

HOUSE OF KEYS

GENERAL ELECTION

THURSDAY, 29th SEPTEMBER, 2011

DAVID ANDERSON

FOR GLENFABA

Dear Elector

PERSONAL FILE

It has been my privilege to represent Glenfaba for the past 10 years.

I was born in the Sheading and have lived and worked here for 55 years. Married to Jane, we have two grown-up children both of whom were born on the Island but who now live and work in London, having benefited from our excellent education system and support for higher education.

Over the years I have been and am still involved in a wide range of community activities; I was a Commissioner for 9 years and have also represented the Island at athletic events around the world, including the Commonwealth Games and latterly World Masters Athletics.

Because I live in the community, I am readily available at all times - and when people contact me with problems and concerns, would expect to respond within 24 hours. This system has worked well and constituents value a speedy response.

Surgeries may be suitable in a town constituency but not in a constituency which stretches from Dalby to Cronk y Voddy. If surgeries were to be held in each area of the constituency it would mean that surgeries in each particular area would be several months apart. I have never believed it right to restrict constituents in such a way. You are free to contact me as and when the need arises and I will make a point of coming to you if you wish.



THE WORK OF GOVERNMENT

With no party system, achieving things within Government hangs on persuading a majority of colleagues to support any initiative - not always an easy task!

Members of Tynwald are expected to be fully involved in the day to day work of Government - and during the past 5 years I have held two important portfolios - as Minister of Transport (renamed Infrastructure) and more recently Minister of Health. Both Departments are significant net spenders of, what will be, in future, a more limited pool of money. But it has always been my priority to seek best value for money in any difficult decisions - and to put people first. On occasions personal convenience has to be sacrificed to the provision of a better, more fit for purpose solution which can be available to a wider group of people.

The work of Government is time consuming - and those who become involved, inevitably, have less time to 'be seen around the constituency', than those who do not make their contribution to the work of Government. But being at the centre of Government is an advantage - those who are, have a greater influence in decisions which directly affect their constituents and can usually achieve more than those on the fringes.

It has been my privilege to have served at the heart of Government for the past 5 years - I believe that has brought significant benefit to Glenfaba, and the West of the Island.

CONSTITUENCY MATTERS

The relocation of the DEFA Headquarters to St. Johns (the first government department to be relocated outside Douglas) is a major coup for Glenfaba and St. John in particular. This modern environmentally efficient building is a real tonic to the community.

The completion of the First-Time Buyers Scheme at Archallagan Terrace in Foxdale has given the opportunity for a welcome first step in home ownership.

The continuing upgrading of the local authority housing stock being undertaken at the moment in St. Johns is a welcomed investment.

The acquisition of the Central Marts site and Farmers' Arms has given the opportunity of development of Magher Vay type retirement property for the future - I am keen that this should be put in the capital programme as soon as practicable.

SELF GOVERNMENT

The Isle of Man has obtained significant advantages, largely financial, from its self-governing status. Many of those advantages have accrued from freely negotiated revenue sharing agreements with our larger neighbours - so it is not surprising that, when our neighbours go through difficult times, they scrutinise any arrangements where they think they may be surrendering financial benefits to others.

In the Customs and Excise Agreement with the UK, we need to keep the benefit to the Island under constant review. So long as the Agreement remains of benefit to our community I would support its retention - if it ceases to provide a benefit, abrogation must be seriously considered, although people must be aware of the implications of abrogation such as customs barriers between the Island and the UK, increased administration for postal shopping and such matters and the likely severe impact on the manufacturing sector.

But as a self-governing nation, we cannot expect our neighbours to 'subsidise' us - we have to stand on our own two feet. Maintaining arrangements such as the Reciprocal Health Agreement depends on our convincing our neighbours that the benefit from such an agreement goes both ways - which is what finally persuaded the UK to continue with the Agreement.

Maintaining good relations with our neighbours is vital - I have been pleased to support initiatives to build on established, but little publicised contacts with politicians and key decision influencers at Westminster and in Brussels, in particular and through the British Irish Council. These contacts have proved of great value in the past and need to be maintained in the future. But we have to be realistic - having friends is one thing, expecting them to favour the Island over their own electors is another.

THE STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT

We all want a high level of services - but the delivery of such services involves an ever increasing work force to provide them.

The more difficult financial times ahead will require Government to scrutinise its own efficiency - to deliver the services at a more economic cost. The work of streamlining the Government structure as advocated in the Scope and Structure of Government Report five years ago has started - but will need to be addressed with greater urgency.

My priority will be to ensure that front line services are maintained and that unnecessary waste is eliminated, and duplication rationalised.

I am in favour of constitutional reform and regret that no progress has been made in moves to reform the Legislative Council and the way in which its members are elected.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Over the past 10 years, the Isle of Man has experienced unprecedented financial growth - and we have all benefited. Perhaps we have begun to take it for granted.

Government has concentrated on investing surplus revenue in renewing the Island's essential infrastructure and in providing services to the needy and disadvantaged members of the community. We now enjoy facilities that are the envy of many larger communities.

Undoubtedly the next few years will be less easy - with the global economic downturn and a significant reduction in our revenue from the Customs and Excise Agreement. The next Government will have to make difficult decisions and some of the benefits we have taken for granted in recent years, may be difficult to sustain.

Determining priorities will be a sensitive area - I believe my knowledge of and commitment to the Island will help me determine what is important to our community - and what might be unnecessary luxury, in a challenging financial environment.

THE ECONOMY

Over dependence on any one sector of the economy is risky. I have been encouraged by the growth in the manufacturing sector over the recent years - it provides employment and revenue. I am more wary of industries which are vulnerable to regulatory or fiscal reaction from other countries and believe we should not place too great reliance upon them. Ensuring that all businesses that operate from the Isle of Man observe the highest standards of integrity to protect the Island's reputation will always be a priority.

A balanced economy providing steady income to our community and a wide range of employment opportunities should always be the objective of Government.

It is not luck that our economy has grown by over 30% in the last five years and that unemployment has been held at 2%. This is due to hard work and planning. Compare this with our larger neighbours who have huge national debts and have been in recession.

The creation of the Department of Economic Development seeks to continue to build on our successes and create further opportunities for new business and job opportunities.

LOCAL CONCERNS

Having been a Commissioner, I am aware of their importance - and that they are an under-utilised asset! I favour strengthening their role to give them a greater influence on local issues, such as planning and local services.

Glenfaba is the smallest constituency on the Island - and there is a danger that it could get swallowed up in any re-drawing of constituency boundaries. I am in favour of reform of our present constituencies, principally to remove the anomaly of constituencies having differing numbers of representatives.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

The excessive speed of traffic through our villages continues to create problems and is a major local concern. I am keen to work with the local Commissioners, the Department of Infrastructure Highways Division and Police to work on a solution to improve these problems.

I welcome the introduction of "buffering" speed limits (already rolled out on the A1 Peel to Douglas Road which I supported) and look forward to further implementation of these schemes which have proven to reduce the speed of traffic through villages. However, there will also need to be other measures to complement these and I have been encouraging the partnership working of the Western Traffic Liaison Group to find further measures to improve road safety. I also look forward to the DOI shortly putting in place the agreed crossing improvements at The Hope.

TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIES

Agriculture is continuing to go through a challenging period and we are in the infancy of the Countryside Care Scheme. It is important that government honours this support so farmers can plan for the future. The processing plants are taking a very much more commercial position and need supporting to keep up their much needed throughput.

PLANNING REFORM

Always a contentious issue, but we must make sure our planning policies are fit for purpose and both protect our environment but are not over bureaucratic. They should also give the framework for necessary development but protect our established business centres.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The environment is of great importance to all who live in Glenfaba, and the wider Island. I have strongly supported local moves to protect sensitive areas from development - and will continue to be vigilant and responsive to local concerns, as demonstrated in working with ASAP (Archallagan, Stoney Mountain, Arracey Preservation) to oppose the now defeated Archallagan proposals by the former DOLGE (Department of Local Government and the Environment).

I have strongly supported the government aim of providing 15% energy by renewable sources by 2015.

We must take a responsible attitude to a sustainable energy policy. The funding for harnessing wind energy will need to come from government working with the private sector. We must also work towards giving more encouragement to individuals to play their part in utilising natural resources including recycling.

Education of our population in this area is key and I welcome organisations that work alongside government to get this important message across.

OVERSEAS AID

I am committed to Government supporting those overseas who live in extreme poverty. The Island has moved a long way towards the internationally accepted target for overseas aid but we have some way to go in reaching the 0.7% of gross government income. The current £2.4 million budget for overseas aid is a big improvement but we need to show we are a mature and caring jurisdiction as despite our financial pressures we are a relatively wealthy society. Our support has already made a difference and can make more of a difference.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Not surprisingly those who come to live on the Island from elsewhere value highly our strong sense of community - something we who have lived here all our lives can take for granted. Maintaining this community spirit is something we all have a part in supporting.

A recent survey confirms that the Island is one of the safest places to live and we should be thankful for such a dedicated and professional police force interwoven with the community keeping the crime rate low and detection rates very high.

THE PENSION TIME BOMB

We are an ageing population - there will be a 50% increase in over 65s over the next 15 years, and a doubling of those over 75.

Continued provision of generous pensions and other benefits will be one of the most difficult issues facing future Governments, not least because of the cost to the working population of providing those benefits.

There are no easy answers - we have got used to a high level of provision, often without our having to make any contribution (and MHKs have sought to set an example by reforming their own scheme). The prime objective will be to maintain a healthy economy to be able to fund those pensions and benefits. Supporting the less advantaged members of our community will always be a priority for me.

Third sector organisations will become increasingly important partners of government in supporting the older population. The Western Live at Home Scheme is an excellent example that delivers welcome support with minimal cost to government.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

I am in favour of openness and transparency and would support Freedom of Information legislation but not at any cost. It must be understood that much of the information that would be open to inspection would be of little interest, and would cost a lot to provide. On occasions there is a need for confidentiality - sensitive issues involving individuals, commercial confidence and matters subject to delicate negotiation. Contrary to the rumours, there is no conspiracy of silence - but much of the work of Government is mundane, routine and repetitious.

MY ROLE IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS

I was appointed Minister of Transport following the last general election and was in that position until the restructuring of government departments in April 2010.

Transport had a wide portfolio including harbours, the airport, the sewerage system, and road network as well as responsibility for a large number of government properties.

One cannot achieve anything on one's own in government and not only does one have to work to get support from Tynwald members to implement improvements but one relies on professional advice from civil servants in deciding what the priorities should be and how to get best value in any project.

Two examples that show positive outcomes would be the Peel Harbour Improvement Scheme which has made a significant contribution to breathing new life into Peel through the pontoons and harbour facilities that is looked at jealously by other Island ports.

The second is where a change of policy will not only save a significant amount of money in construction costs but very significant running costs - Tynwald unanimously supported me changing the 'All Island IRIS System' to a regional strategy where the remaining areas to be completed will be treated in the North and the West rather than pumping all the way to the eastern site at Meary Veg.

However, it has been extremely unfortunate that due to the lack of support for the western proposal from the Peel constituency that Ramsey and the North have leap-frogged the West and the northern site will be constructed in the next couple of years.

The existing sites at Dalby, Patrick and Kirk Michael will soon be upgraded to the highest modern construction.

I also took several capital projects through Tynwald for road and airport improvements that are now complete, all within budget.

Since April 2010 I have been Minister of Health and I have enjoyed the challenge of delivering our much valued front-line services within restricted budgets.

My first priority as Minister was to secure the retention of the Reciprocal Health Agreement. I was fortunate that the majority of the work to secure that was well on the way by the time I came into position and I am grateful to all those who contributed to that result.

When I became Minister, Dudley Butt MLC became my Member of Health and we agreed to make our top priority the introduction of bowel cancer screening. In the relatively short time together I am happy to say that thanks to our hard-working team this was introduced at the beginning of August and will be rolled out across the Island over the next year to all those in the most vulnerable age group of 59 - 69.

Bowel cancer is the biggest cancer killer on the Island but is very curable if detected early enough.

Waiting list times are a cause of concern and the hospital is actively looking at ways of improving these.

The introduction of pacemaker implants on the Island is very close and will be a much welcomed service that previously had to be provided off Island with all the resultant travelling.

The new Peel Medical Centre for the West is a significant investment that provides the most modern facilities for the practice and allied health services.

THE ROLE OF THE MHK

There must be as many views within the electorate as there are voters - and it is rare to find unanimity on policies and priorities!

Thus any prospective MHK is being unrealistic if he/she pretends that all of the people can be satisfied all of the time. On occasions difficult choices will have to be made - and as many people will be disappointed as are satisfied.

I can only make one promise - I will use my knowledge and understanding of the Island and this community based on a lifetime living and working here, and my judgement to make the difficult choices when these need to be made - and to work tirelessly for the well-being of the community in which we live.



I have endeavoured to see as many of you as possible. However, if I have missed you and you would like me to revisit, please contact me to make a mutually convenient time before the election.

There are two requisition meetings:-

Dalby (St. James' Schoolroom)	Tuesday, 20th September at 8 pm (Chaired by Pat Costain, CP)
St. Johns (Methodist Hall)	Monday, 26th September at 7.30 pm (Chaired by John Kennaugh, CP)

I have also arranged public meetings as follows:-

Patrick Community Centre	Friday, 16th September at 7.30 pm
Cronk y Voddy Young Men's Club	Monday, 19th September at 7.30 pm
Foxdale School	Friday, 23rd September at 7.30

THE DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS FOR ABSENT VOTES OR PROXY VOTES IS FAST APPROACHING SO IF YOU REQUIRE APPLICATION FORMS PLEASE CONTACT ME

IF YOU WOULD LIKE A LIFT TO THE POLLING STATION OR WOULD LIKE A CAR STICKER TO SHOW YOUR SUPPORT PLEASE CONTACT ME

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