

VOTE LEO CUSSONS



SUSTAINABILITY & FAIRNESS

- ✓ Balance accountability with risk in a transparent and understandable way and ensure that we obtain fairness & justice for everyone
- ✓ Support local businesses & commerce so that money stays on the island

The challenge of government in the future is to create a society where all people feel engaged, empowered, valued and can live in peace with their surroundings.

The cost of economic development must support the above for a long term sustainable future.

EDUCATION

Education is the fundamental building block of the future. Early school care needs to be developed away from the idea that it is just looking after children and recognized for the enormous chance it affords us. It is in the first years that we can make the biggest impact. I support a widening of options for learning in the earlier years of school.

While it is important that children learn basic fundamentals at school it is also important that we are able to inspire them and allow them to take full advantage of this period in their lives. Life skills, relationship skills, and community skills are areas that are often neglected. For many children being able to feel secure and confident with modern media communications and being able to differentiate between good journalism and commercial marketing would put them far ahead in education. The impact of this is that they will feel included and able to make a positive contribution in many areas of our society. I do believe this also requires the Government to proactively elevate the status of teachers as one of the most important pillars of our society

ECONOMY

While our economy has low unemployment we are still struggling to balance the books. I believe that we need to provide a full range of opportunities in particular for the young and invest in old and new technologies in Rushen.

Small business should be encouraged in government contracts as this supports our economy and independence. We are in a unique position with the ability to pass flexible laws. This can enable us to compete and strengthen our own economy. At the same time, laws should distinguish between large corporate businesses and small businesses.

Perhaps we could have a sugar tax on multinational products such as Cadbury and Coca Cola but not on locally produced products. This way we can create a level playing field for businesses that young & old entrepreneurs can enter. There are also possibilities in datacentres, and biomedical industries for us to attract industry and compete in using our flexible legal system. Tourism in my opinion is far from fulfilling its potential: we have a unique landscape and individual style. Marketed correctly we could potentially be attracting thousands of walkers to island for what is the experience of a lifetime. Even at a modest amount of 500 visitors per a week at a spend of £1000 would add half million pounds to our economy every week - with no cost as the infrastructure is already there. We have an educated and creative population. Attracting sustainable businesses to Rushen is not only good for life/work balance it can ensure the survival of our vibrant community. The current business subsidiary must be greater for the outlying towns than for the capital.

PUBLIC FINANCES

Fundamentally if we are getting value for money from our public services it would be very hard - if not impossible - for anyone to tell if the rate charged for a specific service could have been achieved cheaper or was overcharged.

I support all tendering projects' financial information being freely available. If government carries the risk and is ultimately responsible for the services then there can be no justification for paying market rates as they do not compete in the commercial market. Where market rates are paid in the private sector we have to ensure that full accountability is balanced across the whole organisation and that they are held accountable to all involved including employees, third parties, and the environment in which they operate.

However there are circumstances where we pay private sector rates in public services as this is deemed the "going rate". I stand for implementing a policy that ensures we do not allow for this discrepancy in pay. Public sector workers should not be paid more than private sector workers, as it is the private sector that funds the economy. This policy would need to take into account all work that is outsourced from government. The costing process would have to be transparent, to demonstrate this policy and be publicly available. I believe that there are considerable savings to be made to the public finances in this area.

Pensions remains a hot topic. The government is under a contract with its past employees of whom many have completed long lengths of public service with the promise of a good pension. However there will have to be some give. In particular for the executive top paid salaries which are not sustainable in the long term. Currently the cost of setting up an independent pension is considerable higher than in the UK. We need to provide more sustainable options for working people. I support a flexible pension.

Everyone should to contribute to society, in proportion to their ability. We have to create opportunities for the disabled and people on the fringes of society. It is important that we ask the right question when we are paying out government money in all forms - not just how much do you earn, but also what are you contributing to society. This applies also to tax income above the £125,000 tax cap that is not taxed - it is not acceptable in a fair society. The vague idea that 'wealth trickles down' is not a transparent or reliable enough process. Our island can not sustain unbridled wealth in the resources it use with the comparative contribution. For a fair and just society all must contribute proportional to their circumstances. The idea that we are all in it together has never been such appropriate description for the Isle of Man in these times.

HOUSING & ROADS

Affordable housing is an issue that needs to be addressed along with the number of dilapidated buildings and unused properties in Rushen.

While legislation has been passed to enable action to be taken against dilapidated buildings I believe that we need also to consider further action in relation to unused buildings. To build a strong community it is not sustainable to have property that is not lived in or undeveloped while demand and prices are so high. I would also be supporting the development of first time

buyers property as opposed to luxury apartments in many of the vacant sites in Port Erin. We should allow small builders the chance to develop and build houses as a way of retaining money on the island. Many of the roads in Rushen are being improved or are in the planning. I support consultation/debate on the funding priority to improve the roads against other priorities where needs might be considered to be greater - possibly through the use of a digital democracy website.

HEALTH & WELFARE

A large proportion of Manx budget is spent on health and social welfare. Creating a healthy society and manageable system is a complicated matter.

First we must ensure that we encourage a healthy living and preventive measures. There are many innovative possibilities here starting with a sugar tax, and ensuring that sport, recreational facilities are available to all, in particular to those on low incomes. Some illness can be attributed to lifestyle. We should encourage a full range of possibilities where medicine has not been able to help. According to government accounts published for the financial year 2015-16 one of the notable cost is the use of temporary staff at Nobles (locum workers). Due to Nobles not being able to recruit enough staff

and higher than average recorded sick days. Staff morale is at a low point. It is fundamental that we are able to recruit and train enough staff so as not to be dependent upon locum workers. This requires long term planning and engaging school children in the availability of a really good career here. We should also provide affordable loans for students who wish to enter this profession that are not repayable if you take a post in the Isle of Man for 7 years or more. Providing free health care comes with a responsibility that must not be misused. Where patients clearly fail to contribute to their own well being or act in a reckless fashion (drunk driving, criminal activity etc) these costs must be attributed to themselves or their insurance.



Compared with many European countries we lag far behind in recycling and management of waste

CULTURE

Our culture is what defines us and is made up of many parts. A cultured society develops and encourages the arts. While we have made great strides with the Manx language and our own history it is important to diversify and enlarge our artist community.

Research has shown that having centres of excellence that combine many disciplines encourages innovation and entrepreneurship and adds to the economy in many ways at a small cost. We need to provide a channel to export Manx culture and creative industries to other international markets, if necessary through a subsidy.

In Norway the government funds free performances of local musicians and artists. Not only does this provide entertainment but it encourages a wide range of people to be creative and increases personal development of all those that partake, allowing for contributions from all areas of society. The cost of such schemes is negligible when looking at the budget as a whole.

ENVIRONMENT

We have seen many changes in the environment during my lifetime and it remains an important issue. Compared to many European countries we lag far behind in recycling and management of waste.

I would push for overall joined up policy in waste management over the island. The cost of waste management can be felt directly in Rushen by increasing amount in rates and will continue to raise each year unless we have a coordinated policy in place. I would also like to see broadening of our purity laws that have served us so well to include a total ban on intensive animal farming as this is characteristic of the quality of life we pursue here. We can and should also increase our own Manx grown produce.



ABOUT ME



Born in Glen Maye in 1971, I was raised and educated on the island, studying at the Isle of Man College. I have an honours degree in Law from Lancaster University and a Legal Practice Certificate from Manchester Metropolitan University.

I have set up several businesses over the years, including an environmentally-friendly industrial cleaning business and a web design business. I am currently the proprietor of Ken Quine's hardware shop in Port Erin. I lived in the Netherlands for ten years working as an ERP computer consultant before I returned to the island in 2004. I have two children and I live with my partner.

Interest: My family, the arts, walking

Memberships: The Law Society, Port Erin Traders

Regular sponsor of the Erin Art Center

If you have any questions and wish to arrange a private meeting or help my election campaign in any way please do not hesitate to contact me.

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I am also available informally most Monday to Saturday mornings 10 am to 12 am at Ken Quines Hardware store, Port Erin.

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