

House of Keys General Election

Thursday 29 September 2011



John  
**SHIMMIN**

Douglas West

*Representing You, Representing Our Island...*

John Shimmin  
15 Devonshire Crescent  
Douglas, Isle of Man.

Dear voters;

It has been my honour to have represented the people of Douglas West for the past fifteen years. Your faith in me has allowed me to amass a level of experience in all aspects of our Government and Parliament which I feel will be invaluable in the times ahead.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all of your previous support and I only hope that I may serve you again.

Throughout my three terms I have always maintained the belief that Government requires team players, capable of working together for the good of our Island. I have now served as the Minister of four important departments and have relished the responsibility, performing competently in all of my roles.

It is clear that the next five years will see some of the most challenging and difficult decisions for a generation. Now, more than ever, we require experience and dedication to protect the future stability of our Island.

I hope you will find enough in this manifesto to believe that my experience is worthy of your support for the next five years.

Yours faithfully,

John

# About Me

I am a 51 year old Manxman. I live in Devonshire Crescent with my wife, Mo, and two sons, Andrew and Peter.

Before entering politics in 1996, I worked as a teacher in Crewe, Tamworth and Merseyside before coming back to the Island to teach at St Ninian's.

Over the last fifteen years, I have worked within the highest levels of Government as;

- Minister of Transport  
(Responsibility for Highways, Airports, Harbours, Drainage, Building Works and Quarries)
- Minister of Home Affairs  
(Responsibility for the Police, Fire, Prison, Probation and Communications Commission)
- Minister of Local Government and the Environment  
(Responsibility for Environment, Planning, Housing, Waste Operations, Estates and Government Laboratory)
- Minister of the Environment, Food and Agriculture  
(Responsibilities for Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment and Forestry)

I support many charities and am a trustee of The Alcohol Advisory Service and Relate.

# An International Politician



I am well experienced in international affairs, having worked with the British Irish Council on Energy and Economic matters as well as attending meetings in Washington on e-gaming and in Brussels on Agricultural matters.

The next five years will require national politicians to successfully work at an international level, and I am confident that my previous experience makes me a suitable candidate for this position.

I currently lead the Island's Energy Policy which has allowed me to meet with the leaders of the UK and Irish Governments. These relationships assisted the successful prevention of the Scottish fishing fleet destroying our sea beds in 2010.

**Consider how many of your MHK's you would entrust with the level of negotiations that will be increasingly important in the next few years.**

# Current Issues in Douglas West

I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting so many of you at your homes or at my Public Meetings over recent months. I have been heartened by the warmth of the reception and the many positive suggestions about how you feel the Island might move forward.

We all have slightly different priorities in our lives, but below is a list of those issues most frequently discussed;

- Parking problems
- Road safety
- Road and pavement conditions
- Variety of health issues
- Cost of Douglas rates (introduction of all Island rating system)
- Cost of water rates
- Cost of living
- Pension matters
- Bus routes
- University fees
- Greater disability access
- Employment
- Immigration
- Litter and dog dirt

However, by far the greatest worry is the Islands economy and how the VAT changes will affect us in the long term. We all acknowledge that there are difficult decisions ahead, however I believe that it is unacceptable to allow those in the middle economic bracket (the majority of West Douglas) to suffer whilst others appear to escape any financial impact.

I will be fully supportive and work towards the introduction of an all Island rating system and the means testing of those in public sector housing.

I don't pretend to have all the answers, but with your support and carefully made decisions, we can work together to ensure a fairer and less divisive community.

# Issues for Families

**Families come in all shapes and sizes and experience different priorities as their children grow.**

**Money will always be an issue, but let us remember how lucky we are to live on such a safe and beautiful Island where our children can be nurtured into adulthood.**



## **Affordable Housing**

As DLGE Minister I oversaw the largest house building programme for generations, but there is still so much more to do. Unless young families can afford a first time buyers house or reasonably priced rental property then they will never thrive. The level of subsidised public sector housing is distorting the market and this must be addressed so that those who need housing can afford it.

## **Children**

They are the most important part of our society and they depend on us to make the right decisions. I care passionately about maintaining our educational support from primary school to university and to ensure that schools and streets are safe for our children.

## **Cost of Living**

We know times ahead will be difficult, but by concentrating on the economy and maintaining high employment we will be able to allow people to support their families. The current level of inflation is hurting us all, but we are going to come through this period if we all stick together.

# Issues for Young People

You rightly have the expectation of a future that will provide an excellent education; employment opportunities in a range of areas; the ability to buy your own house or to rent at an affordable price; and to achieve a happy and fulfilling life.



## An Excellent Education

I am a former teacher and proud of our exceptional education standards. One of my sons has just graduated and the other is still at university. Education will always remain one of my priorities.

## Employment Opportunities

I work closely with the business community and understand how to develop the employment opportunities so vital to our future success. This area is absolutely critical to our recovery from future economic challenges.

We must ensure all young people have opportunities which allow them to earn a living and develop their independence.

## Affordable Housing

Unless young people feel they will be able to afford a first time buyers house or find acceptably priced rented accommodation, then some will be tempted to leave our shores.

Government's priority for capital expenditure must be to provide suitable housing across all sectors. This will also stimulate our construction industry and create employment.

# Issues for Retired Persons

The contributions (financially and socially) of these members of our community can never be overstated and they deserve our respect and our protection.

I have ageing family members myself and I understand the problems facing many of our retired population.



## Health Issues

I am fully aware that an ageing population creates many demands on our health services, but our challenge is to ensure that pain and suffering is minimised. Our hospital services are generally excellent and appreciated by patients, and if we can continue to grow our economy, we can maintain this level of service.

## Financial Worries

Many financial worries of retired people are caused by fixed income and low interest rates combined with high inflation.

I am fully aware of the anger that is felt by many that if they do have to go in to Nursing Care then they may lose their property - whilst other people who may have lived a more carefree lifestyle have the fees picked up by the taxpayer.

We must make these systems fairer for the hard working and responsible people in our community.

## The desire for Independent Living

We must be grateful for the thousands of people who care for loved ones, helping them to remain in their own homes.

Our duty is to ensure we provide the facilities necessary for people to maintain independent living for as long as they are physically able.



# Progress to Date

We should never forget that the recent success of the Island has allowed us to invest massively in the infrastructure and services to the public. During the successful financial years, I believe we have **invested wisely** for the future.

Some examples of our investments include;

- The new hospital
- Many new schools
- Energy from Waste Plant
- IRIS
- MEA infrastructure
- The new Prison
- NSC/Bowl
- Airport runway extension
- Housing development
- New waterworks infrastructure
- Staff costs cut by 8% (£26 million saved through policy of natural wastage)
- In a recent survey, 95% of people said that they were very happy or satisfied with their quality of life
- In another survey, a 91% satisfaction rate with the policing of the Island.
- Maintaining triple A credit rating
- World class communications infrastructure

This represents the largest investment to our infrastructure since the Victorian era and will be of benefit for decades to come. However, the years of plenty are behind us and we must ensure that we **now focus all our attention upon rebuilding our economy** to maintain our services to the people.

# The Next Steps

I believe that my support for restructuring and reducing the scope of Government five years ago was justified. Regrettably at that time we failed to take action, but now we must.

It is generally accepted that we will reduce the size and cost of Government in the years ahead. This will inevitably have an impact on most of our lives. We can continue to reduce inefficiencies, however some services will no longer be able to be provided.

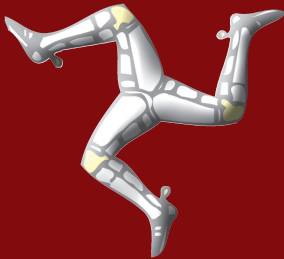
As Government contracts we will require the private sector to expand. We will need to support the growth of innovation and employment opportunities across existing and new areas of business.

There are numerous sectors which are perfect for development on the Island and now is the time to seize these opportunities.

I believe that the Island's business people and entrepreneurs are desperately looking to government to show leadership and commitment towards economic growth.

**We should be bold and opportunistic. Our financial success has, throughout history, been built on intelligent people making brave and innovative decisions.**

# The Future



I see a future where our Island is significantly different from today, but still retaining the core values of our community.

I believe our government will be smaller but more efficient. I believe our young people will have opportunities as yet unimagined. I want the Island to be at the forefront of new technologies and innovation with clusters of businesses revolving around bio tech, clean tech, nanotech, and indeed any area of new technology.

We must exploit our assets. We have a geographical position which makes us pivotal to the exploitation of renewable energy throughout the British Islands. We have a communications network which is the envy of all our competitors. We are small in size and therefore able to react quickly to new opportunities.

This new economy will be essential in continuing to provide our excellent health and educational services.

We must leave behind any sense of complacency or expectation of continual growth - now we must earn every penny that we spend.

**We can create a strong and vibrant economy which will build upon our current success and embrace new challenges, but only if we have strong, decisive politicians who have the courage to rise to the occasion.**

# Vote Wisely



Very soon you will have the opportunity to choose which MHK's will serve Douglas West and the Island for the next 5 years. It is my hope that those you elect will be the best to safeguard our future.

I would encourage you to discuss the election with families, friends, colleagues and neighbours. Perhaps talk to people working in the civil service and the business sector. From their assessments, gain an understanding of my competence as an MHK and a Minister.

I thoroughly recommend that you make a judgement based on people whose opinions you trust, rather than relying on "promises" made to win your vote.

As you know, these "promises" are common tactics used to gain your favour during an election to draw you in. Please don't be fooled by the propaganda, do your own investigating.

**I believe that my reputation over the last ten years as a Minister for four Government Departments compares favourably with any other MHK, so please, put this to the test by talking to those 'in the know'.**

# In Conclusion

I do not believe we will be able to avoid difficult decisions in the next few years. We are not immune to the very real financial crisis affecting many parts of the world, however we are in a much better position than many other countries. We have good cause to be optimistic if we can work together.

Our Island has the most amazing community, filled with talented and generous people. Few places in the world can boast our number of volunteers and charitable bodies who are the lifeblood of our Island society.

We have a fantastic environment, a renewed infrastructure (hospital, schools, IRIS, MEA, EFW, waterworks and others) low crime and a strong economic base. This should give us confidence that we can cope with the problems that we face ahead.

I am far from complacent, but I do believe in our Island's ability to cope and stay united as a caring community. There is much to do, but with your support I will be committed to doing my very best to nurture the young, to care for the vulnerable and create an environment where we can all enjoy our wonderful Island.



# Polling Stations

The election will take place on the 29th September 2011.  
Polling stations will be open from 8am to 8pm.

- For Garden City: The Sea Cadet Hall, Tromode
- For Somerset: St Andrew's Church Hall, St Ninian's Corner, Glencrutchery Road
- For Albany: The Department of Home Affairs, Homefield, 88 Woodbourne Road
- For Ballabrooie: All Saints Church Hall, Alexander Drive
- For Eastfield: All Saints Church Hall, Alexander Drive

*vote* <sup>John</sup> SHIMMIN X

# Support

I always self-fund elections and do not accept donations, however, I would be very grateful to anyone who would willingly volunteer to :

- Put up posters in windows or in gardens
- Deliver leaflets around the constituency
- Help out on election day

If you are willing to help then please let me know and any help would be greatly appreciated.

# Absent / Proxy Votes

- ARE YOU OFF ISLAND ON HOLIDAY OR ON BUSINESS ON ELECTION DAY?
- WILL YOU BE AWAY AT UNIVERSITY OR SCHOOL?
- ARE YOU UNABLE TO GO TO THE POLLING STATION TO VOTE IN PERSON?

If you would like your vote to be taken from your home, or made by post, or wish to appoint a proxy vote on your behalf, please let me know and I will assist with your application.

# Thanks

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the people of Douglas West for their support and friendship in recent years.

In particular my family and close friends who have been a constant source of help and guidance.

Contact me anytime by the methods below:

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