

Douglas South By-Election: Thursday 27th August 2020



Thoughts on... politics, representation & me

Hello everyone and thank you for taking time to read this document.

As a proud Manxman born and bred, I believe that Manx politics is unique and that our issues have their own special blend of importance to us as an island community. Our unbroken link of government back to 979 is a proud statistic. We were also the first national parliament to allow women to vote in 1881 and in 2006 we lowered the voting age to 16 in elections:

<https://www.tynwald.org.im/education/history/Pages/default.aspx>

Unfortunately due to unforeseen family circumstances I had to leave the island suddenly at the beginning of my campaign and I have been unable to meet you all on the doorstep as I been self-isolating with my family since our return home. To those of you who feel frustrated that you cannot find an outlet for your views I fully understand your feelings at this time. However, my family and friends who met you have told me that when they were delivering my original introductory manifesto recently door to door that the same concerns were being voiced by those they spoke with: mainly job security and public service provision.

<https://www.gov.im/media/1369832/200727-lon-pinkerton-manifesto-2020-a5-v1a.pdf>

This message has also come through loud and clear to me since my return home as I have received contact from many of you via social media. I have gained much widespread experience over the last 30 years within the public services sector and taking on board your view that delivering public services is of vital importance to you at this time I know that this would make me a strong representative for you if elected to the House of Keys on Thursday. I also have a proven track record working for and supporting others in my capacity working within an HR role for the last 5 years and being an Associate Member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development:

<http://www.isleofman.com/news/details/79581/suicide-prevention-workshop>

My working class background has also taught me that as a country we should never leave those vulnerable in our society behind. Many of you are suffering the effects of food and fuel poverty, and this should be a real area of concern for us as a society. A prime example of this is that 1 in 6 of the population currently earning less than the Living Wage:

<https://www.gov.im/about-the-government/departments/cabinet-office/economic-affairs-division/earnings-survey/>

This is why I firmly believe in a socialist philosophy where the public sector provides core services for the benefit of all members of our society. I believe we need to take further action now to support those on low incomes looking for support, and to those who feel abandoned by the political process and who are looking for their voice to be heard at this time of crisis in our island's economic outlook:

<https://www.gov.im/media/1370005/household-survey-report-may-2020.pdf>

<https://www.gov.im/media/1370007/coronavirus-household-report-july-2020.pdf>

Maintaining confidence in the business community will also be of prime importance to the island, and maintaining stability in levels of employment and investment in our economy are crucial in this regard:

<https://www.gov.im/media/1370006/coronavirus-business-survey-report-july-2020-v2.pdf>

In relation to public service provision and starting with our health services, I applaud the tireless work and dedication shown by all those working in our NHS, not only during the recent pandemic but the service they provide 24/7, 365 days a year. As we saw during lockdown, the island came together to support each other and showed a genuine respect for our key workers at a time I have never witnessed before in my lifetime. The health services sector is the largest employer of public service staff and has the largest budget, and it is essential that as an employer Government retains, trains and supports the staff it employs. I hope that the recent public support shown during the pandemic is not quickly forgotten as sometimes we all, including myself, take these essential services for granted. I also applaud the recent Government "Are you OK?" wellbeing campaign and I am a keen supporter of mental health initiatives.

As a parent with a daughter who will be starting her reception year in September, I am acutely aware of the needs of the community to have an excellent education system. We are so lucky on the island that we have dedicated teaching staff and education service support professionals, as it is true that employees within this sector view this not only as a job but a vocation. I hope that the current dispute between Government and Unions can be resolved as it will be our children at the end of the day who will suffer, also bearing in mind the months they lost as a result of lockdown. Having received mediation training from ACAS only last year in Manchester I believe that a further round of mediation will be a positive step in helping to resolve this dispute.

Overall Government employs over 7,000 staff to deliver our essential service needs, and as one of their number I am proud of the effort and dedication of everyone working for our island community. A well-funded and supported public service for all is fundamental at this most uncertain of times.

My politics is based fundamentally on a belief in democracy; where one vote is equal to another and does not differentiate on any other basis. I believe that we still have a way to go in persuading all people to engage in the political process. I would include in this those users of platforms such as "Manx Forums", as my belief in freedom of speech and expression and including others into the mainstream conversation is crucial in understanding all views in our society. I hope that the 40% turnout in Douglas South at the last General Election in 2016 will be improved upon at this by-election on Thursday:

<https://www.gov.im/media/1353348/2016-general-election-turn-out-figures.pdf>

I would also urge those not registered to vote to do so to make your voice can be heard at the 2021 General Election and beyond, as at the end of the day politicians are elected by and to represent the needs of the electorate:

<https://www.gov.im/categories/home-and-neighbourhood/elections-and-voting/>

Over the years our political map has evolved and here are my suggestions on how we can further adapt the political map into the following geographical areas:

- Metropolitan: including Douglas (redrawing existing boundaries), Onchan and also redrawing Braddan's boundary to some extent to be included within the new Douglas boundaries. This would lead to there being 8 MHKs in the Metropolitan area. My proposal would be for 4 areas represented: Douglas North, Douglas Central, Douglas South and Onchan; with 2 MHKs representing each area.

- 3 other geographical areas island wide, with 6 MHKs representing each area: North, West and South. I would suggest that we would designate in each area a local area capital represented by 2 MHKs in each one. In my scenario the capitals would be Ramsey, Peel and Castletown. This would leave 4 other MHKs in each area.

I would then suggest that we reform the existing Local Authority landscape to reflect these new boundaries, merging existing authorities in order to give a stronger community representation into 4 new local authorities: Metropolitan, North, West and South.

In relation to LegCo I believe that due to the increase in MHKs from the current 24 to 26 under my proposal that there would then only be a requirement to 7 MLCs; 1 MLC per Sheading boundary and also a President of Tynwald. I am still undecided how LegCo would be elected, although my instinct is to have an election at the same time as per the current Keys framework.

Under my proposal I believe we would be able to solve ongoing discussions regarding how we can reform Local Authorities and secure cost effective local public services for the future in each new area.

Thoughts on... our borders

As the world is still in a state of uncertainty due to the pandemic and whilst our borders remain at stage 4, our sense of isolation in our own bubble gives us some comfort that things have gone back as they were. However, as I can testify being only in London recently having returned from Slovakia is that regaining any sense of normality is far from being achieved in the UK from what I experienced. Indeed as recently as last weekend with lockdown restrictions being tightened in Oldham and other areas of the North West. I am reminded that we still need to remain vigilant and that our border levels may not be able to be lowered in the near future.

I fully support our borders strategy and I am fully complying with this in terms of my 14 day self-isolation at home, which as you know has minimised my ability to be involved in the wider by-election process and indeed mean I will be absent on polling day on Thursday. I am also acutely aware of the impact that the negative effect that lockdown and the pandemic has had on the community's mental health and wellbeing, and again if elected I would be a champion of support for those in our society needing urgent help in this regard:

<https://www.gov.im/categories/health-and-wellbeing/>

Thoughts on... working together

In the next 12 months if elected I would see to work with others to steer us through the unprecedented situation we find ourselves in as a result of the pandemic, including those who may hold different political views to my own. For those who know me well they understand that I have a reputation of speaking my own mind, including sometimes taking a minority view on certain issues. This is true, but now is the time for us all to pull together and I would show true leadership by finding common ground, rather than trying to score political points at the expense of the greater good at this critical time:

<https://hr.gov.im/media/1177/guidanceforpublicservantsipar.pdf>

Beyond thoughts of how we deal with the pandemic and even the post Brexit world in coming years, the consequences will certainly cast a shadow over the future for years to come, with Government expenditure at an all-time high, Government income at lower levels than expected and higher than normal levels of unemployment:

<https://www.gov.im/about-the-government/departments/cabinet-office/economic-affairs-division/unemployment/>

How Government steers the island through this will be crucial in positioning ourselves as a vibrant island community in future. However, I do not want to ignore other real and outstanding issues that we need our Government to address such as:

- tackle unemployment and create new public service jobs
- raise the level of the minimum and living wage
- tackle food & fuel poverty; protecting the vulnerable
- future elderly care strategy and investment
- pre-school, after school and holiday childcare provision
- equal employment rights for maternity / paternity leave
- mental health and well-being service funding increases
- increased help for & awareness of substance abuse
- solution of reform of the rates system (too long a political football)
- future reform of Tynwald & Local Authorities
- resolving industrial disputes via mediation & consultation

- legalising medicinal cannabis for pain relief; not for social use as yet
- lower public transport fares to help alleviate congestion on our roads
- achieving carbon neutral target by 2050

I have also gone on record recently that I would support tax rises where necessary to ensure that we can redistribute the wealth in our society for the greater good at this time. I stand by this statement as our reserve funds will need to be replenished in order to protect us from uncertainty in future years to come I believe.

Thoughts on... the Isle of Man & inclusion

We have thankfully become a more inclusive society over recent years. The recent BLM march in Douglas showed that we understand and support social issues in a wider, global context. In other areas such as LGBT rights, same sex marriage and other minority views that have been accepted by wider society I would like to applaud the progressive outlook and contribution of both former Chief Minister Allan Bell and former President of Tynwald Clare Christian in this regard. Also as the son of someone who moved to the island in the 1960's and as a husband of someone who moved here in the 2000's, both choosing to make the Isle of Man their home, I am delighted that we also attract to our shores those who make a valuable contribution to our island, including those working in the public services sectors such as doctors, nurses and teachers to name but a few.

Thoughts on... transport & associated matters

I have always held a keen interest in Manx transport, with a specific interest and knowledge relating to my first area of discussion: the Steam Packet.

I very much welcome the news regarding the contract being finalised for the new vessel to be introduced in 2023 (thankfully I was correct bearing in mind I jumped the gun if you viewed my interview with Paul Moulton two weeks before the announcement was officially made!) and that the "Ben-My-Chree" will be retained as a back-up vessel. My preference for traditional vessel names leads to me to suggest that "Mona's Queen" would be a fitting name (this vessel would be the sixth to bear the name), although if we turn back the clock to 1834 the third

Steam Packet vessel was called "Queen of the Isle", which is a name not used for any vessel since and may be another option.

This then leads me to the subject of a long term replacement for "Manannan". Bearing in mind that there are restrictions on the new Liverpool Terminal that mean it is not accessible as a 24 hour berth, how should the Steam Packet proceed in her replacement which would also serve Irish services? In my view a like-for-like fastcraft replacement would be the wrong decision; indeed technological improvements in the design of conventional ferries would allow for say a 28 knot vessel which could then be used all year round, not just for seven months of the year. This would then alleviate the burden on the new 2023 vessel because as we have seen with the "Ben-My-Chree" over her 22 year service she has been used almost continuously on the twice daily service to Heysham and she has suffered as a result of bearing the sole burden of service needs all-year round.

The future of air transport is also another key area for discussion. With the pandemic still casting an uncertain shadow over a return of all airlines to full services with the borders still at stage 4 currently for returning residents, with the drastically reduced schedules there have been calls for a national airline to be set up in future. I agree that this is one avenue worthy of further investigation, where we can secure future services and maintain services levels. This will be key to both the tourist and financial sectors in 2021 and beyond, depending on future pandemic impact. As recently as last week, with the news that Loganair are taking over the London City route from British Airways, the viability and stability of the airline sector still hangs in the balance during the current border restrictions.

The level of the National Speed Limit is another area I believe we should have a further discussion about as I believe that any decision regarding this matter should only be made with road safety concerns rather than economic factors being considered. However, with the reduced 40 mile per hour speed limit being introduced during lockdown I realise that decisions can be made for the greater good when necessary. If we look at the A595 road on the Cumbrian coastline, this is very similar in layout to some of our carriageways and has a limit of 50 miles per hour in many areas due to safety concerns. I hope to at least continue the

conversation going forward as it is an important issue needing a sensible resolution.

Finally, in relation to road transport I hope that with emerging technologies and their use that we can reduce carbon emissions in future. I would like to see other initiatives, such as reduced bus fares as peak time for commuters into Douglas to alleviate traffic congestion being promoted. I also applaud the Government's current active travel strategy and believe this will provide long term benefits not only on congestion but our society's health and wellbeing:

<https://www.gov.im/media/1365921/active-travel-strategy-2018-2021-gd0043-18.pdf>

Thoughts on... who pulls my strings?

In my original manifesto I declared that I have no vested interests that I need to declare, and indeed I can confirm that I have neither sought nor received any financial donations from any third parties as part of my campaign. I am proud that my platform is 100% an independent one.

I have minimised the amount I have spent which came in at just a little over £200.00; this being from two sources related to the printing of my original manifesto and advertising on social media over recent weeks. For clarification I could have spent and reclaimed at the taxpayer's expense in excess of £4,000.00 as part of reimbursements as a political candidate participating in this by-election process in Douglas South:

<https://www.gov.im/media/1369765/by-election-2020-guidance-for-candidates-final-version-interactive.pdf>

However, I hope that my financial approach in this regard proves my sincere belief in spending taxpayer money wisely. This campaign will be the only time that I will make a reimbursement claim, which I have already submitted to the Cabinet Office as my current status is that of a candidate seeking election to office. My pledge to you is that if elected I will never make any further claims for mileage or reimbursements at your expense at this time of hardship for you and our island. If elected on Thursday I will take the salary of an MHK during my term of office:

<https://www.tynwald.org.im/memoff/remall/Pages/default.aspx>

Final thoughts...

Finally, it would be an honour to represent you all at this pivotal time in our island's history and thank you all for taking the time to read my thoughts online over the last few weeks, and to those of you who have sent me sincere messages of support and helped me during the campaign. If you want to get in touch further, or indeed have any questions you would like me to answer or issues you want to raise then please use my Facebook page "Lon Pinkerton - Douglas South By-Election 2020" or please give me a call on 336272. I do not stand for election for myself alone, but as someone who wants to help others and build a better future for everyone in Douglas South and the Isle of Man.

Vote Lon Pinkerton for Douglas South on Thursday 27 August 2020.
Thank you.

VOTE 

Lon Pinkerton



• The Representation of the People Act 1995 • Representation of the People Regulations 2015

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