

# 2025 **DEAN DENT**

Candidate for the Stanley Constituency

**AN  
HONEST,  
REALISTIC  
AND  
FORWARD THINKING  
MANIFESTO**



The Last Assembly have, to their due, set the ball rolling on four of the largest capital projects our islands will have seen for decades. The port, the waste transfer facility, the wind farm and the new power station are all necessary projects to varying degrees. However, it has left our islands in a position where government spending over the next four years will be at a serious low, with the government reserves ratio falling to 1.5 times from a previous, and

healthy, >3 times ratio. This, alongside 150 million pounds worth of borrowing necessary to deliver said projects, means our next assembly will not have the remit of large-scale government spending. What it does mean, is that our next group of councilors *must* control ongoing government spending to ensure our economy does not falter and encourage new business and industry within the islands. All whilst limiting the effect this has on not only the businesses and industries that fund our islands, but the people who live here.

## My Priorities

- Increased scrutiny and government oversight on capital projects.
- Maximising the efficiency of government departments and projects.
- Reduce unneeded government expenditure.
- Deliver much needed, affordable and suitable social housing for our community.
- Increase transparency between the next assembly and the people of our islands.



**Our Economy**, as mentioned above, is faltering. Poor fishing seasons coupled with increased capital spending have left our islands in a somewhat dire situation. The prospect of hydrocarbon exploration is encouraging, but we cannot be reliant as a nation on that one industry. New business and industry must be encouraged, through continued government support of FIDC, and a promotion of the possibility of overseas investment in local business. At least some revenue from the oil industry must also be prioritised for the encouragement of new business and industry.

The stark rise in the price of electricity over recent years has had a serious effect on the livelihoods of not only the public, but also local businesses. The rise has increased inflation, meaning the public are feeling the effect of this price hike both directly and indirectly. A massive government subsidy of the electricity price may not be the answer, but through cuts of other unnecessary government spending, there may be the opportunity to lessen the price of electricity just slightly.



**Government Inefficiency** and unwarranted government spending is another reason for our current financial position. At a time when the people are feeling the cost of everyday items and services increase, pension contributions stagnate and government provided services falter, it is discouraging to see unwarranted and wasteful government spending. FIG has a duty to the public to spend money efficiently and wisely. This can be achieved by streamlining government departments, terminating irrelevant and costly projects, and the merging of departments and offices that perform overlapping functions. We are not a first world country; we are a developing island nation and must act like one. There has been an increase government positions and officers who provide unnecessary services to a nation of our size. These must be streamlined to increase the efficiency of our government and lessen the financial burden they have on our budgets.

- Terminate irrelevant government projects that are unwarranted for a nation of our size.
- Streamline government departments that perform overlapping functions and duties.
- Implement realistic and achievable time frames on to the islands plan.
- Prioritise spending on projects and initiatives that have a direct impact on the publics



**The Capital Projects** that have left us in this position must get the oversight and scrutiny necessary for them to be delivered on time and to budget. FIG project managers need to be held accountable for their respective projects. They are the first line of defence between private contractors and FIG's budgets, and through an increase in oversight from them, it is my view that it is possible to clamp down on FIG overspend. At the end of the day FIG project managers do not have the same responsibilities as other managers inside or outside of FIG, they don't have staff beneath them, and they often do not manage more than one project at one time. Their sole responsibility should be ensuring their project does not damage the economic security of our country. Something that they get paid handsomely to do already. There will be an increase of productivity within this department as new roles are created within PWD to oversee the project management team. It is up to the new assembly to

ensure the working relationship between PWD and our MLAs is an open, honest and productive one. As having been both a civil groundworker and engineer in the private construction industry I know it is possible to make daily and accurate progress reports on all aspects of a construction projects. Making these progress reports, on our most major capital projects, available to the public bi-monthly would increase transparency, something the last assembly has absolutely lacked, and would allow the public to keep up to date with the massive projects that really do influence day-to-day life. This also allows public scrutiny of private contractors delivering these projects. Because at the end of the day, these projects and the last assembly's somewhat naïve capital program, have left the public facing cuts across all government services.



**The Port** is essential. We are an island nation whose three main industries rely on export and passenger transfer. With no port there are no transshipments of fin fish, lolligo and illex, wool or meat. There is no tourism. The last assembly has reached a huge milestone by getting the project started, and it's now down to the next assembly to guarantee the final product is fit for purpose. Once again, more oversight needs to go into making sure our lifeline to exporting produce does not bankrupt our nation and is fit for use for the fishermen, farmers, tourists, and companies that have propped our country up for decades. We cannot be left with a new port full of “teething problems” that don't allow us to continue as we have been. With a lack of warehousing and no substantial system in place for berthing ships in bad weather, it's my worry that without further public consultation and amendments, shipping services could be delayed. Not only affecting the economy and the industries that provide for us but affecting the consumer.

- An increase in government oversight on private contractors delivering major projects for FIG
- An increase in specific auditing of projects by FIG project managers to ensure projects are delivered on time and to budget

- Weekly accurate progress reports from private contractors to FIG project managers detailing specific progress made on capital projects and design work. With these progress reports being published bi-monthly to the public.
- Foster a more open, supportive, and productive relationship between the assembly and PWD.



Our Fisheries have, for a long time, been FIG's main source of income and in turn have contributed to a serious improvement in our island's infrastructure and reserves. But it is not just fishing companies and FIG that have benefited from the industry, I as a stevedore have, along with the many people working alongside the industry: transshipment operatives, fishermen, other private companies and most important of all the necessary services provided by FIG for the people. That is why it is of the utmost importance to secure the future of the islands fishing industry amidst the shiny new hopes of oil. Our fisheries are an uncontrollable resource and many factors outside of our control affect them. Changing sea temperatures, unregulated fishing within international waters and changing regulations in Argentina's fisheries have all effected the stability of our own fishing industry. This is why it is the next assembly's responsibility to ensure the security of our fishing industry through fostering an improved relationship with our industry leaders. With no guarantees on fishing license fees, and the difficulties involved with certain license classifications and by-catch regulations, it leaves

our fishing industry in a precarious situation when faced with fluctuating biomass quantities. The upcoming fee and license reviews will allow the next assembly to finally provide security to our fishing industry, our island's economy and our environment.

- Foster a better relationship between our fishing industry and FIG.
- Provide clear and structured formulae to calculate license fees based on accurate up to date data on our fisheries.
- Use upcoming license reviews to improve by-catch regulations for ALL fishing companies and ease the strain on fin fish license holders.
- Use the upcoming license reviews to encourage the health of our fisheries through adjusting by-catch quotas.



**The Prospect of Oil** exploration in our islands is huge for our faltering economy.

However, provisions must be put in place to allow for the future proofing of our islands for the generations to come. FIG cannot spend income generated from this industry on a 'hand to mouth' basis as we have done with our other industries. Sovereign wealth funds have secured the futures of many a nation involved in hydrocarbon exploration. The next assembly must secure our future, and the introduction of such a fund would certainly achieve that. The United Kingdom is a perfect example of a nation that mismanaged their earnings from hydrocarbon exploration. A sovereign wealth fund would allow for long term investment in projects and infrastructure, as well as provide economic stability in the future when there are times of economic downturn. It could also be used to fund the state pension, which is something that has been seriously overlooked in recent years, and fund our pension system for the foreseeable future.

Oil exploration must be managed efficiently and pro-actively. There will be a major strain on infrastructure that is already faltering. Housing must be managed and Lookout Lodge must be utilised whilst Navitas produce their own housing.



**Housing** in our islands has always been an issue. We cannot produce houses at a rate to satisfy demand, and with new industries and a growing government it is more important than ever to produce social housing. With a major increase in workers on the horizon, housing should be at the forefront of the next assembly's agenda. There needs to be a change in the way we construct FIG housing. The current system of building semi-detached 2-3 bedroom houses needs to be changed for a more affordable space saving system. There needs to be an increase in 1-2 bedroom flats, terraced housing to utilise space and multi-story blocks of flats. This will allow for FIG to move single occupancy contractors from 2-3 bed houses into more suitable accommodation fit for single individuals. This will in turn make those 2-3 bedroom houses available for young families. Single occupancy flats and bed sits will also allow for returning students to have housing available on their return to the islands.

The next assembly must encourage private contractors, both local and international, to provide housing and housing developments on behalf of FIG. This not only takes certain pressures off FIG but also allows Government to produce social housing at a faster rate. These properties developed by private contractors would then be bought or leased back by FIG.

The next assembly will have a decision to make on how many plots in the next housing development are earmarked for social housing. This is something where the last assembly have failed. An increase in the number of FIG plots per loop not only provides housing for young families and people but also frees up private rental properties for members of the public. With more FIG housing Government can move their contractors from private rentals to FIG owned properties. Which lessens their costs and makes these private rental properties available to the public.

- A move away from the current housing system of 2-3 bedroom houses in favour of space saving smaller homes.
- An increase in housing made available for returning students and a utilisation of already paid for accommodation i.e. Lookout Lodge.
- Promote the possibility of local and international contractors to provide housing and housing developments for FIG.



**Immigration** has built our islands. With no immigration our

healthcare systems shut down, government departments suddenly become understaffed, our hospitality sector fails in turn affecting our tourism industry, roads do not get built, housing projects stop, our elderly stop being cared for, farms become understaffed and FIMCO fails. And that is to only name a handful of critical industries staffed by non-Falkland Islands nationals. Customs and Immigration along with the Union have been doing commendable work to ensure non-Falkland Islands nationals are not in unfit living conditions. This needs to continue. FIG along with the next assembly need to make sure *everyone* working and living here is housed to an adequate standard. Government currently rent a vast number of rooms from Lookout Lodge, fill them with our single workers, and reduce the strain on our social housing.

That being said, immigration cannot be at the detriment of our healthcare system. Customs and Immigration cannot continue to allow people to enter our islands who have medical conditions that are untreatable by KEMH. It is not only unsafe for said persons but an unnecessary strain on our underfunded healthcare system.



**Our Environment** is one to be proud of, but work must be continued

to improve the longevity and safety of it. As recently mentioned in Falklands Conservation's sustainable islands vision, there is a direct link between the health of our environment and the health of our three largest industries. If the health of our environment falters, so do our fishing tourism and farming industries. The restoration of our habitats not only help our endemic species but also the land itself. If erosion of land is limited it could directly affect our industry. By promoting the health of our peatlands we not only aid farming, but also open the islands up to opportunities of new business such as carbon credits schemes.

- Continue to support the health of our environment through re-wilding and habitat restoration schemes.
- Investigate new business opportunities directly linked to our healthy environment.



Our **Camp Communities** are in a precarious situation. With the decline in wool prices over recent years it's more important than ever for camp residents to get the support they desperately need. Roads are the lifeline for most farmers who need to transport livestock by land. There must be more money made available for the capping and upkeep of camp roads. With £20 million being earmarked for an access road and causeway for the new port it's easy to see why camp residents feel neglected. The roads in the South of West Falkland are the worst on the islands; money must be spent on a designated crusher for the West to increase capping. However, if that's not possible, alternatives such as long hauling stone from burrow pits elsewhere on West Falkland must be considered. This would not only help with capping in the south but would give West Falklanders and camp contractors an extra income stream. Money will be available from savings in other government budgets, and camp roads are an area where that money must be spent.

**Why me?** The last assembly have done a good job of starting some of the most important capital projects, schemes and pieces of policy our islands will have seen in decades. However, they have also led us into a place where there are major issues for both FIG and the people. With a rise in the cost of living, times of financial uncertainty, a lack of transparency and rising tensions within the community on social issues, it is time for a new assembly. For all the reasons stated above, the next assembly must be pragmatic in the way it thinks and acts. It is going to take honest, hardworking and realistic MLAs to do this, and I think that is what I offer.

## I'd love to hear from you!

Please feel free to contact me to discuss your thoughts in the run up to this important election. You can use the below details, or just stop me in the shops!



[dean\\_dent@outlook.com](mailto:dean_dent@outlook.com)



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I look forward to speaking to you.

**DEAN  
DENT**

Candidate for the Stanley Constituency