

Representation of the People Act 1995

Election 2006 – November 23rd



Manifesto of steVe Osborne Independent candidate for Douglas East



Introduction.

Many of you will already know me, but for those who don't here is a brief résumé of who I am, the things in which I believe and with your help, what I intend to do.

Born in Birmingham I have been a regular visitor to the Island from an early age. I was educated at the Queen Elizabeth I Grammar School in Atherstone, a school I hated due to the institutionalised and vicious bullying. I made a stand against this bullying. On my own I achieved little apart from being labelled as a trouble maker. However, by persuading all the victims of bullying to stand together we made a real difference; by the time I left school we had virtually ended a 400 year reign of bullying.

After leaving school I attended college at Nuneaton and then joined British Telecom, for whom I worked for more than 17 years. I was a member of the Communications Union for all that time. I continued

my education at various colleges and Coventry University. I later formed my own computer company, its success based on listening to the customer and giving the best possible value. Moving to the Isle of Man nine years ago was the realisation my lifelong dream. The natural beauty of the island, the warmth of the people, their common sense and down to earth approach to life was a great attraction.

I currently work for the Government as an Analyst Programmer in the Information Systems Division (ISD). My time in ISD has been extremely enjoyable and has given me the opportunity to meet and work with people in every government department.

Never a 'yes man' I am not a person to stand by and do nothing when I see something wrong. Nor do I mince my words. Having seen the many problems we have in Douglas (and experienced some myself) I decided to make a stand – and to stand at this election. I have great desire to improve things for this island and more importantly its people. Some issues are unpleasant to consider but need to be faced head-on and not swept under the carpet. All my life I have been a problem-solver, but with (please pardon the expression) a 'kick-ass' attitude towards getting results in anything about which I am passionate. I am passionate about this beautiful island and anxious to get stuck in to put many things right.

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Law and Order



These images are not pretty. However, there is no point in pretending this is not happening in Douglas and elsewhere. It is. We are currently experiencing the greatest increase in crime and disorder since the Vikings arrived. Crime, social disorder, drug and alcohol problems are increasing so rapidly it seems difficult for some to comprehend. Virtually everyone in Douglas (possibly the entire island) has been affected by crime or knows someone who has. What has happened to our crime-free island? The current liberal attitude towards crime and punishment has a lot to answer for. However, I do agree with the policy of tackling the cause of crime. The cause of crime is CRIMINALS. Deal with the criminals and we deal with crime.

I and many other people have experienced the effects of so called 'Modern Policing'. These effects are there for all to see: cars vandalised, shopkeepers attacked and robbed, antisocial behaviour and of course the insidious increase in drug use. Douglas desperately needs a return to traditional policing methods; more bobbies on the beat, zero tolerance to crime and anti-social behaviour. We need a proper deterrent to those who believe they can get away with criminal activities. We need a police force which is a part of the community and given the resources necessary to tackle the current problems. Our police force cannot achieve the results the community needs without the help of the community itself. We all need to work together. Criminals and drug dealers need to be hit hard and given a clear message that their activities will not be tolerated.

FACT – things were very different when we still had the birch. It was an excellent deterrent. It cost little. IT WORKED. Of course we won't ever see the birch return but there is need for a real deterrent. Like all decent people I want a Criminal Justice System that punishes criminals and supports victims. If elected I would fight for all the above – yes, even a return of the birch if I had half a chance!

Drug and alcohol problems

Nobody is forced into excessive drinking or drug taking. We have a Drug and Alcohol Strategy. We have a Drug and Alcohol team of trained and dedicated people to help individuals with problems. It is essential that they have adequate resources to cope with the problems affecting addicts. Their families and the community are the real victims. However, we need to include treatment as part of the Criminal Justice System. Many crimes are committed under the influence of drugs or alcohol. This is not an excuse. Those individuals concerned should be made to attend an appropriate course, with additional penalties for failing to do so. We need to combat these problems now. The necessary investment will pay dividends for the community of Douglas and the Island as a whole.

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Young people

The future of our island is its young people. Some have a drive, enthusiasm and vision which I envy and our Government needs. This should be encouraged. It is essential that we listen to youngsters about their needs and work with them to provide appropriate facilities. Recently, a local youth club in Broadway was forced to close. A victim of its own success as it attracted a huge number of youngsters from all over; more than it could accommodate. Living in the same road as that club I was never aware of any serious problems other than a few high spirits. I applaud the efforts made to provide a venue in Douglas for the youngsters. The winning formula of this club needs to be applied to more suitable premises with the young people themselves involved in running such an establishment and policing the disruptive few, who too often give all youngsters a bad name. The sense of ownership and responsibility would be an invaluable experience.

Government

We currently have a government which does not listen to the people – the voters who pay their wages and put them there in the first place. There are many changes well overdue in Government. The ‘Report into the Scope and Structure of Government’ highlights a number of problems areas where radical change is necessary and others where change is desirable. We have a secretive government where decisions are made behind closed doors. ‘The People’ have lost confidence in a Government which has been subject to unprecedented criticism and scandal in the past five years. I will state that if successfully elected I have no intention of being considered for the position of Chief Minister. This position should be decided by the people of this Island, as should all legislation. At the last election in 2001 only 41% of the electorate voted. I believe this is because 59% DECIDED not to vote for a government in which they had so little confidence.

We need a Freedom of Information Act. We need an open government which is fully accountable. We need a Government which has less control over local issues.

Agriculture

Our farming industry is part of our future. Not only does it make good environmental sense to buy fresh local produce, it is essential to provide as much support as possible to local farmers, to help them diversify, to increase organic farming which will aid the diverse wildlife supported on their land. Oil prices will rise, so will transport costs. We saw the result of the Foot and Mouth epidemic in the UK. In the event of a Bird ‘Flu outbreak in mainland Britain our farming industry could well make the difference between surviving or not. We can make the difference between our farming industry surviving or not.

Tourism

Next year will be the Centenary of the world famous TT Races. More people than ever before are due to travel to the Isle of Man, many for the first time. This opportunity must not be wasted. Our visitors need to be shown just what we can offer every tourist. To attract visitors we need affordable air and sea routes.

Economy

Economic growth is not the answer to everything. This increased prosperity means little to people struggling to pay fuel bills or young families having to pay expensive rents as they are unable to afford their own homes. An over-reliance on the finance sector could be disastrous. FACT - recessions happen, it is not if but when the next one appears. As a small island we are subject to global trends and economic pressures. We need to diversify our economy and capitalise on the flexibility of local industry.

Pensions and benefits

Pensions need to be linked to ‘real-world’ living costs. Those now retired all played their part in making our island. They deserve our respect and a decent living standard. However, the benefit system is too open to abuse. We are beginning to see a ‘Benefit Culture’ emerging and this needs to be stopped.

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Immigration

“Mass migration and the management of immigration is now the greatest challenge facing all European Governments. We have to get away from the notion that anyone who wants to talk about immigration is somehow a racist.”

Dr John Reid, UK Home Secretary, 9 August, 2006.

Along with crime and drug problems, the issue of immigration will not be resolved by ignoring what is happening. **FACT** – the Isle of Man has no border controls. Anyone is able to arrive here from the UK. As a means of controlling immigration the Work Permit system is not working. The Government currently has no idea how many immigrants are now living or working here. We hear that they will have a better idea from census results but I do not believe this will be a true reflection of what is happening. The Government has been caught napping although the influx of immigrants had been anticipated by many people.

One organisation to have voiced concerns about immigration is **Migrationwatch UK**. This independent think tank has no links to any political party or organisation and has carried out considerable research into the real impact of large scale immigration. It has a distinguished Advisory Council from diverse ethnic and professional backgrounds. This think tank deals with cold, hard facts. I have discussed with Sir Andrew Green, a member of the Advisory Council, the problems we face here in the Isle of Man. With his kind permission I have reproduced below some of the Migrationwatch findings:

Impact on population growth

Migrationwatch were first to point out that the UK Government had failed to include the children of immigrants when they claimed that immigration accounted for only just over half of expected population growth. After a reference to the Statistics Commission, they obliged the Government to admit that **83%** of projected population growth is a result of immigration.

Immigration from Eastern Europe

The Home Office paper in April 2003 claimed that the maximum net migration from the new Eastern European members of the EU would be 5,000 – 13,000 a year. Only 20 months after their accession, 345,000 East Europeans had registered for work in Britain. Self employed and short term workers are not covered by this Register. The UK Government simply does not know how many others have not registered, nor how many have since left but it is clear that the Government estimate was hopelessly wrong.

The pensions argument

For years, the Home Office claimed that the immigration was needed to help pay pensions. Migrationwatch have shown that any such effect is only temporary and has the disadvantage of adding very significantly to the population. The Turner Commission on Pensions agreed. The Home Office have now dropped this argument.

Economic Benefit?

The economic benefit of immigration is very limited. Immigration is **not essential** to economic growth. It adds to economic growth but also adds nearly proportionately to population so that **the benefit to the host community is small**. Immigration is welcome to many employers because it holds down pay levels, especially for the unskilled, and contributes to lower interest rates. It can also be a source of cheap skilled labour with no training costs. The **tax payer** then picks up all the costs of the extra infrastructure required.

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Immigration holds down wages, it makes it more difficult for the Government to achieve their stated aim of moving from welfare to work those on Incapacity Benefit. In Britain there are now one million young people who are neither in work nor in education.

Are immigrants doing jobs the British will no longer do? No. In large parts of Britain where there are few, if any immigrants, British people are doing all these jobs. The fundamental problem is the benefits trap. Wages are held down to a level where for some, there is little to gain in working rather than collecting benefits. Wages should be allowed to rise to make lower paid jobs worthwhile and to encourage productivity. Increasing productivity is the only way that a nation can become richer.

Where is this leading?

In the UK there is growing resentment among the native population of whom 70 – 80% wish to see a tougher immigration policy. They feel that their **concerns are being ignored**, or dismissed; Government is not listening to public opinion on immigration. The ethnic population is also concerned about the direction of events. A majority of them wish to see tighter immigration control and **feel that Britain is losing its own culture**.

The natural tendency of some immigrants to join their own communities and to choose spouses from their countries of origins, is leading to the **formation of parallel communities** with little contact or identification with mainstream British culture. Indeed, in some cases the younger generation is growing up hostile to British culture.

The facts of the immigration problem are real and must not be ignored. We do have a buoyant economy but I do not believe that economic growth should be pursued for its own sake; especially if that results in a reduced quality of life for anyone. Do we really want an economy bolstered by service and construction industries served by an immigrant workforce who are paid as little as £4 or £5 per hour? Whilst out on the 'campaign trail' I visited as many people as possible in East Douglas, whether registered to vote or not. With a full time job I was limited to evenings, weekends and two weeks holiday so was not able to speak to everyone. I saw for myself the large numbers of Eastern European people, many living in conditions far from ideal. I heard firsthand the problems they encountered finding work and suitable accommodation. I have seen the beginnings of 'mini-ghettos', areas of concentrated immigrants, many struggling to achieve a decent standard of living, speaking little or no English and certainly not part of the community. Some feel a growing resentment towards the mainstream population. We are sleepwalking towards segregation.

What should be done?

I wholeheartedly support the recommendations made by Immigrationwatch. We need to learn from the mistakes made in the UK. We should be clear about the facts, frank about the problems, and constructive about the solutions.

The first step must be to limit the scale and pace of further immigration through the currently dormant Residency Act. An annual limit is essential to restore public confidence in the system and to give everyone time to 'take stock' of the situation. Thereafter we should encourage more explicit nation building so as to integrate the minorities we have. This should involve language teaching, skills training and assistance in finding employment. Failure to act now will undoubtedly see problems arise which many thought would never happen in the Isle of Man.

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Transport

The Isle of Man currently lacks a cohesive transport policy. I am able to walk to work and to walk my daughter to school but many cannot. There has been talk of a Congestion Charge, something which I would be totally against. We need to encourage employers to adopt a staggered system to working hours to spread the load on our transport infrastructure. It came as a great surprise to find there was no policy to encourage the use of two-wheelers in Douglas. Motor bikes and scooters are an economic form of transport, take up much less room on the road and can be parked off the road freeing up space for other vehicles. Many bikers have told me they would gladly use their bike or scooter to travel to work but currently there is no incentive. Disk parking restrictions still apply to motorcycle parking bays and I would want this absurdity abolished.

Road safety

My campaign to introduce a 'staged' licence system for young, newly qualified drivers has shown a great deal of public interest. We see and hear of the devastating accidents resulting from the actions of some irresponsible, inexperienced drivers. Would you want to travel in an aircraft piloted by someone with a few months experience? Of course not, despite air travel being much safer than driving. Accidents involving young drivers have many common factors: distractions such as friends in the car and loud music playing. Experience and responsibility are acquired with the passage of time. I would not want the minimum driving age lowered but I would want new drivers to gain access to a full licence in stages, gaining experience and demonstrating competence and responsibility before progressing to the next stage.

Energy, the environment and the MEA



We all know about the MEA fiasco so there is little point in deliberating on why we are in debt to the tune of many thousands of pounds for every man, woman and child on this island. Neither is there much point in pouring more money into the MEA money pit by holding an expensive enquiry. It was a huge mistake to have wasted so much money on a power station which burns fossil fuels that have to be imported from the UK. Not only are we totally dependant on imported energy but we are still causing damage to the environment. Our island is ideally situated to make use of alternative, renewable energy sources. These technologies are not new, but are tried and tested. The world's largest tidal generator, in France, has been generating 600 million kWh every year for the past 40 years; 4 times our requirements. Oil and gas prices will continue to increase and these fuels will eventually be exhausted. Wind, tide, wave and solar power are our future. We need to pursue these alternative energy sources as a matter of urgency and I would do my utmost to see this is done.

Community

Recently announced plans to move another GP Practice out of Douglas highlight the underlying problems we have in Douglas – the high cost of premises, the reliance on cars and centralisation of services.

The future

I have listened to many people resigned to a Government which will never change. All too often I have heard people say "What can you do?" On my own I can do little. Together we can achieve much. I believe the time is right for the changes this island needs. Please use your vote. 10,000 people have already voted. 10,000 people appear to already given up. Don't give up! I have been listening and will always listen. If you want your voice heard -

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