



# Geoff CORKISH DOUGLAS WEST

**House of Keys  
General Election  
Thursday  
29 September 2011**

Age 58 born in Douglas, married for 37 years with two children and one granddaughter.

Since being elected in 2006 I have served on the Departments of Tourism & Leisure, the Department of Trade & Industry and the Department of Transport and was a board member of the MEA.

I am currently a member of the Department of Economic Development, Vice Chairman of IOM Post Office and Tynwald's Advisory Council for Disabilities.

I am also a member of various important committees including the Tynwald Economic Initiatives Committee, Chief Minister's Social Policy Committee, Tynwald Management Committee, Tynwald Honours Committee, the Queen's Jubilee Committee and was a member of the Council of Minister's Working Group on the Queen's Pier.

**In community and private life I remain:**

a member of All Saints Church Choir, a member of Lon Dhoo Male Voice Choir, Chairman of the Douglas Buxton Music Trust, Chairman of the Isle of Man Anti Cancer Association, Board member of the Mersey Mission to Seafarers.

**Election colours:  
Red, White and Gold**



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### **Dear Constituent,**

Since my election to the constituency of Douglas West 5 years ago I remain very conscious that my first responsibility is to you, my electorate, and I have welcomed the opportunity to work with you on so many constituency matters from planning issues to the varied problems concerning you and our quality of life on our Island. With you I have initiated speed warning signs in our busiest areas and pedestrian safety barriers and am slowly winning the battle to remove large commercial vehicles from our residential areas to maintain the quality of life of constituents. Early on in my political career it was obvious that the constituency needed a Post Office. I have been successful in restoring, in part at least, a Post Office facility at the Wessex Garage to serve a need in the community.

I have no need to tell you that our Island faces serious challenges in the near future and difficult decisions are going to have to be made by our politicians and especially those who will be appointed to the Council of Ministers. Any complacency which we may have had in the past must be dismissed.

Our Island was dealt a severe financial blow following the review of the VAT Sharing Agreement with the UK government earlier this year. This was following the horrifying decision again by the UK government to end the long standing reciprocal health agreement between us. This was later resolved by the intervention of back bench members of Tynwald including myself and pressure from the general public. Such actions made me realise that we can take nothing for granted in our relationship with the United Kingdom.

It is imperative that our government forges a strong and mutually beneficial liaison with UK senior politicians and decision makers world wide to better ensure the long term, international future of this Island. I have to say that I believe our current Council of Minister's over the last 5 years has not been good at this, hence the woeful breakdown of long standing beneficial agreements mentioned above.

It is this issue then that I believe is perhaps the most important one facing us for the future - our ongoing relationship with the UK government and trading partners world wide.

# Economic Development

The Isle of Man has seen over 25 years of steady economic growth which at present is continuing. Such growth, if sustained, will help to recoup the losses from the restructured VAT Agreement. We managed to develop many aspects of our economy and this gives me confidence for the future. We have achieved success in attracting e-commerce and clean-tech investment - we have thriving shipping and aircraft registers and as a centre for financial and corporate service provision we have been awarded a triple A status, which is currently higher than the USA. Additionally, initiatives in space technology and satellites mean that the Island is operating in a wide and diverse field of initiatives which all go to help the provision of future good well paid jobs for our young people.

This growth and sustainability has provided us with the revenues to support our wide range of public services, and the government's close relationship with the Island's private sector is key to the future success of the Island. I am pleased to be involved in the bringing together of the partnership between the Chamber of Commerce and the Department of Economic Development, working together to ensure the future success of the Island. I have long believed that the next government needs to develop new strategies in line with those in the private sector.

Whilst I spoke in the Tynwald debate against the re-structuring of Government departments, believing it to be an expensive and unnecessary move, I did support the creation of a Department of Economic Development, charged with the development and support of economic growth so vital to our Island. It was very appropriate that the area of tourism was recognised as a major wealth generator and was moved to this department, and I was pleased to be appointed to head this key division. Tourism underpins much of what we call our 'quality of life' and generates around £115 million for the Treasury helping to fund vital public services. The downturn in the UK economy and fierce competition is a concern but we have achieved much by working more closely with the Island's tourism industry and by working with our partners in driving up accommodation and restaurant standards. I am again pleased that our supply of self catering accommodation has grown responding to customer demands and attaining 4 and 5 star standards.

I am also pleased that we are attracting growing numbers of UK coach operators and have seen an increase in the number of cruise ship arrivals visiting the Island and fast becoming a 'must visit' destination for foreign visitors and UK visitors on 'Round Britain' cruises.

I was part of the team who have increased the status and value of the world famous and world status TT Races. They are a major wealth generator for us. We are seeing increased arrival figures and more worldwide television exposure is bringing more and more new visitors to this tremendous event, increasing valuable sponsorship funding and a significant injection of cash into the retail sector of our community. We are currently following a strategy to grow and build the Manx Grand Prix event to become another significant wealth generator to aid our straightened financial times. This year the Manx Grand Prix Festival recorded a visitor number increase of around 12% and there is huge support for our growth plans. I must also record my thanks to our residents who live on or near the course and acknowledge the obvious inconvenience incurred and take this opportunity to thank the huge army of volunteers and clubs without whose support the staging of these events would not be possible.

Through my work in Tourism I instigated the now very popular Food & Drink Festival which highlights the importance of our local produce and stimulates our agricultural and fishing community.

In another national initiative I have founded the IOM Festival of Choirs, which in its first year attracted over 500 visitors to our shores, and which I hope will prosper and grow, attracting people, profile and wealth to our Island.

Initiatives I am progressing at present include a new diversity in our tourism portfolio. Together with interested parties I am hoping to establish a Log Cabin Estate which will provide unique holiday accommodation for visitors (and residents) to appreciate our Island in forests and unobtrusive designated areas.

I entered politics to support and aid good government in this Island, not to carp and criticise, but to improve the quality of life of its people and their aspirations.

I was appointed by Tynwald to the board of the IOM Post Office as vice-chairman. In very difficult and changing times the postal world has been subject to dramatic changes in customer demands. Surface mail, whilst still significant, is gradually giving way to emails and other modern technology, inflicting loss of income to our core business. The Post Office has boldly moved to embrace the new order and challenges, maintaining its high standards and protecting its employees wherever possible, and continuing to generate significant profits for the Treasury. It is now employing innovative technology and attracting major new customers to its services.

It is incumbent upon those who will be elected to help promote and grow our economy as best they can by employing good business sense, acumen and vision.

## **Douglas West and You**

I have enjoyed greatly canvassing around the constituency and whilst the major topic of conversation has been the loss of income from the VAT agreement, there are many and varied concerns that you have shared with me:

- many aspects of parking and especially large and commercial vehicles in our streets
- the condition of pavements and road surfaces
- lack of playground and nursery facilities for young children
- cost of nursing home care

and so much more that I will if re-elected, promote and explore with you the formation of a Residents and Ratepayers Association for you and I in constructive partnership with Government, Douglas Corporation and the police, will endeavour to make the constituency a better place.



**Choir Festival Winners 2010**

# **Please Vote Corkish**



**If you require transport  
to the Polling Station  
or a poster to show your  
support, please ring me  
on 620548 or 493016**

## Employment

We may be rightly pleased that our low unemployment rate is below 2%, but I remain concerned that adults under the age of 24 make up 50% of this figure. It is clear that government has not been as focused as it might have been on this problem. To that end I have been pressing from within the Department of Economic Development to progress schemes particularly in the area of those not in employment, education or training (NEETs) to assist young people into appropriate training or work. However, I also believe there is a responsibility on all those claiming job seekers allowance to do so honestly. Failure to do so should lead to a condition that benefits will only continue in return for community work. This will have the added benefit of encouraging a work ethic and providing youngsters with some ownership and responsibility within their community. Talking with many of you I find that you share my views here as we see a deterioration of many aspects of our lifestyle.

## The Future

Any prospective MHK must realise that what they can achieve by themselves is limited. I believe that my track record shows that by working closely with people at all levels inside and outside our Island, much can be achieved.

Politics is all about people and working together, and in this Island we are fortunate that when times get tough we are able to join together and work for the common good. We must continue to join in partnership, public and private, wherever possible, fully utilising our strengths and expertise.

### **I will want to see:**

- a strong, trusting and better relationship with the UK government to protect and secure our economy.
- continued Government internal scrutiny leading to better value for money and better examination of central government and local authorities.
- promotion of a 'can do' attitude throughout a cohesive Government working to be more receptive and able to sharpen up to opportunity further diversifying wealth generation opportunities.
- a more open and better connection with the electorate.  
I believe that the Council of Ministers have failed to communicate fully with the public. If re-elected I will encourage a programme of providing better and clearer information for the public.
- enhanced liaison and cooperation with the private sector.  
Bringing wider and more focused advice and help to our economy.
- a review of our benefits system.  
This is long overdue and needs review and overhauling.
- a review of the public housing rental system to be fairer and equitable for everyone.
- support schemes which will increase home ownership and help first time buyers.
- a review of the present scope of Government undertakings to equate the pros and cons of public/private partnerships.
- an in-depth review of the Island's Customs and Excise relationship and explore the benefits or otherwise of continuing with Protocol 3.

Over recent years we have actively encouraged many entrepreneurial and high net worth individuals to reside in our Island. Government needs to work more closely with these people using their skills and business acumen to the benefit of us all.

In debate I strongly supported the Chief Minister's scheme for regenerating our towns and villages. I am passionate regarding the improvement of Douglas Promenade and Strand Street in particular. I believe it is so important to us all that an enhanced Douglas promenade and shopping area should be a driver to generate confidence in our society for the benefit of residents and visitors whilst attracting much needed business and employment opportunities. I note the start of the scheme in the heart of Douglas and we must keep this momentum going.

I remain disappointed that in the last 18 months the Council of Ministers has done little to prepare the population for the changes needed to make government more efficient and cost effective. I therefore was absolutely amazed that Tynwald voted to expend the sum of £1.8 million on the Queen's Pier at Ramsey. Likewise £250,000 on a traffic roundabout in the South is hard to accept for the same reason.

Our Island is entering the most difficult period of its time for decades.

We have many areas of concern that need to be addressed and I have welcomed the opportunity to talk at length with many of you regarding some of them. We have a lot to be thankful for in our Island but will continue to face considerable challenges.

Above all, I am buoyed up by the evident resolve and commitment of those employed in commerce and business in our Island. With vigorous support from government in all its areas of influence and with a real and committed 'can do' attitude, together we can face the future with real determination and confidence.

During my 5 years in Tynwald I have tried to get things done by being constructive. It is easy to submit questions in House of Keys or Tynwald which waste much parliamentary time and resource and easy to gain publicity by constantly criticising government policy. However I believe it more constructive to work cohesively with others in government to bring about influence from within.

I am prepared to work in the best interests of this Island and I believe that I retain a positive attitude to life and am well placed to take on the challenges that face us over the next few years.

I have enjoyed my canvassing around the constituency and although it is difficult to find everyone at home I have endeavoured to personally call at every house and left a courtesy calling card.



**THANK YOU for reading my manifesto and I hope that you will have the confidence to support me on the 29th September**