

# Brian Stowell

I have lived in Onchan for almost 60 years, over 30 of them with my wife Tina who is a teacher. I have two sons – Aaron who works in the City of London and Luke who is a pupil at St Ninians. I am standing as an independent candidate in the September election and I ask you to consider voting for me please.

I have been associated with various private businesses throughout my working life and I have overseen the creation of prominent and sizeable developments. I am a serving director of several companies and I have considerable experience in business operation and management, however I am in the process of resigning most of my directorships to give me the time to devote to Government should you decide to elect me.

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## ONCHAN

House of Keys General Election 29<sup>th</sup> September 2011

# The Local Issues

Onchan Commissioners have made giant leaps forward in recent years, with a close working relationship now existing between the Board, the Clerk and his Officers. Working together we have created a much more proactive and efficient Authority. I believe that your elected Board are a valuable resource, competent and willing to address all local issues, but they must have the support from and easy access to National Politicians who will work with them and give their policies full backing and assistance.

I was Chairman of Onchan District Commissioners for two consecutive terms until I stood down in May to concentrate on this election. It is a very busy time for me, because I have to clear my desk in readiness, just in case I should be fortunate enough to be elected by you. It will be difficult for me to see you all but I am happy to answer any queries or questions that you might have and I welcome your calls on 451357.

With many years as a Commissioner behind me I feel fully prepared to make the transition into National Politics. Whilst National Government is a world away from the local issues, my time with the commissioners has given me an opportunity to appreciate the processes and procedures of both government and the private sector and to understand the needs of our community. I have demonstrated that I am not afraid of controversy or averse to taking the unpopular line. I have always stood up for what I believe have been the correct decisions for both the rate and tax payers, even when faced with organised and determined opposition. Whilst my experience with the Commissioners has been invaluable, National Government is a more demanding and truly serious full time occupation. The Island needs Politicians with business experience, intelligence and the ability to guide us through the difficult period ahead. The world has changed and the prosperity that we have enjoyed for many years may not return in my lifetime. This is not a time for you to elect willing learners, or people without a proven track record of success. For far too long the local issues have dominated elections and popularity has determined our leaders without any consideration of their ability or understanding of the National Issues. In my 2006 manifesto I wrote: -



**Sadly there has been a party attitude in Government for many years, but that has to end. Major Debts, Crime, Immigration, Health, Iris, Bottom Ash, Energy, Transport, Waste, and the list goes on. The next administration has a serious job to perform because, the party is over. Now it is time to clean up the mess!**

**BRIAN STOWELL 2006**

**Much of our wealth is generated by companies that are readily mobile!  
We cannot afford to lose any of them without a fight.**

I have long since been associated with some large and international companies. Through the period of my directorships within these organisations, I have had direct access to, and regularly come into contact with, some of the best financial and business intellects available. I regularly discuss with them the problems and possible solutions that are desperately needed to extricate the Island from our current financial predicament. Obviously we need to look for new income, but it is a priority for us to concentrate on keeping the business that we already have!

## SOME OF THE DIFFICULTIES

The world's economy is in a mess and so is our own! Many of our Island's iconic companies are facing extremely difficult times ahead. Our foremost carrier to the Island, on whom we are all reliant, together with many other businesses, have major commitments at a time when interest rates are the lowest in history. It is inevitable that the "Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee" will raise the base rate eventually. High interest rates and inflation are additional threats that may befall us in future years and we must have dynamic and proactive people in place in government who can steer this island along the smoothest route.

We are not the only international financial centre in the market place and almost every other jurisdiction is looking to take our customers away from us. Any changes to our legislation must be thoroughly thought through so that they will not destroy the very valuable business that we already have.

# COPING WITH THE FUTURE

An ageing population, the pension shortfall and the future of the National Health Service are problems that have been talked about for many years, but what action has been taken? So many candidates in this election are undoubtedly well meaning and willing. But we desperately need experienced and worldly MHKs who can step up to the mark to deal with the National Issues. We live in times when anyone under the age of 45 has never known high unemployment and never had to take just any job that is available. But worst of all, the readily available credit of recent years has put many people in a very vulnerable position. Fortunately we still have our core financial businesses and we must support them and give them the stable platform to retain their place in the market that they need. With the current instability in the financial world we have to demonstrate that we have the necessary political will and strength to address the issues head on. There is an overriding economic necessity for unpopular and drastic cuts to be made quickly and only a fool will tell you otherwise.

We have to cut expenditure quickly in such a way that it impacts on employment the least. Projects that send money off Island must be shelved in favour of schemes that keep the local people employed. We must concentrate on using on Island resources to keep cash in circulation here and only bring in off Island services when they are absolutely essential. What is the point of brand new buses if we cannot afford to pay the drivers? An old bus keeps mechanics on the island working! A new bus keeps people in Germany working! How can we be proud of a new prison when we are cutting cancer specialists? Do you think our pensioners will get any comfort from the pretty coloured light show at our new power station when they cannot afford to heat their homes? We can get through this crisis but we need to appreciate how bad things are and act accordingly for us to prosper long term. We have to keep money here to circulate!!!

## Relationship With The UK

It is of deep concern that so few people, and for that matter, so few candidates in this election appreciate the complexities of this relationship. It is especially worrying that for many years some of our elected representatives have not had the experience or the will to examine this association in detail. Abrogation is always bandied around as an option, however this would be a very complicated and difficult course, with a high element of risk attached. We should keep the situation under constant review and lay the foundations in readiness, because it might be forced upon us. The VAT sharing agreement provides the Island with most of its income and the recent changes will have dramatic implications for many years. So many of our residents do not understand that Government cannot print money to pay for services and they do not understand our need to bring cash to our shores. In 2006 my manifesto warned that difficult times were overdue and now they are here but recent regimes have done little to prepare us for the difficulties that were so obviously coming.

It is essential that we cut all our unnecessary spending and expensive bureaucracy in order that we can maintain a reasonable level of security for our residents. The overall size of Government has grown for decades and meaningful reductions must be made to address this burden on our resources for future generations. But any reductions must be made over an appropriate period so as to avoid high unemployment and should be done via natural wastage. It has taken decades to grow Government and it will take many years to reduce it! But it has to start now. Government has to adopt a policy of replacing all retiring personnel with others from within and only employ outsiders when absolutely essential.

## Health Care and Security

The care and security afforded to the sick and vulnerable is a guide to the worth of any society. The priority of any politician must be to do their utmost to provide the best health care available and to ensure a proper decent living standard for all the Island's residents. Iron piers, roundabouts and other unnecessary expenditures are nice, but not essential. We should always ask the following questions before approving any spending.

### DO WE NEED IT? CAN WE AFFORD IT? WILL WE USE IT?

If the answer to any of the above questions is NO then funding should be denied. With funding pressure on the Health Service, The Police, Pensions, Education and other priority services, how was almost two million pounds approved for the Ramsey pier? Especially as much of this expenditure was given to a non Manx based company. Worse yet that is only the first payment, at least another ten million will be required in the future without the ongoing maintenance cost.

## MHK PAY

The issue here is not what we pay our MHKs, it is what do we get for our money? The salary scale was set so as to attract people with the skills to run our country. You, the electorate are in effect the interview panel. It is of major concern to me that voters do not take this responsibility seriously. Ideally it should always be the best, highest qualified and most experienced candidates that are elected. Sadly, that is seldom the case. It is the most popular but least knowledgeable that frequently fill the Tynwald seats. The people that are needed to guide us through these difficulties are experienced negotiators with proven track records. They all need to be able to demonstrate a thorough understanding of world affairs and finances and most importantly be conversant with the undeniable problems that blight our future.



# Agriculture

Operating Glenville Farm as a Livery Yard has given me a true insight into the problems and issues that are facing many landowners and farmers who are the foundations of this important industry.

Recently the issue of exporting live animals has rightly caught the headlines. In my opinion this practice has been brought about by the differences in the regulations between here and in England.

With the other problems that we are facing, we cannot allow bureaucracy to cause unnecessary suffering to our animals whilst disadvantaging our local producers.

In recent years Government schemes have been encouraging farmers to grow less and spend more time caring for the countryside. I do not believe that this is a realistic approach to maintaining any industry. The beautiful countryside we enjoy today is as a result of the success of the industry in the past.

For our landscape to have a bright future, our farmers must have hope for the future.



**We should strive to make the island a centre of excellence. We can promote our produce in the wider market by enhancing quality and always maintaining the highest standards of animal welfare.**

# Recycling and the Environment

There is no doubt that we should do everything in our power to conserve resources for the future and reduce the pollutants that are poisoning our planet but we must do what is right and not be talked into popular but damaging schemes by people who have not read or understood the evidence. Recently some of the more radical environmentalists have criticised the Board for questioning the kerbside recycling initiative, but so far we have not seen any evidence proving that kerbside collections help reduce emissions at all. The document that has been circulated by the Commissioners gives very good reasons for it being discontinued and I still await a proper and accurate counter argument that is based on the reality.

We must be certain that what we are doing is correct and truly beneficial, I have been looking in depth at some of the processes that government have adopted and I am deeply concerned that these have not been properly thought through from the outset. We keep referring to UK based figures and not taking the IOM location or scale into account. Look at the recent Gas Conversions did they bring down the price of gas? IRIS, is this the all singing answer to our problems? When any project is put before Tynwald each and every member should examine all the implications before approving funding.

All too often politicians are quick to jump on and support popular or high profile ideas just for political gain without a care for the true consequences. Don't be fooled into believing that the major recent spending on the hospital, power station, Ramsey pier, IRIS, Richmond Hill and everything else is the end of the story. All of these projects have been capitalised! So any repayments will have to be met in addition to the operating costs. Worse yet, many of these schemes were under researched, poorly controlled, over priced and in essence less than efficient. Now that the fat cats have gone somewhere else with their pockets bulging with your cash, it is for the least well off in our community to pay the Bank.

# Law and Order

The sentence must be a deterrent. Recent events in large UK cities are a result of years of the soft approach. In our society it is now the norm for the victim to be treated worse than the criminal. If we do not address this fundamental issue then our Island is destined to follow the pattern of our neighbours. That is not to say we should impose draconian measures but they have to be realistic.

# IN SUMMARY

I often hear about the vast reserves that we have that will assist us in the short term, however I cannot find them in the Government accounts. We will be able to survive for a short time on the small amount that is available to us, but major savings will have to be found. It is not another passing problem that we are facing, but a very serious issue that has to be addressed. Every single individual will be affected, some more than most and services will have to be cut. I wish that there was another way around the problem but there is not. We have to prioritise our services and cut where it will cause the least hardship.

# WE MUST:-

- Give priority to capital schemes that are labour intensive and retain the majority of cash on Island.
- Extend the operational life of all equipment where practical to reduce off Island capital expenditure in favour of on Island maintenance.
- Instigate a proper Buy Local campaign that applies across the spectrum and in every instance employ on Island companies and consultants in favour of all others.
- Instigate a meaningful waste reduction policy throughout Government.
- Lay down a meaningful Government bureaucratic reduction programme that will streamline both the public and private sector. Get behind the Freedom To Flourish statement!
- Consult with all Government employees regarding methods of reducing personnel. This has to be done in such a way that no employee is under threat of redundancy! But equally any position being filled should be from within Government except only in the most extreme of circumstances. Reductions will take decades to take effect. We must start now especially as we have other major problems that are due to hit us long term, when they hit us hard we need to be ready!
- Show to the world that the Isle of Man has policies in place that provide a stable platform on which to do business. Prove we can take the measures needed to balance our finances and protect our future.
- Protect the essential services such as Health and Education. Demonstrate that we are still the caring and secure society that we have always been and that we know how to prioritise.
- Develop educational opportunities to provide prospective employers with a wealth of qualified and motivated people. Our workforce is our biggest asset and we have to continue to invest in it.
- **Most importantly we must stop voting for people who are “nice” but have no experience or qualifications. Imagine if we started employing our surgeons in this way. Would you want a very “nice” man with no experience to operate on you?**

# Brian Stowell

## ON VOTING DAY

For as long as I can remember, voters have been forced to walk the gauntlet of candidates and their helpers lining the doors of the polling stations.

I have always felt uncomfortable with this so I have decided not to pressure anybody in this way.

I intend to have only one agent at each station and I will request that they do not stand close to the entrance. They will be there should you wish to speak to them but otherwise they will remain in the background.

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I am happy to provide transport to take you to the polling station and if you call me on 451357 I will arrange it for you.

There are almost seven thousand voters registered in Onchan and I hope you appreciate that it will be impossible for me to speak to you all before the election. If you would like me to visit you, please give me a call and I will make a special effort to see you.



I appreciate that very few people will take the time to read any of this manifesto and I thank you for reading this portion at least!

If you wish to contact me about any of my views or policies I welcome your call.

# Brian Stowell

