

HOUSE OF KEYS - GENERAL ELECTION

Equality

Integrity

Transparency



Karen Angela

VOTE



KAREN ANGELA

**CANDIDATE FOR
DOUGLAS NORTH**

MANIFESTO

I stand for Equality, Integrity and Transparency

I believe that in this life we are all born equal. It should not matter whether you sweep the streets of Douglas or aspire to be Chief Minister of our next Government. Whether you are able bodied or disabled, physically or mentally, makes no difference; male or female we are all entitled to equality. I am extremely disappointed that previous Governments have failed to bring in the Equalities bill and I pledge to fight for those rights. I believe that the vulnerable in society have been let down once too often.

I will not make false promises that I cannot keep. Therefore what I do promise, to you the voter, is that I will leave no stone unturned in my quest to access the truth. I will only ask questions in Keys if I fail to find the truth through the proper channels. I have absolutely no intention of performing to the gallery, or wasting civil servants' time producing written reports unnecessarily and costing the Taxpayer further money.

My Questions:

Government

Why are we still awaiting "Smaller Smarter Government"? How many more elections are we going to hear this rhetoric before we stand up and say "enough is enough"? Whilst I, like most people, welcome Lord Lisvane's comprehensive report, most of the electorate have been telling our politicians that we have been over-governed for some years. Yet there showing the way is Laxey, Lonan and Maughold who amalgamated into Garff Commissioners. Douglas Borough Council is also leading the way by reducing the number of councillors from 18 down to 12 from the 2020 local elections. I'm tired of waiting for government and local authority reform. I am certain the House of Keys could operate with 18 or perhaps even 12 members far more efficiently than they would have us believe. And as I don't like turkey, I will be more than happy to vote for Xmas!

How should Legislative Council be elected? Legco should not be publicly elected or we will just end up with exactly the same situation that exists at present. We need people with the right credentials. If we are to retain Legco I believe members should be qualified and possibly independently appointed with reduced powers. Following Local Authority reform, Legco could even be nominated by each of the (in an ideal world) five or so Local Authorities, to reduce membership down to 5 or 6. No sitting in government departments but doing their job of "scrutiny" and in turn modernising some of our outdated Legislation. Legco most definitely should not be electing our Chief Minister. We the people elect members to vote on our behalf and that is what we expect. Only elected members of our Parliament should have the right to vote by virtue of the mandate given to them by we the people. The Government state that they are listening, so why haven't they heard us?

Pensions

What more can be said that hasn't already been said with regard to public sector pensions? It is an extremely complex issue with no overnight solutions but it can't continue without some action being taken. We need to keep our workers fully informed



at every level, instead of leaking information in dribs and drabs causing unnecessary stress and worry for our frontline workers who need to be protected. I personally believe the scheme should be closed to new entrants who would enter a defined benefit scheme. For the first few years it will mean relying on reserves. There should be a cap on how much money can be taken as a lump sum on the higher earners. Doing nothing is most definitely no longer an option!

Why are we not educating our young people not only about how politics works but also how pensions work? Constantly bombarding young people about their need for a pension without engaging with them has failed so far! Instead of browbeating people into having pension provision, why don't we educate our students in the 6th form about how pensions work, how entitlement is built up, etc. This would equip them to make an informed choice when they start work.

Students

Why did we give 16 year olds the vote without educating them as to why they would want to be interested? I believe we should be educating our children more in the Politics of the world. I personally would encourage any student to read George Orwell's "Animal Farm", and hopefully stir their imagination and interest in politics.

Why don't our young people come back to work on the Island after university? To encourage students to return to the Island on completion of education I believe a special tax allowance over 5 years equating to the fees paid out whilst away at university should be considered. Providing that they return to the Island within 5 years of leaving university, thus giving them chance to gain work experience across in their chosen field. They could return to the Island with greater life skills than they could learn on the Island. I would also include a proviso that they should stay and work on Island for a minimum of 5 years to contribute to the economy that enabled them to go to university.

Social Care

Caring for the vulnerable has fallen far short of my expectations and I am quite sure that you would agree with me there. I have personally seen first hand the rise in fuel poverty and the use of food banks. This is far more widespread than the current Government would have you believe. Stealth taxes along with the high cost of utilities are crippling the lower income brackets and squeezing the middle income bracket. Yet still no means testing has been introduced.

The people who live alone are struggling with the concept of being expected to pay the sewerage tax based on the rateable value of their property and not by usage. This I believe would be by far the fairest way and not as is currently charged. For example a single person (more often as not older people living alone) is expected to pay the same charges as their neighbour, a family of 6 living next door, 4 of whom are in full time employment? Where is the fairness in that?



Our senior citizens have paid their dues, cared for their families and contributed to the wider communities. Plus they make up a considerable percentage of the large army of volunteers working diligently for the betterment of charities on this Island, “for no pay whatsoever”! State pension is not a benefit but an entitlement to which people have paid into. Constantly stating that pensioners are living longer is not exactly true. What is true is that the population is much larger now but I would perceive that percentage wise it is not up by that much. Do bear in mind that you can make statistics say anything you want in order to back up an argument. Scaremongering the elderly who have paid in there dues and lived through the toughest of times so that we can enjoy the life we have now, is not only cruel but abusive. It’s time to stop berating and insulting our senior citizens. Discrimination no matter who it is aimed at is totally unacceptable in this day and age.

Why did Government remove senior citizen’s free rail travel? It should be free! The Live at Home Scheme operating throughout the Island, works so hard at enabling the older more vulnerable person’s social inclusion. Yet this Government felt it right to take some support away. I myself only ever used the trains 2 or 3 times a year due to other committments. So imagine that I am on a low income and I could afford to treat myself to a trip out to Ramsey or Port Erin by train for free. I could eat out and put money into other local economies. It does not cost any more to the taxpayer as the trains are running anyway. It lifts peoples spirits, prevents loneliness and deters depression from setting in. This in turn saves stretching the health service. This is all about social inclusion in a caring community.

Why are there no direct bus links connecting people in sheltered housing with the hospital and their GP’s practice? How is that a service? How is that caring for the vulnerable?

The removal of the over 75’s TV licence, to me is totally unacceptable. After bringing in all these stealth taxes along with the cost of living going up, we now remove the proverbial rug from under their feet. We are going to end up with more and more people living in isolation unable to trust Government to “care for the vulnerable”.

I fully support the modernisation of the current abortion legislation. It is not our place to judge any woman who finds herself in the situation. We need to ensure that the correct support network is in place on the Island, to assist in the final decision no matter what the outcome. It is time for abortion to be decriminalised in Manx Law. It is our place to ensure that legislation is fit for purpose and the 21st century.

Health

What happened to the New Zealand Health Service Report? I still await the information being released as to how the New Zealand Health Care system operates or when it will be implemented on our Island. Given that taxpayers money was used to travel to New Zealand to research the system, why haven’t we the people been fully informed of the outcome? Why is it such a secret? If a corporate company carried out research at such cost it would have to provide a report to shareholders proving value for money, yet we the taxpayer have still not been provided with evidence or facts!



Why does it take so long to receive referral appointments? The length of time taken on NHS waiting lists through to the referrals and current treatment is way to lengthy.

Examples:-

- 26 weeks to wait for an MRI scan before a diagnosis is confirmed and treatment can be started leaving the patient in dire pain and little choice but take extra strong pain killers with not very nice side effects
- 9 months waiting for mental health referral and having your benefits reduced because of a Dependability assessment even though no diagnosis had been given. And after diagnosis is proven and incapacity benefit restored, there was no apology for the untold stress exacerbating their health problems, no recompense for the poverty caused due to lack of funds to eat and heat their home!
- Being asked if you can afford to go private to operate on a potentially life threatening condition because of the lengthy waiting lists.

These are just a small section of examples I personally have come across during the last 12 months. None of which is acceptable given that we are supposed to have access to a National Health Service in the 21st century. Whilst I know that some patients have had a good outcome, for others the only way out of their painful journey is to fund it themselves. Or worse still go into debt to fund private treatment! Which begs the question why is the Dept of Health and Social Care encouraging the fleecing of the vulnerable. Sadly not everyone on our Island is getting the right experience. Equality is definitely missing here.

- Our frontline medical staff are under enormous pressure to reach targets which appear to be more important than the real care people need and expect. Why do we need so many levels of management in order to deliver the frontline medical care? Why are we paying large amounts of money to UK agencies for staff which we can ill afford, nor do they portray the same commitment to our health service? Surely it should not be more lucrative to work through an agency for our health service, than direct employment? Where is the support for our own staff? Unfortunately not everyone on our Island is getting the right experience. Proving once again the need for the Equalities bill.

Legislation

It has become increasingly apparent to the people it effects most that not enough has been done in the right areas, not enough has been achieved, and most definitely not enough promises have been kept. The Freedom of information Act does not cover enough Government Departments, nor does it go back far enough. One has to ask why? What are they frightened of we the people finding out?

Why are we still awaiting the Equalities bill? If the Equalities bill had been brought in, gay marriage would have been included. As it is we have once again failed the disabled in our society, which in the 21st century is totally unacceptable. This is so long overdue, it has become embarrassing that we fail a percentage of our residents in this way. Let's not forget that they too are Taxpayers.



It's time we set a fairer rating system for the whole Island and stop kicking it into the long grass. It is the rateable value that is in question. It should be on the value of the property itself, not as at present based on it's rental value! Empty properties should have a rate levied on them after a certain period of time thus encouraging absent landlord's to reduce the rent and bring life back to our high street and residential areas.

There should be a scheme in place where the compulsory sale of a derelict or neglected property after a certain period of time has elapsed especially when ownership cannot be established. Once costs have been removed from the sale, the monies can be put into a trust fund until such time as a claim is made. Any purchasers of said derelict buildings should be set a timeframe for the renovation of such properties, thus preventing them from being added to further landbanks as is the case in many quarters of our towns. There are far too many properties owned by someone living half way round the world who have absolutely no interest in coming here or even knowing where we are. Generally because it has been passed down through the extended family as an inheritance. There are still far too many empty sites which the Government has so far failed to inspire any developer to take on. Why can't some of these vacant lots be used for first time buyer homes?

Tourism

Vision 9: the Department of Economic Development believes this is going to grow the TT brand to make money for Government. If the offer is so lucrative then Vision 9 will also be making a good deal of money. All on the back of volunteers who work for nothing whilst fleecing our friends the tourists! On the surface it would appear to be pushing out the real motorcycle enthusiasts who have been the backbone of the TT and MGP for many years. It is those visitors, who at their own expense, bring their huge variety of bikes over to show off to others who only marvel at and appreciate. It is also those visitors who use our Hotels and self-catering establishments further adding to our economy. At absolutely no cost to the taxpayer of this Island, these people pay for the privilege themselves and impart their knowledge freely to all. They also give their time freely to marshall, etc, all for the benefit of this Island. With Vision 9 it will be all about corporate and big money, which will make it beyond the true motorcyclists pocket. This I feel will destroy the true spirit of the TT which we all know and love. To me this is comparable to bringing in Sita to run the Energy from Waste plant which is far to big for this Island's needs. Our taxes paid to build it and now we as taxpayers and ratepayers have to pay again whether we use it or not. As is demonstrated by the introduction of the company's "availability fee"!

Tourism we all accept is never going to be big like it was in the 50's. Times have changed, most people who want a beach holiday go South to the Mediterranean (unlike me). We are the ideal location for the niche experience type holiday which some of our local entrepreneurs have already worked hard to tap into in order to grow their businesses and achieve. I would happily support them in these pursuits. We have limited transport by sea and air to the Island and limited bed spaces, plus there is a limit to how many people would choose to go camping or glamping. The older visitor



prefers to be indoors. As I see it the only option we haven't sold widely is the "safe environment for children with natural experiences to be enjoyed by the whole family".

The Promenade

The regeneration of some of our towns whilst long overdue has only improved certain areas, and left other areas sadly wanting. The Promenade!!! What a prime example of Government listening to the people but not hearing a word that has been stated. Douglas Promenade has to be one of the biggest let-downs ever. It not only effects Douglas but the whole Island being open for business. Where is the commitment to the people of this Island? I am extremely disappointed with DOI having spent £1m+ of Taxpayers money along with all the discussions and consultation, that we are now back to the drawing board. This I find totally unacceptable. We do not need to look like any-other town across in the UK. Whilst I understand that the infrastructure of the road needs serious attention, I believe it should start with the integrity of the sea wall. Followed by a decent road surface to drive along without our vehicles' suspensions being wrecked (and I am speaking from experience). Not something that resembles an art exhibition where motorists start using side roads as shortcuts in order to avoid the obstructions. This in turn will cause further traffic problems for Douglas residents, not alleviate them. I cannot believe that this Government is still talking about the Promenade just like the previous Government did. That's at least 10 years of OUR time wasted on discussion and OUR money wasted on consultations for no achievement! I would much rather see Douglas retain it's character with a modern touch.

Keep the horse trams where they are. Moving them to the side of the road will cause endless parking problems when they are running. Why oh why do we need to turn Loch Promenade into a permanent car park, by having chevron parking both sides? How will this benefit traffic flow? During racing, traffic incidents on the mountain and bad weather in winter, Douglas Promenade becomes the main arterial route between North and South. We already have a perfectly good traffic calming measure in place - the horse trams.

Thanks to the fairground rides we now have even more cracks along the walkway. The Government want to spread the TT entertainment around the Island, well why not enhance Ramsey's experience and locate the fairground there, thus contributing to Ramsey Sprint's atmosphere?

So much of Taxpayers time, money and another 5 years wasted on consultations! Why are we continually paying vast sums of taxpayer's money to consultancy companies across? Thus contributing to the UK's economy, not our Island's. There is more than enough expertise on the Island who would be more than willing to contribute their knowledge at a fraction of the price?

About me

I was brought up and schooled in South Manchester, and have worked 24/7 all my adult life. At 20 I was an employer in the petrol retail sector, by 26 I was self employed and moved to North Leeds. I ran Shell petrol stations for 21 years, including running



the largest of the Shell sites on the Leeds ring road. Deciding on semi-retirement I took on a busy Post Office in the same area, where I enjoyed being part of the community (and coincidentally where I met my partner) During this time I raised 2 children, bred and showed Great Danes and Birman cats and was a keen gardener until hay fever got the better of me. I was a long standing member of the Petrol Retailers Association plus I was a committee member of the Bradford branch of the Federation of SubpostMasters.

Since making the Island my home I have constantly been involved in the community. In the early days I helped at Hospice. I joined the Orange Army around 14 years ago and these days can usually be found around Governor's Dip or Bedstead. Currently I am on the Committee for the Douglas Live at Home Scheme, a staunch supporter of the Positive Action Group and I fully support the setting up of the Manx Credit Union. For the last 5 years I have been a Welfare Caseworker with SSAFA which is the oldest Armed Forces Charity, and for just over 4 years I have been a Douglas Borough Councillor representing Athol Ward.

During my time as a councillor I served on the housing committee from the time I was elected until April this year. I have also served for a short time on Regeneration and currently sit on Environmental Services. For the past two and a half years I have served on the Local Authority Pensions Scheme Committee, of which I served as Vice-Chair in part of the previous session.

I am 65 years old and have lived in Douglas with my partner for 12 wonderful years and between us we have 6 grandchildren.

I still await open and transparent Government! That must sound familiar to you from previous General Election manifestos. I know I can't be alone in asking this? I have decided not to sit watching this happen anymore.

I ASK THAT YOU PUT YOUR CONFIDENCE IN ME BY VOTING FOR ME ON

**Thursday
22nd September 2016**



CHANGE NEEDS TO HAPPEN!

If you have any questions or require a lift to the polling station please call me on



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KAREN FOR KEYS

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