

# JOHN HOUGHTON



## DOUGLAS NORTH

House of Keys General Election • Thursday • 23 November • 2006



## **INTRODUCTION**

**Dear Constituent**

***I have pleasure in offering you my manifesto for my candidature for another term in the House of Keys.***

***I have outlined my views on many important issues of concern to people living in the constituency and the Island. There are many issues which need to be addressed both nationally and in the constituency.***

***I will continue to put 100% effort into representing your interests at all times.***

**Yours sincerely**



## **MANX ELECTRICITY AUTHORITY**

This is an issue of extreme concern. The financial effects could affect the tax payer and electric consumers for many years.

### ***Assistance for those who need it***

Following news of the MEA unauthorised loans debacle, I moved a motion in Tynwald asking the Treasury to bring forward a special scheme to subsidise not only those people receiving benefits but to assist people who sit above the benefits threshold and as such do not receive any financial support from the Government.

My motion was amended by the Treasury Minister but Tynwald supported my proposal of providing financial assistance to those most affected by the increases in electricity bills. I await the arrival of an appropriate scheme from the Treasury and will continue to push for this to be brought forward.

### ***14.5% Increase in tariff announcement on 1st September 2006***

The MEA announced an increase in its charges with effect from 1st September. Following my intervention by asking the office of Fair Trading to investigate the real effect to consumers of imposing a retrospective charge, the MEA clarified the date of imposition will be for meters read on or after **1st December 2006!**

## **IMMIGRATION**

I believe that the current lack of adequate monitoring and control of people from foreign lands coming into and remaining in the Island is the number one election issue. Constituents in North Douglas are voicing their real concerns and want to see early action taken to control the problem. Mr Henderson and myself were joined by only a few other members of Tynwald to highlight this serious issue in the last House.

I pledge to continue to pursue the Council of Ministers to consider adopting some if not all of the following proposals:

- Regulations to impose short term contracts which will deny any rights of residency following termination.
- Automatic registration of Immigrants who will be required to inform the Immigration Office of any changes of address, place of employment etc
- Failure to report arrival on the Island or changes of circumstances should lead to immediate expulsion.
- A maximum number of foreign immigrants to be set by Tynwald.
- Registration ID cards for each immigrant to be produced at the request of Police or Government Officials.
- An increase in the ten year period to elapse before eligibility to housing lists, benefits etc

At the eve of Romanian and Albanian acceptance into the membership of the EU which will place further strain on immigration in the UK we must therefore act **NOW** to control our borders.



## **LIVE AT HOME SCHEME**

A scheme is being set up in North Douglas to provide support and friendship locally to those who are, or are at risk of becoming isolated or lonely. The scheme is a joint initiative between Social Services and the Methodist Church and is going to be offered to people of any denomination. Similar schemes have been successfully operating in Onchan and other areas on the Island and arrangements are well in advance for launching it in North Douglas. If you would like to help on a voluntary basis or if you know of anyone who you think is lonely or vulnerable please contact me. I would be delighted to hear from you.



## **NURSING CARE**

I believe the time has come to bite the bullet with regard to the escalating costs of long term nursing care which is costing around £700 per week. Private patient's life savings are dwindling at a rapid rate. My philosophy is that the NHS should care for our people from the cradle to the grave. UK Case Law has caused a re-think on the ethics of this issue and I would support a phased implementation of NHS operated nursing care.

Previous administrations have let us down by closing NHS care of the elderly beds at the rate of around 200 placements over the last 20 years. As a result the private care operators have flourished.

In the interim I will support Government initiatives to cap fees or subsidise private patients who do not qualify for benefit.

## **HEALTH**

As our Health Services continue to grow we must find savings throughout Government to meet this necessary commitment.

I will support:-

- Innovative ideas to cut waiting lists
- An independent system which encourages patients input into change.
- The continuing operation of a dedicated diabetic centre.
- An on-Island prosthetic team or twice weekly clinics which is a must
- Increased NHS dental facilities to eliminate current waiting lists.
- Enhanced orthodontic support to NHS patients.

## **FUTURE PRIVATE MEMBERS BILLS – DANGEROUS DOGS ACT**

I am concerned that there is no legislation covering dangerous dogs. I have received many complaints from constituents regarding nasty natured dogs roaming at large. I will research the UK

Dangerous Dogs Act and assess the relevant points missing from IOM legislation with a view to bringing forward a Private Members Bill.



## **WASTE MANAGEMENT**

Civic amenity sites around the Island are the ideal and most practical way of dealing with household and garden waste. I welcome the Department of Local Government and Environments decision to allow anyone to deliver waste to any civic amenity site on the Island.

More initiatives to support the reduction, reuse and recycling of materials should be pursued.

I was disappointed to note Douglas Corporation's premature withdrawal of its kerbside collection initiative in Governor's Hill. This service was developing well and many complaints were received from constituents who wanted the service to continue.





## ENERGY COSTS

Urgent action needs to be taken to address this problem to protect the elderly and vulnerable and families who need better financial support in order to make ends meet.

The Government needs to acknowledge the Island is now subject to fuel poverty the same as in the UK and action is required now.

I shall continue to work with other like minded members of Tynwald to bring about an effective resolution to assist those who need it.

## REPORT INTO THE SCOPE AND STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT

This report has been published by an independent think tank and has made numerous recommendations. I support many of its recommendations covering the restructuring of Government departments and the tidying up of various boards of Tynwald bringing them under a central umbrella. However I do not support many of its recommendations to privatise operations such as the Post Office, the Bus Service and the Water Authority. The report is a consultation document only and will be on the agenda for debate in the new house. A restructured Government is overdue.

Government departments operate independently and charge each other for its services etc which is a nonsense and must be stopped.

A revitalised, restructured Government must be designed to be user friendly to the public, operating in a transparent and non bureaucratic way with the ability to share information with each other and not be constrained by unworkable legislation which inhibits progress.

## RETIREMENT PENSIONS

I will support a review of the way pensions are calculated and operated. Over recent years there have been many additional incentives bolted on to pensions. The latest being the £10 disregard in respect of the benefit threshold. The whole issue surrounding retirement pensions is very complicated and the elderly find it hard to understand their true pension entitlement.

## LAW AND ORDER

This subject has been my leading commitment to the people of the Isle of Man during my time in the keys. I have:

- Introduced my own legislation in the form of Private Members Bills which have made offences for those who use threatening, abusive or insulting behaviour against others, and using threats of violence and affray. Not a week goes by without numerous prosecutions appearing in the media in respect of those who use threatening behaviour against others.
- Successfully brought into force a Sex Offenders Act and
- A night time noise Act

I am a staunch critic of police management and will continue to strive to see better policing throughout the Island. I speak to many operational police officers who support my stance and assist me whenever possible to bring more effective police procedures. I am grateful to those officers who have gone out of their way to advise me whilst under constant threat of their career.

I will support:

- Community Policing and would congratulate Inspector Ken Kneale for his wonderful efforts thus far in pursuit of his initiatives introduced in Douglas.
- More officers on the beat especially at night and not necessarily in day glow jackets. Thieves and burglars need to be caught red handed by officers skulking in dark areas watching criminals!
- The imposition of a "3 strikes" policy against serious recidivist offenders. I moved a private members bill to achieve this a number of years ago which was unsuccessful. I would be willing to bring this measure forward again for scrutiny by the Keys.
- The Department of Home Affairs affecting a study into preventative detention. There have been occasions when persons who were likely to commit a serious offence against another person should have been detained before he committed that offence which could lead to a death. The public have a right to be protected from persons known to be unbalanced in mind.
- The reinstatement of a dedicated Drug Squad to deal with the ever increasing problem of drug trafficking.

## NATIONAL INSURANCE FUND

I will not support the payment of a pension supplement to people who have worked in the UK and have transferred their pension to the Island. The pension supplement has derived from those who have worked on the Isle of Man and who have therefore paid into the fund during their working life.

It follows therefore, that those working whilst living in the UK should have been rewarded with a similar increase by way of a pension supplement in the UK. They regrettably should contact representatives in the UK for an explanation as to why the UK pension fund was closed down many years ago!

## EDUCATION AND THE YOUNG

Education must come second only to health. The young are our future and we must ensure they get the very best opportunities in their education at primary, secondary and further education levels.

I will fight to maintain the student grant system and continue to support further enhancements in financial support to assist students.

I support all youth initiatives forward by the Department of Education who must be praised for their work so far.

- I have assisted the Department of Education to bring forward increased resources for its youth initiatives by getting the "Staff Cap" removed from the youth service, thus allowing the Department unlimited ability to employ part time youth workers to operate more youth club sessions and events in the summer months etc.
- I will support more drop in centres staffed by youth officers.
- Youth clubs should be kept open during school holidays with increased activities.
- Douglas needs a young peoples centre. Ideally located on the Summerland site to replace all the attractions recently lost. This should be a multi use complex open all day and evening and should include roller skating, skateboarding, internet facilities, micro scooters and a host of other attractions.
- I also intend to ask Tynwald to support the multi use of the sea terminal complex to allow evening use of the waiting hall for teenagers to meet and to enjoy a welcome and secure place with support from the youth service.



## **COUNCIL OF MINISTERS**

The conduct of the Council of Ministers when dealing with a number of issues during the last term leaves a lot to be desired.

Chief Minister Donald Gelling has publicly stated his Government's intention to move towards transparency. However the Council operates its business on a confidential basis. Therefore no one outside the "inner sanctum" is supposed to know what is being discussed. This leads to innuendo and speculation on many occasions. Ministers are sworn to secrecy, but if they breach the rules of CoMin they are guilty of an offence. No charges however, seem to be brought against Ministers found in breach. Such breaches of trust affect the interests of all who serve in CoMin but the Chief Minister appears to be powerless to act.

I will continue to pursue a more transparent approach from CoMin with ministers being more accountable to Tynwald for their actions.

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## **THE EUROPEAN UNION**

The relationship we have with the European Union falls under the Protocol 3. i.e. The U.K. Act of Accession 1972. The Island neither contributes to nor does it benefit from their budgetary provisions. Consequently Isle of Man farmers do not benefit from funding under the Common Agricultural Policy. We do however under the common customs territory of the Community have free movement of goods between the Island and the E.U. These

measures also relate to our agricultural goods which must follow the E.C. guidelines. We cannot discriminate in the way in which we treat peoples of E.U. member states.

This reflects the way in which we can allow people to come from the U.K. to work and live in the Island providing they have a work permit. The same rules also apply to the peoples of all other E.U. Member states.



Overall there is a generally accepted view that as the Island has a G.D.P. per capita higher than the E.U. there would be little to gain, and if we were a part of the E.U. we would be a net contributor to their overall budget.

Much has been spoken about the Common Travel Area. We are a part of this along with the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, and the Republic of Ireland. However, the Islands DHSS only has an agreement with the U.K. which allows for treatment in each others country. This is calculated on an annual basis and the balance has to be accounted for.

This Common Travel Area does not have any provision for the health care of Island residents travelling within the rest of the Common Travel Area or indeed continental Europe. It is important to holiday makers travelling to Europe to know that the E.I.I.I form or the European Health Card is not available to Isle of Man residents so it is strongly advisable to get sufficient private health care insurance before travelling.

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## **PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITIES**

I have asked a total of 370 questions during the 5 year term which covered many important topics.

I have also tabled 30 motions in Tynwald covering Government responsibilities, Private Members matters on behalf of Constituents and further motions reporting back to Tynwald where I presented reports of Select Committees which I had chaired.

I have spoken in many other debates and on many occasions I have "raised the game" when debating contentious issues which have in some instances caused some rather heated exchanges – all in the interests of transparency and democracy.



## IN THE CONSTITUENCY

I work closely with my colleague Bill Henderson. By forging links together we are able to achieve results which are appreciated by our constituents.

Bill and I have addressed numerous personal issues many of a serious nature to the satisfaction of our constituents.

In May this year we delivered a constituency report to all of our constituents. I have briefly summarised most items which have been addressed.

- **Road closures** – new crossing corridors
- **New prison** – not being built over Victoria Avenue and into Linden Grove
- **Noise nuisance from Isle of Man Creameries**
- **Laureston Grove and Close** – roads adopted
- **Constituency police station**
- **Public sector housing maintenance programmes**
- **Double glazing programme for Willaston**
- **Willaston heating programme**
- **Olympia re-roofing and heating programme**
- **Road repairs**
- **Footpath repairs and street lighting**
- **Planning issues affecting our quality of life**
- **Noble's Park drainage scheme**
- **Road safety issues**
- **Willaston Corner mini roundabout**
- **Zebra crossing near the new mini roundabout at Willaston Corner**
- **Puffin crossing to be situated near Mountain View** – soon
- **Road crossing patrol officer for Cronk-y-Berry School**
- **Regular police speed checks and traffic counts undertaken by MHK's**
- **Disc zones for parking** – Hutchinson Square, Marathon Road, Princess Road, Homefield Close and Homefield Road.
- **The adoption of roads and green open spaces at Governor's Hill estate**
- **The adoption of roads and footpaths for Abbeyfields**
- **Single, individual problems addressed and constituents helped**
- **Noble's Park anti-flooding scheme**
- **Flooding measures carried out at Governors Hill**
- **Assisting Abbeyfields residents**
- **Community recreational area on Watterson Lane**
- **Johnny Watterson's Lane first-time buyer/public sector housing scheme**
- **Ensure that adequate pedestrian crossing is in place**
- **Public housing maintenance programmes**
- **Footpath and street lighting upgrades**

## BILLS

I have moved the following bills through the Keys:-

### Government Bills

Property Service charges (Amendment) Bill

Tribunals Bill

Housing (Multi Occupancy) Bill

### Private Members Bills

Noise Bill: dealing with domestic night time noise. This has been enacted and comes into operation on 1st January 2007

Sex Offenders Bill: will effect orders on Sex Offenders forbidding them access to places where vulnerable people may congregate

Small Claims Arbitration (Personal Representation) Bill: permits limited companies to submit claims to the small claims court without the service of an advocate

All of these bills have cleared the Parliamentary process and have since been enacted.





## FINANCE SECTOR

The Island's National Taxation Strategy incorporates a number of measures, the most significant being a move to a standard zero rate of Corporate Tax which took effect on 6th April 2006.

The zero rate was brought in to assist e-gaming, tourist accommodation, film and television production, agriculture, fishing, manufacturing, insurance, shipping and fund management companies, all of which I am pleased support.

However, in the February budget 2006 a personal tax cap of £100,000 was introduced in order to attract more "high net worth" individuals to move to the Island. This was a bold and rather risky decision which I hope is successful.

The Treasury have adopted a professional approach to embrace these initiatives in particular, by developing a relocation programme and engaging high calibre personnel to meet and liaise with clients interested in moving to the Island.

## GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Since being elected to the House of Keys in 1996 I have served on the following departments and boards:-

- Department of Health and Social Security with responsibilities for Social Services
- Department of Education with responsibility for youth activities
- Office of Fair Trading as a member of the board and its Chairman
- Department of Local Government and the Environment with responsibilities for environment, safety and health.
- I am currently Chairman of the Civil Service Commission

## OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACTIVITIES

- I am Chairman and Treasurer of the Willaston Youth club.
- I am a Karate instructor with 33 continuous year's membership of the Isle of Man Karate club and am the club's administrator and treasurer.
- I am a Trustee and keen supporter of the "Friends of the Manx Diabetics Centre"
- I am a voluntary driving instructor

## CONSTITUENCY SURGERIES

Bill Henderson and I operate surgeries on an alternating basis.

John's Surgery      Thursday mornings 10am to noon every first and third Thursday in each month at Willaston Methodist Church and rent office.

Bill's Surgery      Thursday evening 6.30 – 7.30pm every second and fourth Thursday in each month.

*A surgery operates every week by your candidates.*

*Can you help with the Election on 23rd November?  
Please ring 628397 or email [john.houghton@gov.im](mailto:john.houghton@gov.im)*

PLEASE VOTE FOR

**JOHN HOUGHTON**

*Your Independent Candidate for Douglas North*

**X**