



# Amanda Walker

## Putting the People First

House of Keys General Election - Douglas East

**VOTE AMANDA WALKER**  
22 SEPTEMBER 2016



# MY VISION

## For the Economy

✚ Brexit is both an opportunity and a threat. I want to be part of the team that is ready to maximise the potential of this new phase in International Relations. I am confident that although there will be challenges. We can flourish in difficult times but we need strong leadership and the courage to make tough choices. I do not think we face Armageddon but we have to be alert and prepared for unpredictable times ahead. Brexit was a close result and the UK government has only a slim mandate. We must be aware that the UK wants to protect its own financial services sector. We must prepare to defend our position through partnership with other interested parties to prevent our unique position being compromised, as part of the UK negotiating position.

✚ We must defend our low taxation status as we are an island nation and need a unique selling point as we face so many additional costs yet taxation has to be fair and transparent.

✚ I am not connected to any political party and never have been. I believe that people are gravitating towards the centre ground, a position I have always held. I am dismayed by the levels of apathy and feelings of

## WHY ME?

I am a 53 year old woman who has the academic background to make informed decisions and the life experience to have balance and perspective. I have three daughters and a grandson and my family has lived in East Douglas for 17 years. I know and have daily experience of the problems and benefits of living in our community.


I have spent 30 years in Education and my husband has spent the last 17 years working at Nobles hospital so I feel I have a very good understanding of two of the most important and costly front-line services that we all rely on. I have a degree in politics which I think will help me to navigate the tough decisions that face our island nation in the next five years. I think this is a great place to live and raise a family and I want to have the opportunity to work hard to keep this place as special as it is and defend what we value most as a community.

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helplessness in the political sphere which I am galvanised to change.

I think we need must take back control of our future to ensure that the Isle of Man sends a strong message to the wider world that we are “open for business”. I realise the enormity of the task ahead and the overwhelming responsibility to get this right. In our relationships with the EU and other markets we need to focus on opportunities first. I have never been a fan of the institutions of the EU and accept that the UK voters believed it was beyond reform. The impact of the Brexit vote is still unfolding. There is a definite loss of certainty. It will no doubt lead to some cancelled contracts and loss of jobs but we still have many shared goals with European countries and collaboration with the EU is still a sensible economic strategy. The dividend promised by the Leave Campaign has already evaporated for the UK but we can capitalise on the state of flux. We can attract inward investment to support our infrastructure, education, information technology system and in particular research and development. We are a dynamic country with a determined people and we can attract new investment. Our national team has been proactive throughout this process, placing us in a greater state of preparedness.


 A key market could be China. The State Owned Enterprises in China are keen to develop and invest in brands and infrastructure projects overseas.


The Chinese have invested significantly in the North West of England, our near neighbour. With the buying of brands, real estate and even football clubs. In Manchester Chinese investment has gone in to Airport City the expansion of Ringway, the Middlewood Docks development in Salford and of course Chinese Media Capital Consortium holds a £265 million stake in Manchester City FC. Chinese investment in the UK has been £3.8 Billion so far this year; a 500% increase in 6 years. Liverpool Football club has also attracted Chinese interest and so might the T1, a hugely recognisable international marque that could well attract investment. We have a Chinese society on island and Ballakermeen and the Department of Education have already made strong ties with Chinese education providers. Mandarin classes have been available at Ramsey Grammar School and these are initiatives we can expand and develop. We must ensure balance in any partnerships and ensure that the benefits are not diminished by limitations on our ability to manage our own economy.

 I believe what we have to offer here is our great quality of life. This is a wonderful place to raise a family. Research on work-life balance and “Happiness” shows clearly the links to raised productivity. We are a resilient people, we have weathered economic storms in the past and I believe with the right leadership team we can


steer our way through the next five years and look forward to a credible strategy to manage the uncertain times ahead. I ask you to seriously consider me as one of your two representatives on that National leadership team.

 We must protect our Heritage and our freedoms but we must also seize the significant investment and development opportunities we have as an island with our unique status. We may be small in scale but we can dare to think big and we can defend our individual and diverse status and avoid being a pawn in the UK negotiations by being proactive and prepared.


 Economic security is the key principal that will underpin any other strategies we wish to pursue and growing our economy must be our primary goal as a nation. We need to market our offer and the investment potential we have, our island is rich in natural beauty and we have a number of development sites that could attract inward investment. Liverpool has seen huge investment in the Waterfront area; the “Three Graces” enjoy UNesco World Heritage Status. Our own Waterfront could be developed from the “Disgraces” we currently have in Lord Street, Summerland and the Castle Mona site.


 Higher Education is a huge earner for the UK. Mrs. May is considering

restrictions on UK entry for students which could impact severely on the UK University sector. We could offer places in our University centre but to do this we would need a residential facility, Hall of Residence which would be privately developed and owned (a potential use for Castle Mona site). This is the model for the majority of UK University accommodation and we could time terms to ensure the block was available for both TT and Grand Prix creating viable extra tourist capacity at these peak times, perhaps attracting more Chinese involvement in the festivals too.

 We must not forget the needs of our own students and by attracting inward investment we can further diversify courses available on island, especially at Undergraduate level and in areas of need such as IT and languages.

## **We must see opportunities rather than threats**


 We must support the growing number of smaller start-ups on the island as well as developing the big projects. There is so much to celebrate in our small business sector and the funding and support offered to entrepreneurs needs to be maintained.

 Our migrant workers are exactly that “workers” in the main and vital to many of the low paid sectors of the economy where employers struggle




to recruit. These communities enrich our society and we could further capitalise on this with language classes such as the Café Lingo proposal in Douglas East. We can learn other languages whilst enhancing the English skills of our migrant community.


 Apprenticeships are a key area to develop; we need to ensure access to more of the UK based schemes for our students as we do not offer a full range on island. Many UK schemes are private enterprise and funded by companies rather than the UK government and our students would need active support to gain access to these programmes.


 We must enhance the position of women. We once led the way giving the vote to women in 1881 but we lag behind in equal pay and many of our female workers are part time and low paid, this is a waste of potential and a loss of tax on what should be equal pay. Quality childcare is a thorny issue here as the sector is expensive for consumers, possibly over-regulated and many of the employees are poorly paid. We need to eradicate “incentive traps” such as the cost of childcare preventing women from returning to work. The gender pay gap is not just a problem during working life, up to two thirds of pensioners in poverty are female. Women are far more likely than men to find themselves in poverty as pensioners due to gaps in employment to raise a family or be an unpaid carer for family members. We must develop ways to address this

long term issue; perhaps moving to “basic income” as a national policy for those entirely dependent on benefits. Our strategy for benefits should be to reduce dependence by creating alternatives; benefits should be a support that enables people to move on wherever possible rather than creating a culture of dependence.

 We must ensure transport links are secure. I have already suggested that Chinese investment might be a strategy for the airport and this could develop our routes significantly, perhaps enabling Ronaldsway to become a European Hub, possibly being developed more swiftly than the UK proposals which are extremely long term and subject to objections.

I would aim to explore partnerships with investors that would allow expansion of direct flights from the island and bring more reliability to our routes.

 The Ferry link is vital and has to be sustainable. The route has unique features that make it a difficult proposition to run profitably at all times of the year and we need to consider carefully the passenger services and their frequency

 The housing sector is also an important part of the economy as owner occupiers and especially first time buyers spend significantly and boost the economy and create tax revenue as they spend to improve and personalise their space. We need a workable scheme for first time buyers, to consider the

right to buy for selected properties in public ownership but only on a like for like replacement basis. Manx based mortgages bring obvious yield to our economy. We have an opportunity here to build Green housing such as the Passivhaus in the South of the island and to consider insulation materials such as straw which we can generate on island. We could be innovators in house design and energy conservation and stimulate the building trade with green initiatives to insulate older property and thus reduce reliance on expensive and environmentally costly fuels.

## Education

-  This is crucial to economic development and personal development and we must ensure access to Higher Education is not made impossible for some students due to economic factors rather than academic ability. I would aim for scholarships or fees being waived for returning graduates. It is an investment for our nation as well as for individuals. We could attract private scholarships for our most able on a merit basis.
-  Early years needs to be funded more generously and places for pre-school need to be more evenly spread than the current provision. This is important to economic development and opportunity as well as for education.
-  Wider access to apprenticeships. We have some excellent provision,
- e.g. in the Engineering sector but we need greater diversity and it may mean developing partnerships with private sector providers in the UK or even beyond.
-  Graduates who return should be rewarded with waiving of fees proportionate to how long they stay on island. They can also be expected to mentor sixth formers or current University students and help them with career planning and gaining experience, through work experience or project work.
-  We have some first class personal, social, health education on the island and our partnerships with outside agencies such as Junior Achievement and Barclays enable us to deliver real world lessons from adults other than teachers. Education is quite well-funded but we need to defend this funding and I would aim to do so.
-  Education of the whole child/pupil is vital and we need to continue to develop programmes to meet the needs of the general student population and support those with particular and specific needs through provision such as Children and Adolescent Mental Health services and dieticians. Waiting times are too long in some cases and I would seek to address this.
-  We have excellent extra-curricular provision from the NSC and outreach and through organisations such as



Youth Arts Centre and the Youth Service and DoE schemes. We would be the envy of most towns of the size of the Isle of Man in the UK.

✧ We enjoy strong performance in public examinations and I would aim to maintain this by supporting the continuation of high quality training for our teaching professionals and regular review of the examinations we choose.

✧ Develop more provision for adult education, especially for government workers who may need to re-train as we streamline government to be more efficient. We have many excellent training providers both on island and in-house within government.

## Health & Social Care

✧ Nobles have the evidence to work on to bring about improvement. Reports have been made and time is now needed to react and implement. We need to manage our own development rather than invest in off island advice which is not cognisant of our unique context. We need to

empower the Health professionals to implement changes and not introduce more management to frustrate the clinicians and nursing staff.

✧ We need to continue to train staff on island to meet our needs and ensure that our many international workers at the hospital are supported and encouraged to develop their language skills.

✧ We need to devolve more to our community GP or Health Centres and use these as first point of call rather than the hospital.


✧ We need to celebrate and recognise the huge contribution the voluntary sector makes to provision on the Island such as Rebecca House, Bridge the Gap, Hospice Crossroads Caring for Carers and many other organisations. We can be proud of the magnificent efforts of fund raisers and the work that is achieved through their commitment.

✧ We need to ensure that older patients and vulnerable adults are able to return home as swiftly as possible rather than






facing prolonged stays in hospital due to lack of home care provision. We would be spending government funds far more wisely to support people in their own homes rather than keeping them in hospital beds.


 We need to look at more imaginative solutions to Health Care of the Elderly. I would like to see more shared provision, Nursery provision alongside Residential Homes to mix the generations and enable hard working families to support both the youngest and oldest family members at the same time. Why do we seek to concentrate our older citizens in exclusive enclaves rather than welcoming them into the community? I would rather watch children playing than TV.


 We can be leaders in innovation; areas such as Dementia Care are growth areas where we could take a leading role in pioneering treatment as we develop new facilities which our demographic dictates we will need. Our University Centre teaches Health and Social Care to Degree level and specialism in Dementia could be a field to explore.


 Education to prevent health issues and especially around nutrition is essential and I would like to see more cooking in our classrooms and locally sourced food in our canteens.



## Farming, Fishing & Forestry

 We have biosphere status and the potential to pioneer green and sustainable methods which could again be used to increase tourism and diversify our farming.

 Our scallop bed management is a world recognised example of good practice. A scheme which puts us on the map in terms of our Ecology and is important as we negotiate new Fisheries policy post Brexit. We would not be talking hypothetically but from the basis of strong evidence.

 Our farmers have premium products and breeding stock that are renowned. We need to place our expertise and experience at the forefront of Agricultural policy development post Brexit.





🦋 Forestry provides not only materials but also fantastic environments for outdoor pursuits and tourist activity such as Ape Man. I would seek to promote and maintain our green spaces.

🦋 We have a duty to hold our precious resources as custodians and we must support our farmers, fishermen and forestry workers as Brexit presents both challenges and opportunities for them. We do not have limitless funds but we can work with these sectors to develop Manx schemes that support our vital primary industries.

🦋 We must defend our interests as complex negotiations and new quotas are established by working with both the UK Government and other Crown Dependencies in every aspect of post-Brexit negotiations.

🦋 We must promote wherever possible green and sustainable practices as these will enhance our premium products and help us to develop food security and reduce air miles travelled by our food.

🦋 We must nurture our food and drink industries which are often small scale and niche but which deliver premium products that enhance our reputation and tourism offer.

## Tourism

🦋 We must be realistic and develop and enhance what we have rather than making plans for a mass market we are unlikely to attract.

🦋 We have the NSC in Douglas and that is rarely at capacity so the idea of a multiplex leisure centre is unrealistic for our current population. We also have swimming pools in Ramsey, Peel and Castletown which have seen recent investment. I would seek to maintain and enhance these facilities rather than invest in further projects.

🦋 We can develop through things such as Festivals and I think there are a variety of ways this could be achieved, such as outdoor pursuits which we are uniquely well-placed to offer.

🦋 We must ensure that we enhance the existing attractions and maintain our





important Heritage sites. These are National assets and must be funded from the centre.

✚ The unique transport heritage we have is significant and I am strongly in favour of retaining the Horse trams, a national treasure rather than the sole responsibility of Douglas Borough Council.

✚ The cost of getting here is a major factor in hampering development. We need to consider schemes to make this more affordable or incentivise return visits, such as discounts on repeat bookings. Developing package deals for weekends to include shows at the Gaiety or Centenary Centre.

## Law & Order

- ✚ We have reducing crime statistics and this is indicative of the quality of life we enjoy and the targeting of our police; I would seek to maintain levels of policing in our communities.
- ✚ Youth crime such as vandalism can be combated as we have so many opportunities for young people to be engaged in their leisure time such as Sound Check, Youth Arts Centre, youth clubs, uniformed organisations and the many sports we have available. We need to encourage positive involvement and active citizenship in our youth.
- ✚ We have good provision and we must maintain this, I see no need for expansion other than continuing development to tackle new areas such as cyber-crime and online fraud.

## Scope & scale of Government

- ✚ There are many areas where I would seek reform and I think there are areas where government should retract and allow privatisation that would develop our economy and reduce the far too high costs of government. The Villa Gaiety complex could be run privately rather than as a government enterprise.
- ✚ We must reduce the burden of the cost of government and we must



do this through savings rather than stealth taxes that impact on our people.

✚ We must consider the Lisvane report and develop our debate to encompass consideration of our system and if it is fit for purpose.

✚ We must aim for a more open and accountable government with transparent voting on issues of public concern. The only areas where I would advocate concealment is where decisions are sensitive to market forces and it is not in the national interest to publicise information.

✚ I do not consider the role of the Bishop to be sustainable in our plural and multicultural society.

✚ I feel MHK salaries must be at a level that will attract candidates of sufficient calibre and enable them to act as full time employees of the people. It is a job that needs to be done and fair remuneration is the only way to ensure it does not revert to being the preserve of the elite. It is not Democratic if representing the people in the Keys is only the preserve of those able to afford to do so.

✚ I do not think digital democracy is yet a workable platform and is open to abuse and distortion to advantage those with extreme views and opinions.

## Pensions

✚ We are already a long way down the road to addressing this issue and the



government, unions and other stakeholders have advanced strategies to address this concern.

✚ In the long term we need to move to sustainable funding.

✚ We must be fair to current members, especially those nearing retirement age that do not have time to make alternative provision.

✚ We must ensure that new employees are clear about the pension they can expect to receive and the way in which it will be funded and calculated. Personal rather than public schemes may be more realistic for workers who are likely to experience multiple employers during their working life.

✚ We must recognise that this is an issue that will have to be re-visited over time in response to changing economic and demographic trends and developments.

**Above all, pensions must be fit for purpose and sustainable. We must not betray those who paid in “in good faith”.**



## Environment & Energy needs

- ✚ It is imperative to explore alternative sources of energy; solar, wave, wind and geothermal sources. In addition we must encourage insulation of older properties, where practical by grant aid. This will create jobs and tax revenue.
- ✚ Our fuel costs are too high and are not competitive, we are paying for past mistakes and we must aim to stabilise energy costs to consumers through efficiency.
- ✚ We must encourage development of brown field sites wherever possible rather than our green fields being lost to development.
- ✚ We need a review of planning to enable the development of our heritage buildings. These often require significant investment which precludes them being used for affordable housing and makes them have an inbuilt higher cost due to conservation and the techniques required.
- ✚ Coastal management needs consideration to protect our island where economically and environmentally workable.

## Immigration

- ✚ We are reliant on migrant workers in some sectors of the economy and we must ensure that we state our needs clearly in the EU withdrawal negotiations.
- ✚ There are some jobs where the professional skills required mean that we should adopt a discretionary policy to consideration of benefits such as University fees for dependents. Workers who have skills in demand and yet in short supply, e.g. science teachers, need incentives to work here.
- ✚ Many Manx workers and companies rely upon free movement throughout the EU and our rights need to be protected as far as possible in the future negotiations.
- ✚ Growing the population will have costs as well as benefits but it is vital to attract working age citizens to balance our National books.
- ✚ We need to integrate our new workers and utilise the cultural diversity that they offer to our community. We have the chance to learn from other cultures and enrich our own experience, nowhere on the island is that more true than in Douglas East.
- ✚ Ethnic groups on the island can help to foster links with other nations to the benefit of our Island, such as the Chinese Society.





## The Creative Sector

- ✦ We have an emerging and developing creative sector workers on the island and as the University Centre continues to expand and develop its programmes this is a potential growth area. Artists have long flourished here but Multi-media, Architecture, Film, Photography, Advertising, Marketing and Music all prosper more when there is a community to bounce ideas around in and we have that developing and it is important to nurture it.
- ✦ The area around North Quay in Douglas has enjoyed a Renaissance over the summer and has shown what can be achieved with vision and desire.
- ✦ We have the potential to become a creative hub and as the product is often highly portable it ideally suits our island location.
- ✦ We have DED schemes to enable, encourage and support small scale creative start-ups that can upscale and as a sector become a significant aspect of our diversifying economy.

## Issues specific to Douglas East

- ✦ Central to the improvement of our local area is the need to develop far greater collaboration between the National government and Douglas Borough Council.
- ✦ We need to work together for the benefit of the area and plan and clearly define what local and national responsibilities are. Our shared emphasis must be on responsibility and progress rather than blame.
- ✦ The Promenade is clearly a priority and I support the renovation of the Promenade with the retention of our unique horse trams. I am concerned that the scheme must consider the substructure of the Promenade and the Sea wall and any ingress there. The cosmetic appeal is important but subsidiary and my feeling is that it needs to be in keeping with the period we are capturing rather than ultra-modern. I contend that the civil engineering that might be required





is actually a job best contracted off island to a specialist with the plant needed to do the job quickly and minimise disruption to our main arterial route.

✚ Our derelict and empty sites, the “Disgraces” as I have named them are in need of development but this must not be “Vanity projects” drawing on the public purse. A large leisure Centre for example is simply not realistic given the facilities we already have on island.

✚ I would suggest as an interim we need to landscape the Summerland site out of respect for those who lost their lives there I would like to see the site used as a market at the weekends. Such a space could be used as a pop up with a festival flavour by having themed events and including a monthly Farmers Market and possibly the continental and Christmas markets we have held

previously. These would benefit our own producers and consumers and provide a new tourist attraction at relatively low levels of investment. It could also make a spectacular location for outdoor films during the Summer Season at relatively low cost.

✚ We need to work with Douglas Borough Council, potential investors and the National government to resolve these sites and bring them into positive and active use.

✚ We must ensure that the charges on the people of East Douglas through their rates are proportionate and do not subsidise other island residents to an unfair degree. I would also like to see consideration given to rates being reflective of the number of service users in a property as this seems far fairer and can be mitigated to support the financially vulnerable.



I am under no illusion that the next five years will be easy but I do believe that I am ready for the challenge and have the skills and qualities that will enable me to rise to the tasks ahead and help steer our National ship through the difficult passage we have to navigate.

On September 22<sup>nd</sup> I would like you to give serious consideration to giving me your precious vote. I sincerely believe that we need more women in Government. I would oppose token women being appointed but I do think that I am a woman who could make a significant positive contribution. Who will be right here in East Douglas and accountable to you through regular local surgeries and available at the end of the phone or through e.mail.

I have tried to visit as many of you as possible but it is a huge task and not one that I think should be limited to election time.

I hope to continue to meet with many of you if I am given the mandate to represent East Douglas on 22<sup>nd</sup> September.

You have two votes and I implore you to use both of them. I hope you will consider me for one of your votes to ensure that there is strong, capable and compassionate female representation in the Keys. Women are over half the population and yet at the last election we returned 2 female MHKs out of 24. This is clearly not balanced nor reflective of a nation that enfranchised women so early. I promise I will use my time, energy and talents to promote policies that will help us all flourish. I have three generations of my family here. Please trust me to nurture your family's future too.

*A.J. Walker*



***“My extended family enjoying the Easter sunshine at the Joey Dunlop Centre.”***

A fine facility provided by the Manx people that enables my father to visit us here despite his disabilities.  
A powerful example of the compassion of our population that I would aim to echo in government.



# Amanda Walker

## Putting the People First.

Use your vote  
to make a change  
on September 22<sup>nd</sup>

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