

DAVID ASHFORD

Independent Candidate - Douglas North House of Keys General Election

A MANIFESTO FOR PROGRESS

Dear Elector,

Hopefully you have had an opportunity to read my initial leaflet which focused on the specific pledges of how I would, if elected, represent you as your local MHK for Douglas North. Now, with this manifesto, I want to expand on the national issues facing our island and the direction of travel I believe we need to take.

It would be foolish of me to promise that I will be able to deliver on every single one of my ideas contained within this manifesto as no candidate in any election can in truth promise that. What I can promise you is that, if elected, I will not simply switch my views or my vote for convenience. All of the things within this manifesto are my beliefs and if elected I will fight passionately for them to be delivered for the benefit of our island.

Some arguments and votes I will win, others I will lose, that is the nature of politics. You can be rest assured of one thing and that is, that if elected, I will be a strong and vocal representative not just for Douglas North, but also our entire island.

If you, the people of Douglas North, are willing to put your trust in me for the next five years I would urge you to keep hold of this manifesto so that, if I am elected, you can continue to hold me to account and ensure that I fight day and night to deliver on my pledges. If I am elected, I don't just want to be a MHK that works for you, I also want to be an MHK that listens to you. I firmly believe that actions speak louder than words and if given the opportunity to represent you over the next five years I intend to be a strong and active member from day one.

David



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On Thursday 22nd September
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IT'S TIME FOR CHANGE

PROTECTING THE FRONT LINE

Community based policing

I continue to welcome the approach of Isle of Man Constabulary in relation to community policing. I know first hand from my experiences as a Douglas Councillor that the dedication and passion of the local neighbourhood teams has made a real difference to how our community is policed. It is important that focus continues and crucially that the Police are given the financial means to ensure that they can continue to deliver in that regard. I believe that our community focus is one of the things that has allowed our police force in the last year to deliver the highest detection rate across England, Wales and the Channel Islands, with 49.6% of all reported crime being detected compared to 41.8% in Guernsey, 35.4% in Jersey and only 23.7% in England and Wales.

As referred to in the Chief Constable's report that was laid before Tynwald in July the nature of crimes being dealt with is becoming more complex. That means we must give the police the resources they require in order to ensure they can fully investigate these issues. The current amount spent on policing each year per head of population is £149 per person. This compares to £228 in Jersey, £219 in England and Wales and £206 in Scotland. Previously the cost per head of population was £164 meaning that the budget cuts that the constabulary has had to absorb have forced reductions equal to £15 per head of population. A sizeable cut by anyone's standards.

I would not support any further cuts to the policing budgets as the constabulary has already taken its fair share of the pain when it has come to balancing the books.

Health - more outcome focus

There continues to be an issue in relation to those seeking first stage front line assistance within A&E. Average waiting times in A&E have increased from 2 hours 36 minutes in 2013 to two hours 48 minutes in 2014 and increased further to 3 hours 6 minutes in 2015. This trend clearly shows that there needs to be more focus on dealing with the front end and this can be done in a variety of ways. I would support a review of the current funding allocation within the general practitioners budgets, as I believe many people are seeing A&E as their first port of call. We need to get back to the culture where A&E is viewed as being for only those with immediate needs and seeing their GP should be people's first point of contact. I would also support a front loading of budgets to try and cope with the problems within A&E.

The government needs to be realistic about the costs of the health service and budget accordingly. For far too long there has been a smoke and mirror effect whereby underspends in other areas of the department have camouflaged overspends within what I would term the front line health services. I would support a full budgetary and service delivery review of the health service starting from basics. This should include what facilities we offer on island and what we recognise must be delivered elsewhere. We should also be reviewing each budget to ensure that the allocation is correct compared to where the pressures of service delivery are. The health service is basically a living creature that changes each and every year and budgetary allocation needs to be adaptable to deal with that reality.

There also needs to be an active drive to recruit more full time staff within Nobles Hospital. The amount that is currently being spent on temporary staff to cover vacancies is not either in the best interests of cost or patient outcomes. This would require terms and conditions to be looked at to ensure that we are being competitive with other jurisdictions.

PROTECTING THE FRONT LINE

Early years education - a lifetime investment

Study after study around the world has shown that early years learning is the most crucial phase in a child's educational development. I believe that over the life of the last Tynwald early years education has been allowed to slip down the list of priorities. It is absolutely essential that does not continue into the lifetime of the next Tynwald.

One of the biggest retrograde steps taken over the last five years was the changes brought in to pre-school education. The pre-schools around the island prior to the changes had a structured approach with a feeling of belonging within the school of which they were a part. While the private sector providers are providing in the overwhelming majority of cases a marvellous much needed service they can't give the same sense of structure and belonging that was there before. In terms of funding for pre-schools I welcome the recent changes that the Department of Education has brought forward in relation to the credits available but I believe it still does not go far enough.

There are many working families where their household income is being stretched daily who still have to find money to fund the difference between the allowances and the true cost of providing their children with early years learning. I am also aware of families where one parent who is currently not working due to looking after the children would love to return to work but that due to the salary they would earn they would actually end up losing money overall once any reduction in credits is taken into account. That surely is an unacceptable situation to place on any family.

I also question exactly how much the department has saved in relation to these changes to pre-school education and if elected it will be one of the very first items I will be scrutinising. In a competitive world it is important that we give the next generation every advantage that we can. In the words of Claus Moser "Education costs money, but so does ignorance".

Higher Education- utilising local talent

One of the biggest problems our island faces is encouraging graduates to return to the island to live and work. Our island does not reap the benefits of much of the educational investment that is placed within our children at a higher education level. I believe this is due to a multitude of factors including of course providing the jobs and skills base within our economy to make our island a more attractive place when our graduates to return. I will speak more on that later in my section on diversifying our economy. Alongside that, I believe there are financial incentives that can be provided to get our graduates to return home and use the skills acquired from their education for the future benefit of our island.

There is currently a system of student loans in place which imposes a debt on our graduates. I would support a system where if a graduate returns to work on island for 5 consecutive years then 25% of that loan will be eradicated. If they work on island for 10 consecutive years then 50% of the loan is written off and if they work for 15 consecutive years then the full loan is written off. The fact is that if a graduate returns from university after graduation at the age of 21 then remain here for 5 years or more they are likely to remain settled on the island. During that time they are likely to establish relationships and start families while at the same time using the skills they have required via our educational funding for the long term benefit of the island.

The government should be providing the environment for our graduates to have, in the words of their own motto, "freedom to flourish".

WORKING TOWARDS A FAIRER SOCIETY

Reforming the benefit system

I would welcome more means testing within the benefits system but also would like to see the entire system overhauled so that it is easier for individuals to understand. The benefits system has evolved over the last few decades from something that was there as a support net to a complicated structure of basic benefits, targeted top-ups and scaled allowances. I believe that the system needs to be pared back to basics.

There should be only a few set categories of core benefits, child benefit, income support, disability benefit, job seekers allowance and carers allowance. The thresholds within each of those benefits should then be examined and any additional allowances currently awarded should be merged in with the basic benefit. So for instance the Employed Persons Allowance rather than being separate from income support should be part of the income support structure that automatically kicks in when certain conditions are met rather than individuals having to apply separately for it. Individuals' circumstances and entitlement are assessed on a regular basis anyway and this would help remove a lot of the confusion caused to many individuals as to what they are actually entitled to.

This would mean that individuals can be assured that they would automatically receive any additional benefit when certain thresholds and conditions are met without the need to complete reams of paperwork and would remove a lot of bureaucracy that has developed throughout the benefits system.

Over 75's TV licence

The government has announced that as of the 1st September 2016 the free TV licences for the over 75's will be scrapped and those households will now have to pay. This however, is different to what is happening in the UK. Our government should be ensuring that we are treated the same as TV licence holders in the UK.

Under the new BBC Charter deal the BBC will be taking on the full cost of the free over 75's TV licence from the financial year 2020/21. Prior to this in the financial year 2017/18 the BBC will be picking up a third of the UK licence fee cost and two thirds in the financial year 2018/19.

The Isle of Man should be treated no differently in that respect and our government must ensure that we receive the same deal as those who hold a licence in the UK. The government should also guarantee, as the UK government has, to meet the shortfall in funding between the financial years 2017/18-2020/21. The total cost of that guarantee would be £1.4 million over three years. However, this is not new money that would have to be found, this is money already within existing budgets as the government is spending £700,000 per year in providing the free TV licences. Due to the BBC having to meet the costs by thirds, before picking up the full cost in 2020/21, there is absolutely no reason why the government cannot fulfil that pledge. Even with that pledge in place they would still make an annual saving of £233,333 in 2017/18, which would increase to an annual saving of £466,666 in 2018/19 before the full ongoing annual saving of £700,000 would be realised in 2020/21.

In order to utilise further savings over that three year period I would even support the principle of the free licence being means tested where, if total household income exceeds £50,000, then a free licence is not awarded during that transition period.

WORKING TOWARDS A FAIRER SOCIETY

A living wage and minimum wage

For many people daily life is becoming harder and harder and every penny is starting to count. I would therefore support the phased introduction over the next five years of a living wage to replace the minimum wage. The UK government has started to move from minimum wage to living wage where outside of London it will be set at a value of £7.20 per hour. If our island is to remain competitive in terms of the individuals in jobs and skillsets on which we all depend, then we must follow suit. Our current minimum wage of £7 per hour for those over 21 does not take into account the cost of living on the island and the government urgently needs to undertake a review to ascertain what the true level of a living wage would be. This would however need to be phased in over the next five years to ensure that businesses can be protected from any sudden increase in their payroll costs and provide time for them to make the necessary adjustments.

I also would like to see the removal of the differential in the minimum wage on the island. It cannot be right that a young person aged between 18 and 21 can be paid £6.65 an hour to do the same job that someone over 21 would have to be paid £7 an hour for. They are both doing the same job and therefore should receive the same payment. I would fully support and push for the removal of this age related discrimination.

Personal allowances and tax cap

Personal allowances have also begun to slip over the life of the last Tynwald. The UK's personal allowance for an individual is now £11,000 whereas here in the island ours is £10,500. Five years ago it would have been utterly unthinkable that the UK would actually over take our island in relation to the earnings threshold at which tax is payable. Equally the number of individuals and jointly assessed couples earning below the personal allowance level is declining meaning more low earners are falling into the lower tax bracket. In 2012/13 17,508 individuals and jointly assessed couples fell below the personal allowance, in 2013/14 that fell to 17,410 and in 2014/15 that figure fell further to 17,113. I would support the raising of the personal allowance and one of the ways this can be funded is by the removal of the tax cap for those at the top end of the scale.

All credit to the government for trying the tax cap to see if it would increase inward investment, but I believe it has not succeeded. Treasury's own figures show that in the tax year 2014/15, the last complete year where figures are available, 61 individuals were claiming the tax cap and by doing so paying an effective tax rate of only 2.98% on their assessed income. Even putting the moral arguments to one side, this cannot be a sustainable policy at a time when support is required for those individuals in work struggling at the bottom end of the personal income scale.

Job seekers - making work pay

I have always been a firm believer that as part of the long term job seekers strategy for those that are long term unemployed there should be some element of community work that kicks in after a set period of unemployment such as twelve months. This will allow those seeking employment to potentially learn new skills and also give back to their community in a variety of different ways as well as reintegrating them into the working environment.

Various studies show that many individuals who are long term unemployed feel isolated from their communities and devalued. A scheme such as this will give them a valuable link to the local community and restore a sense of purpose to those who are feeling the effects of long term unemployment.

DOUGLAS NORTH - INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITY

Investing in Infrastructure

One of the biggest issues being fed back to me across all the areas which make up Douglas North is concern over the lack of investment in our roads and pavements around the constituency. As a resident of Governors Hill I share those concerns. While the Department of Infrastructure concentrates on the main thoroughfares much of the issues being experienced around estates themselves are being neglected. There is many a time you see a pot hole filled in only for another to emerge slightly further down the road or in some cases in exactly the same spot. Equally the budget for pavements around the island appears to have all but disappeared. Several of our pavements around the constituency are in a sorry state and the longer they are left the worse they will become. If elected, I can guarantee that from day one I will be campaigning for more investment in infrastructure across the constituency.

There are also several areas of the constituency that remain as an unadopted highway. I for one do not believe, in this modern world, that unadopted highways should exist within built up areas. The Department of Infrastructure should be actively pursuing the adoption of these areas and I would personally support an amendment to the Highways Act to ensure that the department must seek adoption at the earliest opportunity and crucially meet the costs of those where the original builder is no longer in existence, not the residents themselves.

More community Focus

As vice chairman of the Douglas Live at Home Scheme I know first-hand how important a vibrant community is to the people who live within it and what a difference it can make to their every day lives. I want to engage on a day to day basis to ensure that across the constituency the community spirit goes from strength to strength and ensure that government works ever closer with the third sector, which can deliver many services much better and strategically than government ever can.

I also want to work with others such as the schools and already established community groups in the area to see what we can do in terms of more community focused activities across all age groups.

Willaston Refurbishment

The Willaston refurbishment scheme is the largest single social housing investment seen on our island since the majority of the estate was built between 1947-1954. It is a stressful time for tenants with the need to decant to other properties while the work is ongoing and as such continuous communication is the most important thing.

I am aware of the issues that there have been in relation to communicating how the moves will take place and also how services are transferred between properties. I have been working hard with the officers of Douglas Council to try to resolve these issues and also improve not just the lines of communication but also to produce a FAQ sheet to be physically given to tenants so that they have the information required constantly to hand.

Equally, I would like to see more tenant engagement and as such would actively support the setting up of a residents association to give one clear concise voice to residents. While I have been able to pick up on, and hopefully resolve, many issues while canvassing door to door, I believe it is important that tenants have a clear voice in what is a time of great upheaval for them.

BREXIT - A MANX STRATEGY

Seizing the opportunity

Far from coming from a pessimistic point of view I see the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union as an opportunity for our island. It is clear from the indications given by the new UK government that there will be no second referendum to reverse the decision and that "Brexit means Brexit". This means that as an island we need to start forward planning now. We need to have a clear strategy for how we face the future regardless of the details of any exit. In this regard I welcome the strategy document produced by the Council of Ministers that provides clear focus on the next steps that our island needs to take which provides at least a starting point for the next administration.

From my point of view the first thing that we as a nation need to do is emphasise that we will, as now confirmed by the UK government, have input into the exit talks and any deal that is struck between the UK and the EU must and will include the Crown Dependencies. We need now to be developing a strategy as to how we would incentivise any export, manufacturing businesses to stay situated on the island in the event of their costs rising due to tariffs. One of the great things about being an island is that we are a small community and such meetings with industry leaders can be held not just on a face to face basis but regularly.

The new government should also be announcing that as a matter of urgency we are formulating our own economic policy group in relation to Brexit which should include as full members industry leaders from those sectors that will be most affected by any changes. Although we don't know what the UK's overall strategy will be until Article 50 is invoked we should not be waiting to see what that strategy is but formulating with industry leaders our own Manx strategy that best protects our own interests.

Open for business

Despite the uncertainty that naturally comes from such a big change as Brexit I firmly feel that Brexit provides a huge opportunity for our island if we seize it correctly. At the end of the day the UK is a net import economy rather than an exporter and is still going to have to trade with the EU and now the world.

As an example of that in the last year Spain, France and Germany combined imported £119.7bn worth of goods into the UK compared to £64.4bn of UK goods going into those countries. If the EU imposed just a 3% trade tariff on goods and the UK followed suit that would mean those three countries paying £3.6bn in tariffs to get their goods into the UK compared to a £1.9bn cost to the UK of goods going the other way. It is therefore the EU's advantage that any trade negotiations are not punitive. The EU will still have to trade with the UK as 16% of all EU exports go into the UK and there is not the spare capacity in the world economy for that trade to be absorbed elsewhere.

Here in the island we can use this to our advantage. We should be shouting from the roof tops about our automatic access rights to the UK market and the fact that we are a low tax jurisdiction. We need to go out and proactively sell ourselves as a good entry point to the UK market as a good area to found new operations with a much lower tax rate and a more simplified tax code than would be achieved by those businesses setting up in the UK direct.

For once let's make the customs agreement work in our favour.

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM

Elected Legislative Council

Legislative Council must go out to public election, it is no longer sustainable in the 21st Century that the chamber providing the scrutiny of our laws has no form of mandate from the people it is seeking to govern and legislate for.

Legislative Council members should also not be members of government departments. They should be focused purely on their independent scrutiny role. Equally, the number of seats allocated on Legislative Council should decrease from eight to five.

Although I have no problem with the Bishop retaining his seat in Legislative Council, I firmly believe his vote should be removed. It is fundamentally not right that he should have a potential power of veto in close votes.

Returning power to our Parliament

Over the last few decades the power of the Executive has grown massively. I would like to see some of that power returned to Tynwald. I believe all Tynwald motions should be binding on the government of the day, none should be advisory. They should then be forced to produce a timescale, for approval by Tynwald, of when any motion that is passed will be implemented.

House of Keys question time should be expanded. The length of the sitting days would easily accommodate this and hopefully prevent what is becoming a constant occurrence, with standing orders having to be used to try and extend the question period.

The failings of collective responsibility

While I believe in collective responsibility within the department structure, I do not agree with it within the Council of Ministers. If a member of the Council of Ministers votes against something at the Council of Ministers meeting then they should be free to speak, and oppose, that policy on the floor of Tynwald without fear of losing their role. As an example, if the Home Affairs Minister disagrees with the Agriculture Minister, why shouldn't they be able to voice that disagreement and vote the way they believe is best for the island, without running the risk of losing what could be a very good Minister for their department. Tynwald is supposed to be a parliamentary debating chamber within a democratic structure not a rubber stamp for the executive, and that is what collective responsibility is slowly turning it into.

As a perfect example of this the Department of Infrastructure currently, excluding the Minister, contains four MHK's. This makes it impossible under collective responsibility for that department to lose a vote in the House of Keys. Under the rules of collective responsibility if COMIN approve the policy that would mean nine members of COMIN voting in favour along with four department members making a total of thirteen MHK's, an inbuilt majority every time. A similar situation exists with the Department of Economic Development, which also has four MHK's as departmental members.

Smaller, smarter government

The number of government departments is far too many and needs to be reduced.

Equally, the fact that all House of Keys members, other than by choice, are members of government departments impacts on scrutiny of the executive. I believe that other than the Minister of a department there should be a maximum of two other political members within each department.

DIVERSIFYING OUR ECONOMY

Expanding our economic base

For too long the government has been focused purely on the biggest sectors of finance and e-gaming which although both are crucial and successful sectors it has left the overall economy unbalanced.

The tourism sector of government should be marketing the island for events such as golfing holidays and helping to establish a one stop shop where people can purchase an all-in trip rather than having to individually book, boats, flights, hotels etc.

We also need to do more to promote small businesses across all sectors and encourage them to expand as they are the big businesses of tomorrow. Not just local small businesses, but also encouraging small businesses from elsewhere that may be looking to expand to view the island as a place they would like to do business.

As an island we also have natural resources that others don't have easily to hand. We should be using the tax system to encourage experimental businesses in relation to tidal energy production and helping encourage businesses willing to invest and test new green technologies.

A 20 year plan - securing the future

The only way we can balance the books and replace reserves is by a mixture of economic growth and smarter spending. I believe that we need to start prioritising better and actually develop a twenty or even thirty year plan for the island. Not a five year plan that only runs one Tynwald to the next but a substantial plan as to where we want our island to be in 2030's. From that we can then develop a strategy in terms of infrastructure and investment which should be prioritised to meet that strategy. This would give greater control over public spending and ensure that departments worked closer together as one government rather than the individual silo mentality we currently see. It would also mean that any big projects outside of that strategy would require greater justification by the department concerned.

We should also be looking to use our on-island experience more and also trust the skill base we have locally who are qualified professionals within government to make decisions and lead projects. While government has been very good at telling us as individuals to **shop local** they have themselves resorted too many times, in my view, to employing off island consultants. We should be utilising and trusting our own local expertise.

Research and Development

One industry I believe we could expand into quite quickly is the field of research and development. As we are a small jurisdiction we have everything from agriculture to manufacturing facilities within a very small distance. This is ideal for research industries that require multiple facilities at the same time.

For instance, one growing research stream emerging across the world is in the development of Agrobots to help with developments in the agricultural sector. Not only would such research bring jobs and business to the island but it could help place the various already established sectors such as agriculture in an advanced position without the individual business having to foot all of the cost.

As already mentioned tidal power is another developing industry that is no longer in its infancy. Orkney and Shetland is currently home to the European Marine Energy Centre which is leading the way in modern developments in this field. Also Strangford in Northern Ireland has also started working in this field with several success stories. There is no reason why as an island we cannot break into what is now a growing industry and no longer simply an experimental technology.

SEA and AIR SERVICES - OUR ISLAND'S LIFELINE

Sea Services - our island's life line

With regard to the Steam Packet and the user agreement, I am a firm believer that there needs to be greater regulation and control over the services. Unlike the airline sector it is not a matter of convenience, our sea route is our lifeline.

I am in favour of the corporatisation of sea services with the government holding the golden share in such a structure. The way this would work is the corporate entity holds the user agreement and then tenders out the services once every 10 years to interested parties. This gives greater control over the terms and conditions under which the service is operated. There should also be a requirement on the number of spare vessels available in the event of an emergency and also the minimum service requirements need to be updated and increased as a matter of urgency.

The perception I have is that every time the user agreement comes up for renewal there is always a scare story waiting to happen as to why it needs to be extended as otherwise investment won't be forthcoming or routes may have to be reviewed. I find it bizarre that the government seems, from my point of view, to allow itself to be held to ransom over something that is effectively in its gift. The embedded value of the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company is in the user agreement rather than the business itself. As such it should be the government pushing for what they want rather than caving in to the demands of the provider.

With the current renegotiation I hope that it will this time be a truly open and transparent process that will allow all interested parties to compete on an open playing field so that even if the final decision is to continue with the current provider it can clearly be shown why that was the best decision. I am sure that I am not alone in the fact that in the past when I've heard the phrase "negotiation" used in relation the user agreement the first word that has sprung into my head is "capitulation".

Air travel - Protecting our vital routes

I believe that while open skies has served us well over the time it has been in place it is now starting to fail. The continual problems over the London City route show this, a crucial link for our business community, that but for private intervention could well have been lost to the island.

I would therefore support the setting up of a regulatory body to allow carriers to tender to operate individual essential routes on a five year rolling contract. Other less essential routes could continue to operate on an open skies basis.

While competition is a good thing, it can also be detrimental if you have two airlines competing over the same route for passengers with our limited population and potential passenger numbers. This can lead to airlines concluding that routes are no longer viable and run the risk of the routes going completely, as we have seen in the past. Slots are owned by the airlines themselves and if that airline leaves the island there is no guarantee that route and the slots into the corresponding airport will not go with them.

With the need to diversify our economic basis it is more critical than ever that our routes into and out of the island are protected in order to provide the best service possible not just to local residents but also to those outside looking to invest in our future. There is no point trying to sell ourselves as a vibrant economic entity if in the modern world, where time is at a premium, we are accessible when people need us to be.

PENSIONS - A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

The National Insurance Fund

I would support new financial regulations in relation to what can be charged to the National Insurance Fund. I believe that the current regulations and legislation in place allows government far too much leeway in how NI funds can be used. Being blunt, I feel in the past it has been used as a cash cow. Many will remember the raid on the NI fund to pay for the new Nobles Hospital and despite promises that the money would be repaid to the fund it never has been. Even in recent years there have been several items paid for from the NI fund that I personally believe should have been paid for out of general taxation. One way we can ensure the future sustainability of the NI fund is to ensure it is in future used only for what it was originally intended for.

State pension - Dignity in retirement

One of the fundamental principles that any decent society should be based upon is the principle that those who have worked hard all their life should have the right to dignity in retirement. A huge part of that is effected by the state pension which in some cases, through no fault of their own, is the only real income many people have in retirement. In order to ensure that the state pension is fit for purpose I firmly believe in index linking it to Manx inflation. That way the state pension will continue to rise in line with costs.

In the past it has been claimed that this is unaffordable, but if you actually look over the last five years an interesting picture emerges. Over those five years the total average annual inflation rate has been 17.4% actual accumulative rises in the state pension have equalled 16.8%. Not only is index linking affordable but it provides certainty to those whose state pension is quite literally a lifeline.

Public sector pensions - creating sustainability

While I welcome the proposals put forward at June's Tynwald in relation to the cost envelope it is still not a long term solution to the public sector pensions issue. By the end of the next Tynwald the public sector pension reserve will hit zero and a deficit of £63 million will have to be found by the taxpayer. Not only that but one of the ways the financial hole is being plugged is by increased employer contributions which of course also comes from the taxpayer, with no explanation from government as to where the additional money is coming from.

The next administration must tackle it head on and the only way to do this is to close the current scheme, with all currently accrued benefits protected, and move to a money purchase scheme. The current situation is not just unfair on the taxpayer but also on the civil servants themselves who are of course also taxpayers. Members of the public sector pensions scheme have a right to know that the promises being made to them can be honoured and give them reassurance in relation to retirement.

The current arrangement yet again does not do this, yet again it is tinkering round the edges. It is unfair for government to keep coming back every three or so years telling civil servants and the their unions further change is needed. We need to bite the bullet and put in place a long term financially viable scheme which reassures taxpayers that it is affordable and not impacting on the funding available for front line services and also provides civil servants with long term certainty over their future pension. The only thing that will do that is the phased introduction of a money purchase scheme.

The same should also be done for Tynwald members who still, despite recent changes, have what I would term a gold plated scheme. There can not be one rule for one and one for another. Any changes to the civil service scheme must be mirrored in the Tynwald members scheme.

About David



GENERAL DETAILS

Age 38

Born Douglas Isle of Man

Lives and works in Douglas

PRIVATE SECTOR EXPERIENCE

Worked in retail 1994 - 2001

Worked as bar manager 2001- 2003

Worked for a local insurance company from 2003 - 2014. Started as a general administrator, then a senior administrator and finally as a support specialist.

Currently working for a local project firm since 2014.

Operations manager 2014 -2015,
Chief Executive 2015 - present

VOLUNTARY BODIES

Governor of Ballakermeen High School

Vice Chairman of Douglas Live at Home Scheme

Treasurer of Isle of Man Neighbourhood

EDUCATION

Primary: Ashley Hill Primary School

Secondary: St Ninians High School

University: Lancaster University (Edge Hill campus)

POLITICAL EXPERIENCE

Douglas Borough Councillor since 2008

Chairman of Commercial Lettings
2008-2010

Chairman of Public Works 2010-2012

Deputy Mayor 2011 - 2012

Mayor of the Borough 2012 - 2013

Chairman of Housing 2013 - present

Chairman of the Local Government
Pension Scheme 2015 - present

Candidate for Douglas North House of
Keys by-election 2015

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On Thursday 22nd September

Vote Ashford

IT'S TIME FOR CHANGE