

John Birmingham

I am standing to represent the Stanley constituency in this election.
But, if elected, I would represent all who live in the Falklands.

Argentina

The Government's top priority must be security. The present Argentine Government, although outwardly calmer than the previous one, still has the same aim. We must concentrate on strengthening our ties with Britain. It has become apparent that some major politicians seem lukewarm to our rights. We must educate the next generation, including those outside the London circle.

Medical Services

As a community, we have a duty of care to look after the vulnerable and the unwell, including those sent overseas for medical treatment. I am fully in favour of the proposed vulnerable persons' facility and am keen to be involved in the completion of this project. The seriously ill, whilst overseas, should not have to worry about their accommodation arrangements. I believe it is time to investigate the purchase of serviced apartments in key areas. I'd also like to see a more flexible approach to the needs of individuals.

I know that our visiting optician works very hard. Eyecare generally should be better resourced and funded by FIG.

A Healthy Society

Health and fitness are of vital importance to the whole community. I would support investment in multi-use facilities. The site of the new school must be considered when planning. Sporting amenities in Camp should not be forgotten.

Education and Training

A new Infant and Junior School has to be one of the most important projects for the future. We need to move away from temporary buildings and give children a permanent place to study and safe places to play. This will take time but the button needs to be pressed. With increasing numbers moving on to the FICS, proper consideration should also be given to how these students will be accommodated.

A Training Centre, well resourced, would allow more courses to be offered here in the Islands, both academic and practical. There are many people, of all ages, who would benefit. I support the proposed new Training Centre building and hope to see opportunities grow.

The Next Generation

I fully support financial assistance for childcare. Legislation must be accompanied by funding to attract qualified, committed staff whilst helping parents to pay for it.

Capital Projects

We have to be realistic about what can be achieved in a four-year term. My top capital project is a new, permanent power station. A practical replacement for FIPASS is urgently needed. The fire station needs to be re-sited. These, alongside the projects already in the pipeline, should be planned in and moved along, though they may not reach completion in the life of this Assembly.

We need permanent, quality infrastructure. We have the financial resources. Whilst not putting ourselves in the position of having to go "cap-in-hand" to the British Treasury, we should have the confidence to build for the future. With Brexit, large British construction companies are likely to be seeking opportunities outside the UK. We could benefit from further links with Britain to assist with modernising our infrastructure.
And let's not penny-pinching on the finishing touches!

Public Works & Waste Management

I would like to see the reintroduction of the PWD Committee. This is the only area of major Government expenditure without public involvement. It could fulfil the role of the much talked about "Town Council" at little extra administrative cost. What could it do? The Falklands had a proud tradition of re-using and recycling. Let's sort out Eliza Cove! The 2013 Mary Hill Report states "The community will no longer tolerate an ad-hoc approach to waste disposal". A proper waste management system is long overdue. The PWD Committee would be the driver for the scheme. We have a duty of care to our natural surroundings.

Housing

The FIG has some ageing properties, now high maintenance. Selling off these properties, firstly to sitting tenants, should be set alongside a scheme to assist first time buyers with appropriate, affordable housing.

Telecommunications

Telecommunications are fundamental to the development of the Islands. The appointment of an independent regulator should give some confidence for the future but we need to ensure that the provider is held to account.

FIG Workforce

The growth of staff in some sections of the Secretariat is of concern. Some of the new posts, if approved and filled, move the FIG into direct competition with the Development Corporation. The FIG grading system is due an overhaul and the small number of Falkland Islanders within senior ranks of Government is a worry for the future. FIG has to attract and retain talented Islanders.

The Economy

An economy the size of the Falkland Islands is often dependent on factors outside of our control.
We have three important industries.

Fishing should not just be used as a cash-cow. It needs assistance to grow. The introduction of ITQ has been generally successful. Local companies should be given the confidence to re-invest.

An increase in tourist numbers cannot happen unless infrastructure is improved. I support the proposed investments for Gypsy Cove, the most visited place in the Falklands. Any additional flights should build on the existing route.

I would encourage sustainable improvements in the Camp. This includes both agricultural and non-agricultural developments.

When money is tight, the Government, like a family, has to be careful. The FIG has a very healthy bank balance. We need to spend some of this on long overdue, sensible projects.

We must review the pay and conditions of Falkland Island Government employees who have fallen behind others in recent years.

With five votes you, the electorate, can choose a team. I have proven experience, ideas and the ability to work with others. I am always prepared to listen to your views.

ANY QUESTIONS?

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Or stop me in the street