

HOUSE OF KEYS
BY-ELECTION

THURSDAY 10
SEPTEMBER 2015

CANDIDATE FOR
GLENFABA



David

TALBOT

Serving the Community

This is a special year in the life of our constituency as we celebrate the last twelve months of its existence before we merge with Peel in September 2016 as a result of boundary changes. I would consider it an honour if I was to serve as your MHK for this period, leading onto a strong presence in the enlarged constituency, when two MHK's will be elected to represent you. It should go without saying that whoever is elected at that time should have a good understanding of the West of the Isle of Man and be known both in the constituency and amongst Tynwald members for their service and ability to forge links to get things done. I have lived in Dalby for forty years in the same cottage with my wife and had two children who have benefited from our Island's rural lifestyle, and excellent health and educational systems.

In recent times, as we are all aware, the Island has had to face up to significant financial challenges. The reduction in VAT receipts when coupled with the downturn in business, exacerbated by the banking crisis of 2008, has meant that our cosy existence has been rocked to its foundations. Whilst you might say the extra cash previously generated by the VAT Sharing Agreement was always welcome, the capital expenditure that followed and the increase in government

staffing has left us with a legacy of high maintenance and pension costs which we are told 'we simply cannot afford any longer'. This has now led to the universal recognition that we need to assess our assumptions about how we generate income through taxation receipts and then how we use those receipts to pay for the front line government services. I remain optimistic that in spite of these challenges we will move forward if we adopt the appropriate policies.

The issues before us have remained the same for all jurisdictions that want to enjoy their culture and prosperity, now, and for the generations to follow, in what is a fiercely competitive world. These challenges can be summarised as follows:

- effectively grow the economy and reduce the size of government
- proudly and sustainably pass onto the next generation our national assets
- restoration of trust across all sectors of the Island

We are acutely aware that the rigidity of company income tax policy, where only bank and property rental profits are taxed, has led to increasing pressure to find other ways of collecting taxes or passing on costs. One example of this would be the pressure that has now fallen on the soft under belly of our taxation system, that of domestic rates, often without sufficient notice or debate. Whilst in recent times we have seen an improvement in communication, rates are nonetheless set to increase significantly as ratepayers are asked to bear the total costs of running the 'Energy from Waste' plant on a policy of 'user pays all'. Also the significant range of increases in road tax, sewage rate, social housing rentals and petty parking charges, to mention just a few, have collectively caused understandable anger and frustration.

What is our government proposing? It has produced a 'Vision2020' document on how we secure our future by growing the economy, balancing the budget and protecting the vulnerable. Also it has been recently announced by the Department of Economic Development that £50m will be taken from reserves and spent over the next five years to work with business to help develop and expand economic activity. How will people respond to this? On the one hand cynics will say that producing glossy brochures and throwing money at the problem will only mask the underlying systemic failings and silo mentality that is crippling our Island. Others may suggest that this is a brave attempt to rally all sectors to push harder to produce more from less and build a wider foundation for growth that we are proud to leave to the next generation.

As well as monitoring what is happening in the key areas of health and education, the following are the key policies and changes I would like to see implemented as soon as possible.

Economy

First of all we should listen to what the business community is saying and stop throwing up barriers. This is never truer than in the world of IT where we are falling behind other jurisdictions in implementing solutions to cyber crime and procurement challenges. The impression given is that we listen more to expensive off-Island consultants than the solutions offered by home grown talent.

Taxation

The perceived gap between the wealthy and the less well off has been tolerated as long as front line services are being delivered. However with the challenges outlined above there is bound to be social unrest unless more fairness and an equitable distribution of the taxation burden is pursued. This should include :-

- a) A widening the net of the 0/10 taxation policy for corporates
- b) Levying an additional rate on foreign owned 'out of town' retailers

Pensions

We should follow the Chamber of Commerce advice to move to a contribution based public sector pension rather than 'final salary'. If for whatever reason the 'final salary' basis has to remain then the pension should be based on an average of the last ten years earnings. The present deduction rate of 5% needs to be increased to a more sustainable level.



Sustainability

It is no easy task to derive a current dividend from our national assets whilst maintaining their security and value for those that follow us. We may be sceptical about some sustainability initiatives that have been brought forward in the past but we should be plotting the long term economic and environmental implications of what we consume. I welcome initiatives by EcoVannin which 'is a partnership between environmental NGOs and Government departments, with participation from business, private individuals and other organisations. It aims to initiate and support the type of sustainable activity that will benefit our economy, environment and society now and into the future'.

Restoration of trust

Where trust exists we can achieve change more quickly and equitably than where we have adopted a sceptical persona to whatever our political masters are telling us. Therefore three pieces of legislation I would want introducing are The Equality Act, Freedom of Information and updated Credit Union regulations. All of these measures are to do with embracing diversity, transparency and social inclusion. Each needs examining carefully so we can make a virtue out of our lateness in introducing them by looking at what has happened in practice across the water.



Local authority Reorganisation

Whilst serving as a member of Patrick Commissioners and chairman of the Isle of Man Municipal Association I have argued successfully that there is nothing to be gained by progressing with four regional authorities plus Douglas. It will lead in reality to more costs and a reduction in the quality of service. We have demonstrated that working regionally, whilst preserving our individual identities, produces value for money for the ratepayer. I am presently chairman

of the Western Housing Group which has sent to Government a business plan for managing all the social housing in the west of the Island including the Peel housing stock and Westlands. We have recently set our minds to establishing an area plan for the west which will inform Government of what we want for our region which includes the area from Dalby to Kirk Michael and out to Marown. We shouldn't wait for Government to tell us what we need as we should be central to the discussion.

Appointment of a Commissioner for Older People

There is much current debate about the costs associated with an aging population. In particular how we are to fund an increasing proportion of elderly folk as highlighted by the recent Ci65 report to Government which reviewed the Island's 'Social Security and National Insurance Schemes'. The rhetoric associated with this debate has left older people feeling a burden or a drain on society. Whilst I agree that something needs to be done we should recognise the huge contribution made by the 65's and over in producing considerable revenues in taxation not to mention the volunteering undertaken in looking after grandchildren whilst Mum and Dad are at work and providing most of the staffing for the 700 active charities around the Island. A recent report by WRVS in 2011 has shown that older people are net contributors to the economy. One of the biggest problems facing the elderly is that of loneliness. I would therefore like to see the appointment of a Commissioner for Older People who would act on

Constitutional Reform

Everybody seems to agree that we need to do something to change the archaic operation of the Legislative Council. It clearly cannot be right for unelected members to vote on policy and financial matters. No suggestions made however, including three attempts in the present parliament to either popularly elect its members or abolish it altogether, have succeeded. The fact that MHK candidates can vote for themselves against external candidates demonstrates the inequality of the process. I would therefore seek leave to introduce a private members bill to see the two houses kept apart, in other words the tri-cameral form of parliament brought to an end apart from perhaps ceremonial duties. The House of Keys and Legislative Council can then get on with their separate functions the former bringing forward legislation and the latter scrutinising it rigorously. With the matters dealt with, that will need to be settled to bring about this small step, other more radical reforms will subsequently be made easier.



their behalf as an interface with government policy of any kind, to improve their well being. This role could also be central in acting as a liaison with third sector organisations who now provide a significant part of our social care.

Social Inclusion

I have already highlighted the alarming increase of those outside the mainstream of society. We cannot ignore the rise in homelessness and those who are falling below the bread line. The formation of food banks on the Isle of Man would seem beyond belief to most residents. There are also a large number of financially excluded people who cannot participate in the sorts of financial products most will take for granted. For example in the UK over 11% of the population can't obtain a bank account. There is no reason to suspect that this is any different here. Over the last two years I have been chairing a committee to see the establishment of the Island's first credit union. Over 600 people have expressed an interest in joining a credit union once a licence has been obtained and our Credit Union Act of 1993 made 'fit for purpose'. It is a national scandal that the Island cannot facilitate its residents to join a credit union whilst Payday loan companies operate with ease. In Ireland 75% of economically active people are in credit unions. The figures for USA and Canada are 30% and 25% respectively. Needless to say if I am elected I will increase my campaign to see the Island's first credit union established and if necessary introduce relevant changes to existing legislation.

Communication with everyone in our constituency is important if your concerns are to be addressed. This can be facilitated by holding 'information evenings' and use of the internet as well as generally being available in the community to meet face to face. Our nation faces complex issues both home and abroad and I would bring together a network of individuals who have expertise that can be drawn upon. Working with German and Patrick Commissioners, whose services are often undervalued, would be essential to ensuring local issues are fully represented nationally where appropriate.

There are a number of examples in our constituency of initiatives that are in hand and some still on the drawing board:

- **Opening of a Knockaloe Heritage Centre in the old Patrick schoolroom as a research and exhibition area of the World War Internment Camp**
- **The Foxdale Clock Tower, presently owned by the Department of Health, needs to be restored and the garden area made good**
- **Development of a heritage area for St Johns village promoting Manx language and culture**

'Community' Matters

Historically the great value in Manx society has been the strength of the local community, the sense of caring for each other and for our surroundings. As the financial pressures on central Government mean a reappraisal of what they can afford to do, with the consequent rolling back of the 'nanny' state, there is opportunity for citizens to reflect on how they can contribute to their communities. Looking out for our neighbours and beach cleans are just two examples of what is already happening. The 'transfer of services' to Local Authorities will provide more opportunities for citizen involvement. It requires leadership and co-operation with Commissioners, voluntary organisations and households. If elected as your MHK I will work to act as a catalyst for this.

A watching brief needs to be kept on:

- **Knockaloe Farm.** Recent public meetings demonstrated the desire of the community to ensure that any changes to the usage of the site take into account its intended purpose - that of serving the needs of agriculture, community and education and certainly not turned into a housing estate or for a sewage treatment plant.
- **Health.** Listen carefully to the requirement of our health professionals in ensuring that appropriate health and social care services can be developed at the Peel Medical Centre.
- **The Royal Manx Agricultural Show.** Support for the farming community and Manx produce.
- **Neighbourhood Policing.** The continuing presence of a Police Station and members of the constabulary based in the West.
- **The Western Civic Amenity Site.** The continuing success of the Reuse and Recycle Policy (achieved 75% recycled material July '15).

Positions held & Qualifications

Fellow of Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (Past IOM Chairman)

Founder and Director of Talbot & Associates Ltd.
Past Director of Waltons Digital World

Trustee of Archibald Knox Society

Trustee of Cathedral Isle of Man

Founder and past trustee of Connect2Charity

Previous trustee of St Johns Mill.

Commissioner for Patrick Parish since 2008

Chairman of the Municipal Association
(2012 to 2014) currently Vice Chairman

Chairman of Western Housing Group

Former member of Police Advisory Board (as a
community representative) and
Government Overseas Marketing Committee

Tourist Board registered, self-catering unit which
achieved a Best Self Catering Award (2007).

Run up to the By-Election

Notwithstanding that by their very nature by-elections have a short run-up to Polling Day it is my intention to try and make contact with as many households as possible. I will be out and about in the constituency and as well as knocking on doors I will be contactable at the address below and will be holding 'Meet the Candidate' meetings in the constituency at times and venues I will circulate through the press and calling cards. I look forward to chatting with you about matters that concern you and initiatives you would like to see happen in the constituency.



If after reading this manifesto you would like to support my campaign, please display the enclosed small poster in your window

MAKE THE CROSS COUNT

**VOTE FOR TALBOT ON
10TH SEPTEMBER 2015**

to ensure that
GLENFABA
has the best chance of
a voice in the enlarged constituency.

David

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