

House of Keys General Election
Thursday 29th September 2011



VOTE

JOHN SKINNER

Constituency of Douglas West

MANIFESTO

MHK's are elected to serve the Island and represent and help their constituents, with that in mind I have put my name forward and shall be standing in your constituency of Douglas West as an independent candidate.

PERSONAL PROFILE

Many of the electorate of Douglas West will already know me; however, for those of you who do not I am a retired fire officer. Married to Gill I have a son and daughter and two step-daughters.

Throughout my life I have always lived within Douglas West. I grew up in Albany Street before moving to Berkeley Street where I have lived for the past forty years. I was brought up with a desire to help others starting as a St John Ambulance Brigade cadet through to being secretary for the Fire Services Benevolent Fund.

I was educated at Murray's Road and Douglas High School for Boys before working as an apprentice in Gelling's Foundry. I served in the Isle of Man Fire Service for thirty years rising through the ranks to become a Station Officer. During my service I attended various training courses at the Fire Service College in the UK and on the Isle of Man to develop my career but more importantly to enable me to become a better fire officer.

Motorsport has been a great passion of mine for many years and together with a small team I ran the popular and highly successful Manx National Rally for 25 years bringing many visitors to our Island.

As an independent candidate my main priorities will be:

- Review and Prioritise Capital Schemes and Projects
- Protect Vital Services
- Promote Open and Communicative Government
- Enhance and Develop Economic Development
- Require Contributory Pension Schemes for Politicians

WHY DOUGLAS WEST?

I believe that it is important for elected representatives to live within their community as it gives a better understanding of local issues that we all may face every day.

Having spent all of my life in Douglas West, I have learnt through meeting and talking to others on a daily basis that what they would like to see is a representative who is accountable, visible and accessible.

GOVERNMENT

I believe that there should be more openness from Government with information being passed to the public, so that they are better informed as to the reasons behind decisions which affect us all. This would have a positive effect on the trust and relationship between the electorate and Government.

Communication is essential in any democratic society. I am being regularly reminded that communication is a two way thing which appears to have broken down.

The last administration did have some good able members who appear to have been deprived of sound leadership, management and direction. There seems to have been a general disregard for the electorate. This attitude is one that the next Government must not and cannot have if it is to regain the confidence of the public.

PLANNING SYSTEM

Following my retirement from the Fire Service I had a desire to continue serving the community and have been a member of the Island's Planning Committee for the past nine years.

In that time I have seen some modernisation as planning committee meetings are now held in public. However, there are still improvements to be made and if elected I would seek to make the introduction of public speaking a priority. This simple step would make planning more open and transparent, speed up the process and would help restore the public's perception of a fair and equal planning system for all.

I would strongly oppose any moves to introduce a two tier planning system that favours the wealthy, particularly at a time when there are so many properties valued over £1.5 million on the open market. It is important that all planning applications are treated equally and given the same consideration.

HOUSING

I fully support the Government's "first time buyer's scheme".

There is much to consider when approving housing developments and a balance must be struck to enhance communities with the inclusion of all manner of housing. I feel that more can and should be done to encourage and assist people to purchase and modernise older "town house" properties. Some of the streets of Douglas have houses in a state of disrepair which with assistance could be brought up to high standard homes. This would breathe life back into the town and would be a fine example of imaginative regeneration at its best.

ECONOMY

The Isle of Man can rightly be proud of its financial and economic growth over the last quarter of a century; however, we cannot afford the time to dwell on what is now in the past. Government Departments and local authorities have to cooperate in order to concentrate on the testing times that lie ahead.

At the last sitting of Tynwald we were assured by the Department of Economic Development Minister that the Manx economy is not yet in a definite recession and that economic growth is still running at about 3%. This does not generate sufficient income to meet the demands and standards we have now come to expect. Urgent and immediate solutions have to be sought and decisions made to protect our community and our individual Manx way of life. The tax-payer, who must be recognised as a major stakeholder in the Isle of Man, has to be kept fully informed at every stage.



“Education and Health have to be the cornerstone of any government and we cannot afford to reduce the services in either of these areas. Financial cuts cannot just be made across the board by reducing cash in equal amounts to all Departments.”



EDUCATION

We have brilliant young people all over the Island who are a credit not only to themselves but also to their families and society. Our young people are the heart and soul of today and a good well balanced Education delivered to them secures the future and beyond. “Not always is it possible to build the future for our youth but we can and must build our youth for the future”. In order to help achieve this goal young people need role models not critics.

We continue to produce a high number of students who achieve excellent academic successes, a fact of which we should be rightly proud. Continuing financial support for further and higher education must be protected and maintained. Conversely it must also be recognised that for many the “traditional” academic route is simply not realistic and education should always be accessible and appropriate at all levels.

With the publicised financial losses incurred at the Isle of Man Business School it is time to look at what is being provided, at what cost and how services can be better delivered. There is an opportunity to review the possibility of bringing together the Island’s higher and further education faculties under one effective principal whilst still maintaining their separate identities. The possibilities and advantages of bringing this about must clearly be investigated.

HEALTH

We have to decide what kind of a health service it is we would like and what provisions it should offer the public. It is vitally important that we continue to deliver a high quality service. Preventative health measures must be supported the long term benefits of this must surely be obvious to us all.

Government have finally gone some way to accepting and working with a number of charities and other organisations currently known as the “third sector”. Very often they have a variety of practitioners and a wealth of experience, resources and expertise available to them. This does not mean to say that I am advocating Government shirks its responsibilities by off loading everyday tasks, however, there is an opportunity to improve services to the public by better working with these organisations and where necessary supporting them as “service providers” rather than trying to do the job themselves.



ENVIRONMENT

We are very fortunate that we live on an island which is free from the major causes of pollution experienced in larger more industrialised countries. Our air is clean; the water quality good and there is rich agricultural land. There is an infrastructure to remove our waste and provide our water.

However we have one of the lowest recycling rates amongst developed countries, with high car ownership. Very little is being done to promote green energy either nationally or amongst our householders.

I will support the development of renewable energy. Through encouragement and educational programmes we have an opportunity to improve and increase recycling. Consideration must be given to the implementation of an innovative green policy allowing Government to lead by example.

TRAFFIC & ROADS

With an increasingly aging population there is a real concern about the number of pavements and kerbs which are in poor condition and present hazards to all pedestrians. There should be immediate repairs to unsafe footways and the introduction of an ongoing maintenance programme.

Traffic in Douglas West is heavy and measures need to be urgently considered to make it safe for everyone, including the large number of children walking to and from school.



I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for reading my manifesto which I hope you feel reflects the issues affecting Douglas West and the Island as a whole. I do hope you find me to be a worthwhile candidate and promise if elected I will represent the interests of all constituents within our community.

VOTING - 29TH SEPTEMBER

The General Election Takes place on Thursday 29th September 2011

If you have not yet you should receive a polling card very soon.

There will be four Polling Stations – please check your card for details

The Polling Stations will be open from 8.00am until 8.00pm

This Election is for two seats. Therefore, you have the right to cast two votes.

If you would like transport to and from your Polling Station please telephone 487888



Douglas West is a major constituency in population. Whilst I am doing my very best to call in and see all constituents, if you have a specific issue you wish to discuss please contact me

Telephone: 487888 or email jeskinner@manx.net