

HOUSE OF KEYS GENERAL ELECTION THURSDAY 22nd SEPTEMBER 2016

Rob Callister



**A Manifesto
for a changing Island**

Rob Callister



An MHK for Onchan and for a changing Isle of Man



The time is right for an injection of new and fresh thinking MHKs who will stand up to the challenges and the uncertainty that the Isle of Man must overcome over the next five years.

Dear Constituent,

As I outlined in my recent letter of introduction, I really believe that the General Election being held on Thursday 22nd September 2016 is a decisive moment in the Island's history. With the UK voting to leave the European Union, the time is right for an injection of new and fresh thinking MHKs that will stand up to the challenges and the uncertainty that the Isle of Man must overcome over the next five years.

This Island clearly needs national MHKs with the leadership, vision and motivation to step forward to ensure that the right decisions are made, both locally and internationally, on behalf of the people of Onchan and the wider Island population.

Since May 2012, I have built up considerable working knowledge of both Central and Local Government, their many policies and procedures, as well as the Isle of Man's primary and secondary legislation systems, and I genuinely feel that I can hit the ground running if elected.

This manifesto outlines some of the issues I have heard on the doorsteps from Onchan residents and some of the potential solutions and opportunities which I envisage for the next Manx Government to overcome people's concerns and strengthen our Island's position in a rapidly changing world.

Please just take a moment to look over some of my suggestions contained here in my manifesto, reflect on the decisions made on your behalf over the last five years, and then cast a vote on Thursday 22nd September for a new MHK who will fight with a strong voice for Onchan and this changing Island for the next five years.

Thank you.

Rob Callister



Rob Callister

Candidate Information

Age 47; married in 2006 to my wife, Ellen.

I am a Chartered Manager, Compliance Professional and a Trust and Estate Practitioner. I have considerable experience in Business Operations, Compliance, Corporate Governance, Finance and Performance Management at a board level.

I also hold full professional membership with the Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners (TEP) and International Compliance Association (MICA) and the Chartered Management Institute (CMgr, MCMi).

Independent or Party Politics

I am not affiliated to any political party and will be standing as an Independent Candidate. If elected I would, however, seek to work with the Manx Labour Party and the LibVan Party, and with any other groups or individuals that will benefit Onchan, but more importantly for the overall benefit of the Isle of Man.

I would also work with the Government, and in Government if asked. With many of the difficult or key decisions ignored in part by the previous three Governments, the next administration must make those difficult decisions going forward, and they must be the right decisions for this Island today and for the next generation.



Previous Political Experience

- Onchan District Commissioner (May 2012 to date)
- Chairman of Onchan Commissioners (2013/14)
- Member of Isle of Man Municipal Association Executive Committee (May 2012 to date)
- Vice Chairman of Isle of Man Municipal Association (May 2016 to date)
- Member of Department of Infrastructure Waste Management Working Forum Group (2015 to date)

MHK's Expenses

Each Tynwald Member is entitled to be paid an annual sum to cover any out of pocket expenses when representing or carrying out their duties / functions on behalf of Constituents and this Island. The sum currently stands at £6,707.42 and there are no requirements to produce receipts. As the amount relates to work undertaken on your behalf, I will therefore publish a full list of my expenses incurred each year if elected.

Pension Contributions

Given the level of the crisis surrounding Public Sector Pensions, I believe Tynwald Members should lead by example. Therefore I would support any motion that increases Members' pension contributions up to 15% in the future.



Economic Growth and Diversity

The Economy - "Restore Confidence, Create Real Opportunities & Growth"

If we turn back the clock to the last General Election in 2011 for a moment, the Global Economy remained on a knife edge. The Isle of Man had increased unemployment levels, which peaked at 979 in December of that year.

Although unemployment levels increased further to 1,208 by March 2013, the Manx Economy has overall performed reasonably well over the last five years and unemployment currently stands at around 636, which shows real growth in the Island's employment market.

However, since 2008 the Isle of Man is still having to come to terms with the global economic recovery which is taking far longer and feels far less positive than recoveries in the past. The number of banks that have closed or relocated from the Isle of Man in recent years is alarming, and the Island is having to continually defend its Finance Sector which is coming under increased pressure and scrutiny from other international jurisdictions. This is clearly having a negative effect on employment opportunities, and as a result the next Government must prioritise the re-establishment of a robust banking system on the Island.

Within the Construction and Travel sectors, there also continue to be serious concerns over the level of activity and opportunities. The building industry remains very reliant upon the Government to implement Capital schemes, and the recent loss of 40,000 airline seats between the Isle of Man and London is a further worrying sign for the Island's travel and hospitality industries.

Given the global uncertainties and the lack of confidence in the Island's long-term employment outlook for certain sectors, the Island's working population clearly remains very cautious about the future. Most employees have only seen minimal wage increases over the last five years and as a consequence, the spending power of the Manx public has been reduced, particularly with the recent introduction of numerous stealth tax charges by the Government.

The Island's economic success must remain the next Government's overarching priority over the next 15 years, but this can only be achieved by having a stable but flexible Government that can adapt and change with emerging markets. Where possible the Government should also provide additional financial support by way of grants and tax breaks for new and exciting initiatives that encourage more start-ups and medium-size businesses, which in turn creates genuine, long-term employment opportunities for all.

Education and training opportunities are a vital key to ensuring we have a skilled workforce fit to create necessary economic growth, as well as provision of ongoing professional development. A robust and flexible work permit system, together with marketing the Island as a great place to live and work will further attract the high calibre of employment opportunities that this Island will need in order to protect its future.

The next Government must also learn from previous failings, in order to avoid unnecessary financial waste on poorly advised or poorly managed infrastructure projects and when using outside consultants. The Manx public expect, and rightly so, a greater level of scrutiny and debate on all financial expenditure in the future.

Only by achieving these goals will this Island see new investment, new jobs and new opportunities, enabling the Government to protect the most vulnerable in our society, to sow the seed of real opportunity for future generations, along with protecting and improving our core front-line services.

“If elected, I will work with the Government to restore the confidence lost over the last eight years and create the right environment for the private sector to thrive in. The Island’s MHKs need to see the bigger picture and start developing and implementing strategies and policies in the short, medium and long term to ensure that the Manx Economy can continue to grow and diversify even further into new and unexplored markets.”

Brexit – “An unknown journey full of risks and opportunities”

As we know, the UK voted to leave the European Union (EU) on 23rd June and whilst the Isle of Man played no part in the referendum, this result is likely to have a deep impact on the Island’s Economy and Community for generations to come. As the



Isle of Man is not part of the UK or the EU, the Island's relationship with the EU is limited to Article 355(5)(c) and Protocol 3, which enables the Isle of Man to trade freely in industrial goods and agricultural products. However this will fall away once the UK leaves the EU.

I fully support the comments of the current Chief Minister who described the vote as a "Journey into the unknown for both the UK and the Isle of Man", and there will certainly be a long period of uncertainty for this Island, once the UK Parliament make the formal request under Article 50 of the Treaty of Lisbon to trigger a two-year period of negotiations in order to exit the EU.

The main sectors that could be affected include manufacturing, agricultural and fishing communities who may now face disrupted trade in exporting goods to EU countries as well as potentially higher costs and quotas. Other vital sectors including aircraft, shipping and yachting industries could also be affected due to the possible changes in the Island's VAT status. Food exports to the EU and the rest of the world could also see increased costs and restrictions.

On the positive side, sectors such as the financial services and the e-gaming industries look set to be unaffected, and there could well be other opening markets to explore in the future.

"If elected, I would fully support the Government's stance to remain strong and resilient and to position the Isle of Man favourably in the coming months and years in order to take full advantage of any opportunities that the UK's departure from the EU might bring to benefit this Island."

Immigration & Work Permits - "A firm but fair system for all"

Getting the balance right in respect of immigration will never be easy. I have always been a strong supporter of the Isle of Man's work permit system, but at times I don't believe the system goes far enough.

I would therefore welcome additional scrutiny of those applicants wishing to live in and contribute to the Island, including detailed employment history, references, financial information and more importantly, a detailed police check as a basic requirement, and in advance of a permit being issued.

The Isle of Man should never be seen as an easy place to obtain benefits, healthcare & social housing, nor a place which harbours criminals or fraudsters. The Island should therefore always have the right to say no when an applicant does not meet a minimum requirement, regardless of personal circumstances.

That said, the Government and local businesses must not be prevented from recruiting quality staff they genuinely need, and the Isle of Man has always been a welcoming place for those who will integrate into our society and make a positive contribution towards our economy and the Manx way of life.





Air & Sea Links – "Trust, reliability and confidence need to be restored"

The air and sea routes remain the gateway to and from the Isle of Man, and their success or failure has a major impact on the business sector and the overall tourism package being offered by the Isle of Man. They also have major implications on the Isle of Man being able to deliver a diverse and balanced economy, which is vitally needed over the next 10 to 15 years.

Sea Links

The Isle of Man Steam Packet Company has had sole use of the Government's Harbour facilities in Douglas and a virtual monopoly on all freight movement in and out of the Isle of Man for many years. I don't believe that it is right that the people of this Island should pay higher costs for transport links, goods and services to and from the Island simply because of the level of external debt currently held by the Steam Packet Company, which totals around £110 million. The Isle of Man Steam Packet's recent announcement to invest £170 million into new vessels, port facilities and fare reductions is welcome news, but the investment proposal requires further review and scrutiny before a final decision is made on behalf of the Manx public.

“If elected, I will support the Isle of Man Government in fully evaluating the current User Agreement which runs until 2020, to consider the best options for the Isle of Man going forward and for the passengers and businesses that use the service, and certainly before activating the additional six year option available or renegotiating a new User Agreement with the Steam Packet Company.”

Open Skies

The Island's "Open Skies" policy is also in need of urgent review by the next Manx Government. In recent years far too many flights are being either delayed or cancelled altogether, which is clearly having a negative effect on the Manx economy, business travel, domestic holidays and those passengers trying to schedule connecting flights. The "Open Skies" policy was originally introduced in 1993 by the Civil Aviation Authority by way of the EU liberalisation in order to deregulate the airline industry and improve overall competition, and thereby to lower fares and improve services.

Most passengers recognise that as an Island, we are restricted by the number of routes and the number of passengers using the service, but that should never be used as an excuse to cancel flights with little or no notice, many of which are left stranded or delayed. The Government's own data shows that since 2012 business travel has fallen dramatically and I am certain that regular travellers would confirm that the overall level of service currently being provided by airlines on the Isle of Man has reduced further in recent months and that passenger confidence is at an all-time low.

“Although healthy competition and consumer choice are important, if elected I will encourage the Isle of Man Government to put additional pressure on airlines, via increased regulation if required, to improve reliability, the overall travelling experience and to safeguard strategic routes and flight times, which are vital to the Island's economic success.”



Education

"Investing in learning is key to our future"

I believe the Isle of Man has an excellent education system that serves the Island's children and young people well, but more could be done to ensure that every single student is given the same opportunities to complete a full education.

The Department of Education's "Strategy for Children and Young People" (2015-2020) is certainly a step in the right direction and should ensure that all students have the best possible opportunities in life, and from a young age.

Pre-school

The decision to privatise all government pre-schools in September 2012 and to end state funding was extremely disappointing, and the consultation period at the time was woefully inadequate. That said, I fully support the



Government's current pre-school scheme currently available to all children, along with Tynwald's recent motion to increase the standard credits to £1,700 per annum, which should enable a child to attend up to 10 sessions per week or 12 hours a week of pre-schooling for those families on the higher credit.

Further & Higher Education and Apprenticeships

I fully support the continuing payment of university tuition fees for Isle of Man students, alongside offering additional financial incentives for those students choosing to undertake courses which are vital to the growth of our economy, such as teaching, IT and medical & social care, as well as in business and finance.

Government should continue to develop study programmes at the University College Isle of Man (UCM) to be able to offer degree-level courses in support of the Island's key industries, while those students who leave the Island to study should be encouraged to return to the Isle of Man after gaining relevant experience, through relocation packages and other financial incentives, to ensure a return on our long-term educational investment.

I don't believe University is right for everyone, and for those students who wish to enter the workplace after secondary school, I will support the creation of more apprenticeships through the Isle of Man Training Centre and the UCM, in partnership with local businesses, to ensure that young people have the right skills and experience to help grow the Island's economy and create genuine opportunities over the next 15 years.

For those considered mature students, the Department of Economic Development has also supported vocational courses for a number of years, which has enabled adults like myself to retrain or gain additional qualifications. This in turn has allowed people to improve their own career opportunities. I therefore support this type of scheme being continued by the Department.

Going forward, I would like to also see the Department of Education and the College of Further Education explore the opportunities in offering online or correspondence professional courses, with tutors/examiners based here in the Isle of Man. Making local knowledge and expertise more widely available via home study is potentially an excellent source of income to Government and the Island.

NEETs – young people not in education, employment or training

In March 2013, the Department of Infrastructure had the figure for those young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) standing between 300 and 700. I genuinely believe that Government Departments can and should do more to assist those young people into appropriate education, training or work programmes.

With an ageing population, the Isle of Man Government needs to fully engage with this younger section of our society. Only by creating greater opportunities through the employment market or through training courses will NEETs have a sense of purpose, which in turn enables them to make a positive contribution towards Manx life and the economy.

"If elected, I will support the necessary investment in our teachers and the education system, to ensure that our education strategies remain fit for purpose into the future, encouraging innovative thinking to create maximum opportunity for every child to develop to their full potential."

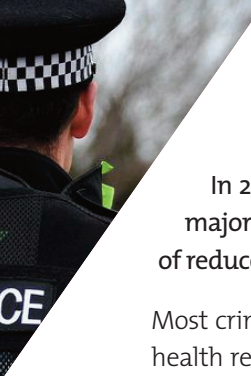
Law and Order



Police and Drugs - "Protecting our society on every front"



As an elected Onchan Commissioner, I have attended regular meetings with the Area Inspector and Officers from within the Neighbourhood Policing Units. The feedback obtained confirms that Onchan and the Island remains a safe place to live and work.



In 2014, the Isle of Man Chief Constable, Gary Roberts announced a major programme of modernisation of the Island's Police Force in an era of reduced budgets and challenging financial targets.

Most crimes committed on the Island appear to be drug, drink or mental health related, and therefore we should ensure that more regular checks are carried out at the Airport, Sea Terminal, Independent Haulage Companies and the Post Office Sorting Headquarters.

A closer working relationship across all Government Departments is urgently needed, in order to ensure that the Island's Police Force can better prioritise their limited resources, without having to become social workers in the evenings and weekends.

"If elected, I will support the necessary investment in our Police Force, in order to ensure that our frontline police officers have the resources, training and the legislation to send out a stronger and clear message that the Isle of Man will not accept the importation of illegal drugs into the Island and as a society we will not accept anti-social behaviour through drink."

I would also welcome a full review of the Island's overall drug and alcohol strategy to ensure that there are sufficient programmes available that provide our citizens with suitable treatment for mental health problems, to reduce substance dependency and offer additional long-term support."

Justice - "A fair and accessible legal system"

Through personal experience in recent years, I have found the Isle of Man legal system difficult to navigate, expensive and beyond the reach of most ordinary people. People can get drawn into the legal system through no fault of their own, and it is difficult to explain how helpless some individuals or families are left feeling through the whole experience, which can often take years to resolve.

Unfortunately, the financial risks involved set against receiving a fair hearing and justice are disproportionate, which means far too many people are left either representing themselves because of the costs involved, or simply giving up on ever obtaining any fair hearing at all. There are also too many cases in the Isle of Man whereby Legal Aid is awarded to just one party and this puts significant financial strain on the other party, resulting in spiralling debts, which helps neither party, especially where children are involved.

The Isle of Man needs a legal system that is balanced, fair, robust, transparent and accessible to all, as a matter of urgency. That is why we should seriously consider introducing a level of compulsory arbitration or mediation for all non-criminal cases. This could be funded by way of freeing up vital Court time and ensures that all parties have an opportunity to be heard, and also to come to terms with the potential financial consequences if drawn into the full legal system.

I would also welcome a full review of the role currently undertaken by the Isle of Man Law Society and the Advocates' Disciplinary Tribunal when considering informal and formal complaints made against Manx Advocates when the professional relationship breaks down for any reason.

If elected, I would support

- (a) the introduction of initial compulsory arbitration or mediation in civil legal cases,*
- (b) Legal Aid being awarded to both parties in certain circumstances involving Family and Children's Courts, and*
- (c) a full review of the complaints procedure against Manx Advocates to ensure the public can have total confidence in the legal profession.*



The Island's Infrastructure



The National Health Service and housing

National Health Service - "A fair, sustainable and cost effective NHS"

Getting the balance right between delivering a first class health service that actually meets our needs and living up to people's expectations isn't going to be easy, especially when costs across all sectors within the health service appear to be rising, and at a time when all departmental budgets are continually coming under greater scrutiny by Treasury, who are looking to reduce overall budgets across all Government Departments.

The Department of Health and Social Care must therefore increase efficiency across all sectors, make savings, ensure funding is not being unnecessarily wasted, along with considering using alternative medicines and delivery methods going forward. In reality that it isn't going to be easy either, as the level of service required across the Island changes hourly, daily and weekly.

In addition, the Manx Government and the Department are also having to come to terms with the findings of an independent audit of the governance, management and structure of our health service, which was undertaken by the West Midlands Quarterly Review Service at Noble's Hospital. The

publication of their initial report in 2014 certainly made uncomfortable reading.

Although a lot of work has been undertaken since 2014, the Government must continue to monitor the level of care being undertaken at Noble's Hospital, in order to ensure that the delivery of service is: accessible; reliable; respectful; clean, safe and provides an excellent level of service and after care; clear with its information and communication to its patients; accountable; friendly and approachable.

The West Midlands report also highlighted serious concerns about the amount of pressure that is currently being put on our hardworking and valuable nursing and medical staff at Noble's Hospital, because of a shortness of staff in certain departments. The situation is clearly unacceptable and not in the best interests of the patients or the dedicated staff.

It is the Government's role to ensure the Island's Health Service has the necessary legislation, investment, resources, support and staff to deliver a cost effective health system into the future.

NHS Dental & GP Services

Many people are still encountering difficulties in accessing an NHS dentist. Some improvements have been made over the last five years, but much more could be done to ensure everyone has access to NHS dental services. I would also like the next Government to review GP waiting times around the Island. I feel it is totally unacceptable that we have to wait days or weeks to see our GP, and months if not years to see a consultant.

“If elected I would request an overall review of the Island's waiting times and the availability of NHS dentists, and support further development of current community health centres that can assist at a local level, such as Ramsey Cottage Hospital and Thie Rosien in Port Erin.”

Housing and Public Sector Housing

It is vitally important in the coming months and years that Onchan Social Housing tenants and Onchan District Commissioners as the Landlord are well represented when key decisions surrounding the Island's social housing sector are made, and to ensure that these decisions are made for the right reasons and properly justified.

I will continue to oppose the setting up of regional housing structures on behalf of our tenants and the Local Authority until further information is made available by the Department of Infrastructure's Housing Division in respect of the overall benefits, the improvement of service and any savings that can be achieved from setting up regional housing structures.

I believe the Department has clearly overlooked the purpose of Social Housing in recent years, which is to provide accommodation to the most vulnerable within our community and to support those families who are unable to get onto the property ladder. I will therefore continue to defend those tenants on a low or fixed income and now having to pay around 35% to 45% of their available income just on Social Housing rent. I support the introduction of means testing, in order to identify those tenants on a fixed income who may require a rent adjustment because of the significant rental increases applied over the last four years.

Onchan Commissioners have also undertaken major investment in the housing stock in recent years on behalf of their tenants. Further capital projects are being rolled out in 2016/17, which I have fully supported as a Commissioner.

“If elected, I will continue to represent the tenants' best interests, and with a strong voice in order to ensure that future rent levels are set fairly, justified and with a full understanding of the tenants' ability to pay – a point which I have made to the Department of Infrastructure's Housing Division many times over the last four years on your behalf.”

First Time Buyers Opportunities

I continue to support the Department of Infrastructure's current strategy to provide financial assistance to enable First Time Buyers to obtain the keys to their own property via one of two Shared Equity Schemes currently available. The 'First Home Fixed' scheme applies to new "approved" first time buyer and buy-back properties, which are on developments undertaken by the Department or private developers, whereas the 'First Home Choice' scheme applies to properties purchased on the open market, and allows higher levels of income and purchase prices to enable greater flexibility in purchasing properties on the open market.

Given the current rent levels found in the private sector and in respect of local authority housing, I would also support an element of adjustment of the government's policy that requires individuals and couples to pay a minimum of 5% deposit. The next government should continue to consider all available options, including rent-to-buy to ensure everyone gets a fair opportunity to purchase their own property, and at a young age.

Sheltered Accommodation

With an aging population, I continue to support Onchan building at least one further sheltered housing unit in or around the village, which would certainly prove invaluable to the community.



The older generation



“We should never forget
their contribution”



I have never seen our older generation as a 'burden on society'. I believe that those individuals who have worked hard, paid their taxes and supported the Manx economy throughout their lives should be allowed to enjoy their retirement.

Public Transport

I fully support Free Public Transport for all individuals aged 65+ at off-peak times, including the heritage railways. Applying some modest time restrictions ensures that the priority of our buses during peak times is given to those individuals travelling to or from work, schools and colleges.

TV Licences

I believe that it is totally unfair that the Manx Government is now removing free TV Licences for the 6,800 Island residents who are 75 or over from September. The next Government should continue to lobby the BBC hard in order to ensure that Manx residents are included in any BBC proposal to give free TV licences to all over 75's from 2020. In the interim, the Manx Government should continue to fund the free TV licence until 2020.

Winter Fuel Poverty

Far too many people in the Isle of Man are caught in what is considered fuel poverty during the cold winter months. It is also totally unacceptable that Manx residents are having to pay higher Gas standing charges and KWh unit prices compared to the UK and many parts of Europe. Unfortunately, the situation with Electricity isn't much better, with higher standing charges and unit costs.

"If elected, I would encourage the next Government to consider ways of reducing overall household energy costs on the Island as a priority, including a Government assisted scheme that ensures homes are well insulated in the future."

Nursing / Residential Home

With an aging population, the time is right for the next Government to take a serious look at the provision of nursing and residential home care on the Isle of Man, and how these services should be funded in the future.

Glenside Residential Care Home in Douglas closed its doors for the final time in 2013 and since then the building has been demolished and almost three years on, the site remains empty - why?

“If elected, I would encourage the next Government to build a new Glenside Residential Home as quickly as possible.”

MHK or Commissioner for the Older Generation

Loneliness, social isolation and access to vital services remain some of the biggest issues amongst the Island's elderly population, and as a caring society we need to engage more with our ageing population. The Government needs to implement a long-term strategy now as to how it intends to fund and care for an ageing population in the future, which was highlighted by the recent Ci65 report to Government that reviewed the Island's 'Social Security and National Insurance Schemes'.

“If elected, I would encourage the next Government to appoint an MHK or Commissioner with overall responsibility for the Island's ageing population, and to engage fully with the third sector as part of an overall strategy towards an inclusive society.”

Public Sector Pensions

A pension scheme that is sustainable and fair to both the employer and employee

One of the biggest challenges facing the next Isle of Man Government is the Public Sector Pension liabilities, which have reached crisis point. The warning signs in respect of an increased average life expectancy, a reduction in the average age of retirement in recent years for Government workers, and an increase in the overall payment periods from 10 years up to 25 years and beyond have been virtually disregarded by the previous three Manx Governments.

So how does the next Government address the Public Sector Pension legacy funding gap which has been largely ignored for the last 15 years? Several options have been presented for consideration by the Cabinet Office, including:

- Reduced accrued rights and benefits
- Close all current public sector schemes
- Capping the value of public sector pensions
- Reducing the lump sum commutation factor
- Reducing the amount of lump sum available
- Taxation options
- Move to Career Averages benefits

None of the options appear to be straightforward or easy, and implementing any one of these could potentially cause additional problems for the next Government, including infringement of human rights legislation, legal challenges, negative short term cash flow concerns, offering only a short term solution or requiring major primary legislation changes.

More concerning is the fact that any deficit in the pension contributions is met by the Government, currently standing at £44.9 million and projected

to rise to £96.4 million by 2034-35. A solution must be found in order to protect vital frontline services being delivered in the future.

So what urgent action can the next Government take? They could consider:

- Reducing the Government Unified Scheme ("GUS") Pension lump sums payouts from 30% to 25%, which would bring the scheme in line with the Police and Teachers Pension Schemes
- Imposing a tax on all lump sums payments above a certain threshold
- Imposing a tax on annual pension payments above a certain threshold
- Increasing Employee contributions from 5% to 8% and then increase to 10% by 2020 Increasing Tynwald Members' contributions from 5% to 10% and then increase to 15% by 2020
- Raising the retirement age from 55 to 60 for all new GUS members
- Raising the retirement age for current GUS Members, Police and Teachers Pension Schemes Members to 58.

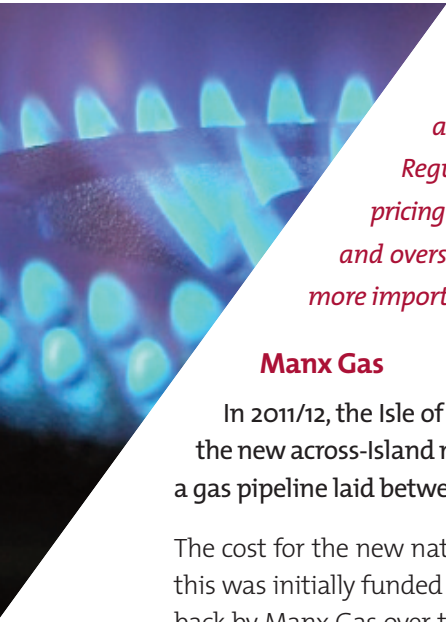
Some of the options listed here could and should have been implemented by the Manx Government at least 15 years ago: an unfortunate failing on the part of previous elected members and which simply cannot be allowed to continue.

It will now be up to the new Government in September to implement a long term solution that is both viable and sustainable as a matter of urgency. Any new scheme must also be fair to the dedicated Government workforce and to the Island's taxpayers.

Unfortunately, the taxpayers' contribution towards the funding will also have to increase beyond 15% or 20% in the coming years. How the Manx Government can make these commitments in the future is still to be established, but it will clearly rely heavily on the Island's future economic success.

Utilities

“An Independent Regulator which is fit for purpose”




“If elected, I will continue to fight for the appointment of an Independent Utilities Regulator on the Isle of Man, in order to monitor pricing structures, profits, quality of service, complaints and oversight on behalf of the Manx Government and more importantly the Consumers.”

Manx Gas

In 2011/12, the Isle of Man Government (through the MUA) completed the new across-Island natural gas pipeline, which saw the Island tap into a gas pipeline laid between Scotland and Ireland.

The cost for the new natural gas infrastructure totalled £23.5 million and this was initially funded by the Isle of Man Government but is being paid back by Manx Gas over the next 40 years. At the same time thousands of local authority tenants and Island residents, many of which are considered vulnerable, elderly or low income families, were transferred onto the natural

gas infrastructure with a promise that the Island's overall gas prices would fall. Unfortunately, since 2012 little has changed and Manx Gas customers are still paying some of the highest prices in Europe despite the wholesale price falling in recent years.



Given the amount of investment undertaken by the Isle of Man Government on behalf of the Manx public since 2011, I have to question why Manx Gas and its parent company, Ancala Partners can enjoy a guaranteed level of profit at 9.9% year-on-year from a new infrastructure paid for by the Manx taxpayer, not to mention the unfortunate individuals and low income families suffering from fuel poverty during the winter months.

In recent years Manx Gas customers have totally lost faith in the Island's Office of Fair Trading which has failed to regulate Manx Gas sufficiently and in my opinion failed to protect consumers' best interests, and apply a level of fairness in recent media articles over price reductions and standing charges.

Manx Electricity Authority

Standing Charges and Unit prices have also increased in respect of the Manx Electricity Authority in recent years, mainly because of the unauthorised borrowing of around £120 million that continues to be associated with the MUA.

I certainly believe the Isle of Man Government missed an opportunity in 2011/12 to open up the Island's energy & telecommunications markets further, which could have driven down costs and improve the overall quality in those markets. I would like to see the next Government consider all options at its disposal in respect of its fibre optic system as a priority, as this could potentially generate a vital level of income that this Island will need over the next few years.

The functioning of Tynwald



“If elected, I would support Lord Lisvane’s recommendations that MLCs should not vote on measures which are exclusively on taxation or appropriation; that MLCs should not be members of Departments and only exceptionally should they be Ministers; and that MLCs should not vote on the appointment of the Chief Minister, nor on a vote of no confidence in the Chief Minister or the Council of Ministers.”

Election of next Chief Minister

One of the first key decisions that the newly elected House of Keys Members will have to undertake is the appointment of a new Chief Minister. The Island deserves a Chief Minister who has the skills, communication and motivation to lead the new Government both on a local and international stage over the next five years, in order to help secure future success, opportunities and prosperity by promoting all the benefits the Isle of Man has to offer our global economy.

I don't believe the Chief Minister should be publicly elected under a separate ballot paper. The people of this Island elect 24 House of Keys Members and I believe it should be for them to select the best possible candidate from those who come forward.

“If elected, I would fully support further media debates and public meetings involving potential Chief Minister Candidates so that they can clearly set out publicly their statement of intention, vision and policy in advance of any vote.”

Role of Legislative Council Members

In recent years LegCo Members appear to have lost their independence from Government when voting. Having read Lord Lisvane’s Review of the Functioning of Tynwald, I don’t believe that it would be fair to exclude sitting MHKs from seeking election to the Legislative Council, but I do believe a review of the role and functions undertaken by the Legislative Council is long overdue.

House of Keys and Tynwald Court

Having listened to various sittings of Tynwald and Keys over the last five years, I am certainly left feeling that many of our elected MHK’s have lost the art of genuine and passionate debate on behalf of the Manx people. Although I understand that CoMin and the Government must ensure the Island is moving forward, using the “bloc vote” and “collective responsibility” for almost every single motion is unacceptable, especially when there is no accountability at a later stage for poor policies and decisions forced through Tynwald Court.

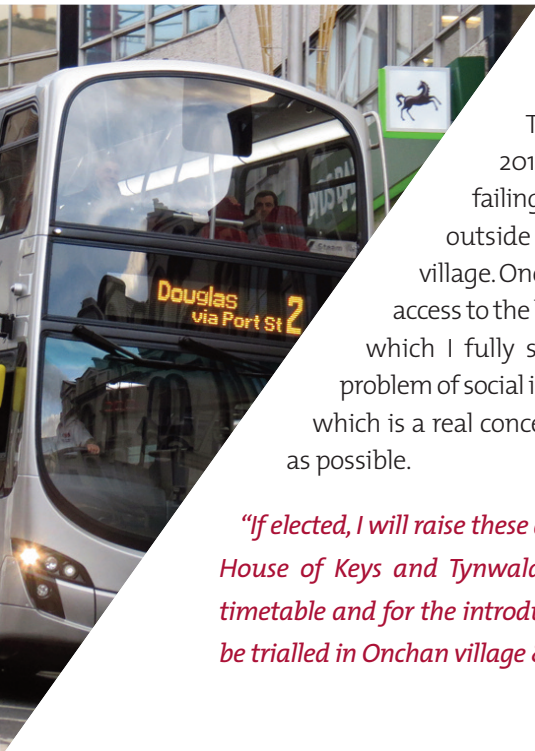
Although presentations, workshops and briefings with senior Government officials and Ministers are fine for helping to get a balanced view of the facts, three days are set aside for Tynwald Court each month and a full day for Keys each week, yet far too many Tynwald sittings last less than two days, and very few sittings of Keys go beyond lunchtime – why?

“If elected, I would want to see Tynwald Court reverting back to being a genuine debating chamber under the full scrutiny of the Manx public and local media.”

Local focus



“An MHK who supports
our Community”



Bus Timetable

The public meeting I organised in October 2014 highlighted some serious concerns and failings with regard to the current bus timetable outside the main road running through the village. Onchan residents have been calling for direct access to the hospital, doctors, shops and other facilities, which I fully support. Residents also highlighted the problem of social isolation in parts of Onchan and the Parish, which is a real concern and needs to be addressed as quickly as possible.

“If elected, I will raise these and other concerns on the floor of the House of Keys and Tynwald, in order to get an improved bus timetable and for the introduction of a Community Bus Service to be trialled in Onchan village & parish.”



Telecommunications Masts

Onchan residents and especially those living in Birch Hill at the moment continue to raise serious concerns over the siting of Telecommunications Masts in and around the village. In recent years Onchan have opposed masts being located on Bemahague School, near the King Edward Bay Golf Course and most recently at Hillberry Water Reservoir, Birch Hill. However, I fully agree that Onchan needs improvement with regard to the telecom signal in certain areas.

I remain disappointed that all three sitting Onchan MHKs voted in favour of the Town and Country Planning (Permitted Development) (Telecommunications) Order 2013 without fully understanding the wider implications for Onchan and its residents. This Order now seems to enable a telecommunication company to seek prior approval for the installation of masts under 15 metres, and for this decision to be made by a Senior Planning Officer and not by the Island's Full Planning Committee. If prior approval is declined, then the telecommunications company can still make a full application to the Planning Committee, which appears to give them an unfair advantage.

Fortunately on this occasion, the current Minister for Environment, Food and Agriculture has directed that the Department's approval of the application brought under the Town and Country Planning (Permitted Development) (Telecommunications) Order 2013 should be reversed, and that the application should be refused.

“If elected, I will continue to fight for careful consideration and genuine consultation with Onchan residents, the local authority and other stakeholders to be undertaken in advance when considering suitable sites for telecommunication masts, which should also take into account any potential health concerns, schools and built-up residential areas.”

Traffic flow though the village

I would welcome a full review of the flow of traffic coming off Signpost Corner onto Hillberry Road in both directions during school term times. The flow traffic around this area needs to be reviewed as a matter of priority, and I am disappointed that a traffic flow strategy wasn't fully implemented when St Ninian's Lower School, Onchan was being built. Any new traffic system must take into account the flow of traffic from Hillberry Crescent and coming out of Lhon Dhoo Close.

"If elected, I will be asking for an improved traffic flow system to be introduced by the DOI around this area as a priority, and that these options are put out to full consultation with the Local Authority and the people of Onchan before implementation. I believe that alternative solutions can be found without considering compulsory purchase of any land along Hillberry Road."

Potholes & General Condition of Roads

Through this election campaign one of the biggest complaints on the doorstep is about potholes and the general state of roads throughout Onchan and the village. Most Onchan residents are not looking for entire roads to be resurfaced, but at the same time, they don't expect to drive through potholes that can be several inches deep.

"If elected, I will be asking the DOI to provide Onchan residents with a clear timeframe for when repairs will be carried out, especially around some of the heavily populated estates around the village."



Parking & Speed Restrictions

Due to the growth of several businesses in the lower parts of Onchan, a number of Constituents have voiced their frustration at not being able to park anywhere near to their own streets, let alone outside their properties between 8am and 7pm during the working week. Unfortunately, some of Onchan's streets have simply become free public car parks for businesses and for individuals travelling onward into Douglas, with little consideration for the inconvenience being caused to many Onchan residents. Concerns have also been raised in respect of the overall speed of traffic throughout the village, especially in some residential areas.

“If elected, I would work with the DOI to support an overall review of speed limits in and around the village and to find solutions to Onchan’s parking problems, such as disk zones and residential parking permits, issued free of charge by the DOI for certain areas.”

Onchan District Commissioners

It is important that as an Onchan MHK I have a good working relationship with the Local Authority, Neighbourhood Policing Unit and other Community groups, in order to ensure that any local concerns brought to my attention by residents and businesses are addressed as quickly as possible. Onchan's MHKs need to work in partnership with the Board of Onchan District Commissioners and the Senior Management team within the Authority.

“If elected, I will hold regular meetings, both formal and informal, to ensure that their concerns are heard, taken on board and addressed.”

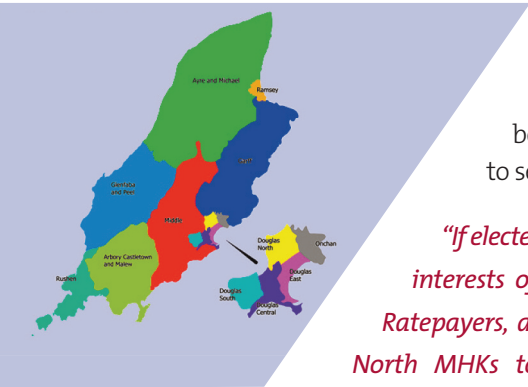
New House of Keys Constituency Boundaries

In June 2013 Tynwald supported a motion to re-draw the Island's political map, which has seen the Island split into 12 equal constituencies, each to be represented by two MHKs with an average population of around 7,000. I continue to be disappointed that over 2,000 Onchan Constituents,

Ratepayers and Voters are having to cast their votes in either Garff or Douglas North Constituencies on

Thursday, 22nd September 2016. Given

Onchan's residential population size, I believe that three MHKs is the right number to serve the people of Onchan.



“If elected, I pledge to represent and support the interests of all 9,273 Onchan Constituents and Ratepayers, and to work with Garff and Douglas North MHKs to ensure that those 2,567 Onchan voters/ratepayers do not become a forgotten voice.”

Local Authority Reform

Local Authority reform remains high on the agenda of the Isle of Man Government. There certainly needs to be more separation between the role undertaken by Local Government and Central Government.

“If elected, I will continue to oppose the introduction of the 4-1 system being discussed, and if required lobby hard to ensure that any decision in respect of Onchan District Commissioners' future as a Local Authority is made by the people of Onchan by way of a referendum, and not by central Government or an individual Government Department.”

Reform of the Domestic Rates

The Island's property taxes system (the "rates") is currently based on a valuation of the property for rental purposes, which was last reviewed in 1969. Therefore a review of the current rates system for domestic and non-domestic properties on the Island is long overdue.

In respect of domestic properties, although I continue to support a rates system being based on the Capital value of a property in the future, I cannot support the Government's proposal that Capital values should be placed within just nine bands ranging from £125,000 to £1 Million. Property Capital values need to range from £125,000 to £5 Million plus, if we are to receive an element of fairness and equality within the Island's future rating system.

I would also welcome a review of the non-domestic property taxes system at the same time as the domestic review.

"If elected, I would fully support the introduction of a rates rebate, which takes into account the number of people living in a property, and the level of income received within the household. This is of course subject to the Island's local authorities being able to introduce a simple and a cost effective scheme on behalf of their ratepayers, and the capital value of the property in question."



VOTE ROB CALLISTER X

"An MHK for a changing Island"

The General Election takes place on Thursday 22nd September 2016.

Polling Stations are open from 8am to 8pm as follows:

- Onchan Community Centre
- Views Café, Onchan Park
- Manx Blind Welfare Centre

Please check your Polling Card for which Polling Station you should use.

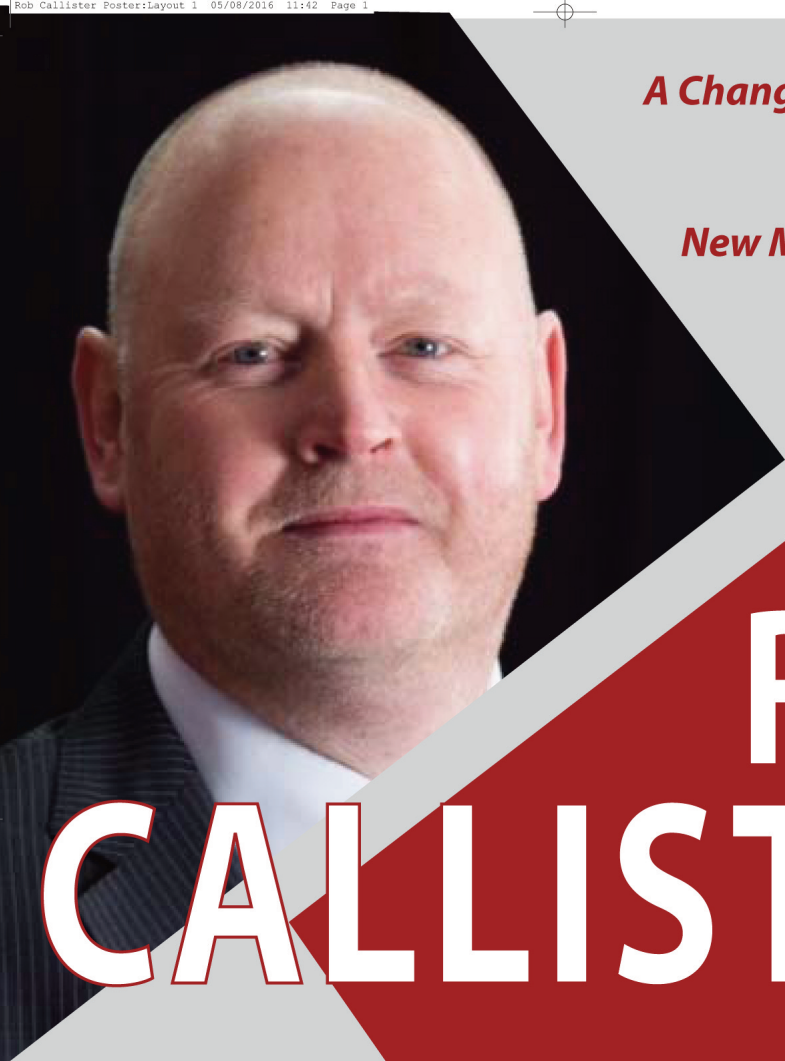
If you would like transport on Election Day, please do not hesitate to contact me on 457511.

Contact Details:

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Phone: 664475 • Mobile: 457511 e-mail: robcallister@manx.net

In an effort to be environmentally friendly, one manifesto has been sent to each family. If you would like additional copies, please do let me know.



*A Changing Island needs
New Ideas
New Approach
New MHK for ONCHAN*

ROB CALLISTER

House of Keys

General Election

ONCHAN

Thursday 22nd September 2016

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