

House of Keys General Election, Thursday 23rd September



DOUGLAS EAST



**X
Vote**



Joney

FARAGHER

MANX LABOUR PARTY

FOR AN ISLAND STRONG & FAIR



Introduction



Dear Constituents of Douglas East

It's been great to meet so many of you on your doorsteps over the last few weeks. As

I may have said to you, I believe that this election is of unique importance. There are so many challenges ahead, with the fallout from the pandemic (both financial and health-wise), the transition to a greener economy, addressing our housing crisis, attracting/retaining younger people being just some examples – and we need an injection of new and fresh thinking MHKs who can really stand up to these challenges.

I hope I have already met you on your doorstep, but if I have called when you were out and you would like to talk, please do contact me – I will be really happy to hear from you (details on back page).

Background

I am a Manx working mother of three sons, and was born and raised in Douglas. Many of the issues I experienced in the area as a child and young adult remain issues to this day, but so also does the sense of community I have experienced when meeting with you.

I received my primary and secondary education in Douglas, and was fortunate enough to attend university when our government still paid tuition fees. I'm grateful for the opportunities this has since provided me, but sadly I am unsure if I would have had this opportunity if I was that age now, given the increased financial burden associated with this. Continued access to education is an important issue for me.

Upon graduation, I worked for many years in a combination of social care and educational roles before undertaking the PGCE teacher training qualification in 2010, which eventually led to my current role; working in primary schools with children who are bereaved. My experiences throughout these roles have had a significant impact upon shaping the views you will see outlined within this manifesto.

Throughout my personal and working life, I have repeatedly seen how personal and societal circumstances beyond our control can impact our outcomes. These may be community issues we face in our day-to-day lives such as the decline of local businesses, never-ending roadworks, or restricted access to healthcare – or they can be wider social and political upheavals, such as the UK's decision to leave the EU or the worsening situation around the climate crisis. From where to park our car, through to considering that our car is part of a larger environmental issue, it can often feel like a struggle to shape our own outcomes in the face of social issues.



My sons, our beautiful island – lockdown 2020

But it doesn't have to be

If elected to the House of Keys, my goal is to empower the people of Douglas East, through coherent social policy and research-driven initiatives both traditional and creative, to safeguard and actively participate in their own outcomes. This vision can and will be achieved through a variety of key ideas I will outline in this manifesto, whether it be through active support in lifelong access to education, ending poverty, transitioning to a sustainable society, addressing our housing crisis, providing agile working

environments, and fostering robust mental health services.

As a community, we need to reverse the gradual erosion of things that improve our lives, and we can only preserve and build upon what we have by laying the framework of a more progressive society, where government works for the people. With your help, I would like to remove the obstacles that stand in the way of people achieving their potential, make our island sustainable and more equitable for the vast majority of us to improve our well-being, and uplift our overall quality of life.

Health and wellbeing, and Social Care






The recent appointment of Manx Care brings many questions. Will this impact waiting lists? How will the structure change in practice? What impact will this have upon our day-to-day interactions with our healthcare facilities? We must have clear answers to these questions, and stay alert to the creep toward commodification of our healthcare system. I will endeavour to seek clarity on all of the above whilst supporting the local community in accessing our health services.

In recent times, we have all experienced the effects of under-funding on our NHS, as our Accident and Emergency department struggles to keep up with demand. There are several issues here, and this starts with our local GP surgeries being understaffed and under-resourced and therefore labouring under a heavier demand post-pandemic. We must be clear that this is not the fault of our GP surgeries - our GPs need more staff of all kinds, and in particular doctors. To achieve this we need to be an attractive and competitive place to work.

Mental health must move rapidly to be seen as a health issue. With this in mind, I will be strongly advocating increased funding and resourcing toward improving our existing mental health facilities, and exploring opportunities to increase and diversify these in conjunction with the wider healthcare system.


Social care is inextricably linked with our health and well-being, but also stands alone as a key pillar in supporting our societal welfare. As a nation, we should see a commitment to user-focused, world class care for the vulnerable, children, families, the disabled and the elderly. I will work toward ensuring standards are being met for something that all of us, to a lesser or greater degree, will eventually require. Privatising our care homes has brought many problems - cost of care is rising, people have reported care standards don't always meet minimum requirements and staff are not in receipt of basic workers' rights. People see their assets and savings eroded to meet the costs of elderly care.


Objectives:

-  **Blocking as strongly as possible any move towards privatisation of our health service**
-  **Ensuring salaries are high enough to attract more staff at all levels to the island; and conditions are good enough to retain them.**
-  **Providing a living wage for carers**
-  **Ensuring illegal substance use is treated as a health issue instead of a criminal one**
-  **Appropriate and research-driven support for the neurodiverse**

Health and wellbeing, and Social Care

 Training new mental health professionals to cut average waiting times in half

 Ensure that prevention and postvention services for suicide are funded and staffed by trained professionals.

 Bringing care homes back into public ownership

 A review of the rules guiding to use of savings/house capital in care home fees

Environment

I believe it is our absolute duty to safeguard our world for future generations. Our stewardship of our island, and our world, has to step up.

We acknowledged the climate emergency in 2019 but have done very little about this. I propose using a Manx Green New Deal to ensure the transition to a carbon-neutral society is fair to everyone, that nobody is left behind and that all economic benefits from the transition are shared by our whole island community. The Green New Deal gives us the opportunity to really be at the forefront of change and economic success.

These are just some of my ideas, grouped into areas for ease:

Travel – I will push for trialling of free public transport with an aim to expanding if the trial is successful. I would also push for

incentivisation for both businesses and individuals to cycle, walk or use public transport to get to work. I would like to see the planning system being used to develop areas in a way that will make it easier for cyclists, walkers and public transport.

Energy – We need to strengthen our energy grid – initially increasing cable capacity, storage and connection for renewable energy. I will push for development of both onshore and offshore wind farms and other suitable renewable energy schemes – I support community ownership of these through co-operatives.

Policy/legislation – I would advocate for the development of a Transition Strategy to ensure the move away from carbon is fair to everyone. I will expect government to develop a Future Generations Act which will bind future governments to sustainability. I will push for a Clean Air Act and the introduction of regular air quality testing.




Myself and my children attending a climate change demo, Sept 2019


Housing


Housing is unaffordable for many people. This is hard on the young, and we urgently need to address this – but it doesn't just affect the young. People looking to upgrade, move or downsize suffer in a turbulent market. We need to ensure that houses are homes first, and investments second. In the past year or so we have seen an explosion in property speculation coming from the UK and further afield. Properties are being bought either to hold and sell on for profit later on, or being added to the rental market. This has the effect of pushing purchase and rental prices up for everyone forcing people into renting where they could otherwise have purchased, whilst seeing capital flowing out of the island.

Compared to many European nations, tenant rights on the Island are extremely poor and require close examination and reform to be brought into line with the current housing reality. Given the deposit sums require for purchase, many young people are forced into renting for many years, and as such require increased protection from the potential vagaries of landlords. Investigation should also be made into the concept of longer-term renting, as for some this may make more financial sense, and as such whether rent control could be implemented in some sense to accommodate the requirements of such people.


Objectives:

 **First time buyers' support – government-run affordable homes schemes, to include tendering for building of efficient, modern homes to be sold to first-time buyers at cost, and low-or no-interest loans.**

 **Last time buyers' support – We have an “under-occupation issue” - Older people are not moving out of houses that are too large for their needs, due to the costs of downsizing and a lack of suitable properties. I would advocate for tax incentives for older people to downsize, and a targeted housebuilding policy.**

 **Banning off-island speculation in our property market -I will strongly advocate initially for a moratorium on off-island speculation whilst this situation is examined, and potentially ban it outright if the economics of the situation prove to be a net negative for the island and its residents.**

 **Expanded rights for tenants**


 **Support the construction of more social housing and improving standards within the existing stock.**


The Older Generation

My aim is to enhance the richness, wellbeing and quality of life of everyone in their senior years and for all to be treated with dignity and respect. I will support policies and actions to this effect. I believe there are issues within this demographic that are under-reported and that we lack advocacy in this area.

Objectives:

 **The creation of the role of Older Person's Champion**

 **A greater investment in sheltered housing, with an aim to modernise stock as well as create more.**

 **An exploration of removing taxation for all people whose sole income is a government pension.**

Parking

The issue many of you mentioned! – we can only seek to mitigate this from now:

Parking specified in planning applications should be adhered to for all new projects – if plans are approved for three flats with three parking spaces, this should be the maximum permitted for this property.

Encourage residents of properties with garages and other off-road parking to use them for their intended purpose where reasonable.

Explore more creative solutions in Douglas East, i.e. making smaller, non-arterial streets one-way to reduce traffic flow and free up parking, introduce diagonal parking which creates more spaces when efficiently applied.

Improve national bus links to enable those who want to travel in without the need to use a parking space.

Tourism

Tourism has always been a vital facet of our economy and one to be proud of – our island is both history-rich and incredibly beautiful. The Department for Enterprise's 6 core aims to ensure tourism promotion and development are a good start. What does concern me is that this strategy document was produced in January 2020 and I don't feel that we are up-to-speed with the core aims at this point. I would also like to see us pursue an active core tourism area, and I believe we should look at eco-tourism.

Ecotourism helps preserve and foster respect for some of the most beautiful environments on Earth. It encourages travellers to help protect the environment and contribute to local communities on a much deeper level than tourists just passing through.

The Prom

This has been a very topical issue. It is clear that people are very unhappy with a perceived lack of accountability and transparency around capital overspend, with the Prom being just one example.

Whilst capital projects have a tendency to run over-budget worldwide, it is clear that the Promenade plan has become an infamous example of how not to go about this type of project, and something of a national embarrassment to the Manx people. It appears that this project was fundamentally flawed in both planning and implementation, and whilst there is little we are able to do at this stage with regards the sunken time and cost of this project, if elected I will push for a public enquiry to examine the root causes of this debacle, with a view to those responsible being held accountable, and providing insight as to how we can prevent such capital projects being so poorly undertaken in future. I am aware that people are weary of expensive

and long-winded public enquiries that appear to have no impact, but in some cases a review is justified and it is imperative that we use this experience to at least gain some level of understanding of what not to do in future, and use this as a lesson for future planning and construction projects the Island may need.






It's clear we need reform of the DOI to make it more responsive to the needs of residents and efficient in the execution of its goals. It is therefore my aim to use the outcome of any enquiry into the Promenade plan as part of a wider effort to reform and restructure the DOI into a more efficient and effective department that can consider the impacts of construction and infrastructure in a more holistic way. Transparency to the public should also be key to this effort, as all too often tender processes and procedures appear to be secretive and selection of appropriate contractors baffling in hindsight.

Education

Good quality education is at the core of solving inequality and I am therefore committed to the concept of lifelong learning. Education should not be limited to these early years nor just to traditional academic success: there are many skills a society needs alongside academic prowess. Vocational and skills-based learning in schools during teenage years would be of huge benefit to our young people. Extending grants for 'mature' students to undertake vocational training would ensure that we are closing in on the impacts of traumatic childhood experiences, which can affect the school years. I am committed to increasing education spending to align with other developed countries; I agree with the National Association of Headteachers that current funding from central government leaves schools in a situation where need outstrips provision, and endorse their call for a review of funding of schools. I trust

our education professionals and believe they should be appropriately remunerated for their expertise and dedication to our island's future.

Objectives:

-  **Increasing education spending to 4% of GDP**
-  **The re-establishment of free pre-school provision for all**
-  **A reduction in class sizes in primary schools to meet the needs of the individual**
-  **The development of vocational pathways and apprenticeship schemes in secondary schools which lead to recognised professional qualifications.**
-  **Aligning educational staff's wages with comparable high-living-cost areas, and establishing a framework for ensuring staff wellbeing in order to attract and retain good practitioners.**

How will I pay for it/raising additional revenue

The Tynwald poverty report has recommended that the minimum wage be brought up to the living wage. Implementing these findings will boost government finances. Increased wages mean more tax revenue in income tax and VAT, and fewer people in poverty will reduce the need for benefits payments.

Lift the tax cap. It's wrong that a billionaire pays such a drastically lower percentage of their income in tax than person on minimum wage. Lifting the cap on the maximum amount of tax each person can pay would reduce this unfairness and raise revenue.

Explore legalising and taxing the sale of cannabis. The basis for this policy would be to protect our young people and reduce the widespread criminality associated with purchasing it. This policy could raise significant revenue

that we could ringfence for spending on healthcare and education.

Tax abandoned and long-term vacant property. Too many buildings are left to fall apart in our towns. Many retail units in town are left empty for long periods of time while their owners hold out in the hope of getting higher rents. A tax would encourage occupation and bring in needed revenue.

Overhauling the way we plan and monitor infrastructure projects. Tens of millions of pounds has been overspent by this administration on the Liverpool ferry terminal and Douglas Promenade. Ensuring that projects are completed to the specifications of their contract could free up resources to be spent on social programmes.

I would also support

Decriminalising cannabis (with a commitment to explore full legalisation):

The war on drugs is over and we lost. Over the past century, we have dedicated vast sums in the quest to forcibly maintain the prohibition on drug usage. This has resulted in huge profits for gangs based in the UK, hundreds of locals permanently criminalised and tens of millions spent unnecessarily in the criminal justice system. We should treat cannabis use as a health and economic issue rather than an issue of criminality.

Assisted dying:

All people have a right to make decisions regarding their own healthcare. A person's life belongs to themselves, and people who are terminally ill should have the ability to choose how, when and in what conditions they die.

'Right to Roam' legislation

We have always enjoyed unhindered access to our beautiful countryside which are a national asset and should be accessible to everyone. We have never needed to bring in the same legislation as other jurisdictions around this, but recent events have highlighted there is now the need for this.

Changes to the planning system:

The planning process needs an overhaul. Far more emphasis needs to be placed upon biodiversity/wildlife needs. Processes need to be tightened and the 'Interested Party' rules need broadening to ensure relevant voices can be heard.

I was one of the organisers of the Save the Elms protest June 2021

Improvements to Workers' rights:

Strengthening protections for whistleblowers and rights against unfair dismissal for all workers, with extra protections for pregnant women, those going through the menopause and terminally ill workers. I would like to support people balancing work and family life by giving workers the right to flexible working.

Support for local businesses:

I would pursue policies that include social spending and putting more money into the pockets of consumers, workers and families which ultimately means more money flowing into local businesses. Ideas include: Tax credits and vat relief to businesses that support other local businesses; offering citizens cash or vouchers each year that can only be spent at locally-owned and -managed companies; Introduce capacity for co-operative business models and allow workers right of first refusal when businesses are sold or move toward bankruptcy.

Polling Stations

Thursday 23rd September, House of Keys Election
Voting from 8am to 8pm

District	Polling Station address
CDGE1:	Promenade Methodist Church Hall, Loch Promenade, Douglas
CDGE2:	iMuseum, Kingswood Grove, Douglas
CDGE3:	Manx Youth Band Room, Derby Road, Douglas
CDGE4:	Spiritualist Church, Lower Dukes Road, Douglas
CDGE5:	Promenade Methodist Church Hall, Loch Promenade, Douglas

Contact me

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 [Joney- Faragher-for-
Douglas-East-MHK](#)

If you require information on postal voting or transport to the Polling Station, please feel free to contact me.