

CLAIRE CHRISTIAN

UNITY HAS NEVER HAD A STRONGER VOICE

Independent Candidate - Douglas South



Dear Fellow Constituent,

On Thursday 27th August, you will have the opportunity to vote in the by-election for 2 seats in the House of Keys. I would be very honoured to serve you as your MHK for Douglas South, to unite our voices and represent our proud constituency. In shaping policy, I see two aspects; firstly the type of society we want, a caring and prosperous society, a society that provides equal opportunity, quality education and a safety net. No one should be homeless or be deciding between heat or eat. As a Manx person living in Douglas South, I have a deep understanding of the diverse neighbourhood we have. Your strong community spirit overflows, and I am humbled by your resolve and utter will to fight during the Covid 19 pandemic, and now through our economic crisis. Secondly, strengthening our economy will have a positive impact on the wellbeing of the nation. I have fought for the interests of thousands of national workers during Covid 19. My proven track record is a testament to my resolve and determination to do what is right, and to build a vibrant community, where a hard worker can be successful and thrive in a flourishing economic climate. I know that it will be a challenge to achieve all that I want to in one year before the General Election, but know that I will lead by example, in truth, honesty, and transparency. I am the candidate who is strong, decisive and understands what you need to succeed. I have listened, and hope that my manifesto represents our collective voice, and I am willing to add to this as I gather wider input from you all in Douglas South. It is a statement of my commitment to **work for you**, and a road map on how I am going to achieve this.

I look forward to seeing you on Election Day.

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VOTE CHRISTIAN

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POST BREXIT AND COVID 19 ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Protect Manx Jobs and Stimulate the Economy

- At the heart of a caring and prosperous society is a strong economy, many sectors in our economy, especially our local economy, have declined in recent years. **I want to see focus on small businesses, at the heart of our community and the backbone of our economy.** This will help us grow the economy and celebrate all that is local.
- **I will introduce measures that deliver job security and job growth.** We have seen little real economic growth over the last five years, little or no salary growth, and by putting money into the pockets of our residents we will see the economy grow. I want to see residents spending more of their own money rather than government spending it for them. I will do this by creating **more job opportunities by exploring new sectors, new ideas and a more entrepreneurial approach to business support and development.** To stimulate the economy we **must attract businesses** to start-up or relocate. Encouraging external investment will have a positive impact on our fiscal economy by increasing local spend. I am fully committed to bringing in medical cannabis licensing which will create some 200 to 250 jobs, and also encouraging the Clean Energy, Biomedical and IT sectors to develop and flourish on the island.
- **To protect Manx jobs we must have a skilled and first-class workforce.** This will be achieved through **training, reskilling and education,** to make us the envy of other jurisdictions.
- **Encourage apprenticeships, training, internships and other new and exciting opportunities for the younger generation.**
- **We must prepare now in order that we have regular and sustainable transport links** to the UK, Ireland and Channel Islands when it is safe to open our borders. Partnering with smaller airlines could provide the solution while the airline industry is in a period of uncertainty and crisis.
- **I want to see the introduction of a small business rate relief.** Where a business would not pay rates on a property with a rateable value of £12,000 or less, and a gradual relief for properties with a rateable value of £12,001 to £15,000.

Think local, buy local

- **Government must lead by example,** we must tender goods and services, capital work, projects and consultancy to all local businesses, making it a fairer system. This will consolidate and grow the local economy and promote the shop local, buy local freedom to flourish initiatives, which we need to keep our island as self sufficient and sustainable as possible.

POST BREXIT AND COVID 19 ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Reduced Cost of Living and Equal Rights for Parental Leave

- **I want to see careful scrutiny of the monopoly or near monopoly service providers, including Manx Utilities.** The quality of life on our island is second to none, but the prosperity is not shared equally. Working families often do not have enough for the bare essentials; families with a combined income of 40k have (I believe) a standard of living below their UK counterparts. High living costs are affecting many hard working families, pensioners and the un-employed in Douglas South and island wide. **I want to see more comparison and benchmarking of these monopolies whose performance is not exposed to the glare of competition, providing better protection and lower costs for island residents.**
- **I am in favour of shared parental leave,** giving parents the choice could allow the lower earning partner to take the parental leave, and better support working families.

State Pension Protection, Tax and NI System

- **Index linking the state pension means it increases directly in line with the cost of living.** This would provide stability, and looking back over the last 4 years inflation rates and pension increases are virtually mirrored, demonstrating that this is affordable. A large share of the population (22%) is of retirement age or over. I support the right to **retirement in dignity, which includes financial independence via a state pension.**
- **A more proactive approach to educating, informing and communicating Tax and NI options is needed.** Covid 19 highlighted that some individuals were not paying enough Tax and NI, or had fallen behind on payments. This in turn had an effect on the eligibility of government financial support for individuals and businesses. In the longer term this also reduces the income the government could be receiving, and impact the value of the individual's state pension.

A Future Proof Economy

- **To strengthen the government's long term financial position establishing a Sovereign Fund of prudent investments** across a balanced portfolio will invigorate our economy and grow our strategic reserve. Our policies as a Government must not only sustain the current economy, but also strive to grow, promote innovation and adapt to future threats. We must have a **clear mission to invest for the benefit of future generations** of our nation, and to support and balance all aspects of island life and infrastructure in the future.
- **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, which filters through all departments, including the Civil Service providing a solution that put people at their heart and not the system.

FRONTLINE SERVICES

Education

As a qualified secondary school teacher, I have first hand experience of the pressure and heavy workload felt by teachers, and additional hours spent outside the class room, lesson planning, marking, and professional development. I advocate greater investment in our schools and in our teachers, in order to ensure our children and young adults have the best start in life, and in many cases this the **key opportunity to prevent future poverty**. As part of my wider education strategy I would like to achieve the following:

- **Deliver a 0-5 years pre-school within Douglas South** with flexible times for working families, including dropping off before work etc.
- **To work with local schools to develop a community education action plan.** By creating relationships between home, school, and the neighbourhood, through projects and opportunities, the lives of our children and parents will be enhanced and improved. The schools should be the heart of our constituency.
- **I would also like to see a review of the pre-school credit system** to make sure it matches the increasing fees charged by some nurseries. During the health emergency, childcare credits were extended to 0-3 year olds for the children of key workers. This should become government policy for all children in the longer term. The current provision for infants is expensive, which can have a huge impact on families.
- **I want to see a positive working relationship between the Department of Education and Teachers, and Teachers' Unions** for the good of the children, teachers and education as whole. We must continue with open consultation, in order to create an aligned strategy.
- **Ensure our schools provide a safe environment**, conducive to learning, development, diversity, and equality, which would include the standardisation of free school meals across the island to achieve social inclusion.
- **Development of essential and practical 'life skills'**, so that young adults are better prepared when they leave school and enter work or further education, for example, budgeting, opening a bank account, completing a tax return, etc.
- **Review the support and on-going training for our teachers**, to ensure they can continually develop and maintain excellence in their own skills, and harness developing strategies and technology in teaching. This includes contingency plans and **standardisation for home schooling, should the need arise again**. We should be encouraging teachers to return to the island following higher education and training.

FRONTLINE SERVICES

Health and Social Care

- **I support our health service that delivered for us during the recent pandemic, and I want to see the Sir Jonathan Michaels report implemented.**
- **I will work hard with the Department of Health and Social Care to rebuild the support required for vulnerable children, which has reduced significantly due to Covid 19.** Providing even better levels of care will help a number of families in Douglas South who are struggling with practical support for children with autism, ADHD, and other physical and mental disabilities.
- **My long-term strategy is to improve our health and well being on the island as preventative measures to sickness and health issues.** A healthier nation will reduce costs to the health service, and **reduce GP and treatment waiting times.** My strategy to reduce the cost of living will allow families, particularly those on low incomes, to be able to choose healthier and nutritious foods which are often more expensive.
- **We must always strive to provide as much care as possible on island** for the sick and injured, to remove the stress, complications and costs involved in travel. As part of this, Covid 19 measures have shown how video conferencing and virtual appointments are viable in many cases.
- **We must invest in our mental health professionals and support networks,** to ensure the long term improvement in our nation's mental health. 25% of children have suffered **adverse childhood experiences (ACE's)**, such as poverty, abusive relationships, parental unemployment, addiction, etc. This is one of the biggest reasons why adults and children have mental health problems. Our frontline services are struggling to manage the volumes of adults and children suffering from the cumulative effects of childhood trauma. Organisations such as "Towards Discovery", are part of the solution to educate and train our community. This is coherent with my education strategy and the development of life skills training. I will be championing the government's support for "Towards Discovery" to improve the lives of young people in the community. This will help adults and children build the resilience they need to deal with adverse experiences, when they happen, or to cope after they have been through them.
- **I fully support the development of a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) on island,** to offer forensic examination and onward referral relating to serious crime, specifically in relation to adult and child sexual assault and rape victims. Currently adults and children who have been victims of sexual assault have to travel off island for medical examination and the support services. Imagine a victim of a serious sexual assault, having to board a plane to be examined in the UK, and the additional unnecessary trauma this would inflict. This is unacceptable.

FRONTLINE SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Community Policing/Law and Order

- **I fully support the Isle of Man Constabulary's approach to community policing** and we are lucky to have the safest jurisdiction in the British Isles, despite an increase in reported crimes. I believe that community policing needs full use and support of mental health professionals now more than ever. I will work closely with all areas of the community, the police and other agencies, to better understand how poverty, drug addiction, homelessness, and other factors lead to crime, and therefore address the underlying causes and work towards an even safer island for all of us.
- **There is a need for our Police Force to have a formal Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)**, which should follow the same guidelines in the UK and Europe. As crime increases, so does the violent nature of crime, the likes of which we have not seen on the island before. It will give confidence to our society in the event of serious incidents, such as death, serious injury, or serious corruption. We need this in place urgently in order that the process is established before a serious incident occurs. We have an obligation as a fair society to protect our force and citizens.
- **I support the Sexual Offences and Obscene Publications Bill 2019**, currently making its way through the legislature, and welcome the changes the legislation will bring; modernising and consolidating the law in relation to sexual offences, making new provision for such offences, their prevention and the protection of children from harm and other sexual acts.

Infrastructure

- **Regeneration is key to improving Douglas South.** I am fully committed to represent the residents of Spring Valley with regards to the refurbishment/redevelopment, which has gone on far to long. **I will work closely and collaboratively with Douglas Borough Council to find an early resolution in Spring Valley**, and to better represent all constituents concerns. I will provide a collective voice for present and future regeneration developments.
- **Many parents with children who want to return to the island following higher education, or school leavers, have expressed a concern of the lack of affordable housing.** This needs to be investigated and will be part of my longer term strategy for housing, supporting young people, and encouraging graduates back to the island.
- **Some of the roads and pavements in Douglas South are in a shocking state** and pose a risk to our community and particularly our vulnerable. Additional speed limit reminders are required to ensure safety, particularly as we have many young families in our constituency. I will address this directly with DOI, and ensure that a timeline is established to improve these areas.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Infrastructure cont...

- **We need to better resource the planning department, to reduce waiting times and increase the turnaround of planning applications**, using technology, while ensuring that a strict process and guidelines are adhered to, protecting our island, communities and natural beauty. We need to be more self sufficient, and as such I will push for up-skilling our planning inspectors, as opposed to relying on expensive support from the UK – promoting local skills and jobs.
- **There are many lessons to be learned from the Douglas Promenade redevelopment.** Capital projects need to be much better planned from the outset in all respects. The impact on local residents, local businesses, parking, transport routes, traffic, and utilities infrastructure all need to be considered in detail before any projects are instigated. An impact assessment must be completed and communicated transparently, coupled with proactive government financial support to businesses (if required) before any work starts. Strict penalty clauses should be included in government contracts so that the taxpayer gets value for money, and is not having to fund additional costs when mistakes are made or the contractor falls behind (unless it's with agreed and valid reasons).
- **I want to see more emphasis on improving the existing housing stock, and regenerating derelict sites rather than developing our green belt.**

The Environment

- **I fully support recycling**, and will work closely with Douglas Borough Council to improve the recycling strategy, and expand and encourage greater use of the current schemes such as kerbside recycling and the Civic Amenity Site, to make Douglas South the number one constituency for recycling.
- **The Biosphere status must continue to be protected and promoted** and impact on the environment considered in everything we do, including a significant reduction in single use plastics within an aggressive timeline.
- **I want to see an end to power generation by fossil fuel.** I also want to see cheaper fuel. Our climate change agenda needs to move from words to action.
- **Renewable energy for the island will dramatically reduce living costs and make us truly self-sufficient.** The renewable energy industry provides reliable power supplies and self-sufficiency, whilst reducing the need for imported fuels. This sector is one of huge growth, and is an opportunity for the Island, which will benefit the environment, while stimulating the economy, and creating jobs.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Summary

Age 46, born Douglas Isle of Man, and have lived in Douglas South with my husband for 6 years. Attained a degree in Fashion Design and Marketing, 1/3 of a Master's Degree in Education, and I am a qualified teacher and successful businesswoman.

Policies

- I want to see focus on small businesses, the heart of our community and backbone of our economy.
- Protect Manx jobs and create new opportunities for island residents
- Scrutiny of the monopoly or near monopoly service providers
- Shared parental leave
- Index linking the state pension
- Establishing a Sovereign Fund of prudent investments
- A future government which is streamlined, efficient, and transparent
- Deliver a 0-5 years pre-school within Douglas South and a review of pre-school credits
- Improve our health and well being as a preventative measure to sickness and health issues
- Invest in our mental health professionals and support networks
- Development of a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) on island
- A formal Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)
- Improve the roads and pavements in Douglas South
- Renewable energy for the island
- Champion the needs of the elderly, the young and the vulnerable across the constituency
- I will work for a better relationship between constituents, Douglas Corporation, and local MHK's
- I want to be judged on what I deliver and not on what I say

HOUSE OF KEYS BY ELECTION - DOUGLAS SOUTH THURSDAY 27TH AUGUST

POLLING STATIONS

Polling District 1 - CDGS1

Pulrose Methodist Church, Pulrose Road, Pulrose Douglas

Polling District 2 - CDGS2

Anagh Coar Primary School, Darragh Way, Anagh Coar, Douglas

Polling District 3 - CDGS3

Scoill Vallajeert, Meadow Crescent, Ballaughton, Douglas

If you require transport to any of the polling stations please get in contact. 07624 285556

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