

CLAIRE CHRISTIAN

YOUR VOICE MY ACTION

Independent Candidate - Douglas South



Dear Fellow Constituent,

On Thursday 23rd September, you will have the opportunity to vote in the general election for 2 seats to represent you in the House of Keys. I would be very honoured to serve you again as your MHK for Douglas South. Since being elected in the By-Election last August, **your voice has been my action.** I have tirelessly represented our proud constituency, constantly striving to do better, constantly pushing the government to do better – but there is so much more to do.

My goal has been to listen to you, to have a deeper understanding of our Douglas South constituency and the things that matter most to you. I can honestly say this has been the most humbling experience of my life. So many of you have reached out to me for support, guidance, help and assistance in many areas, incl; saving Snaefell Surgery, mental health, equality, accessibility, traffic calming measures, potholes, pathways, local authority housing transfers, anti-social behavior, medicinal cannabis, affordable housing, animal welfare, education, your businesses, the economy, improving lives and reducing the cost of living, climate change, and very importantly our safety during the covid pandemic. These are areas that affect all our lives in Douglas South, and nationally too. In creating this manifesto, **it has been my aim to bring together all of your voices, demonstrating the kind of government that you want, a government that listens, acts, find solutions, and works more efficiently, spending your tax money on your priorities and in more cost-efficient ways.**

Difficult decisions need to be made in the next administration. We must work hard to guide our island through the numerous challenges of post-pandemic recovery and climate change. I hope that this manifesto will give you some insights as to your government should work for you, using common sense. **My proven track record is a testament to my resolve and determination to continue to do what is right on your behalf, to build a vibrant community, where a hard worker can be successful, put a roof over their head, feed their family, and save for their family's future.**

I am the candidate who is strong and decisive and is not afraid to challenge government to do better. This manifesto is a statement of my commitment to work for you, and a road map on how we can achieve this together.

I look forward to seeing you on Election Day.

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VOTE X

CLAIRE CHRISTIAN

BUSINESS, INNOVATION, SCIENCE, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

I have a clear strategy to nurture a thriving economy on the island, broken down into two areas: the existing economy, and an emerging economy. To support both we need to start with the correct education and courses on island, innovative apprenticeships, and **reskilling opportunities** for our workforce. **We need to identify skills shortages now and train people for the future**, and this practice needs to be ongoing, so we are proactive and not on the back foot.

- Forecasting the island's future habits and trends, so that we can inform educators in terms of what skills are required to fulfill jobs in existing markets, such as construction, doctors, nurses, mental health professionals etc, is incredibly important to our island's economy. This research is also crucial to support local businesses with information about the current, short term, and long-term spending habits of residents and prospects for tourism. They can then **make informed decisions and assess if their current business models are likely to survive the pandemic, be fit for the future and what adaptations may be needed**. This would also enable government to provide **better financial or practical support in the aftermath of the pandemic**. **Ultimately local businesses that were successful prior to Covid 19 need to know if and when they will be successful again, and under what circumstances**. Predicting this is difficult, but establishing the levers which **encourage spending**, is important for our economy to realise its full potential.

- **We also need to grow emerging sectors creating jobs in Clean Tech Sectors, Bio Medical Sciences, and Financial Technology companies, and to have a suitably skilled work force, educated and skilled locally**. We need a government who makes **swift decisions**, balanced with sufficient due diligence to protect the taxpayer.

- **We must create incentives to retain, and attract local talent back to the island** such as **affordable housing**, reduced student loan repayments and other government led initiatives. Career opportunities are very narrow on the island, we need to widen into new sectors to leverage our competitive advantages. We need to give more reasons why returning, or doing business on the Isle of Man gives a **distinct advantage** – from skills to strategic partnerships, and a tailored approach to **government financial support** and advice.

- Our government should provide a more **personal approach** to businesses with clear lines of communication and also increase and improve links between business and academic institutions, both on and off island. We need to continue to **develop international partners globally**; we need to be **agile and innovative** with a global outlook. The government needs to give clear advice to businesses around relevant financial incentives and support, and give businesses access to key networks and supply chain information. **Our aim should be to ensure that key sectors deliver long-term sustainability and real social purpose**.

- Clean energy is going to be one of the most important tangible actions we will do in this century if we are to build back better from COVID, **to ensure growth is cleaner and greener**. **I will support a much bolder approach to climate change, which is needed to create hundreds of new green jobs, and other benefits from building a cleaner safer future**. We must leave no one behind, while we work towards being a net-zero carbon jurisdiction.

- I am supportive of investing in carbon capture and storage and whilst we are surrounded by water, we have a great **opportunity to turn water into energy and to invest in hydrogen based energy**.

LIFELONG HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

We urgently need affordable and sustainable housing as part of a holistic and long term housing strategy. The core of the housing crisis is simple, a growing population and low wages combined with a lack of social housing has meant we do not have affordable homes.

Critically, the failure to build social homes has increased the demand for private rental properties, driving up rents. **We need a new generation of social housing that should be built to the highest possible environmental standards;** with solar power, heat pumps, and are well insulated, to make them energy efficient and cheaper to run and therefore **lowering the cost of living. Locating the new generation of social housing must include good public transport links,** and have safe walking and cycling opportunities in mind, surrounded by plenty of **green space.**

- Building stock is an investment with economic and social return, which would **reduce the subsidies** being paid in housing benefits to private landlords. We need the political will now to **start building for our future. Spring Valley is due for re-development. We have an opportunity to develop a local housing scheme which could be a mix of sustainable social flats and houses together with a mid rent house scheme** (with rents that people can actually afford to pay rather than market rates). The Spring Valley redevelopment must be done well, and become the **blueprint for all future social housing.**

- I will drive and fight for stronger policy around properties on new private housing developments. Policy to **favour** those who are **purchasing a property** as their **primary residence**, and those who have lived on the island for more than 2 years, in order to recognise a buyer's commitment to living on the island and putting off 'off-island speculators'. More emphasis is also needed on 1 and 2 bedroom good quality starter apartments close to our town centres to give our young people an **affordable start** to independent life, whilst also allowing them to **save for their future** and take their first steps onto the property ladder. But we will only take the heat out of the buy-to-let market if we provide a new, better generation of social housing, which removes the stigma of it being the last resort.

- **Our 1st time buyer schemes need to be improved and extended to meet the needs of people who don't fit current criteria,** perhaps through divorce or separation, or those who have otherwise been knocked off the property ladder. I would like to see existing schemes that are tying families to a 10-year or more 'no sale' policy being released from this burden to meet the need of growing families, **freeing up houses** for individuals or smaller families. **The right housing for a family should be an opportunity not a burden.**

- We need a **housing strategy that deals with the whole-life cycle of a person's housing needs, including policy around nursing and care homes** who can hike private fees up with very little warning, and we must **see more joined up government support** in nursing care contribution or income support, this needs to work in tandem with any increase in care home fees.

- I would task the newly formed Development Corporation to look at the options to deliver more affordable housing now.

- Installation of gas boilers in new housing needs to be stopped now. Switching to renewable heating solutions are high performing energy efficient solutions.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH ESSENTIAL SERVICES

A vision of a joined up government means that we need to properly look at transport links, housing and connecting people with essential services as a master plan for our island. This needs to be addressed on a national level, and our government needs a transport infrastructure to put the “public” back into public transport, and a life-long housing strategy that is tailored to meet the needs of the island.

- **Douglas South has one of the highest population densities on the island, and it is in great need for better, more reliable, frequent, and importantly accessible public transport.**
- Cleaner public transport, 'green' buses, and cycle lanes, which fit our island roads. We need **transport links that connect Douglas South with essential services like the Hospital, Doctors' Surgeries, essential retail, and schools.**
- **I envisage a robust transport policy, which is treasury-proof from cost cutting, and puts the people first.**
- **Accessibility and equality needs to be at the forefront of our decision making and planning.** We should be striving to be an island that leads the way, and is celebrated as one of the top locations in the world for accessibility to live and visit. I fully support the adoption of the CPT Code on our public transport, and its implementation in this next administration.
- **I would like to see better planning of road improvement works** to minimise disruption to motorists, including impact assessments to establish better temporary changes required to public transport.

MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY

Wellbeing needs to be at the heart of all government policy across all departments, including Treasury spending. We are on the precipice of a **mental health emergency**. We have the immediate crisis and we have the opportunity to change the future of our population. First we need to be **proactive, to change the way we live now**, in order to improve our collective mental health state in the future. We need to look holistically at the **pressures people are facing: debt, a housing crisis, homelessness, and suicide**. We need a government who is committed to promoting healthy eating, encourages exercise and community spirit and removes the barriers that prevent people from a better way of life.

- **We need early intervention** with a targeted new Child and Young People Wellbeing and Mental Health strategy to improve outcomes, funding for addiction treatment, beds and services, **a full suicide prevention strategy, mental health professionals in education, primary health care, and in our Police Department.**
- **We need investment in crisis care, more beds, better training for staff**, and guaranteed long-term care for those who need it, when they need it. We also need to constantly review all areas to ensure improvement and development – we must always strive to do better.

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE, IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE AND REDUCING THE COST OF LIVING

The increasing financial commitments and pressures we all face can cause a great strain on our mental health.

- I am supportive of the 5-year plan for business to **move to the Living Wage**, but I would also like to see some Employer NI contribution relief for small businesses during this transition, to help businesses afford this. Small to medium businesses have been through huge financial pressures in the last 18 months due to Covid, and we must not put more pressure on them. Paying people the living wage will help to **ease paying household bills**.
- **Rates reform needs to be addressed in the first year of the next administration.** This needs to be fairer.
- **Equal parental leave is essential for us to adopt gender equality** that must be at the heart of our policies. We need to support those who want to have a family equally. On the birth of a child or adoption, **each parent should be entitled to parental leave**, and leave should be able to be divided (if they so wish) so families can make their own economic and family-based decisions about how to use that time with their children.
- I advocate a policy that would allow for extra money to be given to families for the 1st year of a child's life, and then means tested for year 2 and 3. **This would encourage birthrates to increase**, making it easier for families until they can go back to work when a child starts Pre School.
- **A full review of the benefits system needs to be done in the first year of this next administration.** We need to explore imaginative initiatives to help parents during school holidays, working with the 3rd sector to deliver a holiday activities and food programme. Where parents can enroll children to take part in activity programmes across the island, and free lunches are provided.
- **Funding needs to be given urgently to 3rd sector meal providers for the senior citizens and vulnerable people.**
- **We need to properly value the workers who are looking after our senior citizens, adults who need care, and our children. Care is essential** to those who depend on it, which at some point will affect us all. No parent is able to work without having care available for their children. We need to put this at the **forefront of our policy making**, providers of care need to receive sufficient financial support from the government to pay bills, at the very least **living wage pay**, with strong pathways to higher pay scales to **improve the stability** of this crucial sector. Investing in childcare has an overall social & economic benefit, reducing costs in health, criminal offences, and reducing future prison numbers.
- **We need to urgently approve funding for NICE drugs.** Manx citizens are often prescribed medicine in the UK and are unable to obtain this medicine here in the Isle of Man. For example, Manx Care must reduce the use of polluting anesthetic gases from asthma inhalers. Currently low carbon options that are available in the UK cannot be prescribed here. It is small improvements like this that will improve the quality of life for many users who urgently need this alternative NICE medicine.

EDUCATION, YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Education is the key opportunity for a bright future for all generations. As a qualified secondary school teacher, I have first-hand experience of the pressures and heavy workload felt by teachers, including additional hours spent outside of the class room lesson planning, marking and professional development. I advocate greater investment in our schools and teachers, and building more classrooms in a post Covid world, in order to ensure our children and young adults have the best start in life and in many cases this is the key opportunity to break the poverty chain. My focus in education includes:

- **Delivery of a 0-5 years pre-school within Douglas South with flexible times for working families.**
- **Encourage schools to develop community education programs,** to provide engaging & high quality lifelong learning opportunities, enriching the lives of a diverse community and providing learning and social development opportunities, spanning from early childhood through to adult education.
- **A full review of the pre-school credit system** to make sure it matches the increasing fees charged in some nurseries. During the health emergency, childcare credits were extended to 0-3 year olds for the children of key workers; I would like to see this become government policy for all children in the longer term.
- **Better pay for childcare workers and teachers,** to gain higher **retention of staff** and better quality of life, it is the remuneration they deserve.
- I also want to take the opportunity to **speak directly to people of a young age.** You matter, your opinion matters, why? Because the decisions we make in the next ten years will have the most life-changing implications for many generations to come, they will affect you. If we fail in democracy, we will fail in equality and fairness. **We face big challenges such as the transformation to zero carbon emissions, alongside the huge economic post-pandemic fallout, and the mental health of our society.** These are the jobs of the future, overseeing the transition from natural gas or oil, to zero-carbon sources of power. The more immediate injustices so many families face today; low wages, insecure jobs and uncertain prospects make it almost impossible to think about the climate crisis. Education is essential to set you up to live happy, quality lives, equipping you with the skills and confidence to build healthy relationships, and to be able to support yourselves - teaching you values and skills to make good decisions. We need to invest in youth opportunities, not just academically, but in culture, art, and ultimately something for you to do to help you. I want to be part of a government, which asks you what you want in your surroundings? What imaginative concepts will support your mental health, and will help you contribute to society?
- It is important that the government adopts a strategy for the delivery of lifelong learning, from individual personal ambitions, government departments, and industry involvement. **Lifelong Learning strategy should provide the opportunity for individuals to access education, retraining and upskilling at any point in their life.** This will lead to better mental health, employability, and higher paid jobs. The strategy must address the barriers that often prevent individual access to this personal development. This could be in the form of Tax or NI incentives for both employers and employees, and better access to courses.

COMMUNITY POLICING LAW AND ORDER

- **I fully support Community Policing in Douglas South and island wide.** This has been very successful these past few months bringing together community partnerships and shared problem solving. Tackling the root causes of neighbourhood crime in a manner that builds trust in the police is essential.
- **We must build mental health professionals into emergency response full time,** pairing mental health professionals with police to better help people in a crisis. It is well known that the police are usually the first to respond to someone in a mental health and/or substance abuse crisis. We need to build community resources that can support each other.
- **This next administration needs to implement a formal Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC).** As crime increases, so does the violent nature of crime, the likes of which we have not seen on the island before, and this is on the rise. This will give confidence to our society in the event of serious incidents, such as death, serious injury or serious corruption. **I would like to see reform on internal investigations using this body, as we have an obligation as a fair society to protect our police force and citizens.**
- I advocate for legally prescribed cannabis and will continue to challenge government to follow the Jersey model where only a few GPs are needed to prescribe.

A STREAMLINED COST EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT

- **I want to see a future government that is streamlined, efficient, and transparent.** Historic reports (Robert Quayle and Lord Lisvane), which included extensive public consultations, have advocated this. I want to see and contribute to a strategy to achieve this.
- **We need a joined up government, and stop departments working in silos, with segregated policy and budgets.** Policy goals cannot be met through separate activities by different departments with multiple yet interrelated problems. We have shown through this pandemic we can achieve this, if the will is there. A joined up government supports the ambitions of a common strategic policy, a government plan, and the expectations of the people of the Isle of Man.
- We all agree that we need to work towards a sustainable society and economy delivering cost efficient services for the people of the Isle of Man. This will be the same strategy in 20 or 30 years. **By setting a long term strategic goal, this future-proofs the decisions made in any 5 year administration.**
- **Inefficient and outdated practices and infrastructure prevents us delivering modern public services.** This absolutely has to be the leading plan for change for this next administration.

WHY ME? YOUR VOICE MY ACTION



I am a proud Manx person who has lived in Douglas South (Saddlestone) for over 7 years. My family live on the island too; my mother lives in Union Mills, and my father is in Salisbury Nursing home. I do not have children, but I am godparent to Harry and to Ben, and also have 3 dogs and 3 cats, which keep me very active!

I have a huge depth of understanding of the local economy, and I believe I have the right experience to take us through the next phase of the pandemic, support our economy and protect jobs. I will continue to work hard for you, and fully understand the pressures so many families face in these difficult times. I am proactive, which means that I will always put **Douglas South constituents first** and look for the problems that will affect you, trying to solve them before they become an issue.

I will:

- **Continue to maintain and protect accessible local primary health care and services.**
- **Push for better, more reliable, frequent, and importantly accessible public transport.**
- **Deliver a year on year improved roads and pavements in Douglas South**
- Champion excellent community education
- Develop a fair and affordable housing strategy
- Strive for a streamlined government with centralised national priorities and policy
- Drive a dynamic economy with job security and growth
- Champion the development of a world-class mental health system
- Advocate for a formal Independent Police Complaints Commission
- Equal parental leave is essential for us to adopt gender equality
- Drive for urgent reform for an animal welfare bill
- Rates reform needs to be addressed in the first year of the next administration
- Strive to reduce social inequalities

I have continued to be the conduit between businesses, self-employed and government. I challenged Treasury to make financial support during lockdowns more expedient and to reach wider sectors as families faced enormous pressure waiting for financial assistance.

I have strived to keep my promises to you, to listen, to act, and to be your voice. I have passion and drive, and I hope that you will vote for me on the 23rd September, so that I can continue to make an impact on the decisions which are made that effect our daily lives, and, most importantly, to serve you.

HOUSE OF KEYS GENERAL ELECTION WILL TAKE PLACE ON THURSDAY 23RD SEPTEMBER

**DOUGLAS SOUTH IS THE FIRST CONSTITUENCY WHERE
YOU CAN VOTE AT ANY OF THE POLLING STATIONS**

**Pulrose Methodist Church, Pulrose, Douglas
Anagh Coar Primary School, Darragh Way, Anagh Coar, Douglas
Scoil Vallajeelt, Meadow Crescent, Ballaughton Douglas**

If you require transport to any of the polling stations, please get in contact: 07624 209800 or 01624 622263, or email, claire@clairechristian.im

VOTE X CLAIRE CHRISTIAN