

Dear Voter,

Re: The Port Erin Board of Commissioners ~ A By Election to Fill Two Vacant Seats

Thursday, December 8th, 2022

It is my intention to stand for one of the above vacant seats. As I am new to local politics, I shall have a lot to learn and will therefore listen quite a lot, both to yourselves as ratepayers and to the current Board of Commissioners. However, I am here to try and make a difference ~ I'm sure that not only will I succeed, but I will hopefully bring positive change to life in Port Erin.

About me

My name is David Silvester and I have lived in Colby for almost thirty years. I enjoyed a solid grammar school education followed by thirty years working in the construction industry. The 1980s heralded the beginning of my love affair with the Isle of Man when my tender to fully restore the pavement canopy to the Gaiety Theatre was accepted. In 2002 I joined King William's College for ten years as Technical Supervisor to the building maintenance team. The most recent decade has been devoted full time, to my life long passion of professional photography.

Why am I standing ?

With the advent of semi retirement, I have the time, knowledge and experience to help both the village and the villagers of Port Erin ! I can help with understanding building contracts, project management and finance control. I see myself as a great asset to the current Board of Commissioners. I have been encouraged stand for election by many former Commissioners to Port Erin.

What can I offer Port Erin ?

Housing

Public sector housing in Port Erin is in need of a major maintenance programme. I would seek guidance as to who is financially and practically responsible for the various building maintenance tasks, and evaluate a comprehensive scheme. I would like to try and understand, help and reduce the rent arrears problem and hopefully reduce this financial burden to the ratepayers. My common sense approach will hopefully help reduce costs and improve services. I would have preferred to see affordable housing being built on the new 'glamping' site over wig wams and wooden huts. I will pursue vigorously the starter/affordable home scheme within any new housing proposals.

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Finance

I would like to encourage a greater clarity in the Board's finance systems thus allowing the ratepayer to understand exactly where income is coming from and exactly where the expenditure goes.

I would seek to improve budget control and accounting transparency.

I would encourage more collaboration with other Authority workforces to save costs ?

Household Rates

The rateable value for properties in Port Erin is set at 331 pence in the pound for the 2022/23 period.

The equivalent for neighbouring Arbory & Rushen is 147, less than half !

I believe in a fairer, all Island rating system to replace the valuation system that has been in operation for over fifty years !

The greater transparency I seek in budget control would maybe highlight high cost areas and therefore emphasise potential savings to the ratepayer.

Waste management

I would like to investigate and gain an greater insight into the waste management procedures in Port Erin.

I would seek to understand the complicated nature of the Southern Amenity Site's management systems.

Is the Port Erin refuse collection service economical ? Is it possible to collaborate with other authorities or even employ a sub contractor ?

I would like to investigate the possibility of a subsidised kerbside collection facility of recyclable waste ~ at least for a trial period and in an attempt to reduce the amount of unnecessary waste going through the Southern Amenity Site.

During these challenging times, why not allow the taking of firewood from the Southern Amenity Site ? ~ Naturally, at the customer's own risk.

Remember, the ratepayer has to finance the delivery of waste material from the Southern Amenity Site to the Energy from Waste plant in Douglas.

Are commercial customers paying enough to dispose waste materials at the Southern Amenity Site ? ~ Who does the calculations ?

The Southern Area Swimming Pool

Difficult decisions have to be made with regard to the Swimming Pool operation in Castletown. It is currently not economically viable.

As I understand, the fees paid by Port Erin ratepayers toward the Southern Swimming Pool have not increased since being set by Tynwald in 1978.

Also, the predicted lifespan of the pool facility in 1978, was forty to fifty years.

To keep the facility, these fees must rise, alongside contributions from other southern authorities, however, did you know that Douglas and Onchan ratepayers do not pay toward the NSC facilities ?

There are difficult decisions to be made, but remember, the elderly, the infirm, 'mums'n tots' and the schools, all use this facility, not just the walk in customers.

Port Erin Bay

The bay of Port Erin is one of the most beautiful to be found anywhere and I am keen to help to preserve this, alongside the built heritage.

I will be keen to ask questions about the progress relative to the trio of eyesores, namely 'Traie Meanagh Swimming Baths', the old 'Marine Biological Station' and the Department of Infrastructure's yard beyond.

I began the recent social media campaign to save the original Cosy Nook Cafe. Our associated petition of over 2,500 signatures was instrumental toward the property being saved from the bulldozers.

The recent various and expensive plans for this area have been nothing short of ridiculous !

The north side of the beach used to be a haven for families and with the new beach huts, the marriage would have been perfect. It makes no sense to add evening time noise levels to the densely populated areas, namely the Promenade above the Cosy Nook site.

I would be keen to sensibly keep alcohol facilities to the south of the Strand Road/ Shore Road junction and restore family life to the north end.

I understand the latest task for our tourist department is to attract families to the Isle of Man ?

Teenagers need space ~ two public shelters have recently disappeared but thankfully, it no longer rains in Port Erin !

I have concerns over the piecemeal development of 'additions' to the beach area ~ good so far, but I consider a greater collective control and management of the overall project is necessary to maintain a balance for the future.

The New Castle Rushen High School

I will be keen to push the fight for this facility to be built as soon as possible.

I will add pressure to ensure there is adequate capacity for the school children of Port Erin, both now and well into the future.

The 'Glamping' Site

The decision has been made to progress this and work is underway. I respect this. However, I would be keen to analyse and monitor the capital costs of this project, including the various leasehold agreements, running costs and the associated value for money toward the Port Erin ratepayer.

The 'Pop up Huts'

The new retail units are a good and welcome idea.

I would hope to establish that both the siting and letting of these units are not detrimental to the existing traders and businesses in Port Erin during these testing times.

Will they become 'costs effective' once storage, maintenance and 'non lets' are all taken into account ?

In summary ...

I would like to add that I am not afraid of decision making, conflict resolution or responsibility.

I have a reputation for reporting in black or white ~ no grey areas !

I believe that holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest and I will be keen to pursue this. I will be keen to highlight and rectify any 'conflicts of interest'.

I will be seeking total transparency in both efficiency and finances.

During these few days, I will be canvassing for your support, but if I am unable to meet with you and you have any questions or comments, I would be happy to speak with you.

My telephone number is **309209** and my email address is: **info@ballavere.im**

I look forward to hearing from you and maybe being trusted with your valuable vote on December the 8th.

Thank you for reading my Manifesto.

Kindest regards, best wishes and many thanks,

David Silvester

VOTE Silvester X

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