

JOHN HOUGHTON

DOUGLAS NORTH



Dear Constituent

I have pleasure in offering you my manifesto in support of my candidature for a further term in the House of Keys.

I have outlined my views on many important issues of concern to people living in the Constituency and the Island.

There are many issues which need to be addressed in principal at National level and as always I am committed to assisting constituents with personal problems as they arise.

I pledge to continue to put 100% effort into representing your interests to the best of my ability at all times.

Yours sincerely

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

MAJOR ISSUES

The following are what I view as the principal issues facing the Island at this time. I apologise if I have only briefly addressed them in this manifesto. However, each issue will require careful consideration of all emerging facts and if re-elected I pledge to work together with other political members and professionals at officer level in order to reach a well thought through and considered strategy in each case before moving forward.

VAT SHARING AGREEMENT

I believe HM Treasury “forced the hand” of the IOM Authorities in reaching the present outcome. It was apparent that there is a lack of respect and understanding of the principals of negotiation when HM Treasury assumed responsibility from HM Revenue and Customs for the latest agreement. I believe we lack political allies in key areas in HM Treasury and elsewhere within the UK Government and future agreements will require professional assistance to support the Island’s negotiations to achieve a fair and positive outcome in order to protect our principal source of revenue.

TAXATION

Whilst personal income tax was recently raised to 20% (from 18%) for upper earnings and retaining the lower band at 10% may be sustainable, I believe we would harm the prospects of attracting high net worth individuals to the Island if the rates of taxation were further raised.

New water treatment plant in the heart of the constituency



I would therefore vote against any further increases in Tynwald

In 2006 the Treasury introduced its zero-ten regime for the taxation of companies which was considered at the time to be compliant with international standards with the European Community. Its introduction reduced the rates of income tax for many companies and excluded others from the requirement to pay income tax by reason of the zero rate.

European pressure was nevertheless put on the Treasury to reverse its policy and the “Attribution Regime for Individuals” (the ARI) was introduced which has itself been viewed by the European Code Group as a harmful taxation measure. The Treasury Minister announced in her budget speech in February this year that the ARI will be withdrawn after December 2012.

It appears that the European Union are finding fault with each initiative launched by the Treasury and a

considered approach requires to be introduced urgently to address taxation initiatives going forward.

Members of Tynwald have been contacted by an individual who is a former Assessor of Income Tax and have been provided with a comprehensive information paper setting out the Island’s current position. The paper recommends a high powered commission to be set up to advise the Council of Ministers and Tynwald on future taxation initiatives.

The membership of the proposed commission would include an expert on the various sources of tax revenues available to both national local governments together with an advisor who has previous experience with the European Code Group and who understands its culture.

I would support the implementation of a high powered commission on taxation



St. Ninian's Court



Road junction improvements at Hightonwood Hill

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Department of Economic Development must be adequately funded to “show case” the Island’s attractiveness to business sectors around the world. The Island’s reputation for attracting high quality business is well proven and provides a firm foundation for attracting new business and diversifying the economy.

I will work towards and support all appropriate initiatives to grow our economy in this area

LIGHT INDUSTRIES

There are a number of classic examples of industrial units operating on the Island. Some have been in existence for decades.

A modern and effective initiative to grow our light industry sector needs to be introduced which should be supported by subsidies and a fast track planning regime urgently put in place to promote the establishment of more light industries on the Island.

I would work towards and support all such initiatives to achieve this aim

CONTROL OF GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Much work has already taken place to reduce government spending in many areas.

The reduction in staffing must ideally be undertaken by natural wastage and redeployment rather than redundancy which in many cases can prove to be prohibitively expensive.

Government’s scope of services currently provided should be carefully considered before reductions are implemented.

I will not support any reductions in the health budget which needs to be maintained in order to properly care for our patients into the future.

I will continue to support the enhancement of education standards within the Department of Education and Children with prudent savings applied where necessary. It is vital that our students continue to receive financial support where appropriate to attend universities and colleges in the UK.

PUBLIC SECTOR PENSIONS

The government unified pension scheme is planned to come into effect on the 1st April 2012. Tynwald members will be included soon afterwards. This measure will reduce the liability to the tax payer over a significant period of time.

Negotiations are taking place with unions across all sectors of the public service to reach agreement on a phased implementation of contributions and associated criteria over a number of years.

National Insurance Fund - Pension Supplement

Actuarial advice dictates a reduction of investment income on the national insurance fund reserves due to the effects of the global financial crisis together with a greater draw down on the fund due to a greater number of pensioners living longer in retirement.

Qualifying beneficiaries must have worked on the Island for at least 10 years and be resident in the Island in order to receive the supplement which equates to 50% of the basic pension for married couples and pro rata for single people.

I have deep concerns that the Department for Social Care, after the general election may ask Tynwald to reduce the supplement payment in order to balance the income and expenditure of the fund.

Although the fund may be diminishing, living costs are escalating and our retired people must not be exposed to the risk of a reduction in their income.

I would not support a reduction in pension supplement unless a parallel scheme was introduced to maintain the present income provided by the pension supplement.

RECIPROCAL HEALTH AGREEMENT

I was one of only six members of Tynwald who consistently voted in the interests of our people and fought in Tynwald and at Government level throughout the recent disgraceful episode to maintain a reciprocal health agreement for the benefit of residents wishing to travel off Island.

It is pleasing to note people power brought about an acceptable resolution and common sense prevailed.

BILLS

I have moved the following bills through the keys:

GOVERNMENT BILLS: Pensions Bill. This bill sets up a public sector pensions’ authority to provide improved pensions administration and associated regulations going forward.

PRIVATE MEMBERS BILLS: Debt Recovery and Enforcement Bill. This Bill will improve the enforcement of debt recovery with the appointment of licensed debt collectors who will have powers to effectively pursue debtors following judgement and execution against them.

This bill has cleared the parliamentary process and is awaiting Royal Assent.

DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Since being elected in 1996, I have served on the following departments and boards:-

- DHSS. With responsibilities for social services
- Department of Education with responsibilities for youth services
- Office of Fair Trading. As a member of the board and its chairman
- Local Government and Environment. With responsibilities for environment, safety and health.
- I am currently chairman of the civil service commission.

TYNWALD SELECT COMMITTEES

Member of Kaupthing, Singer & Friedlander. This select committee has reported to Tynwald following hundreds of hours work dealing with thousands of documents, interviewing numerous witnesses and deliberating on all the evidence collected. This select committee has covered one of the most important issues to affect the Island.

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

I have served on the Governance committee.

IN THE CONSTITUENCY

I continue to work closely with my colleague Bill Henderson. By forging close links we are able to achieve effective results which are appreciated by our constituents.

A mid-term newsletter was published and delivered to our constituents to keep you informed of progress on important matters within the constituency.

An example of our joint efforts was the successful completion of the road improvement "splays" at the Hightonwood Hill road junction which has led to an enormous improvement for vehicles exiting the estate into Johnny Watterson's Lane.

NORTH DOUGLAS LIVE AT HOME SCHEME

This scheme is now up and running and is a success. It is based at Willaston Methodist Church. More volunteers are needed, so please contact me for further details if you would like to assist with this valuable scheme to assist the elderly and disabled in order to allow them to continue to live in our community.

OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACTIVITIES

- I am treasurer of the Willaston Youth Club
- I have been a karate instructor for 38 years at the IOM Karate Club and am the club's administrator and treasurer
- I am chairman of the Martial Arts Association
- I am a trustee and keen supporter of the Friends of the Manx Diabetic.
- I am a voluntary driving instructor

CONSTITUENCY SURGERIES

Bill Henderson and I operate weekly surgeries on an alternating basis.

John's surgery: Thursday mornings 10.30 to noon every 1st and 3rd Thursday in each month at Willaston Methodist Church.

Bill's surgery: Thursday evenings 6.30pm to 7.30pm every 2nd and 4th Thursday in each month (next door to Willaston Police Station)

There is an MHK available to meet you in person every week.

Can you help with the election on 29th September?

If so, please ring 628397 or email John.Houghton@gov.im. Thank you.

At the election you have two votes

Please vote for **John Houghton** X

Your independent candidate for Douglas North

If you require transport to the polling station on Thursday 29th September please ring 628397

Meet your candidates

In case I missed you while canvassing during the past few months I will be available at the Willaston Methodist Church on Saturday 24th September between 10am and 2pm to meet you personally to discuss my candidature and any other issues. Mr Henderson will also be present and looks forward to meeting you then.

Please feel free to drop in any time where you will be warmly welcomed. Thank you.