

On November 23rd

STEVE BABB



Do you want....

A secure future for you, your family and the Island?

A Government that is more open and honest?

Ministers to be accountable for what they do and don't do?

Real affordable housing for first time buyers?

Local jobs for local graduates?

An immigration system that benefits everyone?

....I do

I am 34 years old, married to Louise with one daughter. I attended Onchan School, then High School in Douglas before heading to University in the UK to study business.

Louise and I were married in Onchan and both have family still living in the village, close to our home in Lakeside Gardens.

My family ran a retail business in Douglas for over 100 years where I worked whilst growing up, giving me a clear understanding of the difficulties faced by many small businesses on the Island.

I have run my own consultancy firm, working with some of the largest corporations in the UK on projects worth over £300m, and also worked in the finance sector here on the Island. I am currently employed as a Project Manager for the Water Authority, working on national infrastructure schemes with a value of over £25m.

My family is very important to me and like many parents Louise and I want to be sure that, when our children grow up, they will do so in a secure local economy that can provide opportunities and employment, enjoy a good quality of life and benefit from the wonderful and unique aspects of our Island's environment.

In short, we want our children to enjoy what we had as children.

As a community our future depends on making the right choices now, not just on the important local matters where it is essential national government works closely with local commissioners, but also on the bigger issues which affect us all.

On 23rd November, we have an opportunity to make an investment in all our futures, by choosing who will represent us for the next five years in the House of Keys.

I am hoping that, after you have read what I have to say here, you will feel I can represent your hopes for our future.

Steve Babb - Onchan's investment in the Island's future



I consider myself a Manx candidate, not simply because I was born on the Island, but because I choose to be an active member of this community.

Community is very important to me; it is the essence of this Island. I believe the Island's community extends beyond where individuals were born or where their parents come from. The Isle of Man has a long history of inclusivity, a proud history and one which adds to the quality of life here.

I believe those who have made the Island their home they deserve an equal share of the benefits we all enjoy. We must look at schemes such as the Manx pension supplement and consider grading it to reflect time spent working here. After all, it is the tax from all our incomes that pays our pensions in the future.

I am proud to be Manx, proud of my heritage, but I am just as proud of the community of the Island and its diversity.

The Government is an organisation with a turnover of several hundred million pounds, yet how much business experience do those who control it have?

I am currently employed as a Project Manager working on one of the largest public capital schemes on the Island, having had considerable experience of similar schemes in the UK.

Over the past few years I have been amazed and disappointed that time and again previous schemes on the Island have been allowed to go over budget, over time and worst of all simply not perform as we were told they would, without explanation. When have we seen reprimands being given to those in charge or those in Government who are responsible for reviewing Capital expenditure?

It worries me to think that the future plans for infrastructure investment on the Island could be created by Government departments who aren't forced to consult with each other, that they may be approved by Ministers with little or no training or experience in business, and that there is no obvious means of holding individuals or departments to account for the errors they make.

We have already seen the impact of the financial difficulties faced by the Government through the cancellation of new schools and the lack of available funds for other key investment in the next few years.

Above all though, we need a Government that is open and accountable.

In the UK the impact of legislation such as the Freedom of Information Act has already been seen. Through legislation such as this, Governments and civil servants are becoming increasingly accountable for their actions and failure to act.

I believe there **must** be a mechanism whereby those individuals we elect can be held accountable for their actions and inaction.

As an MHK I would welcome opportunities to liaise more closely with those people who elected me, not just once every five years when I am seeking re-election but on a regular and frequent basis, to make my weekly diary public, and to answer to an independent body overseeing the actions and inaction of Government with real powers of censure and to whom MHKs are accountable.

If a week is a long time in politics, five years is an eternity, especially if you are waiting to make a change.

Any successful business constantly plans for its future, be that five, ten, fifteen or more years ahead. The Government must do the same.

We need to consider how our economy will change over the next few years and put in place a framework that will encourage the private sector to flourish, one step ahead of the competition.

It is not only the economy that needs protection and careful planning, our environment also needs commitment now, to protect it into the future.

Elsewhere in Europe, individuals and organisations benefit from subsidies for the installation of equipment such as solar panels, solar tubes, and a wide range of energy-saving devices. Why are such subsidies not available here?

The Government should be helping us save money in the future, not sending us ever increasing bills.



A Manx candidate

Ministers with business experience

Accountable Ministers

Invest in the future

VOTE BABB

Real affordable housing

There is a real shortage of starter homes such as apartments and one bedroom houses available to buy on the island.

I believe the Government should build and manage properties such as these instead of permitting developers to produce small numbers for the open market.

In the UK, housing schemes and Government backed rent-to-buy schemes are becoming more common, benefitting those who want to get onto the property ladder but simply cannot afford to in the open market.



Ministers need to work more closely with local commissioners to develop a strategy that promotes partnership between national and local government.

Such schemes could be extended to include key workers particularly in those areas where recruiting the right staff to the Island has proven difficult.

Whilst work may be available, the cost of housing is prohibitive for many people when considering moving to the Island, especially for people with a single income. Surely it is to everyone's benefit to find a solution that encourages people with the key skills we are short of to move to the Island.

Local jobs for local graduates

This Island's education system is wonderfully supported, yet for some reason that investment stops short.

Having been a Manx student, I can appreciate the high quality of education on the Island. However, it strikes me that much of that money is wasted if there is not also a system supporting graduates to find work on the Island, using those newly acquired skills for the benefit of us all.

I would encourage a scheme whereby companies on the Island offering to subsidise the grants and who offer guaranteed employment for a minimum period after graduation can claim that investment back in tax credits. Such a system, which encourages greater communication and loyalty between employers and employees, benefits both parties.

Similarly, the Government must look at schemes to encourage local students to train in those areas where the Island has a skills shortfall, such as medicine, engineering and utilities.

It must work with local businesses to identify the future skills our economy will need and promote the right training in these areas.

Immigration and visas

Government figures show a population increase to around 90,000 in the next fifteen years. But that's based mainly on historical data, not the rising influx of people we are seeing from around the world, many of whom do not appear on the official census figures.

The Island's infrastructure can only cope with so much. IRIS is not yet completed, the water and electricity infrastructures are limited in their capacity, the Island's roads are already over capacity in some areas, demand in some housing sectors outstrips supply.

So what are we going to do to make sure this problem doesn't get worse? We must act before it is too late.

I would like to see the Government consider a proven immigration system for residency, such as those in Australia and Canada, which easily allows those people with the skills and experience the Island needs to move here, adding to and sharing the benefits we all enjoy, yet which gives us the controls to monitor who comes and who goes.

The current work permit system relies heavily on the honesty of participating organisations, ignoring the increasing pressures on them. Surely a better approach would be to address the permit issue at the point of entry, making it a level playing field for all employers on the Island after that.

By replacing the system, those people who qualify for residency can immediately add to the local economy, not simply drain from it. A realistic and flexible approach would allow the use of skilled workers for short periods of time instead of practices that encourage people to "bend the rules", and do so in a way that would fairly benefit small and large businesses alike.

In addition, we must take the opportunity to monitor our borders, to have a far greater knowledge of who enters and leaves the Island. At a time when countries such as the UK are looking carefully at who they can record to enters and leaves, we should use the limited number of routes in and out of the Island to our benefit. I do not believe we would be asking too much to require people to complete an entry card whilst travelling, to give us all greater peace of mind.

VOTE BABBB

All my life I have enjoyed sports, particularly on the Island. I have gained a great number of friends through sport and it has added greatly to my quality of life. Yet despite so many of us on the Island participating in sport, there is no single Minister or Department Member in Government with specific responsibility for sport.

Across the UK, schools and local authorities are harnessing the physical and social benefits of sport, yet here on the Island much of the success and enjoyment so many of us get from sport is provided by the hard work of relatively few individuals and through private as well as public funding.

I believe it is time for the importance of sport in our culture to be recognised and for the creation of a portfolio for sport to be given to either a new Minister or a single Member in the Department for Tourism and Leisure.



I believe good constituency MHKs focus on the needs of the people they represent before their own personal goals.

They must work with the local Commissioners to develop a strategy between national and local government, for the benefit of everyone.

It is their responsibility to consider how national policy will affect local issues and to act as a liaison between all parties. When policy is made, such as changes to taxation, nursing care, retirement age, then our local MHKs should take it upon themselves to be sure those messages are passed clearly to us, their constituents.

During their term of office, there will be local issues which our local MHKs must address, issues such as the Bemahague School, the rezoning of land for development, the provision of local health services, the creation of more leisure facilities and the promotion of local businesses.

They must be sure not to shirk these issues and use every effort to best represent the people of Onchan.

MHKs are in a unique position of being able to facilitate change, to help their constituencies and by doing so, to stay in touch with the people they represent, carrying their opinions back to Government.

I think it is essential that MHKs remember they have been chosen as a representative of their constituency and as such they should make every effort to make themselves available to their constituents, to listen to what people have to say and to communicate with the people who chose them.

To me, that is what politics is about: consideration, co-operation and communication.

I hope to meet as many of you as possible in person. Over the next few weeks I will be putting a card through your door to let you know when I will be in your area. By letting you know when I will be visiting, I hope you will have time to think about what I have to say and raise any other issues which concern you. If you are not available at that time then I hope you will contact me directly to arrange a time more suitable.

I also intend to arrange open surgeries in Onchan during the run up to the election, details of which will be given via the local press and on my website.

<http://www.babbfamily.co.uk/election2006.htm>

The website contains many more details about my policies and views on various topics, as well as my ongoing election diary.

Feel free to ring me at any time at home on 621321, or email me directly to stevebabb@manx.net

Thank you for taking the time to read what I have to say, I hope that I will be able to count on your support in the election on polling day, **November 23rd**