

JOHN HOUGHTON



DOUGLAS NORTH

House of Keys General Election · Thursday · 23 November · 2006

INTRODUCTION

Dear Constituent

I have pleasure in offering you my manifesto for my candidature for another 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 both nationally and in the constituency.

I will continue to put 100% effort into representing your interests at all times.

Yours sincerely



MANX ELECTRICITY AUTHORITY

This is an issue of extreme concern. The financial effects could affect the tax payer and electric consumers for many years.

Assistance for those who need it

Following news of the MEA unauthorised loans debacle, I moved a motion in Tynwald asking the Treasury to bring forward a special scheme to subsidise not only those people receiving benefits but to assist people who sit above the benefits threshold and as such do not receive any financial support from the Government.

My motion was amended by the Treasury Minister but Tynwald supported my proposal of providing financial assistance to those most affected by the increases in electricity bills. I await the arrival of an appropriate scheme from the Treasury and will continue to push for this to be brought forward.

14.5% Increase in tariff announcement on 1st September 2006

The MEA announced an increase in its charges with effect from 1st September. Following my intervention by asking the office of Fair Trading to investigate the real effect to consumers of imposing a retrospective charge, the MEA clarified the date of imposition will be for meters read on or after **1st December 2006!**

IMMIGRATION

I believe that the current lack of adequate monitoring and control of people from foreign lands coming into and remaining in the Island is the number one election issue. Constituents in North Douglas are voicing their real concerns and want to see early action taken to control the problem. Mr Henderson and myself were joined by only a few other members of Tynwald to highlight this serious issue in the last House.

I pledge to continue to pursue the Council of Ministers to consider adopting some if not all of the following proposals:

- Regulations to impose short term contracts which will deny any rights of residency following termination.
- Automatic registration of Immigrants who will be required to inform the Immigration Office of any changes of address, place of employment etc
- Failure to report arrival on the Island or changes of circumstances should lead to immediate expulsion.
- A maximum number of foreign immigrants to be set by Tynwald.
- Registration ID cards for each immigrant to be produced at the request of Police or Government Officials.
- An increase in the ten year period to elapse before eligibility to housing lists, benefits etc

At the eve of Romanian and Albanian acceptance into the membership of the EU which will place further strain on immigration in the UK we must therefore act **NOW** to control our borders.

LIVE AT HOME SCHEME

A scheme is being set up in North Douglas to provide support and friendship locally to those who are, or are at risk of becoming isolated or lonely. The scheme is a joint initiative between Social Services and the Methodist Church and is going to be offered to people of any denomination. Similar schemes have been successfully operating in Onchan and other areas on the Island and arrangements are well in advance for launching it in North Douglas. If you would like to help on a voluntary basis or if you know of anyone who you think is lonely or vulnerable please contact me. I would be delighted to hear from you.



NURSING CARE

I believe the time has come to bite the bullet with regard to the escalating costs of long term nursing care which is costing around £700 per week. Private patient's life savings are dwindling at a rapid rate. My philosophy is that the NHS should care for our people from the cradle to the grave. UK Case Law has caused a re-think on the ethics of this issue and I would support a phased implementation of NHS operated nursing care.

Previous administrations have let us down by closing NHS care of the elderly beds at the rate of around 200 placements over the last 20 years. As a result the private care operators have flourished.

In the interim I will support Government initiatives to cap fees or subsidise private patients who do not qualify for benefit.

HEALTH

As our Health Services continue to grow we must find savings throughout Government to meet this necessary commitment.

I will support:-

- Innovative ideas to cut waiting lists
- An independent system which encourages patients input into change.
- The continuing operation of a dedicated diabetic centre.
- An on-Island prosthetic team or twice weekly clinics which is a must
- Increased NHS dental facilities to eliminate current waiting lists.
- Enhanced orthodontic support to NHS patients.

FUTURE PRIVATE MEMBERS BILLS – DANGEROUS DOGS ACT

I am concerned that there is no legislation covering dangerous dogs. I have received many complaints from constituents regarding nasty natured dogs roaming at large. I will research the UK

Dangerous Dogs Act and assess the relevant points missing from IOM legislation with a view to bringing forward a Private Members Bill.



WASTE MANAGEMENT

Civic amenity sites around the Island are the ideal and most practical way of dealing with household and garden waste. I welcome the Department of Local Government and Environments decision to allow anyone to deliver waste to any civic amenity site on the Island.

More initiatives to support the reduction, reuse and recycling of materials should be pursued.

I was disappointed to note Douglas Corporation's premature withdrawal of its kerbside collection initiative in Governor's Hill. This service was developing well and many complaints were received from constituents who wanted the service to continue.

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

The conduct of the Council of Ministers when dealing with a number of issues during the last term leaves a lot to be desired.

Chief Minister Donald Gelling has publicly stated his Government's intention to move towards transparency. However the Council operates its business on a confidential basis. Therefore no one outside the "inner sanctum" is supposed to know what is being discussed. This leads to innuendo and speculation on many occasions. Ministers are sworn to secrecy, but if they breach the rules of CoMin they are guilty of an offence. No charges however, seem to be brought against Ministers found in breach. Such breaches of trust affect the interests of all who serve in CoMin but the Chief Minister appears to be powerless to act.

I will continue to pursue a more transparent approach from CoMin with ministers being more accountable to Tynwald for their actions.

THE EUROPEAN UNION

The relationship we have with the European Union falls under the Protocol 3. i.e. The U.K. Act of Accession 1972. The Island neither contributes to nor does it benefit from their budgetary provisions. Consequently Isle of Man farmers do not benefit from funding under the Common Agricultural Policy. We do however under the common customs territory of the Community have free movement of goods between the Island and the E.U. These

measures also relate to our agricultural goods which must follow the E.C. guidelines. We cannot discriminate in the way in which we treat peoples of E.U. member states.

This reflects the way in which we can allow people to come from the U.K. to work and live in the Island providing they have a work permit. The same rules also apply to the peoples of all other E.U. Member states.



Overall there is a generally accepted view that as the Island has a G.D.P. per capita higher than the E.U. there would be little to gain, and if we were a part of the E.U. we would be a net contributor to their overall budget.

Much has been spoken about the Common Travel Area. We are a part of this along with the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, and the Republic of Ireland. However, the Islands DHSS only has an agreement with the U.K. which allows for treatment in each others country. This is calculated on an annual basis and the balance has to be accounted for.

This Common Travel Area does not have any provision for the health care of Island residents travelling within the rest of the Common Travel Area or indeed continental Europe. It is important to holiday makers travelling to Europe to know that the E.I.I.I form or the European Health Card is not available to Isle of Man residents so it is strongly advisable to get sufficient private health care insurance before travelling.

PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITIES

I have asked a total of 370 questions during the 5 year term which covered many important topics.

I have also tabled 30 motions in Tynwald covering Government responsibilities, Private Members matters on behalf of Constituents and further motions reporting back to Tynwald where I presented reports of Select Committees which I had chaired.

I have spoken in many other debates and on many occasions I have "raised the game" when debating contentious issues which have in some instances caused some rather heated exchanges – all in the interests of transparency and democracy.

IN THE CONSTITUENCY

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

Bill and I have addressed numerous personal issues many of a serious nature to the satisfaction of our constituents.

In May this year we delivered a constituency report to all of our constituents. I have briefly summarised most items which have been addressed.

- **Road closures** – new crossing corridors
- **New prison** – not being built over Victoria Avenue and into Linden Grove
- **Noise nuisance from Isle of Man Creameries**
- **Laureston Grove and Close** – roads adopted
- **Constituency police station**
- **Public sector housing maintenance programmes**
- **Double glazing programme for Willaston**
- **Willaston heating programme**
- **Olympia re-roofing and heating programme**
- **Road repairs**
- **Footpath repairs and street lighting**
- **Planning issues affecting our quality of life**
- **Noble's Park drainage scheme**
- **Road safety issues**
- **Willaston Corner mini roundabout**
- **Zebra crossing near the new mini roundabout at Willaston Corner**
- **Puffin crossing to be situated near Mountain View – soon**
- **Road crossing patrol officer for Cronk-y-Berry School**
- **Regular police speed checks and traffic counts undertaken by MHK's**
- **Disc zones for parking – Hutchinson Square, Marathon Road, Princess Road, Homefield Close and Homefield Road.**
- **The adoption of roads and green open spaces at Governor's Hill estate**
- **The adoption of roads and footpaths for Abbeyfields**
- **Single, individual problems addressed and constituents helped**
- **Noble's Park anti-flooding scheme**
- **Flooding measures carried out at Governors Hill**
- **Assisting Abbeyfields residents**
- **Community recreational area on Watterson Lane**
- **Johnny Watterson's Lane first-time buyer/public sector housing scheme**
- **Ensure that adequate pedestrian crossing is in place**
- **Public housing maintenance programmes**
- **Footpath and street lighting upgrades**

BILLS

I have moved the following bills through the Keys:-

Government Bills

Property Service charges (Amendment) Bill
Tribunals Bill

Housing (Multi Occupancy) Bill

Private Members Bills

Noise Bill: dealing with domestic night time noise. This has been enacted and comes into operation on 1st January 2007

Sex Offenders Bill: will effect orders on Sex Offenders forbidding them access to places where vulnerable people may congregate

Small Claims Arbitration (Personal Representation) Bill: permits limited companies to submit claims to the small claims court without the service of an advocate

All of these bills have cleared the Parliamentary process and have since been enacted.



FINANCE SECTOR

The Island's National Taxation Strategy incorporates a number of measures, the most significant being a move to a standard zero rate of Corporate Tax which took effect on 6th April 2006.

The zero rate was brought in to assist e-gaming, tourist accommodation, film and television production, agriculture, fishing, manufacturing, insurance, shipping and fund management companies, all of which I am pleased support.

However, in the February budget 2006 a personal tax cap of £100,000 was introduced in order to attract more "high net worth" individuals to move to the Island. This was a bold and rather risky decision which I hope is successful.

The Treasury have adopted a professional approach to embrace these initiatives in particular, by developing a relocation programme and engaging high calibre personnel to meet and liaise with clients interested in moving to the Island.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Since being elected to the House of Keys in 1996 I have served on the following departments and boards:-

- Department of Health and Social Security with responsibilities for Social Services
- Department of Education with responsibility for youth activities
- Office of Fair Trading as a member of the board and its Chairman
- Department of Local Government and the Environment with responsibilities for environment, safety and health.
- I am currently Chairman of the Civil Service Commission

OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACTIVITIES

- I am Chairman and Treasurer of the Willaston Youth club.
- I am a Karate instructor with 33 continuous year's membership of the Isle of Man Karate club and am the club's administrator and treasurer.
- I am a Trustee and keen supporter of the "Friends of the Manx Diabetics Centre"
- I am a voluntary driving instructor

CONSTITUENCY SURGERIES

Bill Henderson and I operate surgeries on an alternating basis.

John's Surgery Thursday mornings 10am to noon every first and third Thursday in each month at Willaston Methodist Church and rent office.

Bill's Surgery Thursday evening 6.30 – 7.30pm every second and fourth Thursday in each month.

A surgery operates every week by your candidates.

*Can you help with the Election on 23rd November?
Please ring 628397 or email john.houghton@gov.im*

PLEASE VOTE FOR

JOHN HOUGHTON

Your Independent Candidate for Douglas North

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