

Please Vote for

Dr Alex Allinson

VOTE FOR HOPE, VOTE FOR CHANGE





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It has been a real honour and privilege to represent the people of Ramsey for the last five years. There have been major changes to our Island and around the world with BREXIT and the increasing threat of climate change. The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic has been the biggest challenge our Island has ever had to face. We have tragically lost family, friends and members of our community; the stresses of the last eighteen months are still raw. Whilst the pandemic has shone a light on some of the inequalities and problems we have on our Island it has also demonstrated the depth of strength and solidarity within our community. I am standing as your MHK again to improve our Island and seize the opportunities to enhance the lives for everyone in our great nation and for future generations.

Being elected to represent the people of Ramsey in 2016 was one of the proudest moments of my life. After moving over from London twenty years ago to join the GPs at the Ramsey Group Practice my family and I have made this our home. We are so grateful for the welcome, support and friendship we have received. I am committed to try and repay this.

In Tynwald I set out to change things for the better; both for our town and the Island. I have been successful in bringing through legislation to update our laws on abortion, protect people from sexual offences and from domestic abuse. I have worked with Manx Utilities to upgrade the critical infrastructure of the town. Together with DOI, I have responded to your concerns about our roads, speeding up repairs, much needed harbour improvements and flood defences.

However the speed of change has been frustratingly slow. There is still so much to do regarding investment in local healthcare services, social care, our schools, affordable housing and rates reform. I have welcomed new businesses and developments which will enhance our already great town. The new area plan for the North will give us a chance to develop vacant plots, whilst preserving the countryside. I believe the planning process needs urgent reform.

These are some of the reasons why I have decided to stand as your representative for five more years. I would like once again to ask for your support to continue to be your voice in Tynwald, to be your advocate for change and improve the lives of all of us.



A SHARED VISION FOR RAMSEY

As a Commissioner for eight years and then your MHKI have worked with many organisations and parts of Government for the good of the town. I have assisted individuals overcome problems with benefits, housing, schooling and immigration issues. Ramsey is a great place to live but it is our community which makes it so special.

Regeneration & Investment

- I wish to continue to support existing businesses to expand and diversify. Attract new companies to be based here boosting retail, services and provide more local jobs. This will invigorate the main streets and ensure that there are fewer empty premises in town.
- I have championed recent changes which will stop pubs being left empty after being put up for sale.
- I have supported plans for the re-development of the old Barry Curran site on the quayside and other vacant plots to bring more people and prosperity to our town. The state of the Victoria Mall is of real concern.
- We need to complete plans for a new transport interchange at the current tram station which will free up the bus station site for development to provide accessible housing.
- The Courthouse is at the heart of our town. We need a venue for events, functions and workshops and this fine building would be ideal. I will continue to work with the Commissioners, community groups together with private enterprise to ensure this landmark becomes a useful, functional building and an asset to the town once again.

Environment

- I have always supported the concept of a marina for our harbour. I have always and continue to welcome development in the town which will bring benefits to our community and the whole Island. When the current proposals for the bay first surfaced three years ago I kept an open mind about them but have consistently stated that any scheme would have to go through a rigorous environmental impact assessment and full public planning process. I appreciate the anxiety and concern the Ramsey Bay Marina proposal has caused some local residents and have asked the developers to make their future intentions clear.
- The bay is now a protected Marine Nature Reserve. The climate change emergency has led to a new appreciation of the importance our coastline plays in protecting us and our environment. Any development along our shores must meet strict environmental criteria. I will oppose any future licences for offshore oil and gas exploration.

People

- With an ageing population we need to invest in healthcare facilities for the town, making sure that they are accessible to all. I have supported the development of a new health centre close to the Cottage Hospital, to increase the number of GPs we can attract to work at the Group Practice, provide more face to face appointments and expand the range of services that can be provided locally.
- The risk of flooding is an increasing threat to our town. I support work to boost defences along the quayside and increase parking provision in other parts of the town especially for drivers with disabilities.
- Older residents should be valued with better facilities including a complete renovation of Cummal Moar and better transport links to shops and the hospital for pensioners.
- Sport and recreational facilities for young people need to be expanded and made accessible for all.
- Ramsey is my home. It's a great place to live but could be even better. I pledge to work to improve our town so it has a bright and optimistic future.

Intergenerational Fairness

- The worldwide pandemic has exposed inequalities and problems in our society. Whilst we are a relatively wealthy nation many struggle to make ends meet and sudden illness or unemployment can plunge them into debt and financial hardship. This can affect young people, working families, pensioners; in fact any of us.
- Fairness to all generations is essential to preserve and enhance the community spirit and sense of solidarity we have. Tynwald must address all these aspects as the key foundation for the next Programme for Government.

Employment and Pay

- Access to training, lifelong learning and re-skilling can help support people getting better jobs. During the pandemic extra money was provided to our University College in order to expand their classes and offer free access to key courses; this should continue.
- As a MHK I was part of the Committee investigating how Zero Hours contracts are used locally. I will press for revised legislation which provides better job security with statutory sick pay, maternity, paternity benefits and bereavement leave. These should also be made available to the self-employed.
- I support the move to gradually increase the minimum wage to make sure it provides enough means by which to live off. Similarly, benefits especially Employed Persons Allowance need to be at a more realistic level and be increased in line with inflation.
- It is not acceptable that some families have to rely on the Foodbank. Child benefit should be increased and extra support given for those on low incomes to afford school uniforms.

Housing

- Young people are increasingly unable to afford their own homes and find it very difficult to save enough for a deposit whilst also paying rent. In Ramsey we need to develop more social housing and mid-rent schemes as well as a reformed First Time Buyers programme.
- Following the completion of the Landlord Registration Bill further work is necessary on more secure tenancy arrangements, deposit protection and also ways to support the public/private rental market.
- Many older people are fearful of the cost of social care and that they might be forced to sell their own home to afford it. These concerns must be addressed with an adequately funded system to allow more people to stay at home with a cap on any financial contribution they might need to make.
- The next administration must finally reform the rates system to make it fairer and simpler for everyone.

Pensions

- There should be easier access to pensions for the self-employed with a thorough review of the National Insurance system.
- Pensioners should be supported with the current concessions on bus travel and TV licences but also targeted support with energy bills. We need to tackle the harms of loneliness through stronger links with the third sector and the expansion of the community hub initiative currently run through the Town Hall.
- Significant work has already been done to address the cost of the public sector pension scheme but this should be audited and regularly reviewed. It is essential that the Island continues to be able to retain and recruit the best nurses, physiotherapists, midwives, doctors, teachers, engineers and other front line staff. I believe that through dialogue and negotiation we will be able to create a fairer system where all contribute, with the long term cost to the tax payer being minimised.

The Economy

- Despite the human and financial cost of the viral pandemic we are now at a pivotal point to decide the nation's future. Rather than cuts and austerity, I believe now is the time to invest in health, education and our infrastructure.
- More focus should be given to support existing business sectors to expand as well as to further diversify our economy. I have fully supported the creation of a medicinal cannabis and industrial hemp industry on the Island. Investing in the skills necessary to expand emerging technologies will attract new companies to be based here.
- As they did during the last 18 months, government departments must work together to reduce bureaucracy and speed up the opportunities for innovation and investment.
- Although some see President Biden's proposal for a 15% global corporate tax rate as a threat to our economy, I see it as an opportunity to enhance the Island's reputation and offer a flexible, ethical base for many companies to operate from.

Education

- It is a real honour to be the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture. I have worked closely with our schools and excellent staff to try and overcome previous problems, devising a clear five year strategy which has been laid before Tynwald.
- Government is investing extra resources to help those with additional needs from primary school upwards. I value the role our teachers have in educating the next generation and playing such a vital part in our society.
- We will continue to expand the use of technology in our schools with a mix of blended learning, more online resources, as well as developing new courses and choosing the most suitable exam boards to partner with.
- The scope for vocational training will expand both at secondary schools and UCM to provide choice for students, skills needed by employers and more job opportunities for people of all ages through lifelong learning programmes.
- We have successfully broken down the barriers for students attending universities in England but will update the student award regulations to enable more to live and study on Island.
- By building closer collaborative links with employers we will revitalise and expand the range of apprentice opportunities for those leaving school, developing their skills while they work.
- Building condition surveys are being updated to ensure we can prioritise improvements and plan for new schools where they are most needed. There is also a comprehensive review of catchment areas underway to enable greater parental choice.

Health

- It is vital to increase investment in primary care. The last 18 months have shown the importance of local services and the need for more appointments with a variety of healthcare professionals.
- As our community continues to recover, we need as a consequence to concentrate resources on mental health services especially for young people.
- GP list sizes on the IOM are substantially larger than in the UK. Accordingly we must recruit more GPs and District Nurses so more people can be treated locally reducing the requirement for hospital admission. We must focus on providing more holistic care and easier access for face to face appointments. I will work with the Group Practice to draw up plans for a replacement health centre for Ramsey close to the hospital with increased accessible parking and its own pharmacy.
- Manx Care are committed to the future of the Cottage Hospital. The Dermatology service now uses the theatre complex to provide services for the whole Island. More Consultants are providing local clinics and the Minor Injury Unit provides excellent care for the whole of the North. We must build on this success and provide more specialist services in Ramsey for the benefit of all.

Farming

- Last year showed the importance of the Island being self-sufficient. New incentives should help farmers diversify and continue to manage the countryside. It is essential that the Creamery, Ramsey Bakery, Meat Plant and Laxey Flour Mill are supported and allowed to develop further.
- It is great to see we have a fish shop again in town. The Farmer's Market, the work of Bry Radcliffe, Kermelly's and Teare's Butcher mean that locally sourced food is readily available and I believe it is our responsibility to buy local whenever possible.

Legal Reform

- After being elected by you in 2016 I was asked to join the Department of Home Affairs. I worked closely with the Fire and Rescue Service, Prison, Probation and Constabulary to ensure we had comprehensive local services and the return of community policing.
- I have spoken openly about the use of medicinal cannabis but progress has been far too slow. We now have the start of a new industry on the Island to grow and export pharmaceutical grade products. Local people deserve access to this through licensed pharmacies, with support from clinicians to help them with their pain control and other conditions where good evidence shows that medicinal cannabis can help.
- Prohibition has never worked and the current legislation on drugs does little to protect people from harm. Too many young lives are ruined by momentary lapses of judgement. I support the campaign to **decriminalise cannabis** for personal use initially and then develop a framework for full legalisation which has proved successful in many other jurisdictions. This is the only way to stop drug dealers from across targeting our Island, allowing harm reduction through regulation and targeted support.
- Through my work as a doctor I have become convinced of the need for a major change in the way we view people's rights when they are approaching the time of their death. I have advocated an **Assisted Dying** Bill which would give those people with a terminal illness the right to die without their family being fearful of prosecution. Countries around the world have already developed systems to protect individual autonomy whilst avoiding any coercion. I believe we should emphasise the quality of life and respect the right to die in a dignified manner.

Immigration

- The Island has always welcomed travellers who have then made it their home. Our cultural diversity is one of our main assets. Locally the Pilipino community has done so much to support the health service and become part of Ramsey. As we need to attract more skilled workers from around the world. I would like to make it a priority that they are allowed to fully integrate into society through the provision of English language classes where necessary and more multi-cultural events in order to welcome them to our community.



Your vote!

Ramsey has two MHKs to represent the town. We need to make sure they work together for you, Ramsey and the whole Island. Voting will be from 8 AM to 8 PM on Thursday 23rd September. Voting cards should be sent out to you shortly. You will be directed to one of the two polling stations; The Old Courthouse Building or St Paul's Church Hall, Market Square. Please make sure you use your vote and remember that you can vote for up to 2 candidates.

I would like to thank Tony Lloyd-Davies for the use of some of his photographs.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of my manifesto please contact me on 07624 427426 or at allinson@isleofman.com