

CHERRY FOR ONCHAN



YOUR VOTE FOR CHANGE.

23RD SEPTEMBER 2021

MANIFESTO JAMES CHERRY



CHERRYFORONCHAN



07624 321555



CHERRYFORONCHAN@GMAIL.COM



Thank you for reading my manifesto. I am Onchan born and bred and I am passionate about our village and the island as a whole. I pledge to you my commitment to our constituency first and foremost, but I also want to focus my energy if elected on improving all aspects of island government; but I will never forget where I come from, and who elected me, if successful.

Having already enjoyed the privilege of serving Onchan as a commissioner from May 2016 to October 2019, I have a robust understanding of the structures of public sector processes and protocol. I am anxious to replace the rigours of bureaucracy in all areas of government with quicker, smarter decision making.

I will be promoting the application of more common sense approaches and in some cases braver decisions to be taken to make government not only more effective but better able to wipe out archaic, unhelpful and outdated legislation.

I have listened carefully to the many people I know both within and outside the constituency and the recurring themes include government spending, dilapidated buildings, brown field sites, speeding, parking, and state of roads especially in estates.

If you put your trust in me on Thursday 23rd September I will do everything in my power to prove the value of you putting your faith in me as a candidate, and I am more than happy to be held to account. I simply make one promise: to do my utmost to the best of my ability for the people of Onchan.



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Education

As we all know the Department of Education, Sport and Culture has been restructuring for the last 12 months following the departure of the previous CEO. From speaking with Department employees since, I feel the Department is now on the up. This is good to hear but much more can be done to bring us into a modern era of teaching and education. Even though Staff morale appears to be improving, there are still issues that need to be resolved, not just to improve their work-life balance, but also our children's education. Education is absolutely critical for everyone; it is our foundation and keystone for life.

I believe changes need to be made to the current schools funding policy; speaking with senior school leaders this is something that causes great concern on a regular basis. For example, the way that pupil to teacher ratios are applied can lead to annual changes in a school's staffing allocation; sometimes based on very small fluctuations in pupil numbers. This has the potential to lead to situations where a school has to lose a member of teaching staff one year, only to need to re-employ somebody again the following year. I do not think that this annual instability is conducive to a good working or learning environment. One possible solution could be to fix staffing levels on a two or three yearly basis, meaning that schools would be able to carry out longer term strategic planning when it comes to allocating teaching staff to classes.

A few years ago DESC decided to move from the standard GCSE's and go to IGCSE's. Again speaking with teaching staff recently, it does not appear to have been a positive move. I would want to see DESC move away from IGCSE's back to standard GCSE's.

We need to allow independent inspection of schools and the Department by OFSTED. The department currently run a very bad system. Make policy, enforce the policy and audit the policy to make sure the policy is being followed, without any independent verification.



Policing

The world we live in has changed in many ways from 20/30 years ago, and with that the police have had to adapt as well. With criminals changing how they operate and commit crime, moving from the likes of burglaries to cyber crimes, again our police have to adapt. However I do still think that old fashioned “beat bobbies” act as a great deterrent to a lot of anti social behavior. I would therefore like to see extra funding given to the police to get more on the ground personnel.



Climate Change

Climate change is now something that can no longer be ignored and is something that should have been acted on yesterday. We can no longer leave it until tomorrow with a Traa dy liooar attitude. The Isle of Man produced 0.7 million tonnes of greenhouse gases in 2017 (Aether, Dec 19). Compared to much larger jurisdictions and countries this is an extremely small amount; But it is **OUR** contribution to a global issue. The Isle of Man has already committed to 75% renewable electricity by 2035 - this is something that we need to start planning and bringing online as soon as possible.

The island currently has two diesel backup power stations at Peel and Pulrose. These will both have a final end of life date of 2028 and have already exceeded their design life. Is this now not the time to look at and plan their replacements?



Local Authority Reform

Being an Onchan Commissioner previously was a real eye opener to local politics and what people think. After discussions with many people, the consensus comes across that there are far too many local authorities for the island. We need to do something to reduce this number and give some authorities more powers than they already have, such as running social housing. One proposal for reducing the number of authorities would be to amalgamate and align them to that of the Keys Constituencies and make 9 local authorities, leaving Douglas as it is with 8 for the rest of the island.

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Economy

March 2020 saw the start of what was one of the biggest, if not the biggest, economic problems in living memory, that of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic caused near overnight chaos and turmoil for businesses all over the globe, not just in the Isle of Man. The majority of the Island's businesses appear to have weathered the storm much better than I anticipated they would, but now the costly part of rebuilding after the storm is required. I strongly feel that the government has stopped some of its business support schemes far too soon. It is now more than ever that businesses will require government support as they try to rebuild as we come out of the pandemic.

Now is a key moment for the island to either nurture its economy to thrive or risk it withering and dying; the latter would be an absolute disaster. Government needs to speak to every business on the island from self-employed individuals to multi-million pound enterprises and simply ask "what support and help do you need?". Government should be a facilitator in allowing all sizes of business to grow and flourish to be the best that they can, for the betterment of the Isle of Man. If anyone walks though Village Walk there are still empty units. We could give new start up or growing small businesses help to pay rents for such units whilst they find their feet.



Infrastructure

In recent years we have seen a number of government capital projects running over time and over budget. One simple question: why is this happening? Is the government's tendering system not up to scratch? Is government failing to have proper reports and inspections carried out before committing to projects? Or is it simply not being open, honest and transparent internally and allowing itself to trip up on problems that could have been easily avoided? The Public Accounts Committee does good work scrutinising singular issues but there seems to be a much bigger problem. The recent independent report by Beamans highlights a lot of issues, big and small, that need ironing out. One issue which stood out to me is not knowing how many civil engineers employed by the department to manage projects have the relevant qualifications to carry out their work effectively. The department bites off more than it can chew on projects, and we see this time and time again. A proper and sound strategic plan needs to put in place for the DOI going forward.



Manx Care

After attending a briefing by the CEO and Chairman of Manx Care I am optimistic that our healthcare system will start to improve but this will take time and won't happen overnight. Government needs to keep a very close eye on what's happening, but not meddle when it's not appropriate. In 2022 the Care Quality Commission will come to the island to assess the healthcare system. It is highly likely that this report will not be good and will highlight a number of areas for improvement. When this report is received it will hurt but we need to use it as a platform for continuous improvement.



Government Overall

Government overall needs to be more open, honest and transparent with the people. We thought that is what we got at the start of the last administration but it soon fell into old ways, this is something I personally want to see happen straight away.

At the end of the financial year in March government departments are renowned for spending left over money on frivolous things that they actually don't need, because they know if they don't that they will most likely have their budget cut the following year. What I would like to do is setup a system where departments are not penalised for not spending the full budget, but any left over money can be put in a fund where departments can bid at anytime for extra money for a specific project or roll out.

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Housing

Our island faces a crisis of affordable housing for its hard working residents. With the median house price being just under 9 times the average earnings and nearly 10 times that of someone under 25, it is no wonder young people are leaving the island. The first time buyers scheme that is currently in place is not fit for purpose and needs overhauling. We also need to look at people buying second homes and how this can be reduced to allow more properties to be available to first time buyers and those wanting to up or downsize.

With the push for more environmentally sustainable homes going forward into the future, we need to look at schemes for homes. The current proposed scheme from government doesn't go far enough and has been met by criticism from green energy companies and homeowners alike. It is also possible to build some of the most economic homes for in the region of £150,000 and this has been proven to be done on island! These passive homes only take the low hundreds to heat for a year, allowing savings to be made by the home owners in the long term. Government could run a scheme where they give a parcel of land to a first time buyer and give them a mortgage to build the home, OR a rent to buy scheme with these homes once built. We need to be innovative in ideas for homes in design and affordability.



FOR ONCHAN.



Election Day

On Election Day if you are voting in person you will be asked to attend one of three polling stations, either the Onchan Park Cafe, Sight Matters (previously Manx Blind Welfare) or The Hub (previously known as the community centre). Here you will be able to cast your vote for 2 MHK candidates. These polling stations will be open from 8am till 8pm to allow you to cast your vote.

If you are unable to attend you can register for a proxy vote to allow someone to vote on your behalf. You have until 5pm on the 22nd September to do this: you must fill out a proxy voting form and return it to the elections team in the Cabinet Office.

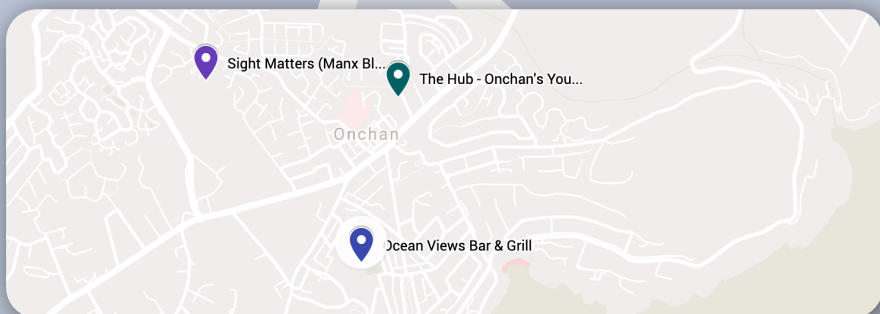
If you wish to vote in person on the day and require some transport please do not hesitate to contact me between now and Election Day or even on Election Day. We will get you to your polling station.

If after reading my manifesto you have any questions, I can be contacted easily in a number of different ways as detailed below. If you wish to display a poster in your window or garden I have some available, please contact me to arrange delivery.

Telephone - (07624) 321555

Email - cherryforonchan@gmail.com

Facebook - James Cherry for Onchan MHK



● The Manx Blind Welfare Centre,
Corrin Court, Heywood Avenue,
Onchan

● The Community Hall, School
Road, Onchan

● The Views Café, Onchan Park

