

For those of you that know me, there is absolutely no need to introduce myself, you know of me and my background, warts and all.

I am offering myself for re-election because I believe that I still have a lot to offer you as we move into what is probably going to be a critical time for our Islands.

I don't think that I have changed in these last four years, I still stand for common sense, plain speaking and still have no allegiances to any business interests – the only allegiance that I have and will always have is to my country and people. You are what this is all about. I am very much an ordinary Falkland Islander, born, bred and educated here. I still hold down a full time job and also now only one part time job. If elected, the full time job will have to go. The country gets my full attention.

I am sure that I will miss out some topics that are dear to some people hearts but alas time dictates that I must be brief. If I do miss anything then give me a shout or stop me as you see me tottering down the road or around the stores. I am only too happy to stop and chat. There is also Facebook, leave a message and I will respond.

I am long enough in the tooth to know that it is a fool who promises that they will change this and change that, for you are but one of eight and it may well be that you and your views are in a minority and you do not get your own way – some you win, some you lose, however here are my thoughts and positions on a few matters.

The referendum was, thanks to you, a huge success. We can now journey the world saying without a shadow of a doubt what the population of our country feels on the most basic and important issue – what we wish for the sovereignty of our country. However, although I never thought of it this way back when we were plotting the referendum, it seems to me that the referendum has given us a much greater self confidence and political maturity and was a starting point in a new chapter in the Falklands political history. I believe that we must now use this opportunity not only to forcefully put our message out to the rest of the world and counter the untruths that are spread around by the argentinians but also we must now work greater vigour to take even more control of our country.

Our constitution, as I have said on a number of occasions is in my view out of whack with reality and requires another overhaul. This would not be an overnight process and would require many years but we have to start some time and I believe this is the time.

External relations and the work we have started in talking to other governments and bodies is vital and must continue. We already have that would be colonial neighbour of ours on the back foot. Those of you who know me will know that I have absolutely no intention of giving one inch of my country to any foreign power, nor will I be forced or bullied into doing anything that would compromise our future. If that makes me slightly hard line then so be it. This new, pro-active approach that we have started suits me down to the ground, we played the silent victim for far too long and I have no problems with going head to head with the argentine government. Our approach is very slowly changing opinion. It will not be an overnight success but must be carried on with equal vigour. We have truth and justice on our side and we will prevail. The quicker those across the water can get their heads around that, the better for them. That said, I have no problems with us, the Falkland Islands government talking to the argentinians about issues that are of mutual concern, such as fisheries but we will do so as equals and as the legitimate Government of the Falkland Islands.

We must continue to strengthen and broaden our economy. The potential hydrocarbons industry is already helping this but we must not become complacent and must seek out every opportunity, no matter how small to bring even greater diversity. Every penny into our economy and job opportunity counts

Oil is, as I have said, is already bringing changes to our country and our economy and allowing us to start spending greater amounts on our infrastructure, finally giving inflation plus wage increases etc. This must continue but at a pace that is affordable, it is no good, in my humble opinion over-reaching ourselves, starting to spend more than we have, depleting our reserves and hoping that oil is going to happen. I believe oil will happen but there are still plenty of opportunities for something to go wrong and I do not want us to be left in a position where we have spent irresponsibly, used a great part of our reserves and have no great hope of returning monies to those reserves. The income from the investment of our reserves contribute a fair amount of income that allow us to keep services etc at the level that we are accustomed to. I do not want us to suddenly find that we haven't enough money coming in and have to look at raising taxes or cutting back on services. Let's be sensible, take it easy and pace ourselves until we are sure of the income from hydrocarbons.

This is our oil. It is a finite resource and we must make sure that every local company and person who wishes and has the aptitude can take part and prosper from it. I will vehemently oppose any efforts to place any obstacles in the way to our participation whether by the business sector or individuals. There has to be a free flow of labour with no artificial bars or restrictions on earning levels. That would be, in my view discriminatory and probably unconstitutional. This will probably mean an upheaval in the labour market but so be it.

The next four to eight years are going to be pivotal as to what the Falklands will be like in the future. Decisions made in that time will affect us for generations to come. Part of it will be about control, not just of the hydrocarbons industry, and we must control it and not the other way around but also politically. I suspect that as we become richer, there may be moves by some outside of the Falklands to try and exert greater control over our internal self government and the monies that we accrue – I can promise you that I will resist any moves in that direction most forcefully. It is our country and our monies and it will be us, the people of the Falklands who decided how they are distributed.

As we move forwards and the situation becomes clearer we as a country have to take a view on what we wish to do with what will be quite considerable amounts of income.

I will continue to urge colleagues to increase wages back to where they should be. This can be through both straight wage increases and also adjustments to the tax thresholds. Whilst I am still and always will be very much on the side of the working person, I hope that the last four years have shown the business sector that I am not out to scupper them. We, as employees depend on them, just as much as the employer depends on us the employees. I want to see both sides prosper.

I am happy to see the minimum wage legislation put in place. I suspect the rate is not correct but work is ongoing on that and I am sure we will get there. If elected, I would like to see an overhaul of the workers protection ordinance and the inclusion of statutory sick and holiday pay.

I will also, if elected, keep pushing for effective legislation covering noise nuisance. People have a right to be able to get a decent night's sleep.

Bureaucracy and convoluted systems is still a major bugbear of mine and if elected I will do my very best to attack them, whenever I come across them.

Training and succession planning. In some areas this has been going ahead quietly and successfully but in others (like the Secretariat) it seems not to be working. Although I recognize that with oil comes greater opportunities in the private sector and I would never stand in anyone's way who wants to further or change their careers by leaving government, I believe that the FIG have not done enough to up its game. More must be done to better pay and treat the workforce that we have. We must also create positions that allow our people to understudy those in post – there must be knowledge transfer to our people. Training is another area that, if what I am hearing over these last couple of weeks is true (and I believe it is) needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Only by training our people, then rewarding them as they should be, can we ever hope to have Islanders (and those who have made the Falkland their home) in complete charge at all levels, something that is politically important as we move forward. I am not contractor bashing, they are doing what we pay them to do, and indeed some are doing far more than we should really be asking, but is it correct that we for some reason cannot train our own people to take top positions in some areas ?. Something seems to be very wrong.

I remain very sceptical about the proposals that came out of the immigration review and feel that some proposals are not in the interests of the Falklands or the core population here. I remain firmly of the opinion that the gentle approach to immigration that we have now is the correct one. It allows for complete assimilation and integration. We are lucky that here, unlike other countries there is not an "us and them" situation between the core population and new immigrants – and I want to keep it that way. We must be welcoming, be fair but at the end of the day we must protect our core population.

As I said four years ago, medical and health are cornerstones that have my full support. Could we do better? I think we could. I am afraid though that we have to face the reality that the medical service is not going to cost us less, in fact I can only see costs rising as expectations on the Falklands increase. I am though hopeful that with hydrocarbons and the increased income and population levels, we can start putting even more money into medical services and perhaps start doing more here on the Falklands.

I was always uncomfortable with the £300 overseas medical treatment charge and would be happy to see the back of it.

Education is vitally important to our country. Only through education can we realise the dream of having Falkland Islanders (and the children of those who have chosen to make the Falklands their home) in the very forefront both within FIG but also in the private sector. Something that is politically very important. We have to accept that not every child will have the aptitude or indeed the desire to leave the Falklands and pursue academic careers but I believe that every child has a talent and must be nurtured.

Sport is also very important and has my support. Sport works at all levels, from the medical angle through to social and political. Every sports person who has been away has through their very presence spread awareness of our country. A running track, indoor rifle range and area for the pursuit of archery are all areas that I have heard mention and I look forward to firm proposals making their way through the system.

We must always remember that Stanley is not the Falklands. We must continue to support camp. We do already pump a lot of money in to the camp via the ferry, FIGAS and the abattoir, which is quite correct. We must continue to assist the camp to grow and if possible diversify. At FIDC we see more loan applications for just this sort of thing. Whilst supporting diversification and offering advice, we must not dictate. The population of camp must be the main drivers of how they go forward.

The Darwin road is an old chestnut that I would like to address. Is it a national embarrassment? In my view, yes. Could we afford to do it in one go? Yes we could. Would we have to really raid the reserves to get it done? Yes we would. Could that have an effect on us? Yes it could as the monies from the investment of those reserves helps fund the core services of the government which we all take for granted. If oil were not to happen in the time that we expect then we could find ourselves with a nice shiny road and less money coming in which could impact on our quality of life, which is why I have always favoured a gradual approach, doing so much a year. I believe this can work and if monies start coming in from hydrocarbon production in a few years then we can up the pace or do it in one go. I would go further than that. I do not want to see the surfaced road stop at MPA but continue beyond there and onto the West until we have the spine roads done. We will also have to take a view on the method we would use. Bitumen is becoming horrendously expensive so it may be that concrete will be the way to go.

I am not willing to pour cash into a permanent port or act as a guarantor or underwriter to any private sector loans for such a project until I can see the monies coming in. I do not want to go down in history as one of the people who bankrupt the Falklands and took away the future of our young people. Unlike most countries we do not have a national debt and that is the way I want to keep it.

I believe we will have to take a pragmatic approach to any temporary port. If our port is not ready in time then we must let the temporary port stay in place until the permanent one is ready to go. We have to be fair.

There are large capital works heading our way. There will have to be a new power station in the very near future with or without oil. This will be eye wateringly expensive, the fire brigade will have to be moved before their building falls on their heads and of course there is the case of eight semi homeless MLA's to be thought of plus also a real desire to have a purpose built, properly staffed old folks home. This project will of course have an effect on the recurrent budget through staff costs etc and a proper analysis should be undertaken as to what effects it would have. There is also the new school, or extension to the old one or whatever may be chosen. I made a promise that this project would have my full support and it is a promise that I have no intention of breaking. Once the fire brigade is moved then that will leave a wonderfully large, central space to be built on and I would like to see sections like Customs & Immigration moved in there and become more accessible. I may be old fashioned but we must look after our employees.

Stanley roads also are starting to crack up. We will have to possibly think about increasing our efforts to renew them but it is a balancing act. We only have a certain amount of money and people so concentrating on one project often means that another has to take a back seat.

We are making good headway on providing plots at Sappers Hill but I will always support the building of a number of council houses each year. This programme must not be stopped and indeed if we can, it should be accelerated and new FIG posts must not be allowed to eat into the pool of housing for locals as it is at the moment. We must look after our own people.

I firmly believe that our economy is sound enough to re-introduce the old pound a day scheme that allowed those who qualified to either travel off Islands or indeed use it around the Falklands. I like this scheme as a way of returning some monies to our population as it is a great leveller, no matter if you are the richest businessman or the poorest member of our community you get the same amount. It should also be remembered that this scheme was also starting to help with local tourism here in the Falklands with people choosing to holiday at home.

I do wonder whether we are right to be so shy about using referenda to find out what people are thinking and wanting. There are issues that arise that are contentious, such as time change or wiggly roads versus a grid system (like old Stanley has) and the way forward might be to put them to a referendum. Whether these should be done ad hoc or perhaps be scheduled to happen, say, every two years is a point for debate.

We are now moving to full time MLA's. To me this makes it even more important that whoever you vote in continues to receive ideas and guidance from you the public. We are there to serve you and you must keep us informed as to your wishes.

We in turn must continue with public consultations and making as much as we can of what we do public. We must see more debates in Legco, more dissemination of information via the web and other media outlets. There will need to be a review of the FIG policy towards the use of the internet as I believe MLA's will need unfettered access to media such as Twitter and Facebook, something that they cannot access at the moment unless they use their own private accounts a situation which is bonkers.

Finally I would urge everyone who can to get out there and vote on the 7th. I hope that one of your votes is for me but even if it is not, democracy is a precious thing, via your vote you can help shape the future of our Islands so please use it.

I believe we have a very good economy, a great little country and a wonderful future. I believe I am a common sense, straight talking, pragmatic Falkland Islander and I promise that if elected I will continue to give everything I have to serve both you the people of the Falkland Islands and our country. Together we can make a difference.