

**MHK Manifesto  
Laurence D Skelly  
Independent Candidate Rushen  
General Election 29th September, 2011**



**YOUR FUTURE, YOUR VOTE**

**VOTE SKELLY**

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Dear Voter

As a proud Manxman, I have always been passionate about the Isle of Man's wellbeing and political position. My decision to stand as Member of the House of Keys for Rushen is because I believe the people deserve better representation and the Island's interests need to be protected more robustly and promoted more effectively.

Raised in Ramsey, I lived in America for fifteen years before returning and living in Rushen for the last twelve years. My family members, wife Jackie, married for twenty-five years, and two teenage children, Tilly and Oliver - have been made to feel comfortably at home and found a strong sense of community and pride in Rushen, with its diverse character of two very different ports and dual rural parishes. Politically strong with three MHKs, it is well-positioned to gain greater central Government support and investment.

With my wife I run a wholesale business, Manx Inspirations, and I have a partnership in an event management company, Destination Isle of Man, handling such important events as Tynwald Day enhancements and Isle of Man representation at the world's largest Celtic festival. In the US, I took a near-bankrupt travel business and transformed it into an industry leader, pioneering e-commerce strategies. For five years I had the honour of being appointed Isle of Man Tourism representative for North America. Maintaining my Manx roots, I joined the North American Manx Association and learnt about early Manx immigrants and their hardships endured and successes earned. It is estimated that more than one million Manx descendants live in the US and I believe our Government would do well to engage these willing and proud ambassadors.

Representing the people requires an acute understanding of the diversified needs for our society and I have spent a great deal of time talking and listening to the people of Rushen. It was important for me to understand the concerns and aspirations of all walks of life and this helped form my policy manifesto. **To serve the people, you must first listen to the people.**

It is important we maintain a truly balanced society by caring for those less fortunate, providing for the elderly and investing in youth. I believe this to be the Manx way of life.

I offer a strong combination of business experience and creative intelligence that's needed to guide us through these difficult economic times, when tough decisions need to be made and new direction is necessary to build a brighter future. With a clear vision and a strong social conscience, Rushen – and the Island – can look forward positively.

If elected, I intend to serve the people in an honest, diligent and easily approachable manner. Maintaining that connection with the people is paramount. All too often there is a tendency to talk much with little achieved. **I always judge on action, not words, and expect to be measured the same.**

Yours truly



Laurence D Skelly

## Our Economy – Our Quality of Life

Our quality of life is based on the health of our economy and it is in a fragile state at best. With the extra burden of the £140M VAT deficit this represents the greatest challenge for the next Government. I believe new direction and leadership is needed and I would campaign to cut waste, improve efficiencies, support local enterprise, demand greater accountability and create economic growth and jobs through new revenue streams.

### *Manx National Savings Bond – Invest in Isle of Man future*

I believe Government should create a Manx National Savings Bond and operate it in a similar fashion to the UK, with the security of being Government-backed and the funds going to *our* Treasury.

### *Support our Indigenous Industries – Farming, fishing, tourism & trades*

In my view Government must play a more active role in supporting these industries, developing initiatives, building on rural and cultural tourism. We must keep our traditional trades alive, and provide training for new trades, such as passive (energy efficiency) house-building and new-age manufacturing.

### *Energy & Natural Resources Division – Greater priority for Government*

I feel Government must make a greater commitment to ensure an efficient, safe and environmentally sensitive use of energy and natural resources. We must reduce our dependency on imported energy, currently at 95%.

### *Enterprise Zone – Renewable & digital industries.*

Developing industries and jobs of the future must be a priority. In particular the Island is well advised to position itself in the renewable industry with peak oil fast looming and with a Government-led initiative to create an enterprise zone it will provide new inward investment and help diversify our economy.

### *Rateable Land/Property Value – Development of vacant & derelict land*

We need new legislation on land/property values to encourage development of vacant and derelict properties Island-wide. The current system deprives *our* Treasury of much needed revenue.

### *Jobs for Rushen – Stimulating commerce outside Douglas*

We need a sliding scale of incentives aimed at attracting relocating businesses to the Island, with greatest support for those locating furthest away from Douglas. Government must work harder to relocate more divisions out of the capital.

## Cost Cutting & Savings

I am against job cuts as I believe employment retention positively impacts the economy. To save money I recommend a stricter regime on Government spending. Capital projects need greater scrutiny, wider utilisation of services, outsource to local firms keeping money in our economy and working harder to ensure better value for money. Scope and Structure report of Government identified several cost cutting measures and needs to be revisited.

## Health Agreement

I support the retention of the reciprocal health agreement and would work hard to ensure we don't have a repeat of the political fiasco that caused such unnecessary alarm for the Manx public. Additionally the public are rightly concerned about the length of our medical waiting lists and I shall campaign to improve this position.



## Political Pay Reform and Independent Vote

MHKs and MLCs dictate their own salary structure, including their pay, pension scheme and expenses allowance. Our politicians expect the Civil Service to make cuts and deliver value for money, so politicians should do the same – we need an independent body to evaluate politicians’ service and determine their overall compensation package. As part of this review I would seek the removal of financial incentive to work for government departments, make it a duty and provide freedom of vote in the house.

## International Relations

### *Isle of Man & UK Relationship – Time for serious questions*

There is little evidence of late that the Island’s relationship with the UK is offering any real benefit and the latest threat for Zero-10 taxation could cost us 3,000 jobs. We need an updated, comprehensive and independent report on our constitutional options to help us examine the true meaning of ‘Freedom to Flourish’ – and determine what is in the best interests of the Isle of Man and people who live here.

### *International Direct Representation*

In my view we should not rely on others for our International representation. As an International jurisdiction with increasing global interests the Isle of Man needs direct representation in London, Brussels and Washington. Lobbying our case, building positive profile and supporting our private enterprise in these highly influential areas.

### *International Centre for Social Finance – Develop sustainable finance industry*

Our International negative label as a “Tax Haven” can change if Government forms a strategy to attract the Social Finance industry to the Isle of Man. This new global industry is founded on managing money that delivers social dividend and an economic return. Developing a sustainable finance sector can benefit our economy and positively improve our global profile.

## Our Community

### ***Ballakilly – Recreation & Housing built to support local economy***

I support a well-balanced sensitive housing development that encompasses a sports playing field facility. I would propose a new system of development whereby our building trade has equal opportunity and self-builds and passive (energy-efficient) housing may live together in the same development. Building houses by demand and keeping the money in the local economy.

### ***Affordable Housing***

I am concerned our young people are finding it more difficult to buy homes and will support affordable housing initiatives and wish to see them expanded with more imaginative funding schemes.

### ***Port St Mary - Marine & Heritage Centre - Marina***

Decision on a marina is delayed by Government's financial position, but I think this presents an opportunity to experiment with pontoon-style berths and gauge interest in a marina. Meantime it is vitally important we seek Government support for a Marine & Heritage Centre with aquarium. Ideal all-weather attraction helping regenerate The Port.

### ***Port Erin - Strengthen tourist destination & retail centre***

We need to capitalise on Port Erin's strongest assets – spectacular beach and stunning setting. Identified as perfect candidate for the Island's water sports capital or National outdoor centre. This must be pursued, alongside reopening Brooghs footpath and seeking government support for its retail sector.

### ***Southern Skipper Bus - Connect communities in the South***

A major overhaul of the bus timetable failed to address the issue of connecting our rural communities. With smaller, more economical buses, Ballabeg, Colby, Ballakillowey, Cregneash, Ballakilpheric, Surby & Ronague could be linked to our commercial centres rather than just getting us into Douglas.

### ***Local Government – Improve efficiencies with decentralised services***

Our local authorities do an excellent job and empowering them may reap benefits for ratepayers. Services provided by Government should be reviewed, to decentralise certain tasks. Returning decision-making to the community will help create more local employment and open and transparent Government.

### ***Rushen Campsite & Motorhome Park – Boost tourism with area site***

I propose a cooperative between four commissioners, the two Ports, Rushen and Arbory - to develop and operate a campsite and motorhome park. Help the local economy with employment, pitch fees and visitors frequenting pubs, cafés & shops.

## Our Elderly and Young People

### *Elderly – Equal Care & Create Society of Respect*

I believe we must provide equal care for all. We have an unfair system whereby some people must sell their homes in order to pay for care – this situation must be reviewed. It is scandalous that Southlands still has wards unopened and I would treat this as a priority for Rushen MHKs. Pension provision must be constantly reviewed to ensure our older generations enjoy the standard of living they have earned and I would like to introduce a core-value into schools “Respect our Elders”.

### *Youth – Invest for the Future*

I am completely against cuts in the Education. We must maintain support in all areas including funding for higher education and equally vocational training – investing in our youth is investing in our future. Government nursery care services are not equitable and need to be better balanced. There is a lack of recreational facilities for young people and we must stop wasting golden opportunities, such as that offered by Summerland.

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**Declaration:**

**If I am a successful in being elected I shall formally resign from Destination Isle of Man Ltd and reduce my involvement with Manx Inspirations. As a family business, I intend to remain a director of Manx Inspirations.**

Business & other affiliations – past & current:

Isle of Man Chamber of Commerce, Member  
Port St Mary Business Association, Member  
Port St Mary Regeneration Committee, Chairman – now part of SW Regeneration  
North American Manx Association, Past-President  
Rotary Club of Rushen & Western Mann, Past-President  
Rowany Golf Club, Member  
Erin Arts Centre, Member  
Official Representative for Isle of Man Tourism in North America 1995-2000  
British American Chamber of Commerce, California. Board Member 1997-2000  
Le Tip International, California – Past President, 1986-2000.

Community supporter:

Rushen United, Port Erin Regatta, Laa Columb Killey, RNLI Port St. Mary, Rowany and Port St Mary Golf Club, Port St Mary Bowls Club, Port St Mary Village in Bloom, Yn Chrunnaight and IOM Agricultural Benevolent Trust.



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