

# *Vote Dobson Smarter, not Harder*

Managing Director of D's Leisure Limited

Chairman of Garff Commissioners

President of the Rotary Club of Onchan 2016/17

President of the Rotary Club of Onchan 2004/05

Hon. Vice President of the Eastern Young Farmers Association

Director of the Laxey and Lonan Heritage Trust

Hon. Treasurer of the Laxey and Lonan Heritage Trust

Director of the Laxey and Lonan Sports and Community Trust

Former Vice Chairman on the Eastern Civic Amenity Board (ECAS)

Former Chairman of Lonan Commissioners

Member of the All Island Waste Management Committee

Member of the Eastern Area Housing Consultative Committee

House of Keys General Election Thursday 22 September 2016

**GARFF**

# **NIGEL Dobson**



***Smarter, not Harder***

### **Can I start with an apology, or should I say an explanation?**

I will not be on the Island in the run up to the election or on election day.

My youngest son, Matthew, is getting married on the 17th September in Hanoi, Vietnam to the lovely Hann. The day is also the 81st Birthday of my Mum who is keen to attend. I am accompanying her to the wedding which involves a 19-hour flight each way. I cannot expect her to fly there, attend the wedding and then fly straight back. In honesty, I might struggle with that myself!

Although I am more than keen to serve you in the House of Keys, I wouldn't miss my Son's wedding for the world. I would like to think that all candidates in this election would make the same decision. Major family events are very special days and I will always put my family first.

I am, however, here for the four years, eleven months and three and a half weeks after the election, and that is when the job needs to be done.

**NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2016**

*Who am I?*

Firstly, can I thank you in advance for reading this leaflet. I am deliberately not calling it a manifesto as a manifesto is a series of pledges and promises of what I will achieve during my term of office if elected.

As an Independent and first time MHK, it is unlikely that I will be at the 'top table' on the 23rd September. And it is in the Council of Ministers that policy will be decided. However, I will use all of my experience both in business and in Local Government and various Boards on which I have sat to try and advance my vision for the future of the Island we all love. Some of those visions are detailed in the following pages.



My name is Nigel Dobson and I've been on the Island since December 1997 when Marilyn, my wife of 20 years, and I came to work for Heron and Brearley as Managers of Molly's Kitchen and Tavern on Harbour Road in Onchan.

In 1998 I was invited to join the Rotary Club of Onchan and was privileged to be their President during Rotary Internationals Centenary Year. I have served the Club in a number of ways since and was invited to again be their President for 2016/17, a post I currently hold.

In 2001 Marilyn and I set up D's Leisure Limited to run a tenancy at the Liverpool Arms in Baldrine. The Company name was chosen in honour of my Mother who when in business was universally known as 'Mrs. D'. In 2005 we were invited by Manx National Heritage to create and open the catering operation at Niarbyl Café in Dalby and seven years ago we won the tender process for the Sound Café, the tea rooms in Cregneash, the Bay Rooms at the Manx Museum.

## *Getting our kids back*

Our children will go to University and see the big wide world. But if our kids do have a career opportunity on the Island we need to encourage them to come back.

I would like to see a scheme where returning students get back through the tax system course fees they have incurred. This would be open to any Manx educated student for up to ten years after completing their higher education. They would be required to have full time employment for a period of time, say two years, contributing to our economy. They would then qualify for a rebate on their tax over a period of time until all course fees have been refunded. This scheme will require proper costing for the full details to be worked out, but I would hope that as our children progress in life and start families, something of this sort would give them an incentive to return.

## *And Finally*

Although away at the time of the election, I will be keeping a close eye on events here on the Island through the internet and social media. On election day I will be listening to the results programme on Manx Radio in my hotel room.

**In the run up to the election I can be contacted by email on [nigel@suremail.im](mailto:nigel@suremail.im) and my Facebook page will be updated if you leave a question.**

I hope to have the opportunity to serve you in the future be it a national or local level.

There will be issues of concern that I have not included in this leaflet. If time and finance allowed, I could write a book. I have tried to include those items that have come up most in my canvassing. Please do contact me if there is an issue you would like my views on.

This can result in some departments having more money than they need but feel the need to spend it.

I would look to move to zero accounting. A little more complex but more efficient.

Departments would be awarded a budget for essential operation and then further funds, if available, for the more desirable projects. This way Tynwald would choose priorities according to funds available rather than 'we need this because we've always had it'. "In business and other jurisdictions considerable savings have proved possible".

### **We are all in this together.**

As to the pension deficit, much has been written and it is a major issue. But I don't believe in criticising for the sake of it. Government has made a substantial start and should be given credit for that. But I have no doubt there is more to be achieved. As a candidate I don't pretend to have an instant solution, but, if elected, I will make it a priority to be fully briefed on where we are to date and will work hard to ensure that the new Government puts in place any measures needed to protect the future of our pension fund beyond 2045.

## *TV Licence*

We, rightly in my view, pay for our TV licences. Until now anyone over 75 has been eligible for a free license. As a result of changes in funding in the UK that has now stopped on the Island. In the UK the BBC now funds the over 75 licences. Surely, if we are expected to pay for the service, we should also receive the benefits of that service on an equal footing.

This is something I promise to investigate if elected. Same fees, same services same benefits please BBC.

## *Our New Constituency*

**Garff is a new constituency. An ancient sheading that was required to supply a certain number of soldiers if Britain was at War.**

**Onchan was in the Sheading of Middle.**

**The two are now confused. I am Chairman of the new Garff Authority and yet a resident of Onchan. Some people in Onchan feel confused and disenfranchised.**

**I am sure that all of my fellow candidates are aware of this.**



The principal of all constituencies on the Island having equal representation is something I fully support, each vote across our land should have equal value. That wasn't the case under the old system. Drink at the Liverpool Arms one vote, at the Manx Arms three votes, at the Quarterbridge, two votes.

The system is now right, but Tynwald got the naming of constituencies wrong. Howstrake, Lakeside and Onchan Parish have never been part of Garff, nor should they be.

My first duty, if elected and learning my trade, will be to ask leave to introduce a Private Members Bill to introduce a new name for our constituency that is all inclusive. This may seem trivial to some. But I will represent ALL of my constituents. And I will learn how to draw up a bill for the challenges that face us.

## *Why am I standing?*

Firstly, I think I have something to offer. I am well-travelled, have circled the globe twice by the time I was 23 which, I believe, gave me valuable life experience. My business experience is varied and I have had failures as well as successes, learning from failure is important in life and I think I have learned.

I enjoy public service, both in political and voluntary life and will continue regardless of the outcome of this election.

Also, I have enjoyed a good quality of life since I moved to the Island and I would like to give something back.

## *Political Experience*

**I have always had an interest in politics. In 1974 I canvassed for Steve Ross, the Liberal Candidate on the Isle of Wight who was successful in getting elected to Westminster. In 1976 I stood as a Liberal Candidate for Leicester City Council, my home town, and was beaten into 4th place by the National Front. Not my proudest moment.**

On moving to the Island, I took an interest in Island politics and stood for Garff at the 2006 House of Keys election. Steve Roden retained his seat. In 2007 I was elected to Lonan Commissioners of which I have been Chairman twice.

In 2011 I again stood for Garff at the House of Keys election and again came second to Steve.

With the formation of the new Garff Authority in May of this year I was elected as Chairman unopposed.

I currently sit on the Island's Waste Management Committee, the Eastern Area Housing Consultative Committee. I have served on the Cooil Roi Housing Board, been Vice Chairman of the Eastern Area Civic Amenity Committee along with various other committees over the years



Our Civil Servants and business advisors are to be commended for the work they have done. I have confidence that in years to come we will identify new markets to come to the Island and contribute to our economy.

Our overall economy has grown by 4% in the last year and sectors of our economy have grown in double digits, that must mean that some sectors are in recession.

Our tax take has increased by under 2% and that's what pays the bills.

By hyping growth for the feel good factor we are ignoring the fact that many of our local industries are struggling. The fact that the Sefton Group needed bailing out, right or wrong, shows that local industries have problems. We need to identify those sectors and try to help them grow. We changed the tax system to 0-10 to create a level playing field, perhaps we now need to give small local businesses a hand up.



In times of hardship we should all share the burden. Minister Teare announced in this year's budget a 1% for public sector pay increase. That excludes teachers, Doctors nurses etc. The Unions have asked for 4%.

### **That is their job.**

Minister Shimmim, rather than negotiating hard, has put it out to arbitration. Time will tell what the result is, but for every percentage point the arbitrator adds to the pay award it will cost £1.3 million every year, forever. The private sector can't afford these awards and those that work in the public sector need all of the health and education benefits that this money could contribute towards.

**Then there are departmental budgets.** Historically departments are allocated a budget based on the previous year and awarded any cost of living increase allowed by Treasury.

## Policing

I am on record as saying that we have a good Police force. And we do. Our crime rate is very low and the Island is a safe place to live. It is important that we maintain their budget as best we can so that they can keep our environment the envy of our neighbours.

I am in favour of providing the latest technology to ensure that, when crime does raise its head, our police force have the best possible opportunity to catch those responsible.

On a personal note, I have always found our police officers courteous, professional and of a high standard in all of my dealings with them through licensing and other courts.

## Economy

And if you have read this so far, It's the economy – Stupid.

A quote that was distorted from an internal memo during Bill Clinton's first campaign for President of the United States.

All that I have written before will require good management and sound finances. Without a growing economy we can't pay for any of it.

Firstly, let's be honest about our economy. We have had 30 plus years of overall growth. When the finance sector first came to the Island it led to an unprecedented period of growth. In recent years banking has reduced but other sections have improved.

Ten years ago the eGaming and ecommerce markets were new to the Island. PokerStars employed a handful of people. Now we have some of the major players based here to the extent a question asked of candidates often is "do we rely on them too much?" Our history of finding new markets and providing those markets with the right regulatory environment to trade around the world is second to none.

## Education

Our pupil to teacher ratio is better than in most parts of the adjacent Isles. We should be proud of that. Our exam result compare well. Our children learn in a safe and secure environment. But some of our IT equipment is out of date, our budgets for text books is under pressure. Money is short at the moment and for a number of years to come, but the building blocks of education must be maintained. Our children are our future.

But the thing that concerns me most is that we have lost our pre-school funding. Those early years are important for our children, and also their parents. Some on the Island can afford to pay for this service, and some can't. It is an area where I could support means testing so that our less well-off have the opportunity to give their children the best possible start in life. **Our children are our future.**

## Air and Sea

I do believe in an open sky's policy. Government cannot own landing slots in UK airports. We had Manx Airlines as a sole provider, a very good provider, but they sold to BA and we lost our Heathrow slots. If we have the market, providers will supply. However, we could look at serving penalties on airlines that consistently fail to meet their promises.

As to sea services, we are a small Island that relies on reliable connections to both the UK and Ireland. Many candidates across the Island have talked about tourism during this campaign. It's my industry. Affordable, reliable and frequent services are essential.

But equally important are the freight services. We have all been into our local store and found fresh food and vegetables in short

supply because ferries didn't sail. That will never change. We live in the middle of the Irish Sea.

But our exports are as important as our lack of bananas on the shelf.

Whoever we choose to supply our sea services in the future, and this will be decided in the next parliament, fair freight prices must be agreed.

As an example, and my figures are not factual but realistic. If we send to the UK a container of goods it costs around £800. If that container, taking up the same space, weighing the same, contains livestock, the figure is around £2000. 15 Beef cows are now uneconomical to export. Whoever we do the deal of a monopoly with, let's include a condition of fares that ensure our exporters have a fair deal.





Our health service, like many around the world is under pressure. We will never have enough money to provide everything all of the people want, but we should provide the best service we can for the money available.

It is my belief that our Primary care system is underfunded. Primary care is our GP's, practise nurses, district nurses etc. In other jurisdictions there are minor procedures that are regularly performed at your GP's surgery. This removes pressure from our hospitals. But we have a shortage of GP's and some of those surgeries are struggling to make ends meet. I know of at least two surgeries that have received emergency funding to stay open. This should not be happening. Ten days plus is often required for a routine appointment and this shouldn't be happening.



We need to look at the packages we are offering new GP's coming to the Island to ensure we can recruit to the levels required. At Nobles hospital we have many fine doctors and nurses and a hard working administrative staff. But morale is low. Work has started on computerising patient records but progress is slow. This in turn slows down results and therefore treatments.

We should have a system up and running so that when you go for an X-ray, that is put into the system and instantly available to any medical professional that needs access to it, whether you are receiving treatment here or in the UK. The system exists, a start has been made, but we need to get up to date. There is a cost, but with the savings once it is in place – and being used by all – the benefits will soon become apparent.

We also need to look at our administrative system. Consultants have told me that they could see more patients if more appointments could be made. Waiting lists are something that upset us all when the need

for treatment arises, and waiting list initiatives are great to cut them down. But if the system is the same once the lists have been reduced, they will only build back up again.

And then there is bed blocking. Care in the community needs funding. This doesn't involve extra spending as there are people in hospital costing fortunes to look after who would be better in care homes, costing less, with a better quality of life. Smarter, not harder.

We don't need our staff to **work harder**, just give them the tools to **work smarter**.

## *Local Government*

I, along with one or two of my fellow Commissioners have spent nearly a decade in creating the new Authority of Garff, the first reform of Local Government on the Island since the 19th Century. This was done by consensus rather than top down enforcement. While it is early days, the new Authority of Garff (not to be confused with the constituency of Garff) seems to be working well. It is better placed to be able to deal with the new responsibilities and duties that have already been devolved from Tynwald and is well positioned to cope with other areas that will come their way.

And we are not afraid to take the lead either. As I am writing this we have approached Government requesting a pilot scheme where they allocate us the budget for our public right of way maintenance and then the Authority can choose its priorities and, I believe, will do a better job with better value for money.

I would encourage other small authorities to follow our example, and assist them in any way I can. Let's help them to work **smarter**, **not harder**.

