

- ✓ Value for money
- ✓ Accountability & Transparency
- ✓ Experienced, Local Candidate



VOTE WATTERSON

International Issues

Over my 10 years in Tynwald I have forged links with politicians across all parties in Westminster, around the devolved administrations, Channel Islands and further afield. It is important that these contacts and experience are used to ensure we get the best possible deal going into “Brexit” talks.

The Island is in the spotlight more than ever as we differentiate our well regulated international finance centre from those who do not adhere to international standards. It is essential that we continue to build on this reputation as a cornerstone of our economy.

Constitutional Change

I have supported a number of initiatives to reform our political system, and address the democratic deficit in both Legislative Council and Chief Minister elections. In response to Lord Lisvane’s call for evidence I recommended a solution that would allow for MLCs to be elected by the public in a national poll. The poll would also give a clear indication to the House of Keys as to who the people’s choice would be for Chief Minister.

Going for Growth

The Isle of Man economy is still performing well. It is a challenge to ensure that the Island’s economy continues to develop without significant and rapid immigration that could dilute our unique way of life. This is not an easy balance to strike, it involves work permit legislation, tax rates, and planning rules to mention three contentious areas. There is no simple answer.

We need to aim for highly skilled jobs across a range of skills sectors from finance to manufacturing, so that we can ensure good incomes for Manx families. At the heart of this is preparing our young people for working life; expanding the use of apprenticeships into IT, office administration, and engineering. These can be vocational routes, where our young people can get a foothold in the world of work and find new motivation to complete education.

While it is Government’s role to support businesses, monopoly providers should not be left unchecked.

“We should have effective legislation to prevent profiteering and artificially high prices by those with a dominant market share.”

Environment

As an individual, I regularly use public transport and, like many of you, try to save energy at home.

In Tynwald I have supported:

- Improved insulation and heating systems in public sector housing
- Installation of wood chip biomass heating in public sector developments
- First solar heating schemes on larger public sector housing
- Waiving of the planning fee for solar heating schemes

If I am re-elected, I would support a carrier bag tax, to help improve our environment, which will stay at the heart of my policy making for the sake of future generations.

Agriculture

UNESCO biosphere status means a real opportunity to grow the market for Manx produce, building on our excellent culinary reputation. Food security and support for local suppliers is essential for this vital industry.

Pensioners

I recognise the contribution that older people make in our society and seek to support them with my work in Government and in the local community.

During my time in Tynwald, I have ensured that every pensioner, whether single or married, at all income levels are 10% better off in cash terms than if they lived in the UK. If re-elected I will continue to ensure that pensions keep pace with inflation and that Manx pensioners, regardless of circumstances, have higher incomes than if they lived in the UK to compensate for our higher cost of living.

The creation of a Government ‘pensioners’ bond’ would also allow a better return on savings for those who have been prudent as well as providing money to invest into growing businesses or reforming services.

I will continue to campaign to change the law so that people never have to surrender their houses to fund their nursing care. I will never vote to withdraw the free bus passes for pensioners. I will support a rebate scheme of the TV license fee for our most vulnerable pensioners to ensure they do not lose their window on the world.

Local Issues

I have visited the house of every registered voter in Rushen during the campaign. The biggest local issues on the doorstep have been:

Roads

The biggest issue on the doorstep. Like you I have been frustrated by the waste of money. The DOI need to stick to the basics of mending roads, without creating grandiose schemes incorporating roundabouts and moving the horse trams off Douglas promenade.

Dilapidated buildings

Legislation will come into effect in October giving the Commissioners the powers to put improvement notices on unsightly properties, with a £50 per day penalty for non compliance. This is intended to stop the blight of these buildings in our community and provide a financial incentive for the owners to improve or develop them - or sell them to those who will.

Marine Biological Site

A prime redevelopment opportunity. Ideally I would like to see a Marina on the site, but I would support any scheme to bring employment and improve the area.

Rates & Commissioners

I would support a reduction in the number of commissioners per local authority and increasing regional collaboration, without losing the distinct identities of our ports. I am also in favour of rate reform based on capital values as well as a rates discount for single occupier households.

“Rushen is a great place to live, mainly due to our people. I have been proud to volunteer as Chairman of the Rushen Heritage Trust, Vice Chairman of the Port Erin Royal British Legion and Treasurer of Southern Befrienders. It is a privilege to support these great charities in bringing people together.”

Healthcare

Noble's hospital is full of dedicated staff doing their best in challenging circumstances.

However, there are improvements that can be made, such as:

- bringing specialists over to the Island to reduce the number of elderly patient transfers
- greater stability of staffing, ensuring a better continuity of care
- continuing to recruit, and train nurses on-Island
- reducing dependence on expensive locums
- using email and text messages for those who want it as opposed to everyone receiving posted appointments.

We must also remember that healthcare is not just Noble's. More community care should be provided, based around Southlands and Thie Rosien to reduce admissions to Noble's and ensuring a smooth transition from hospital to home. We need to ensure that the proper care is delivered right into the home with proper planning whether that be physiotherapy, domiciliary care or mental health support.

Public Services

Five years ago I said that we needed a smaller public sector and greater IT investment. Young people engage with Government in a very different way, often using Twitter and Facebook as well more than traditional channels. Just as we must not exclude those without access to the internet, we must still embrace those who get their information in new ways, making digital the default medium for those enrolling into the tax and other government systems for the first time. This will not only meet needs but improve efficiency.

During my time as Minister of Home Affairs, I have reduced costs by 25% across the Department, the central office has gone from a peak of 27 posts down to nine and we have still achieved high quality public services across prison, probation, fire and police. We are the safest place to live in the British Isles with crime at its lowest level since 1970. Government needs to stick to the basics and be cost-effective. I believe I have succeeded in this.

Public sector pensions will continue to be a major financial issue, and we must seek to make these more affordable without impacting our ability to recruit, especially nurses and teachers.

Criminal Justice

Having set out my vision in 2012, a lot has been done but there is more to do, such as:

- diverting young people away from a life of crime by guaranteeing the future of the Youth Justice Team
- reparations for criminals that cause damage as simple restorative justice
- more use of community service
- reform of sexual offences and licensing laws

Budget Reform and Good Governance

I have made progress in this area, Government's accounts are now far closer to international standards and there have been changes to how the budget is prepared and set out. We need to ensure our legislators have the time and training to get to grips with our national budget and accounts. They should be afforded the ability to propose costed amendments to the budget, and the budget and accounts should be subject to far greater parliamentary scrutiny.

I have been a supporter of the Freedom of Information Bill and support the need for a Tynwald Commissioner for Administration to establish greater confidence in our public institutions.

"I will continue to work for the people of Rushen and the Island with the same honesty, enthusiasm and commitment that I believe has characterised my work over the last ten years."

My Commitment

Ten years ago, you elected me to represent you and in my 2006 manifesto I promised:

- To always have the Isle of Man's best interests at heart
- To act with conscience
- To be honest and professional
- To tackle big issues and look at the long term
- To bring commercial awareness and a quest for value for money to Government

I feel I have achieved this, being a diligent full-time MHK, and have continued to address long term issues like energy, pensions and public spending. Despite being a Government Minister I have still continued my commitment to using public transport and made time to support events in the constituency and spend time with people face to face.

With your support, my next five years will be characterised by the same commitment and values.

If you require transport or an advance vote form, please contact me.

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