



BRIAN STOWELL

I have lived in Onchan for all of my 54 years - almost 30 of them with my wife Tina who is a teacher at Anagh Coar School. I have two sons - Aaron is 28 and works for UBS Bank in the City of London and Luke who is 10 and a pupil at Ashley Hill School.

I have been in private business throughout my working life and have been responsible for the day to day running and management of several companies; I have also overseen a number of prominent and sizeable developments. I now own and operate the Glenville Farm and Livery Yard on the Scollag Road. I also own a portfolio of properties which I administer - primarily in the domestic sector. I am a serving member on the Board of Onchan Commissioners, Chairman of the Leisure and Amenities Committee and a serving member of the Policy and Finance Committee.

Like many people in our Island, I have benefited from the relative prosperity of recent years, but I have become increasingly concerned that beneath the gloss our government is storing up a wealth of problems for the future. Seemingly uncontrolled spending, lacking financial reserves, immigration, the relentless growth of the civil service and an apparent indifference to rising levels of crime worry me greatly, and I believe my fears are shared by many people from all sections of our community.

In business I have had to demonstrate common sense, courage, integrity, and the rhetorical skills necessary to state my case with clarity and conviction. As an independent candidate I am not required to obediently follow any party line, and it is my promise to you that if I am elected, I will undoubtedly make my voice heard on your behalf.

IMMIGRATION



I love our Island and I love living here. I want our children to love it here, but it has to be recognised that we are a very small and vulnerable nation. As things stand, the quality of life here is very good, but the future is uncertain. The better the quality of life is here, the more attractive it is, as a haven, to the less fortunate individuals throughout the world. Next year, two more Countries will join the EU, and about 50 million more "Europeans" will have "*the right of freedom of movement*". The Residence Act was in the headlines for some time but seems to have evaporated now that it is needed, it should be progressed as a matter of urgency, and implemented with enthusiasm.

We are all aware of the need for Work Permits; however it must also be recognised that a permit is not required to reside, only to work, and that "Protocol 3" demands

"That the Isle of Man Authorities shall apply the same treatment to all natural and legal persons of the Union".

Our work permit requirements may once again be challenged in Court or worse yet invalidated by the residency act, so it follows, that we have to be certain of our position, and have a contingency plan in place just in case they are deemed unlawful. I am very proud to claim my Manx heritage is traceable for over 900 years; however my mother could be described as being a stop over. I am not a racist; just a realist. I believe that to allow our culture to be erased or over-diluted would be a tragedy. Throughout history there have been many examples where the indigenous population have been obliterated by immigrants, and we must be as vigilant as any other nation in the control of our borders.

earned by people over a lifetime can simply be vacuumed away from them by the state. I refer to the elderly people who for reasons of ill health or incapacity are no longer able to care for themselves in their own homes, and have to enter residential care. Under the current system, government can recover the cost of care by forcing the sale of any assets, such as the family home. What greater disincentive can there be for the concept of saving up for your security in your twilight years?

It is wrong both legally and morally for the elderly to have to pay for nursing care in a residential setting. I have always believed that by law nursing care is provided free of charge at the point of delivery. This is not happening today. What we actually have is a disguised form of inheritance tax which robs the elderly and their families of their hard earned savings. I am aware that The DHSS has recently proposed some form of limited assistance for nursing home fees in the future but I believe this is too little and too late. We should look to provide free nursing care for all our people whether that is in a hospital or a care home.

GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE



For a small Island we have a mighty large political structure. On a national level I support the principle of a ministerial system, but with a couple of provisos. Firstly I am fundamentally opposed to the enforcement by the Council of Ministers of the block vote. It is at best undemocratic, and at worst an abuse of parliament. A minority must not have the power to force through contentious policies.

When the ministerial system was set up, I presume that the number of Ministers including the Chief Minister was set at ten, so that it would not have absolute power. But that does not take into account the members of departments or the “want to be ministers”, who seem to blindly vote with the Council, presumably in the hope of being invited to join them in the fullness of time. I fully support a review that would go some way to restoring the proper democratic process.

Whilst I favour the retention of the Legislative Council as an important second scrutinizing body, I believe that all the members should be popularly elected and accountable to the people for their actions.

At local government level I am in the reformist camp. The current system is not generating interest among the electorate - it is inefficient, expensive and under-utilised. Local authorities should have a far greater role in the day to day issues that affect people. The problems at Port St Mary produced an exaggerated knee-jerk reaction and resulted in the further emasculation of local authorities by central government.

AGRICULTURE



The Isle of Man can never be a major player. I think there is consensus in the agricultural community that to survive the sector must become more and more specialised with all government subsidies channelled into the production of high quality niche products. The creamery is leading the way in this area with its speciality cheeses. I support the current radical re-think taking place in the industry. Experience has shown time and time again that subsidies do not work long term. The likely end to the existing meat derogation in 2010 is a stern test of the industry’s resolve. Our government, while encouraging change and modernisation, must also do its utmost to protect our local farmers, and our consumers, from a flood of food products from places where inferior production standards prevail. It also has to be said that I do not agree with any form of Country Stewardship annual grant. It is not a realistic way forward to turn our farmers into gentleman gardeners. The production of “Bio Fuels” may offer some salvation and be desirable from an environmental stand point so this must be fully investigated.



HOUSING



The Local Authority Housing structure needs a radical shake-up. DOLGE’s figures show that there is currently a shortfall of around £100 per week on each property in the sector. We must address the issue of how we allocate houses and stamp out abuse of the system. This must involve a carrot and stick approach. Whilst I appreciate our existing tenants have homes for life, new families allocated public sector houses in the future must be provided with incentives to help them get a foot on the property ladder. They should also be required to re-apply every five years at which point their current income and circumstances must be declared. If they then fail to meet the established criteria they should be given a time frame and incentive to find alternative accommodation in the private sector.



EDUCATION

If ever there was an area of policy we have to get right this is it and funding must be available. Sadly it would appear we are losing the plot. I don't question the commitment of our government to the education of our children but unfortunately there are many improvements we could make - many of them without financial implications. The current system is overly bureaucratic. Too much time is spent trying to pigeon hole our children, rather than cater for their individual needs. Yes there must be controls on teachers, but the truth is that good teachers are being driven away from the profession through frustration at the rigid structures in which they must operate.

At Higher Education level we must always avoid insular thinking. Students must be encouraged to take up university places and experience life away from our shores, as that is in itself, an important part of their personal development. For our young people to contribute to our future it is good that they experience life elsewhere if they are to apply a true sense of perspective. Our youth are our most valuable resource, and if we are to attract new businesses, our graduates must be educated to the highest possible standards. Similarly further education must be actively encouraged across the generations, to ensure the most adaptable work force possible in order that we can quickly adapt to any market changes.

LAW AND ORDER

I must admit to finding it difficult to summarise my policies into distinct categories. There are many issues which overlap, and in the case of law and order, we are bordering on many of the fundamental areas that are woven into the fabric of our community. For a society to function it must deliver to its citizens a good education, health and security. In dealing with crime we must move away from the pervasive effects of political correctness. Our penal system must respect the victims of crime, and deter those who perpetrate it. Sadly it seems that we have moved away from short sharp shock, in favour of a gentle introduction into a life of crime. To change the tide we must begin with our young people. Having nothing to do is not an excuse for vandalism or anti-social behaviour. Providing supervised facilities is not the panacea to all our problems. At Onchan Commissioners we have invested over £100,000 on the Kenyon's cafe project with only limited success. More meeting places which are not outwardly 'organised' would be more acceptable to young people. But this must go hand in hand with a zero tolerance of any anti-social behaviour. Young people need support and encouragement, but they must be made aware that there are lines they must not cross. Stepping over those lines has to result in meaningful punishment.

Too often we follow examples that have been set by the UK, despite the obvious fact that the UK is a poor role model. Our island community should make the concept of zero crime more achievable. In all areas we should be setting new standards that the rest of the world will look to as an example, rather than repeatedly following the policies that are visibly failing elsewhere. I understand the need for a human rights policy, but it has to be applied to all our citizens. The pendulum has rightly swung away from the draconian penalties of the past, but it has swung too far. The proper funding of our Police force is essential, and those who administer the law must not be forced to work with one hand tied behind their backs.

HEALTH

In terms of our government's budget, health takes the Lion's share. But despite the huge sums allocated, there remain many glaring problems. We must go back to basics and assess our health provision, not from the financial viewpoint, but at the level of care. The system must include accountability at all levels - not least the Civil Service. In the private sector you are under constant scrutiny and accountability - why should the public sector be any different? We must strive to restore the 'vocation' concept to a career in health, and provide those who commit themselves to such a life with proper incentives. Dentistry provision in recent years has been a disgrace, and our children will undoubtedly suffer the consequences of our failings.

How a society treats its senior citizens is a reflection of its true health and sadly, here we are falling short in many areas. I point the finger of blame at Government for one of the most blatant injustices. I believe it is abhorrent that all the wealth



Making that first step towards buying a home has always been difficult and expensive, and I do not accept that in relative terms it is hugely different today than it was in the past. The difference is that many of those starting out already carry large debts - student loans or credit cards for example. We must liberate Local Authority houses for the families that genuinely need them.

MANX ELECTRICITY AUTHORITY



It seems a little bizarre to include the provider of electricity within a general policy manifesto. But such is the scale of the calamity at the MEA that it's likely to be at the centre of Manx politics for many years to come. People must be held accountable for what has happened. Since I left school I have witnessed the building of new power stations in Ramsey and Peel, two refurbishments of the Pulrose power station, an undersea power cable linking us to the UK, in addition to the Energy from Waste plant at Richmond Hill. If you divide the £400 million cost by the working population of the Isle of Man then the result is as simple as it is obvious - the most expensive energy in Europe. Treasury have, once again, avoided disaster by simply delaying the repayment of the huge loan, and we will now pay the interest only until about 2038. Does this all add up to financial mismanagement? I'll let you be the judge. Hopefully future government administrations will do the same.

TRANSPORT



For an Island not to control its feeder network is a major folly. In terms of the Steam Packet we have well and truly missed the boat. The company has been allowed to drift away from our control completely. My instincts tend to steer me away from the principles of nationalisation, but with something as fundamental as our Island lifeline, I believe that our government must take every opportunity to rein back control, perhaps through state ownership. We have walked into this current scenario and backtracking will be difficult. However we must be dynamic and re-gain any degree of control at every opportunity.

Our air links are also in quite a precarious state. From an economic perspective it is essential to strengthen and protect our London routes. Whether this is through Government buying landing slots at London City Airport or waiving landing charges here, we must be proactive in protecting our economic lifelines.

Clearly it is impossible in a manifesto to enter into too much detail, but after reading this document if you have anything you would like to discuss with me further, I would be more than happy to do so with you.

Brian Stowell

25 King Edward Park.
Onchan

Telephone 451357 or 625276
Email Stowell@hotmail.com
Web www.brianstowell.com



I have arranged a public meeting that will commence at 7.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 14th November in the Onchan Parish Hall at the top of Royal Avenue. The meeting is to be chaired by **Mr. Dominic Delaney**, retired MHK for both East and West Douglas, and I will be available to answer any questions that you might have.

Sadly there has been a party attitude in Government for many years, but that has to end. Major Debts, Crime, Immigration, Health, Iris, Bottom Ash, Energy, Transport, Waste, and the list goes on. The next administration has a serious job to perform because, the party is over. Now it is time to clean up the mess!

Brian Stowell October 2006

VOTE STOWELL **X**