

VOTE



YOUTH & EXPERIENCE



PLEASE GIVE ME ONE OF YOUR VOTES ON 27TH APRIL 2016

Dear Vale voter

My name is Matt Fallaize. I have been a member of the States as one of your representatives since 2008. Thank you for the generous support you have offered me – it is a privilege to serve you. I respectfully request that you consider casting one of your votes for me when the Vale goes to the polls on 27th April.

This manifesto outlines my record as a Vale deputy and explains the principles and policies I wish to pursue over the next four years if you re-elect me to the States. I would continue to work full-time and with absolute commitment and integrity on your behalf.

Most parishioners will receive this manifesto by post because I know some of you will be making an early postal vote. However I will be walking the whole of our parish between now and polling day to meet as many parishioners as possible. If you are out when I call, or wish to discuss anything sooner, please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience.

Tel: 241333, E-mail: mattfallaize@cwgsy.net
Au-dessous du Moulin, Hougue du Moulin, Vale
www.mattfallaize.com

My approach to politics is not defensive – trying so hard not to upset anyone that nothing ever gets done. I doubt there is a single elector who hasn't disagreed with something I have said or done. And I certainly don't claim to have got everything right – refusing ever to admit to one's shortcomings and errors is a sign not of strength but of weakness.

I believe that Vale voters want their deputies to be determined and forthright. I also believe they want them to be positive and constructive and I have worked hard to build consensus with colleagues across the political spectrum because no deputy can ever achieve anything alone.

Populist rhetoric and dogma of the left or right are of little use in Guernsey politics. What matters is getting things done for our parish and our island and that demands co-operation and pragmatic, inclusive leadership.

I am the youngest member of the States but I have learned a great deal from serving two terms as your deputy. If re-elected, I will put my energy and experience to good use advancing policies which promote: prosperity and stability; social protection; opportunity and inclusion; and a strong community.

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www.mattfallaize.com



I was born just off the Bridge. We moved to the Vale when I was six and I have lived in this parish ever since. I was educated at Vale School and Elizabeth College. I am 34. Nikki and I have been married for 11 years. We have two children – Joshua (9) and Amelia (6) – who are at Vale Primary School. Nikki works in IT at Elizabeth College.



Serving the Vale

AFTER years of wrangling, the issue of how much golf clubs should pay to use L'Ancrese Common has finally been resolved.

Thanks to the diplomatic skills of Deputy Matt Fallaize and other Vale deputies the two sides have been persuaded to come to an agreement.

It is no doubt helped concentrate the minds of all.
Cutting taken from the Opinion column of The Guernsey Press 19.03.2016

It was a privilege to lead a small group of Vale deputies in bringing together good people from both the Vale Commons Council and the two golf clubs. It is a fair deal which promotes sport, protects public use of the Commons and secures the maintenance of the Commons for the next 25 years.

I aim to be an approachable and responsive Vale deputy. I have pursued personal cases for many parishioners on matters as diverse as planning applications, school admissions, road safety, social housing and the operation of the tip at Mont Cuet. If re-elected, I will continue to make available as much time as necessary for local duties to Vale parishioners. An early task would be to press for the action necessary to improve water quality at Pembroke.

Reform of the States & IWV

At the 2012 election I said: "Above all I am asking for your support to allow me to lead reform of the States." You were good enough to support me and, working with colleagues, I did lead reform of the States.

A new senior committee – the Policy & Resources Committee – will bring together the co-ordination of policy and resources and external relations. There will be fewer committees with broader responsibilities. Scrutiny will be strengthened. The trading bodies will have a more commercial focus. The number of deputies will be reduced by 15%, saving the taxpayer around £1 million in the next States' term. Senior officers will be more accountable to the committees they serve. These reforms come into effect on 1st May.

In the next States I would like to continue to make the case for a referendum on island-wide voting. I don't mean another consultation exercise. I mean you – the people of Guernsey – determining your electoral system for 2020. If re-elected, I will seek a position from which I can work with like-minded colleagues to deliver a well-organised, binding referendum.

Social Protection



Retaining our values

Guernsey must continue to be a compassionate, cohesive and aspirational society in which responsibility is encouraged and individuals and families are supported through schemes of social protection. It is also economically as well as socially desirable that we should enjoy high standards of health and social care.

In pursuit of these aims the States spend around £350 million a year, which is approximately 60% of all public expenditure. The vast majority of this is spent on old age pensions, medicines, residential and nursing care, the specialist health scheme and the hospital.

The huge challenges presented by demographic changes in the years ahead must be met without destroying the values upon which our forefathers built our compassionate society. This will require a thoughtful and balanced approach to policy-making, rigorous prioritisation, transformation of services and courage in making hard and at times less than popular decisions.

Pensions

Ideally the old age pension should rise in line with earnings, but at the very least its purchasing power should be maintained in association with decent long-term non-contributory benefits for less well-off pensioners.

I have consistently backed proposals gradually to raise the retirement age. Although not universally popular, it is preferable to the other options: further substantial increases to contribution rates or swingeing cuts to pensions. However, this policy has now been taken as far as is reasonably possible.

There are around 25,000 people of working age who are making no private pension provision. This poses significant risks to those individuals and public finances. The next States must have the courage to introduce the secondary pension scheme developed during the present term.

Health & social care

In 2015 the States opened a new mental health and wellbeing facility at the Oberlands, bringing this hitherto Cinderella service into the 21st century. However, many people, including substantial numbers of children and young adults, continue to suffer poor mental health, often in silence, and this must be confronted as a priority.

The challenges associated with the rising costs of long-term residential and nursing care have been well rehearsed. One important way of controlling expenditure in this area is to encourage and support community care so that an elderly person can remain in their own home for as long as possible.

I am concerned that for too many people primary care – and dentistry – remains unaffordable and therefore less accessible than it should be.

The UK government unilaterally ended our reciprocal health agreement, leaving many islanders who cannot obtain private insurance at reasonable cost with a stark choice – risk travelling without insurance or don't travel at all. Typically they are elderly or have pre-existing medical conditions, are far from well-off and just want to enjoy a few days in the UK visiting family or friends. Last year the States accepted a solution proposed by me and my Vale colleague Laurie Queripel – extending the States' existing health insurance scheme to cover islanders' unforeseen medical costs incurred in the UK. We anticipate this can be done by the next States without increasing contribution rates.

Minimum wage

Ever since the introduction of the minimum wage I have advanced the case for substantial percentage increases in the unacceptably low youth rate. It is to the credit of the present States that they have taken all 18-year-olds onto the adult rate and increased the youth rate by 30% in real terms.

Social welfare

I support the social welfare reforms recently proposed by my Vale colleague Andrew Le Lievre and his investigation committee. They have succeeded where many others before them have not by designing a fairer system which is affordable, unifies housing and income benefits, recognises that secure employment is the best route out of poverty and directs financial assistance to those who are in most need. I believe that a compassionate society should guarantee every household a socially acceptable minimum standard of living. I also believe that the success of a society is affected not just by how wealthy it is but also by how equal its people are.

Opportunity & Inclusion



Education

Nothing in which the States are involved is more precious than the education of our children. At its best, education has a unique power – the power both to unlock opportunity for every child and to secure a future for our island of economic prosperity and social inclusion. I think about this most days, not just as a politician but also as a dad of two children at primary school.

We have some great schools, hundreds of great teachers and thousands of great students. But we must aim higher still. Guernsey is an affluent society of resourceful people who have a history of resilience and innovation. It is reasonable to ask: why shouldn't we aspire to have one of the best education systems in the world? At the very least, on behalf of every child, we must always strive to provide a first class education as a right and not a privilege. This should be reflected both in high levels of attainment in every school and in students' wellbeing and personal development.

The present Education Department deserves great credit for working with professionals in schools to lead difficult reforms and improve results.

If re-elected, I would oppose attempts to reverse the following policies agreed by the present States:

- universal entitlement to pre-school education for up to 15 hours a week for every child in the year immediately before primary school, to be delivered through a public-private partnership;
- rationalisation of primary schools with the aim of all schools having a minimum of two forms per year;
- non-selective secondary education, as advised by the head teachers of every States' primary and secondary school.

I was not persuaded by the Education Department's proposal for one secondary school on four sites. On balance I favour setting by academic ability, where appropriate, in three rather than four schools to provide broader curriculum choice and to maximise the opportunities available to all students.

There has been no decision not to rebuild La Mare de Carteret High School or to cease 11-16 education on the Grammar site. With the right leadership the new Committee for Education, Sport & Culture could quite swiftly report to the States with the optimum three-school model. If that model includes La Mare de Carteret, which is achieving great things in wholly unsatisfactory conditions, the school must be rebuilt without further delay. In addition, any movement of students and teachers in the three-school model must be managed with the utmost care.

The future of tertiary education will form part of the review of the education estate. There is the prospect, which should be welcomed, of raising the value of technical and vocational skills alongside academic achievement.

Regrettably the redevelopment of La Mare de Carteret Primary School and the new autism and communication facilities proposed for that site have been delayed as a consequence of changes to secondary education. These projects must still proceed.

Parental benefits

Important and progressive changes to parental benefits will come into effect on the 1st January next year. These improvements to existing maternity benefits will greatly assist many new mums and for the first time benefits will be made available in certain circumstances to dads and also to adoptive parents. I welcome all reasonable steps to increase the birth rate locally in order to move closer to what is called the replacement rate, i.e. where there are enough births to sustain the existing population.

The disabled

Every day 4,000 islanders experience significant difficulties as a result of their disability. I endorse the campaign of the Guernsey Disability Alliance for greater respect for the rights and dignity of disabled islanders and carers. As Chairman of the States' Assembly & Constitution Committee I had the privilege of welcoming wheelchair users into the States of Deliberation for the first time and leading legislative reforms to give the vote to people with a legal disability.

Prosperity & Stability



Economic overview

The economic objectives of the States must be to secure the island's prosperity through sustainable growth, stable inflation and low unemployment. Without a strong economy the States will not have the necessary revenue to pursue social welfare programmes or invest in vital public services and infrastructure.

In some sectors of the economy trading conditions remain challenging, the labour market is fragile and wage growth is almost non-existent. Overall, though, Guernsey has weathered the global crises of recent years relatively well. It is estimated that between 2009 and 2014 our economy grew by 13% in real terms. Unemployment remains below 2%. The non-finance sector is growing faster than the finance sector is declining, which is stimulating economic diversification, although the finance industry remains directly responsible for a third of our economic output and 20% of our jobs.

Public finances

In 2009 I argued against the Treasury's top-down efficiency programme. Predictably it failed. The present States have made a success of the programme by adopting a more collaborative approach. Savings in States' expenditure amount to £28.7 million a year – every year.

The company tax base has been extended three times in four years. This is expected to generate additional tax revenue of around £15 million a year which would otherwise have come from other taxpayers or the island's reserves or required cuts in services.

Nevertheless there is a persistent deficit in public finances of around £25 million a year and inadequate provision is being made for capital projects and rebuilding reserves. Income and expenditure need to be brought back into balance through one or more of economic growth, reductions in expenditure, company taxation or personal taxation.

It would be unwise to rely on spectacular economic growth, but a period of moderate economic expansion which leads to real growth in earnings would boost tax revenues and consumer confidence.

There is scope for further efficiency savings and cutting spending in areas of lower priority. However, Guernsey already spends less on public services than its two most comparable jurisdictions, Jersey and the Isle of Man,

and over the past decade States' expenditure has fallen significantly in relation to the size of our economy.

It could be argued that companies trading in Guernsey and owned by non-residents are still making an insufficient contribution to public finances. If re-elected, I will continue to support moves to address this which do not unduly affect the competitiveness of our largest industry.

For some people taxes and contributions are already very onerous, especially given our high cost of living. This is one reason why a general sales tax (GST) should be seen as a policy only of last resort. Ideally any additional taxes which become necessary should fall on those who are best able to bear the burden. For example, there must be a strong case for withdrawing benefits and allowances currently enjoyed by higher earners.

A radical approach to eliminating the deficit and rebuilding reserves would involve spending cuts alone or tax increases alone. The former would imperil vital public services and investment in essential infrastructure; the latter would be unfair as well as depressing economic activity. If re-elected I will pursue a moderate, balanced approach which recognises the need to raise additional revenue and restrain public expenditure.

Public debt

In 2014 the States agreed – unfortunately in my view – to borrow £330 million to consolidate existing and future loan guarantees. Most of the borrowings remain unallocated. The States supported an amendment which I submitted to maintain the policy that borrowings can be allocated only to projects from which they can be repaid in full without recourse to general revenue.

External transport

Last summer I was the first States' member publicly to advocate a contingency plan for our lifeline sea links. Like thousands of others, I am a customer of Condor and have been a supporter of theirs, but recently their levels of service have become intolerable. Unless significant improvements can be secured rapidly, and since ferry companies are hardly queuing up to serve the islands, serious consideration will need to be given to Guernsey and Jersey establishing their own service, as we have been forced to for air links and fuel tankers. Air and sea links have a significant impact on our standard of living and quality of life and as such are strategic assets and not just commercial operations.

A Strong Community



During the present States I was elected as a member of the Home Department. Its successor – the *Committee for Home Affairs* – has the following purpose: to support a high standard of living and quality of life by maintaining and promoting a safe, stable and equitable society which values public protection and justice and respects the rights, responsibilities and potential of every person.

Budget challenges

Since 2010 Home has reduced expenditure by around £2.3million a year in real terms. Genuine efficiencies account for 98% of these savings – so we have protected front line services like policing, customs, the fire brigade and probation. In the long term additional efficiencies may be obtained by further integrating the emergency services and law enforcement agencies and by rationalising property. But in the short term there are few opportunities to cut spending further without affecting front line services.

Law enforcement

Guernsey is a strong and secure community. It will remain so only while policing and border control are effective, resourceful and responsive to the public they serve. Some people believe that crime should inevitably rise – I don't. What I do believe in is policing by consent – in other words by securing and maintaining the approval and respect of the public. I also believe that law enforcement policy should be based on evidence of what works and what doesn't and not by the need for headline-grabbing initiatives.

For five years I argued in vain against the establishment of an unnecessary bureaucracy to run policing. Last year the idea of a Law Enforcement Commission was finally scrapped, saving the taxpayer more than £600,000 in every States' term. What is needed instead is the replacement of policing legislation, which dates back to 1920, in order properly to set out the duties, powers, limitations, oversight and impartiality of modern law enforcement agencies.

Criminal justice policy

The main objectives of criminal justice policy must be to protect the innocent and keep the incidence of crime as low as reasonably possible.

Prison plays an essential role by punishing offenders, deterring future crime and rehabilitating those who want to turn away from crime. In 2014 HM Inspectorate of Prisons reported that Guernsey Prison was "...a powerful reminder of how good a small prison can be". The emphasis at Guernsey Prison is, quite rightly, on purposeful activity – work and education. In 2015 running costs were £53,000 per prisoner compared to £70,000 in Jersey and £82,000 in the Isle of Man.

There is a need to review the use of short-term prison sentences. There is limited evidence that they are effective and yet in Guernsey it is typical for a third of prisoners to be serving less than a year and for more than 10% to be serving less than six months. It may well be that more use needs to be made of alternatives to custodial sentences, especially if they can be shown to cut re-offending rates.

Community, social & population policies

Blue light services are vital, but I wish to see just as much emphasis placed on the *Committee for Home Affairs'* other responsibilities – in particular the misuse of drugs and alcohol, domestic abuse and the safeguarding of children. I have a track record of voting to prioritise expenditure in these areas; I represented Guernsey at a meeting of the British-Irish Council on misuse of alcohol; I have sat as a McKenzie Friend in the family courts; and I supported the Voice for Victims campaign.

The *Committee for Home Affairs* will be responsible for the new population regime. I support the replacement of housing controls with work and residency permits. These reforms should provide a more effective way of influencing the size and make-up of the population.

Encouraging significant population growth would not resolve the demographic challenges of the future – indeed, it would likely put us on a population escalator with no way of getting off. It would also place unsustainable demands on our infrastructure and services. However, there is little doubt that maintaining a generally prosperous economy while a shrinking workforce supports an increasing number of pensioners – and achieving it without substantial population growth – is a complex challenge.