on-the-streets results that will benefit our young people;
- Support the excellent organisations, facilities and clubs that exist currently.

We need to implement partnerships between government, local authorities and the private sector to work towards:

- A young people's entertainment centre which offers multi-use leisure facilities for activities such as skateboarding, micro-scooters and rollerblading, together with an indoor international size BMX course, tenpin bowling alley and a cafeteria with internet facilities plus a stage area to encourage aspiring young musicians and bands. There are sites around Douglas ideally suitable for such a development, including Summerland, which I have been proposing;
- Café style drop-in centres, appropriately managed.

## Young people in care and foster care

We need to learn the lessons from the Everall Inquiry into the double murder of two teenagers, Samantha Barton and George Green and from the deaths of other young people in Social Services' care from drug overdoses and other misfortunes. The inquiry makes disturbing reading. It was a sad indictment of the system, the staff at that time and the care programme and heavily criticised Social Services for failing in many areas.

It pointed to failings within the care system, poor communications between care staff, care staff not taking on their full responsibilities and a failure to keep accurate and full records, all of which are crucial to the safety and wellbeing of young people in government care. As a consequence the Chief Minister set up a Children's and Young People's committee to address the findings from the report and other issues affecting young people.

As far as I am concerned, having attended some of these high-powered meetings I feel that all we are achieving is 'an inverted pyramid' top-heavy with excessive management and bureaucracy, and at the bottom very little in the way of improved services and staff support to benefit young people. In short, a muted response that will bring about little or no change. Young people will not directly experience any tangible, meaningful benefits as a result of this hugely costly and time-intensive process.

I have made it very clear that to make any real difference and for the whole initiative to have any worthwhile effect will rely solely on one essential factor: the performance of front-line staff providing the direct care and services to our children and young people. If this is not being delivered professionally and with every staff member being accountable then the scheme is doomed to failure. My sentiments are echoed in the inquiry report that directed the bulk of its criticism at the lack of accountable front-line care staff.



## Foster Care

This has come under the scrutiny of government and in particular the Department of Social Care whereby they are now to introduce fewer assistance payments for those who want to foster and care for children and young people. This situation must be reviewed as it is in danger of dissuading people from applying. Also the present practice of reassigning key social workers does not help in the continuity of care or instil confidence.

## NEETS – Not in Employment, Education or Training

There is a growing number of our young people falling into this category and we need to better understand the social dynamics causing this. We now have a government 'Children's Champion' – currently Dudley Butt, MLC, a Department of Education and Children and a multi-agency young people's strategy group. All these parties need to develop solutions to address the NEETs 'trap'.

## Heritage

### National, natural and environmental

Heritage is at the fundamental core of the Island. Our heritage in all its forms must be protected for present and future generations to enjoy. It gives us our identity, a sense of national pride and, as a consequence, makes our Island unique. The Island's natural, social, cultural and built heritage represent the jewels in our national crown. Our environment – terrestrial and marine - is exceptional and less polluted than that of many other nations.

### Natural Heritage.

Our natural heritage is one of the Island's greatest assets, its distinctive qualities recognised internationally. We are one of the few places remaining in the British Isles and Europe able to boast heather moorland, rare plants, bluebell glades, peregrine falcons, choughs and hen harriers in such a small area and a wonderful marine environment capable of sustaining our special summer visitors - basking sharks.

We have an elm tree population of some 250,000 which leading experts agree is one of the highest in the world (Dr. David Rose, one of the world's leading tree experts). Our hedgerows and fields lend a distinctive character to the landscape and provide an environment on which wildlife can thrive – a direct result of the efforts of our agricultural community.

I placed a motion to Tynwald which caused Parliament and government to recognise the unique status of our natural heritage thereby ensuring it will receive higher priority in future government policy.

### Heritage – cultural, archaeological, built and social

Our Celtic heritage - including history and language – is unique and world famous. Manx Gaelic is now taught, albeit on a minor scale, in schools. We have Manx Language nurseries, Moongey Veger, and a Manx Language primary school at St. Johns. We are also reminded of our Celtic heritage by ancient keeils such as those at Lag ny Killey and our world famous Celtic stone crosses.

Our ecclesiastical past is represented by the many beautiful churches and chapels still in use today such as St. Luke's at Baldwin while Rushen Abbey and its lands, such as Silverdale, are unique reminders of a once thriving medieval monastery.

We also have two more stunning and world famous examples of the Island's medieval past, Peel Castle and Castle Rushen, the latter one of the best preserved fortresses of its type in the world.

Our built environment is a rich tapestry of Victorian and some Georgian architecture and streetscapes – much loved by locals and visitors alike - which still dominate the character and 'feel' of our towns and villages, providing a unique atmosphere such as can be found in Douglas, Castletown and Ramsey. Our towns and villages have also attracted international film companies eager to include them as authentic backdrops in their productions.

Victorian industrial architecture and archaeology can be seen throughout the Island, from our world famous Laxey Wheel to the mines at Foxdale and Bradda at Port Erin.

The Island is a world famous archaeological treasure trove full of outstanding sites.

## Victorian railways

I must give this a special mention, as I can't think of anywhere else in the world where I can take my family for a trip on an original Victorian steam train, electric tram or horse tram. I also can't think of anywhere else in the world where I can look out with my boys from one of the best preserved mediaeval castles and watch an original Victorian steam train pull into our ancient Capital – Castletown, with its many Georgian and Victorian buildings still standing.

All these aspects add priceless value to our Island. When government (Council of Ministers) promotes our Island for trade and tourism purposes it places our heritage at the forefront. Government also promotes our quality of life, environment and countryside as some of the finest in the British Isles and Europe. Yet it constantly lets us down by not adequately supporting our heritage, while its central planning process does not fully reflect the invaluable contribution heritage has to make, despite my motion to Tynwald.

### Recommendations:

- The Island's heritage must be enshrined in central government policy and given greater prominence and status;
- Heritage, culture, history and our Island today must be celebrated and enshrined in mainstream education curriculums to produce a far more enriching learning experience that children and young adults can identify with. This is where the seeds of national pride and community pride are sown. Pride in the Manx language should also be promoted in our schools;
- Education – currently, in my view only pays lip service to this critically important area. School curriculums are based in the main on UK material. We want Manx schools to fully embrace our heritage and culture and use the infinite and priceless resource that is all around them as the building blocks to our children's education;
- Biodiversity – we must fully subscribe to the United Nations RIO Convention supporting biodiversity and conservation – an internationally important wildlife initiative. Without a diverse environment we will lose unique and common wildlife species;
- Work must continue to accord national heritage status to Sulby Glen Valley and The Sound. In time, similar status should be accorded to other unique locations including all upland areas and coastal regions such as alongside Marine Drive;
- Our marine environment must be accorded special status;
- A more joined-up approach between conservation and heritage groups should be adopted – moving towards complete joint government/non-governmental co-operation to achieve our heritage goals;
- Promote 'green tourism' by emphasising the Island's unique environmental qualities, thereby introducing a valuable additional product to our business proposition;
- Designating more areas as Areas of Significant Scientific Interest (ASSIs);
- With immediate effect regenerate the wildlife sites scheme to protect our natural heritage. These sites are important and while not of ASSI standard, are crucial in supporting the biodiversity of our natural heritage;
- Protecting our hedgerows – many of which are the only habitats left for important plant, bird and animal species;
- Increased protection for our hill lands from motorised vehicle use.

Charities and organisations that should be supported in the above aims. (Not an exhaustive list)

- Manx Wildlife Trust
- Native Oak Scheme
- Manx Bat Society
- Friends of the Earth
- Mann Cat Sanctuary

- Manx Bird Life
- Wild Flowers of Man Project
- Manx Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals

## Environment

Our precious, yet fragile environment, less polluted than that of many other nations, is the bedrock on which this Island flourishes. However, as an island, we are faced with a unique set of environmental problems and threats, which we must combat by developing robust policies and recognising our ecological responsibilities.

We must also embrace and embed into central government planning policy measures which take into account climate change, as evidence indicates climates worldwide are changing and it is our responsibility to plan for the sake of the Island and the planet

Future strategy must be driven by new planning development standards and reducing our carbon footprint. Government has constantly scoffed at this, seeing it as a fanciful, trendy green joke. However, the reality is far different, with polluted rivers pouring waste into the seas and nations, such as China and India, pumping out pollution into the atmosphere. This was clearly demonstrated at the Beijing Olympic Games where, every day, there was a pall of dense smog hanging over the city. Meanwhile the United States still refuses to make any meaningful moves towards reducing industrial waste and pollution.

Closer to home whenever the wind blows from the east there is a mist or haze over the Island caused by an industrial plume from the UK and Europe. Meteorologists refer to it as an 'industrial haze', a prime example of the greenhouse effect.

This government is only slowly accepting the importance of changing planning standards and our carbon footprint. If re-elected I will continue to lobby for change and apply pressure relentlessly.

Other examples of environmental negligence here include a power station that still burns oil at times, belching out acrid black smoke into the air; an incinerator that must burn oil to keep operating; motor vehicles left running; people not sharing cars on the daily commute; heating and lights left on unnecessarily; water wastage; unnecessary night-time lighting resulting in some schools looking like Heathrow Airport; street lights adding to light pollution and thousands of tons of whey from Isle of Man Creamery regularly dumped into Douglas bay.

Tynwald and government must redouble their efforts to secure the complete closure of Sellafield Nuclear Plant - a silent time bomb with a catalogue of health and safety accidents. The plant is leaking pollution into the atmosphere and sea (the authorities say it is 'within normal limits'), which could have catastrophic implications for us all, all the more since the re-commissioning of the MOX plant, thankfully now closed and the heightened threat of international terrorism. And the nuclear reactor tragedy in Japan serves to highlight this power source's supreme fragility, all the while the UK government continues to call for more nuclear plants.

I have placed regular questions to ministers in Tynwald and backed debates calling for the closure of Sellafield, a view shared by this government.

Recommendations:

- We must continue to lobby the UK government for Sellafield to be completely shut down permanently;
- We must establish a full joint working initiative with the Republic of Ireland to increase political pressure on the UK government;
- Continue close working relationships with the Sellafield administration and other stakeholders to ensure our voice is being heard. We must ensure we are furnished with detailed information of the plant's operational procedures and its status at any given time;
- Continue the close monitoring of our marine environment;
- All other UK nuclear installations on the north west coast must be monitored and the safety threat they pose assessed;
- The Island must recognise the gravity that climate change poses and work towards reducing its carbon foot print. Government must be at the forefront of promoting environmental campaigns;

- New standards in the building and planning process to better recognise issues such as rising sea levels and heavy rains which can bring about the risk of flooding.

Other environmental threats include raw sewage pumped into the Irish Sea from surrounding countries, sea litter washed onto our shores and individuals' irresponsible attitude to litter disposal, while the energy from waste plant pollutes the atmosphere and creates large bottom ash deposits.

Recommendations:

- A new policy that calls on the British and Irish governments to cease pumping raw sewage into the Irish Sea;
- Establish a British-Irish Council working group to examine joint initiatives for tackling sea pollution, especially by maritime traffic;
- Government must take the lead in challenging current inadequate waste management measures and encourage a reduce, reuse recycle culture through creative campaigns that resonate with and educate people;
- Partnerships with local authorities. Government must encourage greater civic pride through campaigns highlighting the antisocial aspects of litter (yes – and dog fouling) and how it blights the Island, supported by zero-tolerance enforcement;
- Bottom ash deposits from the energy from waste plant must be disposed of responsibly, which could be easily achieved on government-owned land opposite. Government saw sense by not opting for the beauty spot that is Archallagan but we cannot continue to bury these festering problems. An 'out of sight, out of mind' approach will only leave an unwanted legacy for future generations. Importantly, wherever possible, bottom ash must be recycled; burying it should be a last resort.

Education is at the heart of changing attitudes to waste disposal. I believe the school curriculum should place far greater emphasis on promoting green awareness, responsible citizenship and national pride.

## **Achievements delivered to you – working for you in Tynwald and the House of Keys**

### **Parliamentary Questions**

An important aspect of an MHK's work is submitting parliamentary questions to ministers in the House of Keys and Tynwald. This places that minister and his or her department under public scrutiny and considerable pressure which, in turn, can help bring about positive policy changes.

I have regularly placed questions covering a wide range of local, national and international issues including: national policies, e-commerce, maintaining our competitive edge, strategic planning, quality of care, medical staff performance, pensions, the National Insurance fund, effects of inflation, heating allowances, energy costs, law and order issues, drug abuse, housing, travel costs, public expenditure, employment issues, social policies, immigration, and many constituency issues – such as empty properties, road safety and reinstating the original bus services.

### **Resolutions**

Placing a private member's motion for debate in Tynwald or the House of Keys is an important undertaking which usually requires extensive personal research and, if carried, becomes a parliamentary resolution, prompting a significant government response. I set out below some of the motions I have placed which have been debated, together with their outcomes.

- Silverdale Wood – saved from being cut down and turned into a car park. It is now incorporated as part of the glen;
- Securing £10,000 ex gratia payments for Manx residents who were prisoners of the Japanese during World War Two. The Isle of Man was the second country in the world to do this, and it prompted the UK to follow suit;



- Empty properties – I instigated a special survey to establish the number of vacant properties in the private and public sectors which, given adequate government grant packages, could be returned to use - temporarily or permanently - as either rental units or housing stock. This has had a major impact in returning property in the private and public sector to occupied use more quickly, and has helped reduce housing waiting lists;
- Housing policy strategy – to ensure a monitoring process was put in place. This has required the Department of Social Care to report to Tynwald regularly and provide an update of the Island's housing situation, and has also ensured all relevant parties are consulted in the production of reports to assist in prioritising national housing requirements;
- Government-owned residential homes - stopped the closure of Glen Side, Reayrt Ny Baie and Cummal Mooar;
- Gas prices – caused a major Tynwald debate on this, following a vigorous investigation by the OFT, in turn ensuring that customers were not being overcharged. I abhor price hikes but ensured that any price increases that were required were made transparent and I placed considerable pressure on Manx Gas to become more efficient and, as far as possible, absorb any further increases;
- Natural heritage – caused this to feature more prominently in central government thinking;
- Work permits – caused the Minister to withdraw a motion to deregulate the work permit system;
- Mount Murray inquiry and report – caused this to be taken up by the Council of Ministers. This report, which was in danger of being thrown out, contained many recommendations and provided valuable lessons for the future;
- Sellafield – supported a resolution, in collaboration with Leonard Singer, to increase pressure on the UK government to have the plant decommissioned;
- Damage to our hill lands by motorised vehicles – successful Tynwald resolution passed for causing the Department of Infrastructure and the then Department of the Environment Food and Agriculture to take more action.

## Debates

I take part in all the major debates that take place in Tynwald and the House of Keys, representing you and your views. I tell members exactly what you and I think and make no bones about it at times. Such debates include – the Budget, Chief Minister's policy document, capital spending programmes and projects, increases in government charges and social security changes, along with health and social service issues. As many of you know I make no-nonsense contributions and on many occasions will vote against government. This is very important as it gets my views into the debate and forces government ministers to take note and, in many instances, to make further changes or take additional positive actions as a result of my input.

## Legislation

A major part of the role of an MHK is scrutinising, preparing and presenting legislation in the House of Keys. This also includes speaking in and contributing to legislative debates, and preparing amendments if deemed necessary. Legislation is carried out either as a private member's Bill or through a government department of which the MHK may be a member.

I took the Genetically Modified Organisms Act, 2000 through the House of Keys. This legislation makes it illegal to grow genetically modified plants (GMOs) in the Isle of Man until more is known about the practice and has been proved safe. The Isle of Man, recognising the potential health and environmental risks GMOs pose, is the first country in the world to introduce such legislation.

Amendments moved include:

- Sex Discrimination Act - amended to include all employers. Originally most would have been exempt, which I believed to be a serious oversight;
- Shops Act - keeping Good Friday special and adding protection for shop workers if they could not work on a Sunday.

I have also supported other members' amendments, including:

- Corporate Service Providers Act - extended to reduce the burden of regulation on small local businesses;
- Road Traffic Amendment Act - changing the compulsory written test rules to make them fairer; Fought bitterly over the Road Traffic Amendment Act 2000, especially for our small taxi businesses. Amendment now 'off the table'.

## Policy changes

- The new Island forest policy. I have driven this policy that will protect our heather moors and hill land from the planting of more coniferous trees and recognises these areas as one of the Island's largest natural assets to be preserved for future generations;
- All-Island taxi deregulation – now off the table.

## Placing of emergency questions and questions challenging government policy

This is vitally important to prevent the implementation of strategies which will disadvantage all or some sectors of the community.

Some personal initiatives in this category I have progressed:

- Prevented closure of wards and coronary care beds - following the emergency debate I placed before the House of Keys;
- Nursing home charges – further increases stalled as a consequence of my questions – causing the Department of Health and Social Security to enter into talks with nursing home operators and conduct a price investigation;
- Caused the Mount Murray report and its recommendations to be accepted by the Council of Ministers. Previously it was perilously close to being voted out of Tynwald;
- Emergency debate on the future of our current radio stations, causing a government re-think on its 'wide open door' policy of allowing any number of commercial radio stations to operate in the Island;
- Closure of the Manx Electric Railway during the summer season – stopped this from happening by placing an emergency question;
- Redundancies – emergency question placed to Minister Cretney highlighting the urgent need for him and his department to review the situation and initiate wider dialogue with staff and their union.

## Review

### My commitment to you:

One of my original election pledges was to form an effective working relationship with my fellow MHK for North Douglas, John Houghton, and push for the issues that matter to our constituency. This I have achieved. The constituency has received unparalleled support over the last five years and I am determined this will continue.

To have achieved this level of success has required a huge effort which has included countless meetings with government departmental officers and political representatives as well as with officers and councillors of Douglas Borough Council and key players in the private sector, along with writing letters, submitting public parliamentary questions to ministers and initiating debates in both the House of Keys and Tynwald.

A whole raft of issues has been addressed, campaigned for and brought to a successful outcome for you as a direct result of individual and joint efforts with John Houghton. These have included:

- Road closures during TT and Manx Grand Prix - new crossing corridors now in place for when there is no racing and a shift away from the practice of roads staying closed all day for no good reason;
- New prison – stopped from being built over Victoria Avenue and into Linden Grove;
- Noise nuisance from Isle of Man Creamery affecting residents of Hightonwood Hill - resolved;
- Laureston Grove and Close - roads adopted and made up by the Department of Infrastructure;

- Constituency police station - now staffed and reopened. (Please also see future plans below as the station has now run into problems). I have also pressed for increased CCTV and alcohol-free zones;
- Empty houses lying vacant - both public and private sector - turnover speeded up and better use being made of properties, but this needs revisiting;
- Public sector housing maintenance programmes monitored and being progressed more quickly;
- Double glazing programme for Willaston – completed. Tenants had previously been told: ‘never in your lifetime’;
- Willaston heating programme – completed;
- Olympia re-roofing and heating programme – completed;
- Community policing – established an effective working relationship with officers has greatly benefited people in the constituency. Joint working with our community officers has proved an asset in tackling crime and antisocial issues in North Douglas;
- Road repairs - monitored and requests submitted for additional repairs when needed;
- Footpath repairs and street lighting – programmes well under way and being monitored;
- Planning issues affecting our quality of life – presenting cases and fighting for your rights: Ballanard Road housing estate – stopped. Noble’s Park BMX track adjacent to residents’ houses – stopped. Proposed MEA sub-station for Park Avenue – relocated;
- Noble’s Park drainage scheme – both your MHKs sought the approval and funds for this urgently required scheme which is now in place after properties in Duke’s Road and Poplar Road were flooded and water was running into Marathon Drive and Victoria Crescent. (See also below – future plans);
- Taxis – our constituency has many of these small family businesses which we have helped save from the clutches of Tony Brown’s Road Traffic Act;
- Road safety issues – one of the biggest problems facing the constituency. Improvements John Houghton and I have helped to bring about include:
  - o Traffic calming in Park Avenue;
  - o Pelican crossing at Mountain View and Glencrutchary Road;
  - o Traffic calming measures in Hailwood Avenue – in place. We might not like these measures, but many residents feared for their and their children’s safety. Recent traffic counts show a dramatic reduction in the number of speeding vehicles;
  - o Road crossing patrol officer for Cronk y Berry School;
  - o Home zones and additional traffic calming measures for Willaston, especially in front of Willaston School;
  - o Willaston Corner roundabout at the crossroads of Johnny Watterson’s Lane and Ballanard Road;
  - o Improved traffic lanes and bus lay-by at St Ninian’s High School;
  - o Cronk y Berry and Hailwood Avenue – junction visibility improvements completed;
  - o New footpath from The Cat with No Tail to the junction of Johnny Watterson’s Lane at Cronk ny Mona;
  - o Hightonwood Hill junction – finally done.
  - o Stopped the withdrawal of free bus passes;
  - o Work under way to site a new mast to improve reception for mobile phone users in Governor’s Hill.

We have also helped bring about:

- Regular police speed checks and DOI traffic counts;
- Disc parking zones – now in place for Hutchinson Square, Marathon Road, Princes Road, Homefield Close and Homefield Road;

- The adoption of roads at Governor's Hill estate – a major undertaking requiring many meetings, letters and phone calls. The roads have now been adopted so are formally owned and maintained by the Department of Infrastructure;
- Flooding mitigation works have now been successfully negotiated for the lakes at Governor's Hill following disastrous flooding. Now complete, your MHKs have secured an undertaking from Douglas Borough Council that it will formally adopt the green open spaces from Dandara, which means the lakes will be managed more efficiently. This is now being progressed through legal channels. This is being monitored to ensure it does happen;
- The adoption of roads and footpaths for Abbeyfields – completed;
- Pelican crossings – ensured that these were installed at Johnny Watterson's Lane;
- Low-density older people's accommodation at Reayrt y Sheear, instead of high-rise blocks of apartments;
- Proposed estate on the fields near the Castleward Green cancelled – we worked hard on this with residents as many of you know.

### Here to help:

I am always accessible and am committed to keeping in touch with my constituents. I hold a two weekly surgery on Thursday evening at Willaston Police Station which has been very successful; this alternates with John's surgery on Thursday mornings at Willaston Methodist Church. I produce newsletters, will meet constituents in their own homes or at Government Office, hold public meetings and I have always made it clear I can be contacted by phone at any time.

### The next five years

The work must go on!

My commitment to the constituency. I will campaign tirelessly on issues including:

- Road safety – traffic management in the constituency still requires further assessment by the Department of Infrastructure. North Douglas is a densely populated area with some of the Island's busiest arterial roads crossing through it and, as a consequence, some roads in the constituency are often used as a cut through, which creates serious safety concerns – such as at Cronk y Berry Avenue, Hailwood Avenue, Snaefell Road and Ballanard Road;
- Buses – The Minister of Empty Buses, Mr David Cretney, has sold us down the river with the new bus timetable. Buses are now running at different times, are late or just don't turn up at all. Journeys take far longer as a consequence and constituents have to walk longer distances to or from their homes. This is unacceptable, especially for pensioners and those with disabilities. I am committed to fighting for the original service to be reinstated;
- Willaston – doors programme. We are pushing hard on this as it is something we were promised once the window upgrade project was completed;
- Willaston - serious damp problems. John and I both are working on a project with Douglas Borough Council and government to implement a rolling programme to address the immediate problems and provide longer-term solutions;
- Public housing maintenance programmes – Olympia and Willaston - continue to work with my fellow MHK to ensure these are progressed to provide residents with an acceptable standard of living;
- Footpath and street lighting upgrades and improvements - ensuring these are progressed and completed. This must also include areas such as Ballanard Road which seem to have fallen off the Department of Infrastructure's radar. Assessment is also required of the old inadequate lighting on First, Second and Third Avenues and at Cronk Drean;
- Empty properties - ensuring the empty property initiative stays on track and that vacant property - both private and public – remains empty for the shortest period of time only;



- Car parking. In some areas additional space is needed, in others indiscriminate parking is causing reduced visibility at junctions and pedestrian crossings. In addition, some commuters coming into Douglas use streets in the constituency, such as Victoria Road, Duke's Road and Marathon Avenue, as their personal car park, which creates further road safety issues. We require an extension of disc zones such as those we campaigned for at Hutchinson Square and Princes Road;
- Traffic assessment by the Department of Infrastructure with particular reference to Governor's Hill, 'The Hill Crofts', Johnny Watterson's Lane, Ballanard Road from Willaston Corner to Abbeylands, Willaston and Cronk y Berry Avenue;
- Continue to push for the re-alignment of the pedestrian crossing at Ballaquayle Road/Crosby Terrace;
- Abandoned vehicles - progress the removal programme;
- Constituency police station in Willaston. Despite promises, and continual pressure from John and me, the station has yet to be adequately staffed to restore the service to the more efficient level it once was;
- To support the community policing unit we require:
  - o A police station adequately staffed to meet the needs of the constituency;
  - o Extension of CCTV and additional alcohol-free zones;
  - o Properly managed Neighbourhood Watch schemes;
  - o Continuation of our successful joint working initiative.
- Camper vans – suitable sites must be found for parking these large vehicles and the supporting new legislation closely monitored;
- Community recreational area - continue negotiations with the Department of Social Care, Douglas Borough Council and contractor to secure its installation adjacent to the new first-time buyer development on Johnny Watterson's Lane;
- Road surfaces – crumbling and disintegrating in many places throughout the constituency partly as a result of one of the severest winters we have experienced in decades. A rolling maintenance programme is required throughout the constituency. Heavy representations have been made regularly on your behalf to address areas such as Hailwood Avenue, Snaefell Road, Barrule Road and the Governors Hill 'loop road'. Additionally we require more grit and salt bins to be installed throughout North Douglas for areas such as Ballanard Road and Governors Hill. Both your MHKs made heavy representations to Minister Phil Gawne during the severe weather, but we received only a muted response, so are still pressing for action.

## **The North Douglas service pledge**

I made a series of commitments prior to the last General Election and have upheld every one of them. Rest assured, if I am elected this year I shall continue to uphold my pledge to you, and stand by my commitments which I set out below:

- 100% commitment;
- A full-time, independent MHK - with no other outside interests or commitments to influence my work, so I may represent your views without personal bias;
- Full-time politician working from the Tynwald Members' Office, and at evenings and weekends;
- Committed to the principles of the House of Keys Oath – to perform the role without fear or favour and to keep the best interests of the people at heart – always;
- Principled – I stand for common sense and the rights of the individual. I will not give up or bow to pressure. Here I cite the examples of supporting the local candidate for the Director of Education post (I was subsequently sacked by the Minister) and the recent Fire Chief vacancy. I have also been ejected from the Council of Ministers for expressing forthright and honest views on behalf of the public which included campaigning for the involvement of the police and Financial Supervision Commission in the MEA fiasco;

- Teamwork – I have forged a positive working relationship with my fellow North Douglas MHK, John Houghton, to the benefit of the constituency, as we both believe resolving major problems demands double the effort;
- All constituency communications – I strive to respond personally and in a timely fashion to all queries and communications;
- Contact details provided - phone, e-mail and home address; I also operate a 'see you at home' system and meet with constituents privately at Government Office;
- Constituency surgery – an important community drop-in facility developed for you where you can not only meet your MHKs but also councillors and community police officers. This is the only service of its kind in the Island. Every week at Willaston – alternating between Thursday morning at the Methodist Church and Thursday evening at Willaston police station. This is proving a valuable and regularly used service.

#### Keeping in touch:

- Regular newsletters, all personally delivered by hand;
- Special newsletters – targeted to a specific area in the constituency - all personally delivered by hand;
- General press releases to highlight issues and exert pressure on government or other parties;
- Information press releases;
- Calling to see constituents in their own homes;
- Holding special constituency meetings;
- All constituents invited regularly through the newsletters to get in touch with their MHKs and make use of the constituency surgeries;
- Regular weekly surgeries;
- Working partnerships - liaising with Douglas councillors, other Douglas MHKs and agencies such as the police, Social Services, schools and government departments;
- In the community - I am a board member and supporter of the Manx Foundation for the Physically Disabled.

## Personal

I am a 49 year-old Manxman, born and brought up in North Douglas and attended Ballakermeen and Douglas High Schools. A member of the House of Keys since 1998 I am a qualified psychiatric nurse and health service manager and a former hospital night manager at Ballamona Hospital. I am also a member of the Chartered Management Institute.

I have always held strong political and social views, voicing concerns over the new hospital, employee legislation and health service issues. I was responsible for developing the nursing division of the Transport and General Workers Union, of which I was at the forefront for 10 years serving as the nurses' representative. I still retain strong links with the union and serve as the TGWU (Unite) parliamentary representative.

I support the Island's conservation and natural heritage movements and am a founder member of Manx Ecological Concern. Manx culture, heritage, the Island's history and language are also especially important to me.

An MHK committed to national politics - As one of your constituency representatives, it is my duty to represent your views and interests, but I am also committed to addressing national issues.

I have acquired extensive parliamentary and government experience and been an active and informed Member of the House of Keys and Tynwald. This has included:

- Serving on various Parliamentary Standing and Select Committees –
  - o Immigration;

- o General Elections;
- o Tynwald Management;
- o Tynwald Public Accounts;
- o Children's and young people's facilities.
- Accepting various government roles since my initial election: including –
  - o Tynwald Member for the then Department of Education (twice) including special responsibility for youth and community and special needs;
  - o Chairman of the Isle of Man Student Awards Committee;
  - o Chairman of the Isle of Man Planning Committee;
  - o Chairman Isle of Man Office of Fair Trading;
  - o Tynwald Member for the then Department of Local Government and the Environment,
  - o Department of the then Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry – Chairman of the Isle of Man Forestry Board twice serving in this department, latterly leading it as Minister;
  - o Tynwald Member for the Department of Social Care.

## Closing

I would like to close on an optimistic note. Throughout this document I have highlighted many issues: in the constituency, nationally for the Island and internationally. This is inevitable for a political document such as this. However, if we rise above it and take an overview of our country we can see a much bigger picture. It does incorporate many of my observations, but that is only part of the story and one which a politician by virtue of their work has to concentrate on. We can see so much more.

We can be justifiably proud of our Island nation. Our economy, one of the strongest in Europe, is growing and set to continue to grow. We have no national debt. We have relatively low unemployment. We have built up our reserves. The effects of the general recession that some countries, including the UK, are suffering from (bitterly in some cases) are not being felt anywhere near the same here. I strongly believe that we can cope and manage our way through the challenges we face and the hostile sanctions taken against us.

If we take a look around we can see new schools including the new high school at Bemahague, house building programmes such as Pulrose, Janet's Corner and Reayrt y Sheear. We see the North Quay being re-developed. We have a new hospital and power station. There is a progressive infrastructure renewal programme.

Our standard of living and quality of life were measured and are one of the best in the British Isles. This is set against the backdrop of our amazing heritage and culture – and of course our renowned countryside and wildlife.

*'Mr. President, Lady Haddacks and I take away many happy and treasured memories of our five-and-a-half wonderful years spent in Ellan Vannin. We wish you, this Honourable Court and everybody in the Isle of Man, health, happiness and a bright and prosperous future. Thank you for welcoming us to your Island. We have been honoured to live here. Thank you. (His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor – Sir Paul Haddacks, in Tynwald, 15th of March, 2011)*

What we have is priceless, it needs to be cherished and we need to fight hard to retain what we have developed and established through years of hard work and endeavour by everyone. We need to consolidate what we have now and build upon it. The next five years will be hard but I believe we can manage our way through this and emerge stronger on the other side.

# Quocunque Jeceris Stabit

*(The Manx National Motto –  
Whichever way you throw me, I will stand)*




**Manx National Flag**



**Tynwald Flag**





# **House of Keys General Election**

## **Thursday 29th September, 2011**



# **YOU HAVE TWO VOTES**

**REMEMBER, THERE ARE TWO MHK SEATS FOR  
NORTH DOUGLAS, THAT MEANS YOU HAVE  
TWO VOTES ON THE DAY.**

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**If you can't get to the polling stations  
Please Telephone 492448**

**And we can arrange for you to vote from your place,  
residence or arrange transport.**

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***Can you help on Thursday 29th September*  
Please Telephone 492448**

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**Committee rooms for the day  
3 Willow Close, Birch Hill, Onchan.**

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