

House of Keys General Election  
Thursday 29 September 2011

# John Karran

DOUGLAS EAST



**REPRESENTATION**

**RECOVERY**

**REFORM**

# JOHN KARRAN

I am Manx born, 62. and a Chef.

I have two Children, one an 11 year old just starting High School.

Most of my working life has been in Catering having had the Olde Tynwald Restaurant in St Johns and Rafters in Douglas.

What I would offer as an MHK is honesty. I will not tell two different voters what they each want to hear to get both of their votes. I would show a willingness to pursue the release of information to allow MHKs to do the job you elect them to do.

This information is the knowledge that they need to represent the People of their constituency and the wider interests of the Isle of Man.

I cannot imagine why a Minister, when asked a question in the Keys, should seek to give as little information as possible. It is not a game of 'one upmanship', MHKs need to be fully informed to do their job.

I feel that as a Free Thinking Independent I can offer you the best representation and a fresh look at all aspects of past Government performance and how this should be improved.

I will be free to follow my conscience on every matter that is raised.

I believe that it is the duty of all MHKs to perform a Departmental role and to give Political input to the running of each Department, to bring policies that are a fair representation of what you, the electorate would wish for.

To take the extra pay for this role and then not perform to the best of ones ability, not attend meetings, would be dishonest and I can promise you full and frank scrutiny of all parts of any Department that I am in and indeed any other Department that I feel is straying from your best interests.

I will press continually for the fullest information to be released to Tynwald and the Public.

**This will be an election of National Importance more than ever than in the recent past.**

## THE ECONOMY

It would seem that we have had our 'Boom' and now we must very quickly deal with the deficit in Government revenue that has resulted from the loss of our VAT share.

It is irresponsible that our Government have not admitted that this was coming and put in place before now an...**ECONOMY RECOVERY STRATEGY** and fully inform us, the Public, of what this is and how it will affect each and everyone of us.

The reduction in Government revenue from the VAT agreement will have to be addressed through a very quickly planned Economy Recovery Strategy. A long term plan for the next 5, possibly 10 years to take us back to where we have been is of major importance to our recovery and the well being of the Island's population.

**I would make it my aim to see that the burden of rebuilding the economy is spread fairly to all sectors of our society and to protect the low paid and vulnerable from bearing more than their fair share.**

## REVENUE

All aspects of Government revenue will have to be looked at.

The Tax Cap for high earners, Income Tax rates, Corporate Tax, Zero/10 and the tax contributions of those companies operating here but not paying Manx Tax.

There are those business sectors who will call for everyone else to pay more but not their selves or they will threaten to leave the Island.

This attitude will have to be challenged from the beginning of the new Tynwald, the Treasury will have to quickly identify those sectors that can genuinely stand to pay more into the Island economy, even 1, 2 or 5% would be a valuable contribution.

That does not mean that I favour the end to any of the current tax concessions in place for those that are fairly contributing but that the Treasury must not be swayed by powerful Pressure Groups meeting behind closed doors with Government officials.

The Treasury must carry out thorough assessments of each sector to ascertain the likely effect of that sector paying its fair share towards our economic recovery. These assessments must be made public and fully explained as to why or why not these tax levels have to be retained, as does any rise in Personal Income Tax.

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A priority for the next Government must be to create and protect jobs in the Private Sector. With Government assistance, new start ups and expansion of the current manufacturing sector will provide valuable jobs to the lower paid sectors of our workforce who have been left behind in the finance sector boom.

I consider job creation to be the most important area to be addressed, particularly in the manufacturing sector, this could be used to generate new revenue and to provide those all important job alternatives for the current low paid, ex-Govt workers and those School leavers who have difficulty getting onto the work ladder.

It should be recognised that the more jobs that can be created, the more revenue the Government will accrue to replace the lost VAT share.

I think few MHKs or candidates will say this but further population expansion will have to be one area that the next Government will have to consider. ( I did promise you ‘Honesty’).

## **GOVERNMENT SPENDING**

The other side of re-balancing our books is Government spending and the size of the Public Sector with its considerable costs.

To keep our economy moving, the Government will have to keep up with their Capital Projects for the next few years but I believe that, with debate, these projects will have to be chosen to both provide employment and give the Government a return on our capital.

This could mean that projects such as the resurfacing of the Promenade may have to be put on hold, the Promenade is still passable, despite the bumps and dips but the work will not bring in a single penny of ongoing revenue to the Government.

During the next five years the money can be better spent on projects that will grow our economy to allow the Government to downsize its own scope.

There are many calls for the “Slashing of the size of the Government”, unfortunately, the Public Sector can only be cut as the Private Sector is able to grow to accommodate these ex-Government workers. This will take time.

These are Peoples lives and livelihood’s, they have been part of our economic growth from which most of us have benefited, throwing them on the unemployment scrap heap will benefit no one.

An immediate start must be made to identify areas where this changeover from Public to Private sectors can take place.

## **INQUIRY INTO RECENT GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE**

Unlike some, who may wish to sweep it under the carpet, I do believe that there should be an Inquiry into the performance of past Governments in their handling of the Economy, their profligacy with Public funds and our negotiations with the UK Government.

Such an Inquiry, with finger pointing and blame laid where it is necessary will have to see appropriate action taken against those culpable.

Will the incumbent MHKs be willing to take that action?

I believe that we need to face up to the mistakes of the past Governments and to use this to both assure the Public that we admit to these mistakes and to use this knowledge to ensure that we do not carry on in such a way into the future.

Such blame as is found will centre on the Treasury past and present and the Chief Minister through his overall responsibility. That a past Treasury Minister is being touted as the possible next Chief Minister is a slap in the face to the Island's people and is to be seriously questioned if not resisted.

The complacency of the past can not be allowed to continue.

## **REFORM OF TYNWALD**

Tynwald is long overdue for a thorough overhaul.

The unelected LegCo, the power of patronage held by the Chief Minister and Comin are a restriction on Democratic and open Government.

The Legislative Council exists to oversee and scrutinise legislation that has been brought forward by both Houses of our Parliament. None of its current members have a mandate from you the voter. It is voted in place by Keys members only, usually from older Politicians. Much is made of the experience that this provides but it is often used as a bolt hole for MHKs who fear that they are about to lose their seat in the Keys to further their Political career beyond the wishes of their electorate. That is not right.

I believe that Legco should be replaced by one or more Scrutiny Committees selected by the Keys from an expanded Keys of between 26 and 32 MHKs and that Department members should also be selected by the Keys rather than by the Ministers.

**JOHN KARRAN**

This selection method would serve to remove the 'Patronage' that the CM and Comin have over the body of Tynwald and the £11,000 extra that Dept. members are paid for that role, by making their placement and removal a matter for all MHKs to vote on, rather than that power being held by the CM. It would be important that the Scrutiny members should also receive that pay to ensure that the best are selected for those roles.

I would see the role of the Scrutiny Committee as, not only to oversee the workings and pitfalls of proposed legislation but also, to inform MHKs of the precise consequences of each Bill so that all MHKs are fully informed as to what they are voting on. Yes, there are MHKs who have not read the Bills that come before them.

That the Chief Minister is secretly elected does nothing to assure the electorate that behind the scenes deals are not putting in place a weak CM.

There must be a form of Public involvement in the election of the Chief Minister. One such method of several that could be expounded, is that the outgoing Keys would select a short list of candidates for the Public to vote on with a separate ballot paper. Checks and balances will ensure that such a person remains answerable to Tynwald and the People.

A programme of Reforms should be set in motion through the next five years so that the next General Election will be under a new system.

The most important reform is to ensure that we have Free Thinking, independently minded MHKs who feel free to vote with their conscience not by the dictates of the Executive.

A free voting Tynwald can achieve this in the best interests of its People.

I do not favour the eight super constituencies promoted by some, nor do I favour multiple votes per person for its ability to distort the results of what is basically, a preferential voting system without the necessary 'weighting' given to the first preference choice of the voter, the second and third preference votes being counted as equally weighted.

## **IMMIGRATION**

This is such a polarising subject with all of our Islands People. At the beginning of this manifesto, I promised you 'Honesty', here I will show you that I would rather tell you my true feelings than perhaps, what you would like to hear. In the 2006 election very few candidates were honest enough to even mention immigration.

By immigrants do we mean English, Irish and Scots? Or just Poles, Malaysians and Filipinos?

If the latter, then that is perhaps a rather bigoted view of all the People who have contributed to our economy and the current make up of our Society. These hard working People have filled a niche in our job market with a level of service that has been exemplary.

If we do not want immigrants on the Island, we should stop them from coming. We have the Work Permit system to do so.

If we let them come, they work, pay taxes and contribute to our economy, then we should treat them as equals. That is only morally right.

With the right recovery policies, I would hope that we never need to ask anyone to leave our Island.

## THE FUTURE OF OUR STRAND STREET SHOPPING?

There are so many complaints about the general state of Strand St as our main shopping centre, the dismal outlook, the weather, the attitude, the size of the rents making improvement difficult and so on.

While recognising that many shops have made great efforts to improve, perhaps it is time to give serious consideration to a dedicated Shopping Mall, this seems to be the way to go according to consumers in other Countries. The Government should consider this before spending millions on the regeneration of our Town centre only to find that People are still dissatisfied and the money has been wasted like so many other Grand Projects of our past Governments.

Would the Summerland site be suitable for a multi storey Mall? Preference could be given to current traders if that were deemed to be only fair. Strand St around Marks & Spencer would remain viable with the rest of the area being re developed for other businesses?

### Tesco

When Tesco was first proposed for Douglas, I was very much against the massive competition it would be for our then current traders but it has proved massively popular with the majority of shoppers, as has its plan to expand, that I feel it is only democratic to support it and its future plans, depending on a full impact study.

I do not feel that expansion should take place at its current site but, possibly, Cooil Road, again with a small cluster of 'specialist shops' on the same site, those that require being driven to for bulky items? I do not feel that this would impact on Strand St, as most people will drive to Tesco and then have little desire to then have a 'Trip into Town'?

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## MEANS TESTING

Invidious though this is, no one with a genuine need of Council Housing need have anything to fear from such a proposal, other than, that is, the intrusion into a persons private affairs. It would serve to satisfy the clamour from those who see it as an unfair advantage over those in the Private rental sector or those with mortgages to pay. I would suggest that a mortgage to buy is far more advantageous than renting, that the exorbitant rents in private renting need looking at.

## ABROGATION

We have been constantly told by past Governments that this would not be financially viable for us to pursue. If this is so, then we should be told exactly why and how this is so.

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

This is a very necessary piece of legislation but it is such a shame that we should need this for our Governments to inform us of what they are doing on our behalf.

## LOCAL ISSUES

There are many many Local issues in East Douglas. parking, congestion, Strand Street shopping area, facilities for our children and local health and education facilities.

On the doorstep, many People are recognising the urgent needs of National Policies but the above matters and the safety of our Children and Elderly from inconsiderate speeding on our streets, the dumping of rubbish in our back lanes and indeed our main streets are matters close to my heart.

To us residents of East Douglas these are very important and I will address these to the People on the doorstep and through literature to be delivered.

I will endeavour to see as many People that are available.

I can be contacted in the meantime on

**Mobile: 414 930**

If I am not available, Text and I will return your call.

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