## HOUSE OF KEYS GENERAL ELECTION - EAST DOUGLAS THURSDAY 23rd NOVEMBER 2006

# BRENDA CANNELL

# FOR AN OPEN AND RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT



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#### Dear Constituents,

A new Government will be formed following the General Election on 23rd November 2006.

One of the very first tasks for the newly elected House of Keys will be to select a new Chief Minister, someone whose leadership combines the strength, decisiveness and fairness necessary to determine a secure, sustainable, and buoyant economy for the Island's people. He or she will select a Council of Ministers who will each head up a Government Department.

This 'Cabinet' will need to work as a dynamic team, restoring the public's confidence through their readiness to be fully accountable for the working of Departments, ensuring greater scrutiny of public expenditure, policies and procedures.

They will need to work together effectively and efficiently in defence of the Islands reputation in a competitive, even hostile, economic world. More proactive, positive action is required, employing the lessons learned through past mistakes and making improvements in the systems of governance. To do this, the Council of Ministers will have to listen to the people and the members of the House of Keys when constructive criticisms are made.

With an effective team working for the benefit of ourselves and our Island we'll be able to enter the next five years with real hope and confidence.

Brenda Cannell

#### **Policies for the Future**

#### **Quality of Life**

In 2001 I called for residency controls following the passing of the Residency Act. At that time we had seen the arrival of an average of 850 new residents in each of the preceding four years. The Government's recent booklet 'Immigration in the Isle of Man - Frequently asked questions.' raises more questions than it answers. This is not good enough, people are concerned about the lack of control over population growth. The Government needs to win control over immigration within the next five years.

While it is important to continue to welcome highly skilled individuals to supplement our homegrown talent, we need to protect the employment opportunities of our own people, particularly graduates seeking to employ their hard won qualifications at home. We also need to ensure that population growth does not continue to outpace our ability to provide affordable housing, education, health, sewerage and other service infrastructures. For instance, the new provision of treated drinking water supplies can only accommodate a maximum population of 90,000 people; this figure is based on consumption remaining as it is today.

Government needs to publish targets for sustainable population growth and be bold and imaginative in applying the Regulations for Residency control.

SUCH REGULATIONS SHOULD GO OUT FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION NEXT YEAR.

#### **Law and Order**

Crime figures have risen this year with a marked increase in offences of violence and criminal damage. Greater police numbers are needed on our streets, with a particular emphasis on Douglas Promenade - the site of too much unruly and criminal activity over the years. A larger police presence supported by CCTV cameras would certainly benefit problem areas.

Police numbers have largely remained static over the last 5 years and there is often an inadequate deployment of police officers in the evenings and at weekends. People need to feel confident about their personal safety, as well as the safety of their homes, businesses and other property. They should also feel confident that crime is being detected and that those responsible are being brought to justice.

I support policies for maintaining law and order and protecting the public that ensure persons who are repeatedly convicted of serious criminal offences receive extended prison sentences. Properly structured rehabilitation programmes would be an essential part of such policies.

#### **Restoring Confidence**

Much work is required by the next Minister of Home Affairs to restore confidence and morale in the ranks of the Police force and this will take time and effort.. There has been much infighting, resulting in the loss of some very good, hard working officers over the last few years. **THIS MUST END** and the lost respect and support restored at all levels through the efforts of chief officers and the Department.

# Tywald Select Committee on Police Complaints

I have spent this last year on a Tynwald Select Committee examining the issue of the Police Complaints System. We've recommended that a totally independent method of hearing and assessing complaints be introduced (such as an Ombudsman scheme) to hear complaints made by the public and by officer against officer. Tynwald gave their unanimous support to these recommendations and the Department has been charged with coming forward next year with proposals to effect this change -

AN OMBUDSMAN SCHEME FOR CONSIDERING POLICE COMPLAINTS WILL GO SOME WAY TOWARD RESTORING PUBLIC AND POLICE CONFIDENCE.

#### Commission of Enquiry into the

#### **Care of Young People**

The recent tragic events have brought sharp focus on both the youth and community care and education systems. The Commission have made no less than 132 recommendations aimed at greater improvements in the way which we care for our younger generations. To date the Council of Ministers have approved only 5 of these recommendations with the remainder being under investigation and consideration by various Government Departments. Of real importance is that the Commission not only looked at the events leading up to these tragedies, they also considered the early days of a child's life and the ways in which we could improve our systems at an earlier stage of child development, in order to prevent, as far as is possible, such tragedies from occurring again.

This Enquiry was the third report received by the Government in a relatively short period. It is essential that all the recommendations be approved, even if some will take time to deliver in terms of making new Laws etc.

I WILL PURSUE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ALL THE ENQUIRY'S RECOMMENDATIONS .

#### **Health & Social Issues**

#### At What Cost?

The Department of Health and Social Security continues to struggle with its finances, which I believe is largely due to the costs of the new Nobles hospital far exceeding original targets. To date we still do not know the final figure for the construction of the hospital, the last estimation being £111.7 million.

The last budget saw an £8 million shortfall in the Departments overall revenue and what followed was the threat of ward and theatre closures. This was strongly resisted by Tynwald and a move was made to provide the necessary financial shortfall. The move was lost by a slim majority vote, with, surprisingly, M.H.Ks who serve on the Department voting against. The result of this financial crisis was the commissioning of PriceWaterhouse Coopers to look at the financial management of the Department by the Council of Ministers. They examined the costs of the health service in the Island, but TO DATE THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS HAVE REFUSED TO MAKE THIS REPORT PUBLIC. It is vital that such far reaching reports are published if we are to have a meaningful debate on retaining and enhancing the National Health Service.

### Tynwald Select Committee on **Health Service Complaint**

# Health Service Complaints Procedures

I was the Chairman of this committee following a Petition for Redress of Grievance where we examined the process and made recommendations to improve the system to make it easier and more transparent for those wishing to make a complaint regarding the treatment of themselves or their loved ones at Nobles Hospital - most of our recommendations where approved by Tynwald earlier this year which should realise improvements in this process for the public.

# Investigation into the cost of **Nursing and Residential Care**

The Office of Fair Trading, of which I am the Vice Chairman, was charged with looking in to the issue of charges for our elderly persons care in the Islands Residential and Nursing Care Homes - this was initiated following some Care Homes requesting an increase in charges for those who are paid for by Government through social security benefits. The investigation was conducted using a totally independent organisation from off Island who found that the proposed increase in charges was unfounded and should be resisted. Tynwald received this report in October this year and agreed unanimously to uphold its findings and a strong message was given

that the elderly people and their families should resist any increase in charges.

#### **Care in the Community**

It was interesting to note that one of the Report's recommendations was for the 'Care in the Community' scheme to be properly funded, enabling those elderly or frail persons who wish to reside at home to do so with the appropriate support - this was my policy in 2001 and it remains so.

#### **Grading System**

What is required is a form of 'Grading System' for the Islands privately run Residential and Nursing Care Homes, to provide a range of choice in terms of the quality of accommodation and the cost to the resident. It is essential that a prospective resident is provided with as much choice as possible before taking the decision to move from their homes to a Care Home.

#### The Coughlan Judgement

A case was recently considered in the high court in the U.K. and a judgement made to the effect that Government had an obligation to provide the 'nursing' element of a persons care FREE of charge in Residential and Nursing Homes. The Government here is currently considering this, and I'm in full support and keeping a close eye on progress.

#### Greater Choice for those with Learning Disabilities

I was pleased to report in 2001 the unanimous support for recommendations made by a Tynwald Select Committee which I Chaired, although some progress has been made there still remains much to do, particularly in the provision of a choice of accommodation opportunities. The Department has been slow to progress a Core and Cluster or Villagetype of accommodation which was one of the main recommendations of the Committee, however I am pleased that a private organisation have indicated that they wish to provide this type of accommodation and I am hopeful that the Department will give this initiative their full support and backing.

OUR SOCIETY SHOULD SEEK TO INCREASE, NOT LIMIT, THE RANGE OF CHOICES AVAILABLE TO DISABLED MEMBERS, FOR THE ABILITY TO CHOOSE IS SOMETHING WE ALL HOLD DEAR.

I gave my full support to the **DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT** during this term of office and I look forward to it coming into effect.

# Fairness in the Payment of the Manx Pension Supplement

The principle of this payment being based on contributions paid in the Isle of Man is supported. However, it is unfair that contributions for a period of less than 10 years should be totally disregarded. I would support another look at this issue to perhaps consider a way in which a payment may be made which reflects fewer years of paid contributions.

PENSIONERS ON A FIXED INCOME STRUGGLE, PARTICULARLY WHEN FACED WITH EVER INCREASING LIVING COSTS.

I remain Vice Chairman of the Tynwald Committee for the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons, and this has enabled me to keep in touch with many organisations and charities that have to deal with disability issues on a daily basis. I have recently become a Trustee of the charity REMAP which will design, engineer and build, free of charge, an adaptation or appliance required to improve the quality of life for a disabled person, provided that there isn't such an appliance already available on the market. All members of this charity give of their time and expertise free of charge.

#### **MEA Financial Crisis & Energy Issues**

### The Manx Electricity Authority Financial Crisis

There is no doubt that every household and business is feeling the effects of the increases in electricity charges with more increases on the way if we are to believe a statement attributed to the Treasury Minister in May 2005,

'that the MEA would fund new borrowings out of increases in tariffs over the next five years, or that selling off the power station to private enterprise, then leasing it back are options'

and that both should be considered by Government. In the words of my former colleague and friend Dominic Delaney:

"the latter is a a short-term fix and the first is a longterm wound."

The only way to prevent this financial burden from affecting people is to pay back what is owed using Government Reserves that stand at around £342.7 million according to the October 2006, Treasury news release. To do otherwise will create much hardship for those who cannot afford to pay and will inevitably lead to an increase in costs of Island services and businesses and will impact negatively on the Islands economy.

The Reserve Fund has been set-aside over the years for a rainy day and the downpours have already started.

#### **Fuel Poverty**

I initiated, as the Vice Chairman of the Office of Fair Trading a study which was undertaken, over a year ago, into whether the Island's people are suffering from Fuel Poverty. The results of that study found that if a person is spending more than 10% of their income on energy bills then that person can be said to be suffering from Fuel Poverty. The United Kingdom have a model for assessing these facts which was used in our study, however once the report was presented to the Council of Ministers it became a political hot potato and has been bounced from one Committee to another with neither Committee nor Minister wanting to take responsibility for the Reports findings. Worthy of note is that the study found that it isn't just those who live on benefits who suffer but other categories of people as well, including those who live on a fixed income, single families and single people. What is required now is for the Report and its findings to be taken seriously and measures put in place to help those who struggle to pay their energy bills.

#### **Energy Conservation Measures**

It is pleasing to note that Tynwald has just recently approved greater assistance being made available to help those who wish to install energy efficiency solutions to help keep their homes warm and dry. In addition grants are to be made available to those wishing to employ renewable energy solutions in their homes, although the grant is only small, 25% of actual cost, it is the beginning of new GREEN thinking within Government and must be encouraged.

I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A SUPPORTER OF ENERGY CONSERVATION MEASURES AND RENEWABLE ENERGY SOLUTIONS.

#### The Youth of today

#### 16-year-olds can now VOTE

I supported the introduction of the new Law which enables 16-year-olds to vote in this and future Elections in the Island. The sooner our younger generation understands politics and the working of Government the better, as every Law made or Order passed will effect them now and in the future.

As adults we often struggle when trying to resolve young peoples issues in terms of their leisure facilities, abuse of alcohol and drugs, road offences and, on occasion, unruly behaviour. As a mother of two sons aged 19 and 20, my experience is that the only way to resolve these matters is to engage the young people themselves in the discussions and decisions regarding future policies.

#### **Engage with young people**

Over the last few years I've enjoyed taking groups of 15, 16 and 17 year olds from St Ninians High School around the House of Keys and Tynwald Chambers and providing them with information on the political systems we employ. It would be fair to say that I have never attempted to give our young people a history lesson, a task best left to their teachers, but have provided my version of the way things really work in politics today in the Isle of Man. These tours have proved popular and it is heart warming to see their enthusiasm demonstrated by the many and varied questions they ask once the process is understood.

#### **A Youth Commission**

At 16 years and over our youngsters can join the armed forces to defend their country, they can marry and have children, and they can also work and pay taxes. Therefore it is only right and just that they have a vote and a voice in the formation of policies for their future. What is needed now is the setting up of a YOUTH COMMISSION.

Such a Commission must embrace the problems associated with drug and alcohol abuse and seek to provide both medium and long term policies which will encourage parental skills, the mapping of child development, education, a healthy diet and an improvement in their recreational facilities. The Commission must involve young people themselves, as their voice must be heard by Government if we are to encourage a sharing caring society for the future.

#### **Supporting our Students**

I have been privileged to serve on the **Department** of Education's Student Awards Appeal Panel as Chairman for the last couple of years, having held this post during my previous term in the House of Keys. We should feel proud of the achievements of our young people, which often results in good College and University degrees. Last year the Department supported over 1500 young people by either paying their fees or providing grant support to a sum of over £9 million. I wish to see this investment continue and would fight to ensure that all fees continue to be met by Government.

There should be greater employment opportunities provided for when our students return home. One way of achieving this would be to change the Civil Service policy of requiring a graduate to have a minimum of 2 years administrative experience before being eligible to apply for a job here. This policy is ridiculous, if ever there was a time to engage our own young professional people in the Civil Service it is now, when fresh thinking and enthusiasm is needed.

#### **Student Rates for Travel**

Special Student Travel rates should be introduced for our students to offset the cost of travel and transport to and from the Island, whether by sea or air. In addition, I wish to see special student rates for access to all the Island's leisure facilities and student discounts in the Islands shops when purchasing certain items connected with their studies. The U.K acknowledges the importance of the increase in business brought by those studying in Colleges and Universities and offers such financial inducements. Why should we be treating our students any differently when they are the customers of the future?

I STILL REMAIN OF THE VIEW THAT AS MANY SPORTING ACTIVITIES AS POSSIBLE SHOULD BE AVAILABLE FREE TO THOSE UNDER 16 YEARS OLD - HEALTHY BODIES-HEALTH MINDS.

#### **Nursery Education**

In 2001 I called for greater provision to be made for state run pre-school nurseries. I am pleased to report that the policy of the Department of Education is now to provide wherever there is a need. The Department has acknowledged that there is an urgent need within Douglas and provision will be made on a phased basis whenever a primary school can identify the necessary space and demand.

#### **Healthy Environment**

#### **Waste Charges**

I opposed the introduction of waste charges to be levied on to ratepayers, which has historically been paid for through taxation. The current domestic rate system does not take into account a person's ability to pay, whereas taxes do. The sooner this charge is shifted back to taxation the better for all concerned.

#### **Kerbside Collection of Waste**

I initiated this policy that was supported in Tynwald. What followed was a pilot scheme undertaken by the Douglas Corporation with support from Government. The scheme proved to be a success and the Department of Local Government and the Environment are currently assessing and evaluating the scheme. It is my hope that as the scheme has been shown to be a success that the provision of collection of recyclable waste will continue Island wide.

I HAVE ALWAYS ACTIVELY SUPPORTED REDUCE, REUSE AND RECYCLE.

#### **Harmful Emissions**

As a priority, the Government must ensure greater emphasis on the efficient monitoring of air, water and soil, to ensure that the harmful emissions do not contaminate the air we breathe and the food we eat - leading to serious health problems.

At the October sitting of Tynwald a strategy for reducing harmful emissions to our atmosphere was debated and approved - although in support of this initiative I am bitterly disappointed with the lack of any form of targets or details on how such reductions can be made.

IT WILL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT TO FORMULATE POLICIES TO EFFECT THESE REDUCTIONS.

#### The Numbers Game

The House of Keys has a membership of 24 publicly elected individuals who meet in the Keys to consider new and amended Laws, raise Questions on matters of public concern and probe and test the Government. Once a month they meet in Tynwald Court together with the Legislative Council, which has a membership of 9 individuals, to consider policy, Government expenditure and Motions for debate on issues of public importance, and to raise questions for answer by Government.

The magic number needed to pass or block an issue with a vote is 13 in the House of Keys and 18 in Tynwald Court. On very rare occasions the Government has been defeated, but all too often they have had a narrow win despite there being great opposition in the House of Keys.

The problem lies in the fact that every member of Keys and the Legislative Council is provided with a Government job, which leaves no effective opposition to the Government save for a small number of Keys members who have dared to show their mettle.

One way of resolving this situation would be for there to be only 1 Minister, together with a deputy, to head up each Government Department, leaving the remainder of the membership free to probe, test and scrutinise Government policy and expenditure.

The members of the Legislative Council must be elected by the public, and not, as is present practise,

by the members of the House of Keys. There is a need to be fully accountable for the fact that they enjoy the same pay, benefits and privileges as Keys members but are not accountable to the public for the way in which they exercise their vote on matters which effect the public purse.

NO TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION.

# Select Committee on **Legislative Reform**

During the last 10 years I've served on two Select Committees addressing this issue, with the second one proposing the new Law that requires the Legislative Council to be publicly elected. Once the House of Keys considered and passed this new Law it was sent up to the Legislative Council for their consideration, where, under their rules of scrutiny, it remained for a considerable period until they ran out of time to pass it, and it was returned to the Keys. This was the first time in the Manx political history that the Keys, by a majority vote, had supported a new Law to change the Legislative Council but the Legislative Council predictably rejected it.

TURKEYS NOT VOTING FOR CHRISTMAS SPRINGS TO MIND! However, such a change is still needed if we are to move towards greater democracy in the future.

#### **Constituency Matters**

#### **Traffic Management**

Sadly, traffic is an ever increasing problem for Douglas, particularly Douglas East - the Town centre. The Department of Transport has consistently failed to address the problems associated with heavy traffic and car parking in our residential areas, and is inept at controlling the regulations within Disc Parking areas.

Valuable suggestions have been made over the last few years which would alleviate these problems, eg: extending hours of operation for Disc Parking areas from 8am to 8pm. Monday to Saturday inclusive; making better provision for promenade car parking with 'herringbone' parking on the seaward side opposite Strathallan to maximise parking space; developing the Summerland site as a multi storey car park for business and commuter traffic travelling into Douglas from the north, together with a park & ride facility. All these suggestions would go some way towards solving our continuing congestion problems.

# Improved Standards in Public & Private Sector Housing

Improvements have been made to some public sector housing with the installation of double-glazing and central heating. This October Tynwald approved the next project which is to assess these properties for energy efficiency in the form of improved insulation, draught exclusion, low energy boilers and light bulbs. This work may take some time to complete.

#### **Housing Associations**

There is still a need for Housing Associations to be grant aided by Government. This would provide accommodation at an economic rent, and tenants would have the right to purchase at a price which takes into account rent paid at a later date - this is still Tynwald policy but to date Ministers have failed to bring in the new Law for the setting up of Housing Associations. This initiative would go some way to assisting young families and single people to get onto the property ladder.

#### **New Housing Bill**

During my brief time on the Department of Local Government & Environment I initiated a new Housing Bill which is in its final draft form. This Bill would provide flat dwellers, who either rent or lease, with the power to set up a Management Company to oversee repairs and maintenance, or alternatively, with the option to buy out a landlord's interest should they fail to fulfil their obligations. This Law is already in force in the U.K. and it would be my intention to ensure that it comes in to force in the Isle of Man. The

Department is willing to bring this new Bill forward in the next term and I would be more than willing to take it through the House of Keys.

#### The Hospitality Industry

Douglas East provides the greatest number of tourism accommodation facilities such as Hotels, Guest Houses and Self Catering establishments. The number has been dwindling over the years due to replacement with apartment developments - there is a vital need to establish under planning law special DESIGNATED TOURISM AREAS to prevent any further erosion of available facilities.

#### **T.T. Centenary Celebrations**

With the approach of the T.T. Centenary in 2007, the admission by the Tourism Department that we are presently struggling to meet the demand for bed space during the T.T. period demonstrates the absence of an appropriate tourism policy over the years. The only short term option now available is to encourage as many householders as possible to accommodate the flood of T.T. visitors, and also to encourage schools, normally closed at this time, together with Church Halls, to provide bed and breakfast facilities.

#### **Events all year round**

The Department needs to encourage and organise events which will enable the tourism sector to operate all year round, rather than continuing to focus on the summer season. If we want to preserve a Tourism Industry a fresh look is needed in order to form new policies for a tourism revival. Millions of holidaymakers would love to visit our beautiful, peaceful Island, and we must continue to seek ways of competing in the tough marketplace.

#### **Pubs Clubs and Bars**

Many of our hospitality facilities may be forced to close if the new LAW ON SMOKING IN ENCLOSED PUBLIC SPACES does not provide for some flexibility in the Regulations (yet to be drafted). Negotiations are under way with the Government Analyst to agree a protocol for the testing of brand new technology which claims to remove harmful tobacco emissions from the atmosphere. Trials would be carried out in three of the Islands smokiest pubs. If the technology proved successfull, I would then support provision being made in the Regulations for its introduction into certain Pubs, Clubs and Bars throughout the Island. If we can manage this problem in a non-discriminatory way I believe we should do so for the benefit of those persons who do not smoke and to satisfy those who choose to do so.

#### **Political Responsibilities**

#### Department Membership

Served as a Member of the Departments of Transport, Local Government and the Environment, Education.

#### Chairman IOM Water Authority 2002 - 2004.

I was responsible for building a new water treatment facility in Sulby at a cost of £15.3 within budget and completed on time. Securing planning consent for a new water treatment facility in Douglas at a cost of £26.5.

#### Chairman Planning Committee 2004 - 2005.

Secured changes to the method the Committee considers planning applications, allowing them to be heard in public, - as recommended by the Commission of Enquiry into Mount Murray.

#### Vice Chairman of the Office of Fair Trading.

#### Parliamentary Select-Committees

- Rate burden on single occupants.
- Castletown and Ballasalla sub post offices.
- The Cook Petition.
- · Villa Marina Staff.
- John Michael Leather.
- Health Complaints Procedures.
- Police Complaints Procedures.

#### Parliamentary Standing-Committees

- Economic Initiatives.
- Chronically Sick & Disabled Persons -Vice Chairman.

#### Motions for Debate initiated by me

• To approve all the recommendations of the Commission of Enquiry in to the Care of Young People, and produce a progress report - June 2006.

- The HMI Probation Service Report.
- To help those on fixed incomes with energy costs.
- Villa Marina Shops current tenants should have first refusal to return when refurbishment complete.
- Avian Flue Virus treatment for all Island residents.
- No charge to be made on domestic rates for the costs of waste disposal.

# Motions for Debate which I supported during the last 5 years

- Not all members to hold posts within Government.
- Residency Control, calling for a progress report.
- Mount Murray Commission of Enquiry and the misleading of certain Ministers.
- Private sector housing rent subsidy for tenants.
- Young people in care, the options.
- Residency control, calling for a public referendum.
- Government Reserve Fund losses of £138.4 million.
- Separation of Social Services from the Department of Health & Social Security.
- Mount Murray Commission of Enquiry calling for approval of all recommendations.
- Tourism Development Grant allegations to be referred to the Standing Committee on Members Standards & Interests.
- Change of Lieutenant Governor's name I opposed.
- Smoking in enclosed public spaces calling for regulations to enable licensed premises to provide smoking areas subject to tight controls on air quality.
- M.E.A. Treasury to reveal true financial figures.
- Penal Policy review.
- Cheshire Police and missing papers from Chief Minister's safe.
- M.E.A. request for a Commission of Inquiry .
- Public election of the next Chief Minister.
- Reform of the Legislative Council.
- Children & young people in care.

My sincere thanks to you all for your invaluable support and encouragement throughout the last ten years, it has been an honour and privilege to serve you. I hope that we can continue our good working relationship in the future and that you will once again place your trust in me to represent you in the House of Keys.

In Douglas East you have two votes to cast as there are two seats to be filled, but you can 'plump' by casting just one vote for your preferred candidate. The choice is yours. I ask you to cast your vote for me, a woman who will continue to work hard for the constituency with a 100% commitment to fully representing your views with openness & honesty.

#### PLEASE VOTE

**CANNELL**, Brenda



#### **Committee Room:**

Salisbury Street Church, Salisbury St. / Farrant St., Douglas.

If you need transport to the Polling Station please phone 620410, **OR:** on Election Day phone 456952.