

MHK Manifesto
Laurence D Skelly
Independent Candidate Rushen
General Election 29th September, 2011

Dear Voter,

As a proud Manxman I have always been passionate about the Isle of Man's wellbeing and political position. My decision to stand for Member of House of Keys for Rushen is because I believe the people deserve better representation and the Island's interests protected more robustly and promoted more effectively.

Raised in Ramsey I lived off Island for fifteen years before returning and living in Rushen the last twelve years. My family, wife of 26 years and two teenage children, have been made to feel comfortably at home and found a strong sense of community and pride about Rushen with its diverse character of two very different Ports and dual rural parishes. Politically strong with three MHK's it is well positioned to gain greater central government support and investment.

With my wife we run a wholesale business, Manx Inspirations, and I have a partnership in an event management company, Destination Isle of Man, handling such important events as Tynwald day enhancements and Isle of Man representation at Inter-Celtique festival in Brittany, France. In America I became business savvy as I took near bankrupt travel business to become an industry leader in California pioneering E-Commerce strategies. For five years I had the honour of being appointed Isle of Man Tourism representative for North America. Maintaining my Manx roots I joined the North American Manx Association and learnt about early Manx immigrants and their hardships endured and successes earned. It is estimated over million Manx descendents live in America and I believe our government would do well to engage these willing and proud ambassadors for the Isle of Man. During this time I gained a different, yet valuable perspective of the Island.

Representing the people requires an acute understanding of the diversified needs for our society. In my preparation I have spent a great deal of time talking and listening to the people of Rushen. It was important for me to understand the concerns and aspirations of all walks of life in Rushen and this helped form my policy manifesto. **To serve the people you must listen to the people first.**

I offer an experienced, creative business mind with vision and strong social conscience. I feel it is vastly important we maintain a truly balanced society. Caring for less fortunate, providing for elderly and investing in youth, our future. I believe this to be the Manx way of life.

If elected I intend to serve the people of Rushen and the Isle of Man in an honest, diligent and easily approachable manner. Maintaining that connection with the people is paramount. All too often there is a tendency to talk much with little achieved. **I always judge on action not words and expect to be measured the same.**

Yours Truly,

Laurence D Skelly

Declaration : If I am a successful in being elected by the people I shall formally resign from Destination Isle of Man Ltd and reduce my involvement with Manx Inspirations. As a family business I intend to remain a director of Manx Inspirations.

Business & other affiliations – Past & Current

Isle of Man Chamber of Commerce, Member
Port St Mary Business Association, Member
Port St Mary Regeneration Committee, Chairman – now part of SW Regeneration
North American Manx Association, Past-President
Rotary Club of Rushen & Western Mann, Past-President
Erin Arts Centre, Member
Rowany Golf Club, Member
Official Representative for Isle of Man Tourism in North America 1995-2000
Le Tip International, California – Past-President, 1986-2000

Community Supporter : **Rushen United**, Port Erin Regatta, Laa Columb Killey, Rowany & Post St Mary Golf Club, Post St Mary Bowls Club, Port St Mary Village in Bloom, Yn Crunnaight, IOM Agricultural Benevolent Trust

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Our Economy – Our Quality of Life

Our quality of life is based on the health of our economy and it is in a fragile state at best. With the extra burden of the £140M VAT deficit this represents the greatest challenge for the next Government. I believe new direction and leadership is needed and I would campaign to cut waste, improve efficiencies, support local enterprise, demand greater accountability and create economic growth and jobs through new revenue streams.

- **Manx National Savings Bond – Invest in Isle of Man future** I believe Government should create a Manx National Savings Bond and operate it in a similar fashion to the UK, with the security of being Government-backed and the funds going to our Treasury
- **Support our Indigenous Industries – Farming, fishing, tourism & trades** In my view Government must play a more active role in supporting these industries, developing initiatives, building on rural and cultural tourism. We must keep our traditional trades alive, and provide training for new trades, such as passive house-building
- **Energy & Natural Resources Division – Greater priority for Government** I feel Government must make a greater commitment to ensure an efficient, safe and environmentally sensitive use of energy and natural resources. We must reduce our dependency on imported energy, currently at 95%
- **Research & Development Zone – Renewable & digital industries** Developing industries and jobs of the future must be a priority – a Government-led initiative to create an R & D zone will provide new inward investment and help diversify our economy
- **Rateable Land/Property Value – Development of vacant & derelict land** We need new legislation on land/property values to encourage development of vacant and derelict properties Island-wide. The current system deprives our treasury of much needed revenue.
- **Jobs for Rushen – Stimulating commerce outside Douglas** We need a sliding scale of incentives aimed at attracting relocating businesses to the Island, with greatest support for those locating furthest away from Douglas. Government must work harder to relocate more divisions out of the capital.

Cost Cutting & Savings

I am against job cuts as I believe employment retention positively impacts the economy. To save money I recommend a stricter regime on Government spending. Capital projects need greater scrutiny, wider utilisation of services, outsource to local firms keeping money in our economy and working harder to ensure better value for money. Scope and Structure report of Government identified several cost cutting measures and needs to be revisited.

International Relations

- **Isle of Man & UK Relationship – Time for serious questions** There is little evidence of late that the Island’s relationship with the UK is offering any real benefit and the latest threat for Zero-10 taxation could cost us 3,000 jobs. We need an updated, comprehensive and independent report on our constitutional options to help us examine the true meaning of ‘Freedom to Flourish’ – and determine what is in the best interests of the Isle of Man and people who live here.
- **Direct Representation** In my view we should not rely on others for our International representation. As an International jurisdiction the Isle of Man needs direct representation in London, Brussels and Washington. Lobbying our interests, building positive profile and supporting our private enterprise in these massively influential areas.
- **International Centre for Social Finance – Develop sustainable finance industry** Our negative label as a “Tax Haven” can change if Government forms a strategy to attract the Social Finance industry to the Isle of Man. This new global industry is founded on managing money that delivers social dividend and an economic return. Developing a sustainable finance sector can benefit our economy and positively improve our global profile.

Health Agreement

I support the retention of the reciprocal health agreement and would work hard to ensure we don’t have a repeat of the political fiasco that caused such unnecessary alarm for the Manx public. Additionally the public are rightly concerned about the length of our medical waiting lists and I shall campaign to improve this position.

Political Pay Reform & Independent Vote

- MHKs & MLC’s dictate their own salary structure, including their pay, pension scheme and expenses allowance. Our politicians expect the Civil Service to make cuts and deliver value for money, so politicians should do the same – we need an independent body to evaluate politicians’ service and determine their overall compensation package. As part of this review I would seek the removal of financial incentive to work for government, make it a duty and provide freedom of vote in the house.

Our Elderly & Young People

- **Elderly – Equal Care & Create Society of Respect** I believe we must provide equal care for all. We have an unfair system whereby some people must sell

their homes in order to pay for care – this situation must be reviewed. It is scandalous that Southlands still has wards unopened and I would treat this as a priority for Rushen MHK's. Pension provision must be constantly reviewed to ensure our older generations enjoy the standard of living they have earned and I would like to introduce a core-value into schools "Respect our Elders"

- **Youth – Invest for the Future** I am completely against cuts in the Education. We must maintain support in all areas including funding for higher education and equally vocational training – investing in our youth is investing in our future. Government nursery care services are not equitable and need to be better balanced. There is a lack of recreational facilities for young people and we must stop wasting opportunities, such as that offered by the Summerland

Our Community & Housing

- **Ballakilly – Recreation & Housing built to support local economy** I support a well-balanced sensitive housing development that encompasses a sports playing field facility. I would propose a new system of development whereby our building trade have equal opportunity and self-builds and passive (energy efficient) housing may live together in the same development. Building houses by demand and keeping the money in the local economy.
- **Affordable Housing** I am concerned our young people are finding it more difficult to buy homes and will support affordable housing initiatives and wish to see them expanded with more imaginative funding schemes.
- **Port St Mary – Marine & Heritage Centre - Marina** Decision on a marina is delayed by Government's financial position, but I think this presents an opportunity to experiment with pontoon-style berths and gauge interest in a marina. Meantime it is vitally important we seek Government support for a Marine & Heritage Centre with aquarium. Ideal all-weather attraction helping regenerate The Port.
- **Port Erin – Strengthen tourist destination & retail centre** We need to capitalise on Port Erin's strongest assets – spectacular beach and stunning setting. Identified as perfect candidate for the Island's water sports capital or National outdoor centre. This must be pursued, alongside reopening Brooghs footpath and seek government support for its retail sector.
- **Southern Skipper Bus – Connect communities in the South** A major overhaul of the bus timetable failed to address the issue of connecting our rural communities. With smaller, more economical buses, Ballabeg, Colby, Ballakillowey, Cregneash, Ballakilpheric, Surby & Ronague could be linked to our commercial centres rather than just getting us into Douglas.
- **Local Government – Improve efficiencies with decentralised services** Our local authorities do an excellent job and empowering them may reap benefits for ratepayers. Services provided by Government should be reviewed, to decentralise certain tasks. Returning decision-making to the community will help create more local employment and open and transparent Government.
- **Rushen Campsite & Motorhome Park – Boost tourism with area site** I propose a cooperative between 4 commissioners, two Ports, Rushen and Arbory to develop and operate a campsite & motorhome park. Help the local economy with employment, pitch fees and visitors frequenting pubs, cafés & shops.