

HOUSE OF KEYS
GENERAL ELECTION
SEPTEMBER 23rd 2021

VOTE

STEVE CROWTHER

FOR ARBORY, CASTLETOWN & MALEW

'time to deliver real change for our communities'

Dear Constituent

Please allow me to introduce myself, particularly if I have been unable to contact you directly.

As a candidate in the 2016 general election I listened carefully to our community and was 1% close to being elected. The current administration was side-tracked from its 'Programme of Government', due to the Covid pandemic, I feel some areas focused on its 'inclusive and caring Island' have been neglected. This has significantly dented the government's reputation through the recovery period and we now need a strong administration to lead the nation forward.

Covid lockdown has affected us all, particularly hospitality, retail, travel and working from home. Many of our core services are under pressure. We are also aware how unstable the economy may be in the coming years, however with the right approach there are real opportunities outlined in this manifesto.

The other core issues of climate change and diversification of our economy have not gone away. Fortunately, I believe the following manifesto presents an exciting way forward to resolve many of the issues.

'Personally I would also like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all our key workers and volunteers who bravely worked through the pandemic.'



STEVE CROWTHER

31 Arbory Street
Castletown
Isle of Man
IM9 1LL
Tel: 07624 416722

vote@stevecrowther.net
www.stevecrowther.net
Find us on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/steve.crowther



A QUICK NOTE ABOUT MYSELF & MY FAMILY

I am 63 years old and married with a teenage daughter and living within the constituency in Castletown. My parents relocated to the Isle of Man in 1973. We lived in Colby and I was schooled at Castle Rushen, going on to study architecture in Manchester, qualifying in 1987. After working many years as an architect in Manchester and Asia, we moved back to

Castletown in 2003. My career and travels have given me considerable knowledge in both local and international business development for example Hong Kong new airport and Bangkok underground/skytrain.

My father, Dr Crowther, in the South helped establish the Southern Group Medical Practice. My mother, Mrs Nadene Crowther, was one of the driving founders of the hospice charity on the Isle of Man. We were all duly proud when my mother was awarded an MBE in 1995 and Tynwald Honour in 2013.

MY DECISION TO STAND AGAIN

I believe our constituency and national administration had an impressive legacy from the last Administration in 2016, particularly for our constituency; the Castletown housing review, a new Castle Rushen High School which was in the Treasury pink book, a technology park at Ronaldsway was ready to launch, the Isle of Man had just achieved UNESCO biosphere status, Castletown Square was complete and beginning to attract new investment. The failure to progress these projects has lost us significant momentum. I intend to voice our constituency and rebuild that momentum.

LOCALLY

- 1. The recently combined constituency requires a full strategic traffic analysis on a regional basis plus new sustainable, high skilled local employment.**
- 2. I have helped develop a high-quality, affordable, eco home which now requires strong adjustment to current legislation. Affordable first time buyer homes for our workers.**
- 3. The Douglas centric nature of development must be better re-distributed across the island and particularly within our own constituency.**

NATIONALLY

- 1. Investment;** since Brexit the UK economy is investing more in small business growth and productivity. With our challenges on **work permits and costly travel**, any inward investment will be challenged and has to be addressed.
- 2. Isolation;** our key industries have been damaged due to lockdown. On the reverse side, the border closures did illustrate our ability to maintain **'quality of life'** during a worldwide emergency which I will refer to later.
- 3. Tax; Zero – 15.** It is important that this is internationally aligned and our island is not singled out. This may influence investment however the full impact will not be clear for a while.

I believe our constituency has all the ingredients to be a central powerhouse to the Isle of Man's economy while respecting the historic nature and beautiful local landscape. The Isle of Man's ability to demonstrate our quality of life, maintained during the pandemic, should now form the basis of a platform for investment. This combines elegantly with our existing UNESCO biosphere status to clearly define an ethical, long-term strategy to attract investment. The core of this should be our environmental approach.

It is essential we now build on our rich culture and heritage respecting our stunning landscape and island scenery. The following pages illustrate how I wish to achieve this transformation.

CONSTITUENCY ISSUES – TRAFFIC

One of the most pressing issues within the constituency is our road distribution network. A full strategic survey must be robustly reviewed to ensure we are able to accommodate future expansion in both the technology park, airport and housing. This is not about starting from scratch, we have most of the analysis, it is about ensuring we can cope with future expansion, the **'big picture'**.

The most pressing issue is how to ensure that **Colby, Ballabeg, West Ballasalla and St Marks** have some alleviation to the current congestion. It is important these changes cope with future expansion. It is important that we negotiate with the DOI to ensure the information provided arrives at the right conclusion for both the constituency and the national/local economies.



- 
1. The traffic calming to the rear of **Ballasalla** and the measures already implemented in **Colby & Ballabeg** need to be both improved and enhanced to ensure that the new route **will divert traffic**.
 2. The diverted traffic must also consider the new pinch points at **Victoria & Alexander Roads in Castletown**.
 3. The future **Castletown housing and Airport Technology Gateway** are vital to our local economies future. Their inclusion in the overall calculations is essential.
 4. Following the bypass it is vital we have proposals for the **re-landscaping of Ballasalla village**. Bring back the **village feel**.
 5. A natural **walkway and cycle path** could connect the historic Silverburn through to the new, 'traffic calmed centre', connecting the walkway beyond Ballahick, around the airport to Castletown.
 6. **Castletown** proposed one-way system must be evaluated to ensure the **impact on side streets** and footfall within the town, including parking, which can function better.
 7. **Castletown** is desperately awaiting refurbishment of Arbory and Malew Street. My architectural skills can help, particularly with phasing, to minimise disruption to the traders.

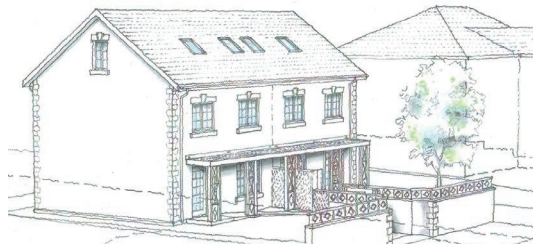
CONSTITUENCY ISSUES – EMPLOYMENT & HOUSING

As I noted at the last election it is important that we find the new centres of growth for both the national and local economy. While some growth has been seen in Balthane it must be remembered that we are positioned next to the National Airport. For so long this has been seen only as a link to Douglas. We must change this Douglas centric mindset.

Critical is a new Climate Change Technology Research Park. Why?

1. The eco-house I have mentioned has now attracted numerous entrepreneurs interested in developing new **international standard research and development at Ronaldsway**.
2. This development would face the airport entrance attracting international investors and complementing our **UNESCO biosphere credentials**.
3. This would bring desperately needed **high skilled** research/engineering employment to the constituency and expand support subcontractors.
4. This would also complement the adjacent Balthane Industrial Estate forming the powerhouse for exciting new local & international export markets.

*'If we don't **take advantage** of these developments these jobs will move north.'*



Castletown housing; The Southern Area Plan review in 2011, highlighted the lack of private affordable housing. Due to the problems of traffic distribution already highlighted this review is currently on permanent hold and has become a squandered opportunity. It must be revived to attract investment.

CRHS; We have now established that the project has **grown in cost** so significantly that Treasury are now unable to sanction. There aren't even detailed plans. Some pupils are now being taught in the local youth club. I have the **architectural skills** to help rationalise this project quickly and move it back on track. We must now deliver for our **young people**.

Airport; this is in desperate need of refurbishment both to the frontage and cargo handling. This is vital for our constituency and national economy.

Infrastructure; having discussed the road network it is important to recognise that any additional housing and jobs require the adjacent medical and primary schools to be bolstered appropriately.

Sadly we have lost ground over the last five years, if the above developments had come together they could have influenced the demise of many local facilities in urgent need of restoration, such as the **Golf Links at Derbyhaven** and significantly boost the manufacturing base for **Balthane Industrial Park** with world-renowned exports. Also the same challenges we have had with the **Peggy**, which must be resolved locally but with imagination.

Retail; The success of these developments would significantly improve footfall to Castletown, the essential resource to restore its market town status and local traders.

Technology; optic fibre layouts within the constituency are behind in many areas of the constituency, some areas projected as 2023!

Local countryside access; We must also address some of the areas which are currently subject to re-wilding to be considered against reasonable access and safety.

***New schools + Affordable housing + Technology Park =
High Skilled Jobs = more support jobs = increased footfall***

ECONOMY

Reviving our economy and our core services is central to the new Administration. It is important we now move on, however keeping in mind our care for the more vulnerable parts of our community. It is vital we have more robust programmes to avoid future lockdowns wherever possible, in essence a form of **medical & civil defence strategy**. We need a to be more self-reliant e.g. better food security. It is also vital to our future investors that we are a stable base.

To improve the inward investment, including our own high net worth individuals, we need better strategies;

BUSINESS; Essential to new investment is 'ease of business' and a belief in the long-term strategies which are clearly and consistently defined. KPMG are currently preparing a report on the future direction of our investments and economy. We await the contents, however it is essential that a more 'joined up approach' to government is achieved in the coming administration.

BIOSPHERE; this is an important legacy left by the last administration. I appreciate many do not have a clear understanding of what the UNESCO biosphere can deliver. I believe it can be the core of the international status the Isle of Man needs to project, clearly defining our integrity and environmental qualifications. Please refer to the next page.

TAX; I have mentioned business tax. Critical to the economy is ensuring that other duties such as death and capital gains tax are avoided. Our increase in revenue needs to feed from our growth in the new income streams, diversification of technology, climate change research, hydroponics, offshore registrations such as patents to name just a few, we need to be innovative.

PENSIONS; we must address the pension divide. As well as the challenges with the public pensions, many workers and self-employed have pension shortfalls, we must look to tackle these using incentives for senior workers/subcontractors.

TECHNOLOGY; fibre rollout and fin tech are key areas. Transport location technology, used to help with bus travel was introduced and scrapped at the start of this administration, why? This is also a key environmental factor. Technology can make a major contribution to law & order plus education, discussed in the relevant sections.



ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Understanding the urgency on climate change, the Isle of Man has now significantly improved its zero carbon targets. The recent report by ARUP's, Future Energy Scenarios, demonstrates how this can be achieved. I am committed, but with **affordable solutions**.



Over the previous five years I have been closely involved in helping a local community entrepreneur develop a new hybrid eco-house. My altruistic involvement, focused on truly achieving an affordable eco-home, for **first-time buyers** has now been achieved. See QR code adjacent and image on page 4.

I have already mentioned the research centre in the constituency. Key areas for research to complement the project are ground source heat pumps and hydrogen development. This strategy is clearly exemplified in the ARUP report, particularly in combining hydrogen and existing fuels (CCGT). Other exciting new developments:

- The Isle of Man is close to the mantle and there may be possibilities in generating some of our power from **steam turbines or wave power** respecting our marine biosphere.
- Excess power from this or other systems could provide additional hydrogen, helping drive large vehicles such as our **bus network or ferries**.
- With the right tariffs for the new affordable housing discussed, these could be net **contributors** to the energy grid.
- The newly proposed, green living grant **house audit**, must be streamlined and practical to ensure the right delivery.
- We need to use enhancements from the above grants to retrofit **adjacent existing housing stock near to new development**.

In achieving progress it is critical to find affordable solutions. We must avoid a **climate technology divide**. Smaller contractors in construction and maintenance for example must be able to run in parallel during this transition period. This is another reason for my focus on hydrogen and existing fuel combinations.

The current administration's new & refurbished infrastructure projects such as the ferry port in Liverpool are challenged by the inability to work with the private sector. It is not a case of losing control but working in collaboration, using joint work projects and contracting as joint-venture. I have worldwide experience of these types of airport and rail projects. It ensures the government can attract easier finance and share risk. It also ensures the **right expertise** are available in negotiation. Ronaldsway Airport for example has several challenges;

1. The existing building entrance and general fabric are in poor shape, **projecting a poor image** internationally.
2. Air travel involves significant energy use on ground as well as the CO2 in flight. Refurbished terminals can save 25% energy and upward with new technology.
3. The current **air cargo handling** arrangements are in urgent need of refurbishment and this is already **restricting** potential business growth.

Redevelopment could proceed for example with a 20 years joint works, with government in 51% control, constructed and administered however, by an airport administrator/developer. This could achieve a new & refurbished facility relatively quickly, creating a perfect backdrop to the new technology corridor and the climate change research park opposite. This is **the gateway to the Isle of Man.**

*'Joint partnerships can move us forward quickly
attracting more investment.'*

I am also keen to ensure the **local authorities are empowered** to make local repairs. Even if temporary this is crucial if we want to encourage more walking/cycling on our roads.

LAW & ORDER

Post Covid we need to be realistic regarding some of the effects the disruption/isolation has had on the young and older generations. I recognise the Chief Constables warning that covert criminal county lines type gangs are trying to establish a strong foothold in our schools and young communities using narcotics. It is vital we tackle this issue as a matter of urgency. We have all been young however the strategy of the current UK syndicates is much more aggressive.

1. We need to foster **greater resilience** for our young people and their parents. Education on social media + mobile phone + peer pressure is vital.
2. Current teaching on the perils of drugs plus using crimestoppers is not powerful enough. We need the above plus recovered role models.
3. The police need more resources using **new technology** to allow them to work from different locations, as available in the UK.
4. Joined up government between the police force, social care and education on narcotics is urgent. We need to **align our laws** with the UK on drug trafficking.
5. There is little for the young, who have taken their own action, focusing more on private parties with little restriction/control.

Clearly the strategy here is not to prosecute and criminalise young people but to root out and undermine the source of future UK criminal expansion in our young communities. Social media education is also vital to avoid bullying and mental health. Over the coming administration we need to bring forward the relevant legislation, and more involvement in events/sports facilities our young can embrace.

EDUCATION

The UK has recognised that the education of our citizens is no longer a set procedure at the end of secondary education. Our future citizens are more likely to require more creative skills and the interjection of education at various stages through a portfolio of careers. We need to adjust our education system accordingly.

Post Covid downtime catch up and help for students is critical. We need to evolve our post school education strategy.

- I'm keen to see schools develop a centre of excellence, as Castle Rushen has done with the arts & Ballakermeen with drama. A programme to export these skills would better unite the schools while still allowing for some competition.
- School performance criteria should not be the only criteria, we must strive for greater creativity. This also requires to be reflected in our primary schools.
Less bureaucracy more creativity.
- I am concerned many of the extracurricular art faculties previously subsidised for instruments and learning are being scaled down. We must reverse this.
- Remote learning is constantly advancing and we must take advantage of this potential and be available for **all our citizens equally**. This offers the potential to catch up with the Covid regression mentioned.

'A new facility should showcase a refocused education strategy.'

To illustrate my mindset, during the refurbishment of the Douglas promenade, re-utilising existing government land at Summerland/the Manx Electric Railway & Castle Mona we could have relocated the Isle of Man College by selling the existing college land and working on joint works, as the type discussed earlier, achieving a Manx showcase facility. This could have duelled as a conference facility in summer and injected student buying power into the far end of Strand & Market Streets.. This opportunity has probably been missed however it demonstrates the type of **lateral thinking and vision** we need to refocus our education strategy.

DIGITAL DIVIDE

As an architect I believe in the cutting edge of new technology, which can provide efficiency and easy access to information/collation. Unfortunately, this framework is **forcing** large parts of our community to accept digital systems without the resources. I do not believe this is acceptable for a government that includes in its core programme **'inclusive and caring'**. This is also not congruent with our biosphere community strategy. We are leaving many citizens particularly the **elderly, isolated and fearful**.

All our communities have **lost key facilities, post offices, banks** & cash machines. Many are travelling large distances for simple resources, which is environmentally and torturously unacceptable. I believe in a new re-branded **post office facility** to broaden its range while providing a community hub with the main banks. This would future proof Ballasalla, Castletown and the other larger conurbations.

1. A **genuine** Isle of Man Post Office banking facility with appropriate disabled access, not just a mobile van!
2. The **core banks** can assist with consultation booths and 'paying in' facilities plus ATM.
3. A right for **cash with no sale** from supermarkets, as current UK legislation.
4. A right to **paper documentation** for government submissions.
5. A contact centre for **advice**, particularly security and local community groups.

Some have said that the core banks would not collaborate on this kind of project however this has been illustrated through the UK Royal Mail, illustrated in two towns; Rochford, Essex and Cambuslang in South Lanarkshire. It has proved a **huge success**. The type of community group I am referencing has been exemplified by Frome in Somerset. Through our Legislative system we can achieve even greater innovation curtailing the digital cut off and the isolation of our communities.



HEALTH & WELL-BEING

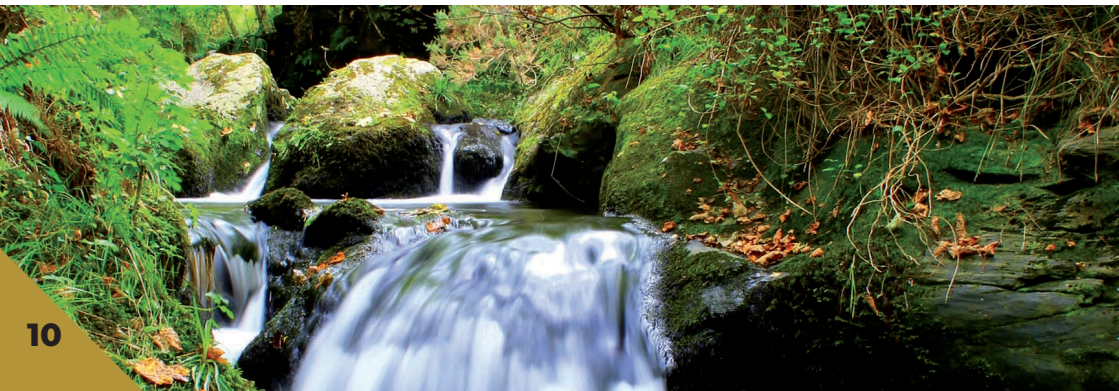
We all appreciate the pressure the medical fraternity have been under during the pandemic period. We are now in transition which also needs careful consideration. Many residual issues remain, they require urgent remedy and long-term strategies.

We are losing good consultants and staff who have been seconded at great expense. Some of this loss is due to administrative processes and the lack of continuing professional development (CPD). Essential waiting lists are also far too long and I am pleased the government are starting to try to address this issue by outsourcing.

- The triage access system to medical practices was tolerated during the pandemic but now needs to change.
- Developing a private hospital facility on the island particularly as a visitors facility which could help Nobles with training and CPD.
- Additional private facilities could also help reduce off island essential procedures during restricted travel periods.
- The remote hospital access in Ramsey from the south of the island is not functioning for senior patients. Transport needs to be addressed.
- The Health Department needs to ensure new technology for ongoing training is a priority, to be sourced urgently.

The health Department need to take a more proactive interest in local care home resources particularly **within the constituency**. It is good to see the new Silverdale Care Home in Ballasalla reopen. I support a fair enquiry into the demise of Abbotswood at the beginning of the pandemic, this needs to be in the public domain.

As noted in the education section, resources for mental health referral, are crucial and I am also keen to see the preventative field within this resource develop.



TOURISM AND LEISURE

It is vital we are now transparent as to the real state of our tourist and hospitality industries following the boundary closures. A challenging economy in the coming few years, particularly subject to interest rate rises, may have serious repercussions on the industry. These are core areas of our economy.

My last manifesto made clear that the UNESCO biosphere accreditation offered significant potential to promote our tourist industry. I feel the link between our industry and DEFA is still not strong enough and this promotion is not evolving. I intend to promote this strongly; our rich heritage and culture deserve our pride to be shared with our visitors.

1. To ensure the Department of infrastructure is liaising with travel watch organisations/user bodies to monitor and encourage **efficiency and reliability**.
2. Moving the **glamping** strategy forward and encouraging **new festivals** in music, food and culture to stimulate the market.
3. Cost-effective travel with associated **affordable transport links**. Maximise return on the new Liverpool ferry port costs; hotels, museum, retail?
4. Helping to improve **hospitality staff skills**. Promoting hospitality day events to encourage training within the industry.
5. To consider **independent accreditation** such as the AA/RAC of hotel facilities to ensure visitors respect for comparison of facilities.

Despite the Isle of Man's, 'non-serviced accommodation futures report' in 2017, little progress has been made in areas such as **glamping**. Conflicts between tourism and planning have failed to develop this strategy, while many other local jurisdictions are forging ahead. This conflict is a perfect illustration of the problems between a government that is not pulling together. This must be resolved.

AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RETAIL

A strong agricultural, aquaculture and food economy are integral to the Isle of Man's history. It is important to ensure a balanced and diverse economy, expanding opportunities for employment. This sector is complementary to the tourism industry.

The recent pandemic has highlighted the importance of ensuring greater self-sufficiency in these sectors. These strategies will work well with the biosphere promotion discussed.

We must encourage the new success stories/entrepreneurs in this field.

- 1.** The new environmental AES policy must work for the farming community, both tenanted and landowners. We must **simplify the bureaucracy** within the system.
- 2.** The **meat plant** is still losing money and urgently needs private investment/promotion. Our food security requires we find a way forward.
- 3.** The **'Food Matters'** programme inherited by this Administration has faltered, losing up to potentially £50 million per annum to the economy. We need to revive this urgently.
- 4.** The development of new industries such as **Hydroponics** for food growing. Which could be expandable in future emergencies.

Retail sector; Following the pandemic, this sector is facing severe challenges in re-establishing its market share on the high Street, particularly due to the increase in Internet sales. We are now overdue in seeking alternatives that will assist existing and new innovative retail strategies. These should integrate technology better. This can involve virtual and augmented reality, combined with grants that can incentivise this sector. We need to use the Internet for our own internal market much better.

GOVERNANCE

Democratic governance around the world is currently being challenged. As a proud nation with one of the oldest parliaments in the world, a rich culture and stunning environment, I believe now is our opportunity to demonstrate a new cultural way forward.

The Lord Lisvane report issued before the previous Administration highlighted some of the challenges with our current governance. Central to these is a better functioning 'joined up', government administration. Current friction between departments is **repelling investment.**

Our UNESCO biosphere status offers us a, 'world renowned, reputation which can act as an umbrella to focus government departments and achieve a more efficient government. It's important to ensure our long-term aims are clear and better defined, essentially, **better communication.** This will attract the ethical inward and local high-net worth individual investment.

'Now is our opportunity to promote our quality of life to the international community.'

I have felt that some of our current MHK's are just not seeing the bigger picture, we need national politicians who can deliver a strong vision for our current and future communities.

WHY VOTE STEVE CROWTHER

- One of the principal challenges within our constituency, traffic infrastructure, is one of my fields of knowledge.
- **The use of much of my free time to help bring a new affordable eco-house for the benefit of first-time buyers demonstrates my altruistic commitment.**
- I am a team worker and enjoy working collaboratively as demonstrated by the eco-house project. The two new MHK's must now work together.
- **My family have been involved intensively in the voluntary sector, particularly through the hospice, for which I share a passion.**
- My international experience has helped develop my broad sense of vision and cultural experience, including an Asian language.
- **Having a young daughter of 18 has brought great awareness of the current education and social challenges of our youth.**
- I am committed to resolving the technical isolation of our senior generations. We must be more inclusive.
- **I pledge to ensure the UNESCO biosphere status for which we have been accredited, brings benefits to all the parts of our community.**



**HOUSE OF KEYS GENERAL ELECTION
THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 23rd 2021**

VOTE 

STEVE CROWTHER

FOR ARBORY, CASTLETOWN & MALEW



If you require any assistance in getting to your nearest polling station don't hesitate to contact me on any of the options below

 **823341**

 **416722**

 **@steve.crowther**

 **vote@stevecrowther.net**

 **www.stevecrowther.net**