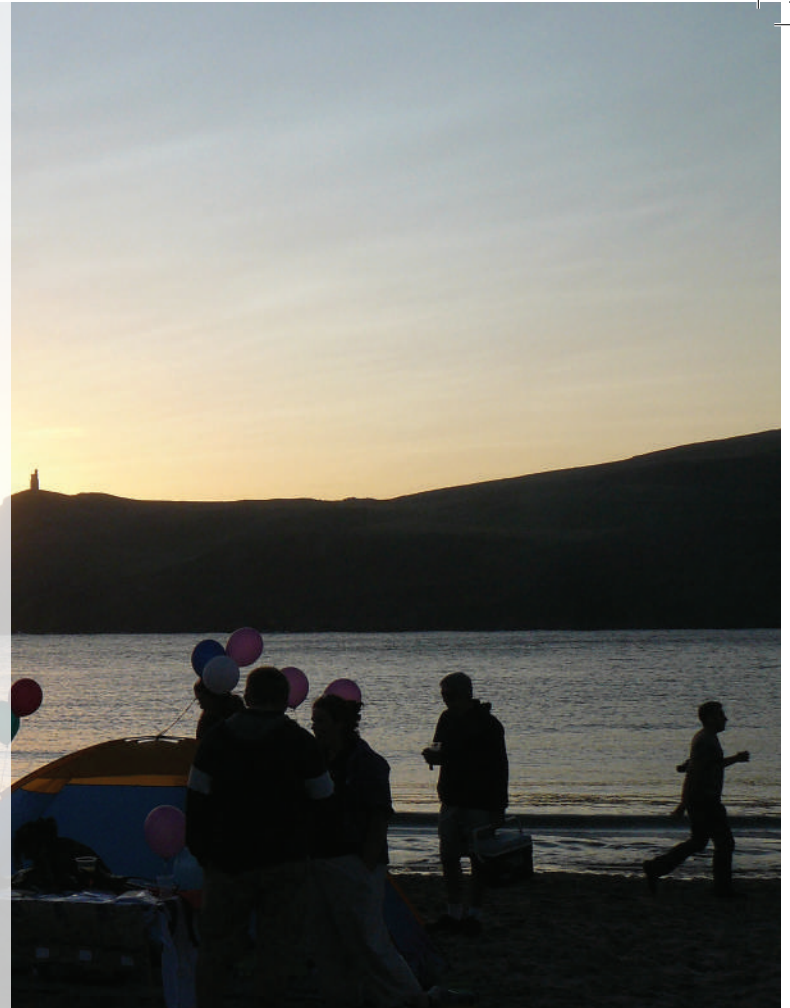


- ✓ Value for money
- ✓ Accountability & Transparency
- ✓ Experienced, Local Candidate you know and trust



VOTE WATTERSON

Dear Voter

Thank you for taking the time to read this manifesto. In it I set out my vision for the Isle of Man internationally, nationally, locally and at a personal level with constituents. It has been an honour to represent you in the House of Keys for the last fifteen years. During that time, I have enjoyed working with colleagues to bring real improvements to our Island and our people. It has not been possible to include my stance on everything in this manifesto, please contact me if there are any gaps you want to know my position on.

As Speaker of the House of Keys I have been able to put questions to Government in Tynwald, holding the executive to account, raising issues and speaking up for constituents. I have chaired the Public Accounts Committee, raising issues about value for money and good governance. I was unable to do this from inside the Council of Ministers.

Growing up in Edremony and later Port St Mary, I am a person firmly rooted in Rushen. My aim has always been to be responsive and helpful to those of you who have had cause to contact me over the years. This help on a one-to-one level is at the heart of being an MHK.

Yours faithfully, Juan


International Issues

Over my 15 years in Tynwald, I have forged links with politicians across all parties in Westminster, around the devolved administrations, Channel Islands and further afield. I have been proud to be involved in training parliamentarians around the Commonwealth on issues from Standing Orders to Public Accounts, flying the flag for the Island without cost to the Manx taxpayer.

The potential for a global corporation tax is an unwelcome intrusion into our power to set our own tax rates. We should not be early adopters of this initiative.

The Island is in the spotlight more than ever as we differentiate our well-regulated international finance centre from those who do not adhere to international standards. It is essential that we continue to build on this reputation as a cornerstone of our economy.

It has been challenging supporting people through the pandemic and lockdowns. We all hope that Covid will not be a big part of our lives going forward, but we need a proportionate mitigation strategy based on medical evidence, case numbers and new variants.



Going for Growth

The Isle of Man economy is still performing well, despite Covid. It is a challenge to ensure that the Island's economy continues to develop without significant downside effects. This is not an easy balance to strike. It involves work permit legislation, tax rates, and planning rules to mention just three contentious areas. There is no simple answer.

We need to aim for highly skilled jobs across a range of skills sectors from finance to manufacturing, so that we can ensure good incomes for Manx families. At the heart of this is preparing our young people for working life; expanding the use of apprenticeships into IT, office administration, and engineering. These can be vocational routes, where our young people can get a foothold in the world of work and find new motivation to complete education. For those choosing university, we need to ensure it is an affordable option.

Whilst it is Government's role to support businesses, monopoly providers should not be left unchecked. We should have effective legislation to prevent profiteering and artificially high prices by those with a dominant market share. Tourism and travel to our Island would be helped by a strategy of filling seats on the Steam Packet rather than maximising profit.

Environment

As an individual, I regularly use public transport and, like many of you, try to save energy at home. In Tynwald I have supported:

- Improved insulation and heating systems in public sector housing
- Installation of wood chip biomass heating in public sector developments
- The first solar heating schemes on larger public sector housing
- Waiving of the planning fee for solar heating schemes
- A more ambitious target of carbon neutrality by 2035
- An end to the installation of fossil fuel heating systems
- Our biodiversity strategy, preserving our environment for future generations

If I am re-elected, I would support cheap loans to encourage people to install solar panels on their houses and better insulate their homes. We also need to do more to invigorate a market in affordable electric vehicles, starting with Government vehicles. Nationally, we need to move faster to decarbonise our grid including greater use of onshore and offshore wind energy.

We also need to adopt international best practise on reporting our carbon footprint so that we can all have confidence in the figures that are produced.

Agriculture

Food security and support for local suppliers is essential. UNESCO biosphere status means a real opportunity to grow the market for Manx produce, building on our excellent culinary reputation. European and worldwide access is key to success, as well as ensuring farmers deliver what the market wants.

Social Justice

If re-elected, I want to see the Poverty Select Committee re-established to continue its important work. We have already had recommendations approved that will see:

- 16% of the lowest paid workers on the Island move to a living wage by 2026
- A new priority on feeding hungry children at school rather than waiting for bureaucracy to catch up
- A requirement for Treasury to justify benefit levels to ensure it is enough to live on, whilst ensuring that people remain better off in work

There is more to do in ensuring a joined-up approach to this complex subject across areas such as disability, housing and homelessness, debt, and children, families and education.

Pensioners

I fully recognise the contribution that older people make in our society and seek to support them with my work in Government and in the local community.

During my time in Tynwald, I have ensured that every pensioner, whether single or married, at all income levels is 10% better off in cash terms than if they lived in the UK. If re-elected I will continue to ensure that pensions keep pace with inflation and that Manx pensioners, regardless of circumstances, have higher incomes than if they lived in the UK to compensate for our higher cost of living.

The creation of a Government 'pensioners' bond' would also allow a better return on savings for those who have been prudent as well as providing money to invest into climate change initiatives.

I will continue to campaign to change the law so that people never have to surrender their houses to fund their nursing care.

I will never vote to withdraw the free bus passes for pensioners.

Local Issues

I have visited the house of every registered voter in Rushen during the campaign. The biggest local issues on the doorstep have been:

Roads & Pavements – the biggest issue on the doorstep. Like you I have been frustrated by the waste of money. The DOI need to stick to the basics of mending roads and pavements, without creating grandiose schemes. The success of Port Erin's Station Road regeneration should be continued onto Church Road, and Port St Mary High Street is one of many roads desperately in need of attention.

Rates & Commissioners – Many issues being raised on the doorstep are the responsibility of Commissioners, but we are struggling to get people fired up to stand for local politics. Increasing regional collaboration, without losing the distinct identities of our ports and villages is essential. I am also in favour of rate reform based on capital values as well as a rates discount for single occupier households.

Civic Amenity Site - Many have also raised the difficulty of recycling and the inability to use the Civic Amenity Site to its full potential. It has taken too long to reopen the reuse area, and I will support the Commissioners in reopening this essential facility, thereby reducing waste.

Dilapidated buildings – legislation I supported in 2017 gave the Commissioners powers to put improvement notices on unsightly properties, with a £50 per day penalty for non-compliance, but they are not being used. We need to look again at how to stop the blight of these buildings in our community and provide a financial incentive for the owners to improve or develop them or sell them to those who will. Unoccupied and underoccupied properties need special attention in the Rates Reform Bill to bring them back into use.

Community – Rushen is a great place to live, mainly due to our people. I have been proud to volunteer as a director of Rushen Heritage Trust, Vice Chairman of the Port Erin Royal British Legion and Southern Befrienders, Hon. Colonel the Army Cadet Force and Trustee of Rushen Silver Band and the Scout & Guide Hall. It is a privilege to support these great charities in bringing people together.

Healthcare

Our health service is full of dedicated staff doing their best in challenging circumstances. However, there are improvements that can be made, such as:

- using email and text messages for those who want it as opposed to everyone receiving appointments in the post
- greater stability of staffing, ensuring a better continuity of care
- continuing to recruit, and train nurses on-Island
- reducing dependence on expensive locums
- introduction of an independent inspection regime and complaints system
- improving the non-pay benefits package for staff working in understaffed areas

We must also remember that healthcare is not just provided at Noble's Hospital. More community care should be provided, based around Southlands and Thie Rosien to reduce admissions to Noble's and ensuring a smooth transition from hospital to home. We need to ensure that the proper care is delivered right into the home with proper planning, whether that be physiotherapy, domiciliary care or mental health support. People should not need to travel to Ramsey for the care they need.

Mental Health

This area has seen a 50% growth in demand over the last five years, a trend that cannot simply be explained by Covid lockdowns. As Chairman of the Southern Authorities Healthcare Committee, I have made mental health the focus of our recent work. We have sponsored the increased listening service at Castle Rushen, focussing on exam years, and funded accredited Mental Health First Aid courses for traders, and offered them more widely in the community. I have also completed this course myself and offered it to Tynwald Members as part of the continuing development programme which I have initiated as Speaker.

Mental health services already directly impact 5% of our population and I would like to see far greater awareness, wider availability of the Mental Health First Aid course for free, and greater capacity in our mental health service to ensure people are not left behind, or as we have sadly seen, lost altogether.

Housing

We are currently seeing housing slipping outside of the grasp of young people trying to get on the property ladder. Some of this is due to disruption caused by the pandemic, but is fuelled by a successful economy and increased demand. We need to:

- Get the right the balance between owned and rental property on the Island
- Preserve our social housing stock for those who need it, whilst moving those people on who no longer do
- Ensure all developments of more than eight dwellings include 25% first-time buyer properties at an approved price
- Ensure new housing meets high environmental standards
- Adopt a “carrot and stick” approach to greater use of empty properties
- Support people into the market with shared equity schemes whilst ensuring developers are not profiteering
- Develop a strategy covering bringing existing homes up to standard, ensuring affordability, monitoring and constraining the speculative ‘buy to let’ market

Public Services

Five years ago I said that we needed a smaller public sector and greater IT investment.

Young people engage with Government in a very different way, often using social media such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram as well as more traditional channels. Just as we must not exclude those without access to the internet, we must still embrace those who get their information in new ways, making digital the default medium for those enrolling into the tax and other government systems for the first time. This will not only meet needs but improve efficiency.

During my time as Minister of Home Affairs, I reduced costs by 25% across the Department, reducing the centre from a peak of 27 posts down to nine. Government employment has risen by over 400 full-time equivalents in the last five years, a trend which needs to be reversed. Government needs to stick to the basics and be cost-effective. I firmly believe I can assist with this.

I have championed the appointment of an auditor general tasked with saving three times their cost, and supporting the Public Accounts Committee in its value for money work.

Criminal Justice

Having set out my vision in 2012, a lot has been done but there is more to do, such as diverting young people away from a life of crime with the Youth Justice Team; reparations by criminals that cause damage as simple restorative justice, and more use of community service. The youth service and youth centres are also a vital preventative aspect.

I support setting up a select committee on cannabis; investigating the effects from a physical and mental health, criminal justice, economic, education and societal perspective. We need to reflect on how we deal with this complex issue compared to other nations, and see if we have our stance right.

Budget Reform and Good Governance

Our legislators need the time and training to get to grips with our national budget and accounts. Costed amendments to the budget should be permitted, and the budget and accounts should be subject to far greater parliamentary scrutiny. This is your money, and you should be able to be part of the debate about where the money goes before Tynwald votes on it.

About Me

I am a 41-year-old husband to Helena and father of Sophie and Jack. I was born and raised in the Island before attending Lincoln University, where I graduated with first class honours in Management in 2001. For the next five years I worked for international accountancy firm KPMG, qualifying as a Chartered Accountant in 2005.

I have been MHK for Rushen since 2006, and have served in roles from Housing and Social Security, Minister for Home Affairs and Speaker of the House of Keys. I have Chaired the Poverty Committee and Public Accounts Committee. In 2016 I qualified as a Chartered Manager.

Despite never serving as a regular or reservist, I am keen to support the Island's Armed Forces Community. As a result, Government has received an employer's Gold Award for supporting armed forces families and veterans. I also have roles in the Army Cadet Force, Royal British Legion and Manx Ex-Services Trust.

My Commitment

When you first elected me to represent you in 2006, I promised:

- To always have the Isle of Man's best interests at heart
- To act with conscience
- To be honest and professional
- To tackle big issues and look at the long term
- To bring commercial awareness and a quest for value for money to Government

I feel I have achieved this, being a diligent full-time MHK, and have continued to address long term issues like energy, pensions and public spending. I have continued my commitment to using public transport and made time to support events in the constituency and spend time with people face to face.

With your support, I will continue to work for you, the people of Rushen and the Island with the same honesty, enthusiasm and commitment that I believe has characterised my work over the last fifteen years.

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