

Dr Michelle Haywood

Port St Mary Commissioners By-Election



Thursday 3rd December 2026

Why I'm standing

I live in the heart of Port St Mary and care deeply about the village and our community. I served in the House of Keys as the representative from Rushen from 2021 to 2026. Prior to being an MHK, I served on the Board of Port St Mary Commissioners for 5 years from 2016 to 2021, including chairing the Board from 2018 to 2021 during some turbulent times. I have spent my political life examining evidence, asking pertinent questions and importantly, making decisions and getting things done. I enjoy public service and believe in principled governance and careful financial management.

This election is not about national politics. It is about Port St Mary and electing Board members who will continue to act in the best interests of our village. I believe that I am in a strong position to support a Board that acts to improve village amenities and the quality of life for all our residents.

What I bring

- **Good governance.** I know what proper financial reporting, scrutiny and transparency look like, and I understand how to work with Officers and Members to achieve these aims. The Local Government Amendments Act 2023 places a number of statutory requirements on local authorities and I would like to help Port St Mary work towards being compliant with the law.
- **Experience of how Government works.** I have a detailed working knowledge of Tynwald procedures and processes which will help the Board to direct its efforts in the most appropriate way and to achieve the best outcomes when dealing with Government bodies. I know which Departments and Treasury officials to speak to about any issue and how to make business cases that have a high chance of being approved.
- **A constructive approach.** I will challenge where necessary and support where appropriate. I have chaired various bodies and been a member of different Boards over the last decade. Enthusiastic members are an asset to any Board and I look forward to working with the existing Board Members.

Port St Mary's annual accounts

We all pay rates to Port St Mary Commissioners, it's a property tax that none of us can avoid.
The most recent published audited accounts are for the year to 31 March 2024, and were only signed off in June 2025, well over a year after the year end.
The 2023/24 accounts show:

- The general revenue reserve fell from £139,020 to £2,160.
- Cash at bank fell from £352,470 to £180,577.
- Loan interest rose from £183,425 to £253,383.

All of these should be matters for concern. The accounts for 2024/25 are now overdue. This is not acceptable. It is our money that we contribute to maintaining the Port and its amenities and we deserve transparency about how our money is spent.

Last year our rates increased by 8.83%! Port St Mary already has much higher rates than other comparable towns. This is mostly because we don't have industrial parks, airports or quarries to subsidise our rates so domestic rates need to pay for our amenities. This means it's even more critical to fully understand and be transparent about how our rates money is spent.

Residents deserve to see the accounts on time and in plain English.

My priorities for Port St Mary

1. Accounts on time and clearly explained

- Publish accounts and budgets promptly, with a one-page summary for residents.
- Review where every pound of your rates goes ensuring value for money.
- Test the case for any future rate rise, not just accept it.
- Ensure priority based budgeting is embedded within the Board's culture.

2. Comply with the new amended Local Government Act

I believe the Board were distracted by and misinformed about Clause 5 (which ensured Tynwald could support local authority functions) and have failed to fully appreciate the rest of the legislation. The Board needs to develop an action plan to ensure they are operating lawfully. I want to help guide the Board through their new statutory responsibilities including ensuring conflicts of interest being openly declared and properly handled, and improved access to information for the public.

3. Fix the High Street

Complaints about the High Street's condition have gone on for years starting before my time as Chair of the Board in 2018. As Department of Infrastructure Minister I took the project as far as site surveys, the detailed engineering plan and a fully costed business case for Treasury. It was not approved earlier this year, but the work is done and the case is made. I will support the Board to:

- Press the DoI and Treasury to approve the business case.
- Lobby the Rushen MHKs to apply pressure on Government to agree the capital budget
- Plant more blooming daffodils if I have to in order to highlight the issue!



4. More public sector homes, all well-maintained

The Commissioners look after 122 social housing homes. It is a statutory duty for the Commissioners to review the condition of existing housing and to have a plan in place for meeting future housing needs in the village. Many tenants want warmer, cheaper-to-run homes and we have a large waiting list of people who need secure homes to live in. I will:

- Support the window and door replacement scheme.
- Back new, low-energy use local housing.
- Use my Government experience to support funding petitions.
- Help the Board to develop a Housing Plan that will support new developments, redevelopment and better meeting the housing needs of our residents.

5. Support our staff

A small team delivers our refuse collection, street cleaning, public space maintenance and parks. They also support our public sector housing, and provide services to the sheltered housing in the South. They are a dedicated team, but sometimes can be overstretched. I will push for a workforce plan covering recruitment, absence and morale, so that services can be maintained without costs spiralling.

6. Listen and report back

I will ensure that the Board embraces the legal requirements in the Local Government Amendments Act to ensure access to meetings and documents. I am always around and about in the village and happy to meet up and chat about your issues or concerns.

Please support me with a vote on 3rd December!

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