

ralph

PEAKE

Douglas North

HOUSE OF KEYS GENERAL ELECTION

Thursday 22 September

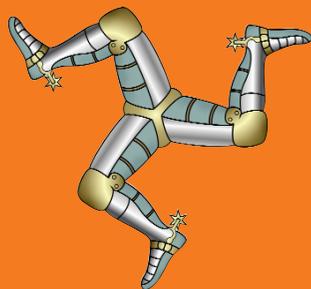
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Dear Douglas North Constituent,

I have been honoured to serve as a Douglas North MHK, and my first year representing you all has flown by.

My constituents are at the heart of everything I do, and I am committed to meeting any constituents who contact me directly for information or explanation. I am especially pleased to have helped so many directly via DHSC and DEFA, equally I am grateful for the assistance of colleagues across Government who have helped resolve numerous matters for the people of Douglas North, that have been channelled through me.



An Introduction to being your MHK

Much of the work of a back bench MHK takes place a long way from the newspaper headlines and front bench of the House of Keys. I have met many of you during the year, listened and learned much, gained experience of our government system and got up-close and personal with the opportunities and challenges our Island faces in the next five years and further into the future.

“Let’s help Back Bench MHK’s make a more effective contribution.”

To support this move I intend to work toward the complete reorganisation of the how the House of Keys works for a Back Bench MHK. The role is presently drowned in detail and attached to all parts of different government departments. The first casualty in such a process is any real scrutiny of legislation or overall policy. We sign up to supporting the system we were elected to change.

I readily support the recommendations found within Lord Lisvane’s recent report on the future framework of Tynwald. One proposal is that Back Benchers would not become department members as a routine so essentially breaking the Council of Ministers block vote, in which Department Members are expected to vote with their Minister. The primary role of a Back Bench MHK should be the scrutiny of and the setting of policy debated as a group.



Health and Education are at the top of my agenda, both are important investments

The scale of expenditure on Health and Social Care dominates government spending. I want us all to have an open and honest conversation about how much we currently spend, whether we consider this to be sustainable, what services the public considers as a priority and how we fund this. The health service needs a transparent change in the level of funding, such a step change won’t be delivered by playing with the budgets, and health care inflation alone is running at 5% a year.

I believe that the recently agreed DHSC Health and Wellbeing Strategy must be delivered. I have seen and heard great ideas from team members at Nobles

Hospital. It’s very encouraging to witness the positive attitude which generates these local solutions. Make no mistake there is much to do and deliver but a great many are up for it and they deserve our full support to help deliver a health service focused on world class service standards.

Thank you for reading my manifesto and I pledge that with your support on voting day, I will continue to address vigorously the opportunities and challenges that our island faces. Acting on YOUR behalf, I will endorse change, when it might be difficult. I will embrace the future, whilst learning from the past. I will support those with vision and passion. Together, we must seek out robust and sustainable solutions.

Vote Peake for Douglas North on Thursday 22 September

Town Centre Regeneration

We have taken some steps improving Douglas but there is still much to be done. The role of the town centre in our lives is changing. There is great potential to see further improvement in Douglas. Starting with improvement in access and improvements in activities based in the Town Centre. I am passionate about creating a vibrant and vital Douglas. I will commit to taking a full part in the recently reformed Regeneration Committee. I want to see a town centre-first approach, one that can compare positively to cities and forms a landmark Gateway to the Island.



The Public Sector Pension has still to be sorted out

A great many constituents are disappointed that Government have been unable to even propose a solution to the Public Sector Pension issue, unwilling to address the difficult issues which have been compounded and avoided throughout successive administrations despite being acknowledged in the last budget as being the biggest single financial issue facing the Isle of Man. Well, right now is the time to face this issue and provide the much needed solution so we can all know and plan our future; the key is a sustainable solution for the Isle of Man people one which we can presently all afford.

Planning for the future

Sometimes taken for granted is the Island's planning system and planning guidance library or policy, such policy shapes our built environment, our lifestyle. When I came to Tynwald the sorry state of planning policy was clear for all to see. Out of ten main policy documents only two were within their sell by date, some from the past century. I believe that one of the next government's priorities should be to ensure that all planning policy documents are fit for purpose by the end of the term and not a barrier to economic growth as they are now.

Ralph Peake working for Douglas North

The last administration spent too long trying to solve problems with yesterday's solutions and made little headway on some fundamental issues.

Should you choose me to represent you again; I will use the valuable head start this year in office has given me, to help avoid the mud of complacency and inaction into which most government initiatives seem, presently to sink, despite the best of intentions.

This last administration spent too long trying to solve problems with yesterday's solutions and repeatedly made little headway on some fundamental issues. I now know that government is not just a big business, its structure is far more complex. I would use the analogy of a family having many complex and conflicting ambitions, being financial minded as well as socially conscious.

In the last twelve months I have seen a government machine too often struggle to cope, at odds with itself and its people. Not enough fuel to keep the old machine running, (money), yes we can provide more fuel (by raising income such as tax) but not enough nor quickly enough to keep the old machine of government rolling along in its out-of-date ways. We need a new engine, an engine that has at its

heart a belief, that it must be more streamlined, efficient and effective. A machine that welcomes and facilitates, the assistance that volunteers generously give. To help deliver services in a new way. We have talked about this often but there is a significant resistance to change and that resistance must be broken down. This should be the priority of the Chief Minister.

The current position is not sustainable and government has been unable to cap its gross spending overall or make many significant efficiencies. I cringe when I look at the cuts laid down on some service delivery departments, for example the Department of Home Affairs.

Expenditure within some departments is so great that it dominates the public purse. For example, inflation alone within the Department of Health and Social Care is not far short of the annual Isle of Man Constabulary budget.

A few areas within the scope of public services have embraced the required budget reductions and with a willingness to change have overhauled their organisation from top to bottom; this learning could be shared successfully amongst other budget holders.

I want to see real debate outside of the Council of Ministers in the next parliament

I believe all MHK's should commit, from the start, to unity and cooperation rather than the politics of envy and dispute.

To agree, from the outset, to shared objectives based on the manifesto of the newly elected Chief Minister.

To work together to deliver results, properly scrutinised, which move the Island forward.

The policies that Tynwald must focus on should grow the economy and protect the vulnerable, a well-used phrase I accept, but essential goals.

Focus on the Economy

“The next five years will be about the economy”

Presently we have a twin track economy, the traditional economy is to all intents and purposes flat-lining whilst the international sector is flourishing. We should celebrate this success but not ignore the traditional economy whose sectors form the back bone of our society, structure of employment and unique way of life.

The local economy needs direct specialised support if we are to avoid an Island community devoid of locally delivered goods and services. The Isle of Man local economy by virtue of its isolation, scale and competitive pressure won't exist as we know it unless we seek

to improve the economic landscape.

We need a framework for our local economy to get back into growth. A framework where the Government works with large and small local businesses. The value of the local economy has been understated for years, the value of the multiplier affect not understood.

Let's leave the UK model behind, it's broken..... We need to grow the Island's working population

We need to grow the Island's working population to a sustainable size, a population that creates enough income which will sustain all sectors of our society. This objective must be underpinned by tangible objectives and strategies, not just a brochure.

An Island full of conflicts of interest

The Island by nature of its size and isolated location is served by monopoly service providers both in the public and private sector. The public's relationship with such service providers is chequered at best. I want to work towards more transparent relationships, relationships that deliver best value to the customer whilst providing good service. These services and associated price or fare structures are complex agreements, grey rather than black and white. In the absence of a competitive environment I wish to see the development of an ombudsman responsible for monopoly or near monopoly service providers with sufficient powers to take action on behalf of consumers in setting standards and making comparisons. An ombudsman who understands the value of an exclusive agreement and how a deal can be flexed to deliver best customer service.

“We want a domestic economy that can support the living wage”

By the nature of its size and geographic isolation the Isle of Man's domestic economy does inevitably carry more costs than its UK comparison, however the cost of utilities are often double that of the UK and transport costs are higher, adding around 10% to local businesses overheads. We have to understand the benefits of doing more business locally improve our customer service experience and attract customers who want to engage with local business and spend money with them.

I applaud the development fund as an initiative toward delivering economic growth

I want us to invest more to improve our local business infrastructure whilst simultaneously reducing the excessive expenditure on public administration. The phrase, 'smaller smarter government' has been mooted by past administrations but there has been little will to affect this. We need to move on from the comfort zone, which often results in lower output and always higher customer costs, the very thing we must all work together to reduce if we want our local economy to be sustainable.

Government must be structured to have a real focus on the priority of delivering local economic growth. There are two areas of economic development local and global. Having focus on and understanding of local commerce and how they trade with customers and businesses in a local, national and even international export, are different to the requirements and needs of businesses who operate in the global market, for example e-Gaming.

