

Parliamentary Election 2015 **Manifesto**

 **UUV**

The Real **ALTERNATIVE**

**ENOUGH**

*is*

**ENOUGH**

*Vote*

 **UUV**



 [www.tuv.org.uk](http://www.tuv.org.uk)

# Contents

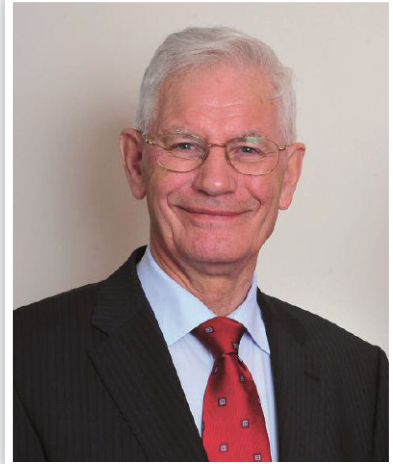
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⊙ TUV – A Clear and Principled Voice for Unionism	3
⊙ Constitutional Reform	4
⊙ A Hung Parliament	5
⊙ Expenses	6
⊙ The UK in the World	7
⊙ EU Membership	8
⊙ Protecting our borders and local jobs	9
⊙ Defence and Armed Forces Covenant	10
⊙ Economy, Job Creation and Taxation	10
⊙ Corporation Tax Devolution	12
⊙ Agriculture	13
⊙ Energy and Environment	14
⊙ Health	15
⊙ Proposed Abortion Law Changes	17
⊙ Education	17
⊙ Housing	19
⊙ Law and Order	19
⊙ Equality?	21
⊙ Victims	22
⊙ Flags	23
⊙ Parading	24
⊙ Transport	26
⊙ Tourism	26
⊙ Sport	27
⊙ Animal Welfare	28

# Preface by Party President

*On 7th May 2015 you will be afforded the opportunity to exercise your civic duty and vote in the General election. TUV will give you the chance to vote for a party that has proved its worth. By taking up that offer you can empower us to achieve even more – strengthen our hand.*

*The TUV message is a simple one. We stand for prudence when it comes to public finances and demand that our nation is liberated from the shackles of Brussels. We want to see fairness when it comes to our Armed Forces with the full implementation of the Armed Forces Covenant in Northern Ireland.*



*In the aftermath of the Scottish referendum all parties are now pledged to re-examine the devolved arrangements across the UK. TUV is the only party which is committed to bringing the same basic democratic rights that voters take for granted in Scotland and Wales to Northern Ireland – the right to have an opposition and the right to remove a party from office. Shamefully only TUV MPs will make that argument. They need to be there to drive the democratic change which is so essential to get Northern Ireland working for all our people.*

*Our Party Leader, Jim Allister MLA, has demonstrated what one determined voice can achieve. Our line-up of young, enthusiastic and principled candidates demonstrates that TUV has dispelled the myth that we are a one man band.*

*Our candidates are not encumbered by being from a party in government with Sinn Fein; therefore they can put principle and people first, not political expediency.*

*TUV is the insurance policy for the people of Northern Ireland. A vote for TUV puts the brakes on Sinn Fein/DUP misrule.*

## **William Ross**

*Party President*

# TUV – A Clear and Principled Voice for Unionism

Under the perverse “peace process” we’ve seen endless pandering to IRA/Sinn Fein and corresponding diminution of our Britishness.

- Tough talk on On The Runs, but no action.
- The election of a Sinn Fein Speaker with DUP votes.
- A Stormont which is “not fit for purpose” and yet a sticking plaster is accepted to keep it together.
- Stormont’s debt rises to an eye watering £1.8 billion.
- Huge expenses scandals involving both Sinn Fein and the DUP.
- Orangemen denied the freedom to walk to demonstrate their Britishness.
- A Christian bakery persecuted by the OFMDFM-funded Equality Commission.
- Top performing schools like Enniskillen Collegiate to close while an Irish language school with just 15 pupils gets the green light and lavish funding!
- Major job losses with little evidence of Executive action.
- An ongoing cuts agenda when it comes to Health while there is a bottomless pit of money to fund useless North-South Bodies and other Sinn Fein policies.
- The ongoing subjugation of our nation to the EU.

People know where TUV stands on all of these issues. We have been a clear and principled voice for Unionism in Stormont and, with our increased number of councillors, in council chambers across Northern Ireland.

This election gives people the opportunity to send a clear message that “enough is enough”!

## TUV is delivering for Unionism

- Ann’s Law was the first victory for innocent victims in years. Thanks to TUV, terrorists are now barred from £90,000 per year Special Adviser posts.
- TUV led the opposition to the Maze shrine. While others branded opponents of the scheme “nutters”, TUV ensured that the voice of innocent victims and thousands of ordinary Unionists was heard loud and clear.
- Jim Allister secured pension parity for RUC widows who have remarried or will remarry in the future, through moving amendments to the Pensions Bill.



- TUV has exposed the endless squandering of public finances and has held the Executive to account. TUV MPs would bring that same record of delivery to Westminster.

## Constitutional Reform

Following the Scottish independence referendum all the main parties in Great Britain are promising to look at the devolved arrangements across the UK. Now is the ideal time to make the case that Stormont is in need of fundamental democratic reform. However, TUV is the only party pledged to argue for a genuinely democratic system of government in Northern Ireland.

People in Scotland and Wales can change their government, yet in Northern Ireland we are told that every major party must be in government for ever. At Westminster the new government is likely to be a voluntary coalition. Those not included - whoever they are - will be the Opposition. That's how it should be.

**But imagine if the Stormont system was used: Cameron, Milliband and Clegg would all end up in Downing Street! How absurd! It simply wouldn't work - as Stormont shows. For the sake of durable and workable government, Stormont, too, needs voluntary coalition and an Opposition.**



We need to see a system of government in Northern Ireland which can deliver good government for the people of Northern Ireland rather than being characterised by deadlock, failure and backroom deals. That's the argument which needs to be made in the new Parliament as it looks at constitutional reform. If it's good enough for the rest of the UK it is good enough for Northern Ireland!

So, TUV demands that Northern Ireland has a parity of democratic rights with the rest of the United Kingdom. The right to have an Opposition is taken for granted in Edinburgh and Cardiff; indeed, it is taken for granted across the democratic world. On top of that, the people of Scotland and Wales have the basic democratic right to change their government: to vote a party that they are disillusioned with out of government. Northern Ireland is entitled to the same fundamental right.

Good government comes from common purpose and stable structures, with deference to democracy at its heart. Yet the quintessential dogma of mandatory coalition is the denial of that basic right: hence it can never be the basis for good and durable government. Its removal is a prerequisite. Likewise at the top of government a workable authority is indispensable. The Office of Joint First Ministers is an unworkable farce. It must go and be replaced by separate, free-standing offices of a First Minister and a genuine deputy.

On the wider issue of constitutional reform, TUV is clear. We are opposed to any further powers being devolved. We have seen that Stormont cannot handle the powers it already has so why should it be given more?

**TUV is a Unionist party. We believe in the Union and that people across the UK should pay the same taxes and receive the same benefits. We are alarmed at the growing tendency among some unionist representatives towards a sense of 'Ulster nationalism' and the ease with which some assist Sinn Fein in insisting that the rest of the United Kingdom owes us a living. We want to strengthen the unity of the UK, not further undermine it.**

## **A Hung Parliament**

Many presume the outcome of the General Election will be a hung parliament. If so, TUV MPs would use their position not just to maximise the benefits for Northern Ireland and promote British democratic standards in Stormont, but we would make an EU referendum the key national issue. **Securing an early and fair referendum on EU membership is vital to the future and rebirth of our nation.**

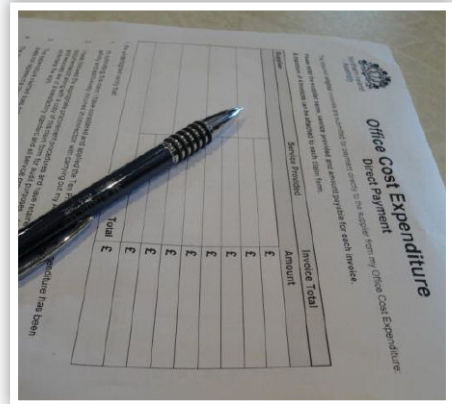
Some, who are part-timers, are seeking to gain votes on foot of the prospect of a hung parliament. However, in a hung parliament the priority is to have MPs who can and will be there every day. Turning up only on a Wednesday, when Stormont isn't sitting, won't do.

Too often MPs from Northern Ireland have left their constituents without a voice on important matters with some absent for two out of every three votes in the Commons. In the last parliament neglect and double jobbing saw poor performance. Even key votes of national importance, such as the vote on the European Arrest Warrant and the vote on the creation of three parent babies, were missed by several local MPs. Northern Ireland has been failed by its absentee and silent MPs. It's time for change.

Only Unionists who are there can exploit a hung parliament to Ulster's benefit. TUV MPs will be there and will use every opportunity to extract the best deal for Ulster, whether on the big political issues or at the local constituency level. We would use our presence to argue not just for much needed funding for the Province but also for the vital constitutional reform we need to bring us into line with the rest of the United Kingdom and indeed strengthen the Union.

## Expenses

The past year has seen yet another scandal surrounding politicians' expenses. The scale of Sinn Fein abuse of the Stormont expenses system exposed by BBC Spotlight was simply staggering. Sinn Fein paid thousands of pounds in rent to cultural and historical societies which could not be shown to exist. Huge sums of public money went to a research company which, likewise, could not be shown to have done any research.



What the BBC revealed amounted to the systematic abuse of the expenses system on an industrial scale. The reaction of Stormont to the broadcasts shows that there is no prospect of change.

When the Westminster expenses story broke it dominated the news and business in the Commons. By contrast, when Stormont faced accusations which were worse, the reaction was muted. It was left to TUV leader Jim Allister to ensure that the matter was raised at all by way of an urgent oral question to the Assembly Commission.

TUV believes that taxpayers should have the money which was fraudulently claimed by MLAs reimbursed. However, other parties would rather that everyone forgot about it. Far from returning their "ill-gotten gains" - as the DUP once demanded as a precondition for Sinn Fein entering government - the expenses system has become a source of ill-gotten gains.

Unionist politicians were also far from blameless with thousands of stamps bought for use in a paperless office and thousands more claimed for iPads and office "rent" for which the ultimate beneficiary is the party.



**Wearied and dismayed by the greed and the expenses scandal, many honest citizens have said they will never vote again. TUV understands this anger, but it is only by voting against those who have so besmirched politics that you can best make your point and help put things right.**

TUV is not a perfect party, but remember that when the independent Taxpayers Alliance evaluated the voting record and actions of every UK MEP (2004-09) they found that TUV Leader Jim Allister emerged as the top Euro MP from across the whole of the UK when it came to hard work and transparency. This is the standard set by TUV and will be required of anyone elected to Parliament.

## **The UK in the world**

The UK has a proud history of defending freedom in the world. That does not mean, though, that we must make every region's problems our own. Our servicemen have served with great distinction in many places and when they serve, whatever our quibbles with the politicians who sent them, they deserve our full support.

It is right that now Parliament must vote to commit the UK to foreign interventions. The experience under Blair over Iraq was costly, not least in lives lost. TUV recognises it has proven easier to get involved in foreign ventures than to extricate ourselves.

With a worldwide and ruthless enemy like Islamic State, which respects no borders, helping allies may have a role to play, though they need to also help themselves. However, our primary defence must be at home by rooting out the radicalisation which has been going on under our nose. There must be zero tolerance for home grown terrorists who then ply their evil trade abroad, or at home, when they can. We've seen enough in Northern Ireland to know that appeasement only strengthens terrorism.

British citizens who fight for Islamic State should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. TUV would support moves to strengthen the law to ensure that the citizenship of such individuals can be revoked. The notorious case of Abu Hamza – where a wanted terrorist was able to use European “human rights” legislation to avoid deportation for years – rightly outraged people across the UK. TUV will fight to correct the human rights balance.

TUV believes that the UK policy on foreign aid needs to be seriously re-examined. The Government is currently spending 0.7% of our gross national income (GNI) on foreign aid. In 2013 this equated to £11,437 million.

We simply cannot go on spending over £11 billion a year on foreign aid at time when essential public services in the UK are under pressure.

However, defence spending must be retained at levels which maintain credible and adequately equipped forces. Thus, the NATO expectation of at least 2% of GDP going on defence must be met.

## EU Membership

We welcome the fact that the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union has become a major issue in this election. TUV MPs would support an early referendum on EU membership and the party would vigorously campaign for the UK to leave the EU. It is shameful that after over 40 years of the EU being a huge drain on our national resources, the people of the United Kingdom are being denied a referendum on our membership. TUV demands an in/out referendum.



**As UK taxpayers we pour £19 billion pa into Brussels and even with the rebate and grants we get back less than half. In 2014 Treasury figures\* showed that the UK contribution to the EU was £19.234 billion while the UK rebate was £4.888 billion and we got a total of £4.539 billion in EU grants. The net cost of EU membership for the UK in 2014 was £9,807,000,000.00. That translates into a staggering daily cost of £26.9m or over £1m every hour! (\*HM Treasury Cm 8974)**

In addition, EU membership is robbing us of the right to make our own decisions on such vital matters as immigration, trade agreements and social policy.

TUV believes in the political unity, prosperity and independence of the United Kingdom, not in Brussels diktats. Thus we strongly believe the UK would be **BETTER OFF OUT!** And so we repudiate the relentless push for 'ever closer union' within the EU. TUV believes in the defence of national sovereignty, not its destruction.

At a time when we remember the centenary of the First World War TUV believes that the UK should foster stronger ties with Commonwealth nations. Our shared history in fighting for freedom should form a basis to build beneficial relationships right across the globe, well beyond the narrow confines of the European Union.

## Protecting our Borders and Local Jobs

Unrestricted free movement of labour within an enlarged EU and Brussels' procurement requirements in regard to major works contracts, leading to an uncontrolled influx of foreign labour, have stirred instances of resentment from local workers in the UK and the exploitation of our benefits system. Frequently, locals feel disadvantaged in their own country.



The compulsion to subject our labour market and laws to the supremacy of EU law is part of the price being paid for EU membership. Procurement policy which prohibits preference for local contractors and workers is stoking up more and more resentment of the EU and its inflexible dogma. TUV will work to loosen these shackles until we are liberated from the EU. Then, the UK could again control its own borders and shape its immigration policy to suit its needs.

**On immigration TUV believes the UK should introduce an Australian-style points based system which would allow immigrants with particular skills to enter the country.**

We strongly support the government backed promotion in GB of a sense of Britishness and strongly believe such should be equally applied in Northern Ireland.

## Defence and Armed Forces Covenant

Public support for the Armed Forces across the UK is incredibly high and there is almost universal support for the Armed Forces Covenant. The Covenant attempts to "redress the disadvantages that the armed forces community faces in comparison to other citizens and to recognise the sacrifices that they have made".

It was published in May 2011 and, according to the MoD website, Government, partner charities and the devolved administrations "have been very busy" delivering it. Sadly, one devolved administration, Northern Ireland, has been found lacking with regards to implementing the Covenant. In fact former NIO Minister Mike Penning told the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee that members of the Stormont Executive failed to even respond to an invitation to discuss how to help veterans and their families. Again, the Sinn Fein veto in action!

**TUV strongly supports the extension of the Armed Forces Covenant to Northern Ireland. Due to our flawed form of devolution this has proved impossible to date.**



TUV is the only Unionist party which is serious about making the changes to devolution in Northern Ireland which will make it possible to deliver the same pledges to our armed forces which they can expect in other parts of the United Kingdom.

## Economy, Job Creation and Taxation

The UK economy is still recovering from the reckless, spendthrift years of the Blair/Brown era. TUV believes that government must live within its financial means. We cannot continue to go further down the Stormont route which has lumbered us with a massive £1.8 billion of debt - the largest debt per head of population in any of the devolved regions.

TUV believes in small government. We want to see significant cutbacks across the bloated bureaucracy of government and this means, for example, axing many of the quangos across the UK.

The severity of the prevailing economic climate requires the public sector to tighten its belt just as families do. We must pull together as a nation and share the pain required to put the UK back on the path to recovery.

Northern Ireland is lagging behind the UK when it comes to the recovery. We believe that the private sector needs to grow and that more needs to be done to bring jobs and investment to the Province.

**The disproportionate focus of Invest NI on Belfast and Londonderry has meant that many parts of our Province feel left behind. And justifiably so. For example, North Antrim only had 8 visits through Invest NI in the last five years by potential foreign investors. Yet the Belfast constituencies in the same period had been feted with 739 foreign investment visits. Parity of esteem and opportunity in this sphere must apply to all of Northern Ireland.**

We have a system of government which shackles us to the bankrupt Republic by way of multiple North-South bodies, while we fail to exploit the advantages of being part of one of the world's biggest economies as part of the United Kingdom.

**TUV's vision is UK centric, not Dublin aligned.**

TUV believes that the role of government should be to ensure that hard working families retain as much of their income as possible. Thus higher taxation plays no part in our thinking.

**Likewise, we believe in incentivising work so that staying on benefits must never be more attractive than getting a job. Yet, the latest Sinn Fein/DUP deal on welfare reform will see the impact of reform nullified by the folly of robbing vital funds from the block grant to keep benefits topped up to the highest level of anywhere in the UK. £565m is siphoned off our money for hospitals, schools and vital services to fund the Sinn Fein wish list on benefits: that was the cornerstone of the Stormont House Agreement. TUV was the only party in Stormont to speak out against raiding the money set aside for our schools and hospitals to sustain excessive benefits.**

Presently 6600 families receive benefits in excess of the benefit cap of £26,000 per annum, which equates to earnings of £34,000 before tax. Indeed, the average level of benefits paid to these families is £30,700 pa (equal to over £40,000 earnings). The DUP/Sinn Fein deal means all will be sustained on this level of benefit, whereas in GB a benefit cap of £26,000 will apply.

TUV opposes any increase in the current rate of VAT viewing this as both unfair and totally inappropriate on retail and service sectors already struggling under the weight of the recessionary climate.

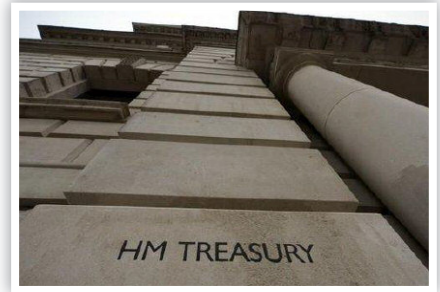
TUV supports the traditional family unit and argues for effective financial incentives to bolster this central building block of our society. Thus we welcome the introduction of the transferable married couple's tax allowance.

TUV seeks a lower tax take on fuel to ensure that the British motorist is best protected from any future shocks on oil prices. Though prices have fallen in recent months, they are still high. Expensive fuel erodes the competitiveness of British industry and costs jobs.

Small to medium-sized Enterprises are the backbone of the UK economy and TUV wants to help them grow, gain a greater international competitive edge, and boost local employment. Reducing Nanny State regulations and opposing any increase in the current corporation tax rate across the UK whilst easing the NIC burden will help British business grow. An entrepreneurial business culture is essential to future growth and the lightest touch possible from government is the key to achieving this.

## Corporation Tax Devolution

Devolving Corporation Tax powers to Stormont has been hailed as an economic saviour for Northern Ireland. TUV does not agree. TUV wants to see a prosperous Northern Ireland but the path to this is not to break up the UK's unified taxation system. If cutting corporation tax was the silver bullet for our economy, then, companies such as JTI Gallahers would not be pulling out with a corporation tax cut just round the corner!



Any cut to the level of corporation tax in Northern Ireland will see a corresponding cut in the block grant of hundreds of millions per annum. This could be of the order of £350-£400m per annum.

A cut to corporation tax will therefore result in a drastic reduction to the money Northern Ireland receives from Westminster which in turn will have serious consequences for public services in our Province. When added to the **£565m** being taken out of the block grant over the next 6 years to nullify welfare reform, the

consequences for spending on vital services could be catastrophic. **Bankrupting Northern Ireland will not concern Sinn Fein, but it should concern unionists.**

The Silk Commission considered the question of devolving corporation tax to Wales - another region dependent on its block grant - but readily recognised that *“the costs would outweigh the benefits”*. The Welsh government shared this analysis telling the Commission that while the *“devolution of corporation tax could offer the Welsh Government a powerful tool to promote economic development, this is a volatile tax which is strongly linked to the economic cycle. There would therefore be significant budgetary risks to Wales.”* Stormont, which cannot handle the powers it has, ignored all these warnings and rushed headlong into the vanity project of attaining Corporation Tax powers.

For Sinn Fein, of course, the opportunity to cut fiscal ties to London is irresistible and trumps any professed concern for public sector workers - who will be hit by cuts to the block grant. Sadly, the DUP and UUP helped them on with it.

**TUV believes the UK should retain its unified taxation system. That is the natural Unionist position and it also makes sound fiscal sense for Northern Ireland.**

Building up our skills base, instead of cutting such funding, as Stormont has done, is the real key to maximising and sustaining foreign investment.

## **Agriculture**

Farming and the resulting agri-food industry is central to our economic success. Though the sector is buffeted by global pressures, it has navigated the recent recession more successfully than many other sectors.

Within the EU it is the national Whitehall department, DEFRA, which negotiates for us, not DARD. Thus, focused representation for farming interests at Westminster is of critical importance. There are anti-farming tendencies in DEFRA, where too often its environmental responsibilities dominate, that need to be constantly challenged.



The roller coaster impact of global pressures produces an industry where stability in price can seldom be assured, yet overheads are constantly on an upward trend. The ending of milk quotas will add to the volatility in the milk sector. The exploitive behaviour of the supermarkets towards producers adds greatly to the pressure on farm gate prices. The supermarkets must be further held to account, as must processors who suppress prices well below the GB comparator.

**TUV is unapologetically a friend of the farming community. Consumers rely on farmers for a constant and safe supply of food. Expecting a viable return is not unreasonable; rather, it is essential.**

Locally, DARD continues to disappoint. It has not lived up to its promise of being the champion of farming. Politically driven by a minister who tries to contrive everything into an all-Ireland approach, rather than what best meets the needs of farmers in Northern Ireland, DARD is proving a weak link in the chain that runs from farmers, through DARD to DEFRA to Brussels. It's very good at accentuating the bureaucratic burden, but less effective in delivering an environment in which farming can thrive. Even, the much talked about 'Going for Growth' strategy has not materialised as promised. Both DETI and DARD, which were supposed to collaborate on progressing the strategy, have been most notable for their inactivity.

Sadly, under DARD the history of farming is littered by grandiose task forces and promises that have seldom delivered.

## **Energy and Environment**

TUV believes it is important that we act as responsible custodians of our environment so we can ensure future generations can enjoy the rich diversity of our planet. However, we reject punitive green taxes and limitations on individual liberty as these are ineffective, financially punishing and based on dubious science. TUV recognises there are many drivers of changing climate, including uncontrollable natural forces, and encourages honest scientific enquiry into these matters.

Daft proposals such as monthly bin collections are totally rejected by TUV. Likewise we are not swept along by the large scale wind farm craze and unrealistic and expensive green energy targets. Wind energy is the most expensive form of energy. Further, there has been wholly inadequate preparation of the electricity grid to even accommodate all the wind turbines that have been encouraged.

**DETI has failed miserably in its oversight and forward planning in respect of energy policy. Its pre-occupation with the all-Ireland single electricity market has**



served us ill, with a failure to expeditiously restore the Moyle interconnector to full capacity a major threat to the our long term security of supply. Aligning Northern Ireland to the ROI monopolistic and more expensive southern market, instead of the bigger opportunities of the UK market and networks has been a mistake, producing prices higher than they need be.



TUV rejects an ideological position on such new opportunities as fracking, but, instead is prepared to sensibly balance the opportunities against the environmental impacts.

## Health

Northern Ireland has extremely skilled and committed doctors, nurses and allied health professionals who have always tried their very best to help our people. However, we have frequently seen poor decisions from the Department of Health frustrate their efforts. This situation has not improved under devolution; our health service is falling behind the rest of the UK.

To make health better front line services must be protected by ring-fenced funding thereby ensuring that:

- Hospital outpatient and in-patient waiting lists are efficiently dealt with.
- Hospitals are clean and safe.
- Front line services are staffed effectively and efficiently to ensure that we all get the quality of care that the 21st century health service demands.
- Adequate protection of children who suffer from abuse and neglect.



- The disabled are allowed to live quality lives and not excluded from ordinary life, but allowed to achieve their full potential.
- Older people are cared for in a caring and dignified way.
- Those with special needs are not forgotten but given what they need to live quality lives.
- All communities have adequate and safe emergency cover at all times.

While in these difficult times severe national financial cuts are with us, reducing unnecessary waste within the health service will assist in ensuring that the allocated funds have the maximum impact.

TUV has been to the forefront of the fight against the DUP cuts in the health service. We helped force the Health Minister into a sudden U-turn when he planned to close most of the statutory residential care homes across a huge part of Northern Ireland. The DUP Minister is still angling for closure by stealth through blocking new admissions to such homes.

TUV is clear that it is imperative that the National Health Service does not disengage from the residential home sector, leaving us wholly at the mercy of the private sector. We have and need to maintain a mixed economy in residential care provision.

Across Northern Ireland cuts to the health service have led to chaos in A & E s. Every day we seem to hear another horrific story. TUV has set out to expose the DUP cuts which too often are making life intolerable for medical professionals and patients alike.

**TUV exposed the fact that since 2011, under DUP control, the number of hospital beds has fallen by 540, almost 10 per cent. This is a huge contributor to the logjams in our emergency departments. There must be no further reduction in total bed numbers.**

**The latest push for hospital closures comes under the guise of the report by Sir Liam Donaldson, which Health minister Wells has already embraced. The first recommendation of the Donaldson report is the audacious and undemocratic demand that political parties should blindly commit themselves to accept the findings of an international audit as to what hospitals we need. TUV will do no such thing. We will not give such a blank cheque to those wishing to shut such vital hospitals as The Causeway. That may be the DUP minister's plan, but it certainly is not ours.**

While all this is going on, Stormont continues to squander £32 million a year on useless North/Southery. TUV is the only party which opposes that squander and says the money needs to be invested in YOUR essential services.

## Proposed Abortion Law Changes

TUV does not believe that the unborn child should be denied his or her fundamental human rights.

Though there is a superficial plausibility within the promotion of abortion in the recent consultation by the Department of Justice in cases of potentially fatal abnormalities the experience of the 1967 Act in Great Britain is a salutary warning against such glib assurance.

**The 1967 Act, on the face of it, permits abortion only in restricted circumstances, yet, in reality it swung open the door to abortion on demand. Who on reading the supposed restraints of Section 1 of the 1967 Act could imagine that under it over 8,000,000 babies have been terminated!**

There is a parallel danger that the Minister's proposals will be similarly exploited. Denying that opportunity is an important consideration in TUV's rejection of the Department of Justice proposals.

It is also important to stress that the present law of Northern Ireland is not an absolute bar to abortion in, for example, a case of severe anencephaly. As the Bourne test makes clear, and as amplified by Girvan LJ in the 2009 Judicial Review, lawful termination is possible where there is a real and serious risk to a woman's physical or mental health, which is either long term or permanent. Thus, the mother, whose mental health is so damaged by carrying a child with fatal foetal abnormality, can at present avail of lawful termination within Northern Ireland. In our view this is sufficient.

TUV notes that other parties have not been clear on this issue and challenges them to publically state their stance on the DOJ proposals so that there can be an informed debate on the issue.

## Education

Few things matter more for the future of Northern Ireland than the education of our children. Yet, it is this very matter which has been plunged into utter chaos by Sinn Fein under devolution. No one should be surprised that Sinn Fein, with its Marxist, anti-stability agenda, should wish to destroy our highly successful education system.

Our schools should be preparing our children for life and work. Thus, teaching to qualifications, rather than slavish attachment to a departmental dictated curriculum, should be the priority. Examinations are not the enemies of progress, but the passport to success.

We have seen academic selection, not saved as an integral part of our education system, as promised, but expelled outside the confines of regular and prepared primary/secondary school progression to the wilderness of unregulated mayhem for parents and pupils.



TUV strongly supports academic selection where that suits the abilities of children who wish to avail of it. We further believe that parents are entitled to have their children prepared accordingly in primary school, but for those children who don't take that route there must be equal consideration and secondary education funded adequately to optimise their talents.

**There must be no funding hierarchy whereby secondary schools are disadvantaged. Northern Ireland must value all its children, but to do so we must equally facilitate the academic potential of some - rather than thwart it - and the different talents of others. Choice, not prescription, is our guide.**

The audacity of Sinn Fein in misusing the education portfolio to favour and promote Irish medium education knows no bounds, nor has it been curbed by those who claim they 'control Stormont'. As controlled schools are closed, the Minister, with impunity, wastes scarce resources on his aggressive pro-Irish agenda.

This was graphically highlighted when the Minister recently approved an Irish language school with just 15 pupils and nothing was done to stop him. By way of contrast the Collegiate in Enniskillen is to be closed by Ministerial diktat.

While there has been a disproportionate focus on teaching Irish, modern languages, which are essential in today's economy, have been neglected. If Northern Ireland is to compete on the international business scene there must be a focus on foreign languages both at primary and secondary level.

TUV wants to make it compulsory that GCSE pupils take at least one modern language. We also believe that modern languages should be a compulsory part of the Key Stage 2 curriculum in primary schools.

In relation to teacher training, TUV believes very strongly in the retention of Stranmillis University College. Stranmillis, with its unique ethos, must not become a sacrificial lamb to the Alliance Party's policy of social engineering.

## Housing

The future of public housing is in a state of flux, with the DUP minister contemplating dismantling the Housing Executive. Wholesale transfer of public housing stock to Housing Associations, which habitually charge higher rents, is not advisable, particularly if it involves overriding the views and wishes of tenants.



**NIHE has many faults, but jumping into the unknown is not desirable. Political meddling in housing, such as seen with the brazen attempt to coerce the NIHE Board over the Redsky scandal, is not healthy. Nor, were the exaggerated and unjustified claims by the minister of £18m overcharging by four contractors an edifying episode. Such politicking needs to be kept out of housing.**

An adequate supply of social housing is essential and tenants need and deserve reliable maintenance and repairs. What they don't need is party political meddling.

## Law and Order

Public confidence in the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland is at an all-time low.

The complicity of the PSNI in the On The Run letters scandal married to the heavy handed response to the flag protests has fed the perception within the Unionist community that there are double standards.

The belated decision of the SDLP to permit the National Crime Agency (NCA) to operate in Northern Ireland is welcome but it is worth noting that due to the devolution of policing and justice powers to the Northern Ireland Assembly, the NCA has not been able to operate in the Province until now. We have lagged behind the rest of the United Kingdom when it came to tackling drugs, child trafficking and fuel laundering among other crimes because of this.

TUV believes that people should feel safe and that those who break the law should experience robust but fair justice.

In relation to the Stormont House Agreement TUV will challenge the new arrangements as they pertain to victims because they clearly do not offer what victims need.

Sinn Fein succeeded in its demand that 'legacy inquests' should continue separately from the new and inferior Historical Investigations Unit (HIU). Thus, the Republican pursuit of the security forces can continue unabated. Moreover, whereas up to £19m pa is to be set aside to fund legacy inquests, only one third of that is allocated to investigate the hundreds of outstanding HET cases. We repudiate such a hierarchy of victims.

The Agreement is silent on who will recruit the HIU and how. Nor, is it stated whether, as anticipated by Haass, former police officers will be barred from membership. It will, however, be overseen by Gerry Kelly and others on the Policing Board.

Sinn Fein, having got caught out in the Boston Tapes saga, has secured the major concession that any information obtained by the Independent Commission on Information Retrieval (ICIR) will not be admissible in either criminal or civil proceedings, nor provided to any law enforcement agency (para 46). So much for the pretence that the proposals on the past are victim centred and respectful of 'upholding the rule of law' and 'facilitating the pursuit of justice'! Moreover, the ICIR can conceal all it wants to conceal because it will be immune from FOI requirements.

**Thus, under the operation of the ICIR, terrorists supplying information will have immunity, in that nothing they tell can ever be used against them. Indeed, whether they even tell the truth seems incapable of verification.**

There is no compulsion on any terrorist group to cooperate with the ICIR. Sinn Fein obtained its demand for a body to investigate themes, such as alleged collusion, by the establishment of the Implementation and Reconciliation Group (IRG), though reporting on same will be delayed for 5 years.

TUV supports the introduction of legislation to outlaw the glorification of terrorism so that events such as the IRA parade in Castlederg or the naming of a play park after a notorious Republican terrorist cannot be repeated.

## Equality?

**The mask slipped when Gerry Adams described equality as “the Trojan horse of the entire Republican strategy”. Equality has become a code word for attacks on the Britishness of Northern Ireland.**

- The Royal Ulster Constabulary went in the name of equality.
- Orange marches are stopped in the name of equality.
- The Union Flag was removed from Belfast City Hall in the name of equality.

Even democracy – which means that we have the right to vote a party out of government and the right to an Opposition – has been dispensed with in Northern Ireland in the name of equality.



Understandably this one way process has built resentment within the Unionist community as they see symbols of Northern Ireland's place in the United Kingdom pushed to the margins or consigned to the history books. TUV will continue to lead the opposition to this agenda.

Now even a Christian bakery is being persecuted for refusing to promote same sex marriage. TUV is unashamedly opposed to the aggressive “gay rights” agenda which gives no space to the rights of others and, aided by the Equality Commission, seeks to suppress freedom of conscience and religious belief.

**We are opposed to YOUR money being used to persecute people with genuinely held beliefs. TUV proposed a vote on slashing the budget of the Equality Commission which has brought the case against Ashers Bakery. Shamefully all other parties in the Assembly – including the DUP – voted against the TUV proposal.**

The case against Ashers is being funded by the Equality Commission. Remember the Equality Commission is funded by your taxes through the Office of the First and deputy First Minister. You cannot say that you oppose the Equality Commission and yet oppose reducing their budget.

TUV repudiates the demand for same sex marriage, which is peddled under the guise of what is falsely termed “equal marriage rights”. Marriage in its natural order and purpose is the union of a man and a woman. Same sex marriage is thus a perversion of marriage.

# Victims

TUV has demonstrated that it is serious about victims' issues.

In Stormont TUV has greatly raised the profile in favour of innocent victims. Ann's Law was a stunning success for this sector, giving them, for the first time an enhanced say in legislation over who could serve as a Special Adviser. Also, it was Jim Allister who introduced to Stormont the marking of European Day for the Innocent Victims of Terrorism, something which is now cherished by all affected. In helping defeat the Maze Shrine Project another famous victory was obtained for innocent victims. And it was Jim Allister who moved the amendment to police pension legislation which secured pension justice for RUC widows who remarry.

Much remains to be done, like correcting the perverse definition of "victim" and redressing the balance in terms of necessary inquiries into terrorist atrocities and the skulduggery which shaped "the peace process".

The scandal surrounding letters given to Republican OTRs exposed how innocent victims have been forgotten by successive Westminster governments. The reaction of the DUP showed that while Unionists talk tough they will not follow through on their demands. TUV MPs will push for legislation making the OTR letters null and void.

**TUV wants to see the perverse definition of victim - which equates the terrorist with innocent victims - changed. Those who accepted devolution before this issue was resolved must bear responsibility for the current situation.**

**Critically, in dealing with the past and with victims, in the Stormont House Agreement there is no departure from the present obscene definition of 'victim', whereby there is equivalence between the innocent victim and the victim-maker. In consequence, the entire proposals on the past are tainted and flawed. This is an insult to the victims and their families.**

TUV supports the creation of a pension for those seriously injured as a result of terrorist actions in Northern Ireland, but for this, again, the definition of victim must be changed. We will not tolerate a pension for victim-makers.

We are appalled by the funding crisis within groups which work with innocent victims. The way they have been treated is indicative of a government which sees innocent victims as an embarrassment.

TUV was the first party to give its backing to a Covenant for and with innocent victims and survivors of terrorism. The principles of that Covenant will continue to inform our policy when it comes to victims.



## Flags

Recent events show that there is a concerted attempt by Republicans to strip Northern Ireland of its British identity. The Stormont House Agreement achieved no progress on this issue. Unfettered by coalition with Sinn Fein, Unionists can be assured that TUV will not roll over.

In last year's council election TUV put forward detailed and rational proposals on how to resolve the flags issue when it comes to councils:

- Belfast City Hall as the prime civic building in our capital city is in a special position. The Union flag symbolises our constitutional affinity. It reflects the reality that Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom. Thus, it should fly every day on Belfast City Hall.
- With many nationalist councils refusing to fly the Union flag even on designated days, this inequity must be addressed as a pre-requisite to any settlement on the flags issue. Thus, outside of Belfast, the minimum acceptable is 'designated plus', whereby every council would fly the Union flag on designated days, with all councils having the option to fly it more frequently, or every day, if that is the majority wish. Thus, Ballymena, for example, could continue its 365 day practice, in accordance with the wishes of the greater number of its inhabitants.



**Recently, there was an opportunity for Unionists to force a resolution of this issue. When the Local Government Bill was going through Stormont a number of amendments to resolve the City Hall impasse and require all councils to at least fly the national flag on designated days were blocked by the nationalist front. Instead of facing down this intransigence, the DUP walked away.**

It is simply not good enough for those Unionists who back RPA to claim that they tried but were blocked by a Petition of Concern in the Assembly. That was not how it had to be. If the flag issue really goes to the core of what the primary Unionist party in Stormont wished to defend, that party had the option, as others exercised in respect of other Bills, of stalling the Bill until the issue was addressed.

Importantly Westminster retains power over the flying of flags on government buildings in Northern Ireland. The current Flags Regulations (NI) 2000 are manifestly inadequate. They allow for the Union Flag to be flown for a mere 15 days a year. This falls short even of the designated days set by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, for Government buildings across the UK. Indeed as most of the days listed in the Flag Regulations relate to events in the lives of current members of the Royal Family, we will ultimately be left with the Union Flag flying from Government buildings on only 4 days a year.

The gross inadequacy of the Flags Regulations is illustrated for example by the fact that in Northern Ireland the Union Flag does not fly on 9th January each year – the birthday of the Duchess of Cambridge.

TUV MPs will seek to ensure that the Flag Regulations which currently apply in Northern Ireland are replaced by legislation which ensures that the National Flag flies on the designated days set by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport so that we are brought into line with the rest of the United Kingdom.

**Recently the UK Government announced that the Union Flag will be printed on Great Britain driving licences. In Northern Ireland, however, this will not apply because of the stance of the SDLP Environment Minister. TUV believes that motorists in Northern Ireland should be able to have the national flag on their licences.**

In 2012 the Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) (Amendment) Regulations there was a consultation to increase, exclusively in Northern Ireland, the fees for driving licences from the UK standard of £50 to £62.50. Why? The consultation said that it was because there was a separate production line for Northern Ireland driving licences and that the fee is too small to sustain it at the £50 level.

Since there is already separate provision, the Minister could, if he wished, afford the Northern Ireland licence holder the right to have the Union flag on their driving licence. TUV MPs will seek to rectify this situation.

## Parading

Since the introduction of Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998, and the creation of the Parades Commission, there has been continuous dissatisfaction at the discrimination and bias of the Parades Commission and the legislation it sought to enforce against the Unionist community.

Traditional Unionist Voice reaffirms its desire to protect Civil and Religious Liberty for the citizens of Northern Ireland. The right to freedom of peaceful assembly is protected in the European Convention of Human Rights.



TUV wants to see the Parades Commission abolished but that should not be seen as an end in itself. Replacing the Parades Commission with another quango which makes the same decisions leaves us no further forward.

The proposals which came out of the Stormont House talks on the parading issue are totally unacceptable. They make it clear that “meaningful and sustained local dialogue” will be at the heart of any new regulatory system.

Tellingly, Stormont House suggests that legislation on setting up a new body will be brought forward in the month after the election.

**Despite both DUP and UUP pretending they had not even negotiated on parading, the separate Stormont Castle Agreement, which was secret till flushed out by TUV, exposes their deception by revealing that not only had they agreed new structures but sought the funding for such. Such duplicity typifies why so many have lost confidence in these parties.**

TUV rejects this underhand treatment of the electorate. We believe that the voters should be fully informed on this issue when going to the polls. What have the parties – particularly the Unionist parties – got to hide?

**With regards to our own position, TUV believes that the starting point of any legislation ought to be a statutory affirmation and protection that the right to freedom of peaceful assembly is paramount. This would give primacy to this fundamental human right in any balancing exercise necessary in determining between competing rights, with the resulting onus on those wishing to displace the fundamental right.**

Legislation ought to specifically declare that where a parading route is historically traditional such will be a strong material consideration in reaching any determination. Likewise, in pursuit of the concept of shared space, the legislation should specify that arterial routes, which are substantially non-residential, should carry a statutory presumption in favour of parading.

## Transport

The priority within Northern Ireland must be towards building roads because of their economic, rather than political, justification. The prioritising of the A5 as a joint venture with the Dublin Government is a political case in point, whereas, getting an upgrade to the vital A75 Stranraer to Carlisle link, in co-operation with Scotland, has been largely ignored.

Choking Belfast City centre with bus lanes is not in the commercial interests of the City. Nor, is a new pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the Lagan a sensible spend when our roads require so much attention.

**The development of the International airport and adequate public transport links, including a rail link should be prioritised, especially now that Dublin, which already steals so much of our air traffic, is considering a direct rail link from Belfast.** There is something radically wrong with the approach of government if Northern Ireland passengers can connect direct by rail to Dublin airport, but not to our own international airport.

## Tourism

Northern Ireland has many unique selling points when it comes to tourism. The Giant's Causeway, superb golf courses which have helped foster the talent of world class golfers, unique cultural attractions like the Twelfth and Scarva and our great industrial heritage which is at long last being celebrated at the Titanic Quarter.



However, Northern Ireland is being held back and prevented from making the most of these uniquely Northern Ireland selling points. On the international market Ireland is sold as a single destination by the cross border body Tourism Ireland. Tourism NI is even prohibited from promoting Northern Ireland in GB, only Tourism Ireland can do so. This nonsensical constraint is hampering the growth of our tourism industry. Last year the outgoing head of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (now Tourism NI)

Alan Clarke summed up the problem:

*“We [Northern Ireland] are putting a third of the money in [to Tourism Ireland] and we get around 10 to 11 per cent of the holidaymakers coming to the island. So Northern Ireland is paying beyond its share”.*

TUV believes that we need to break free from the shackles of Tourism Ireland and promote Northern Ireland as destination in its own right. Sadly, DETI under DUP control has done nothing to achieve this.

A large number of Northern Ireland visitors come from mainland UK. TUV is committed to maintaining our port and airport links to ensure that this increases, but access to our international airport must be enhanced by a direct rail link.

## **Sport**

TUV supports the right of athletes from Northern Ireland to compete on the international stage for the United Kingdom.

In November 2012 TUV ensured that the issue of sectarianism in boxing reached the floor of the Northern Ireland Assembly when Jim Allister proposed an amendment to a mundane motion about Belfast City Council’s Boxing Strategy.



A report which flowed from the Sandy Row case highlighted the fact that boxers from Northern Ireland cannot compete under the Union Flag at the Olympics. They agreed that “the nationality issue in the Olympics is a nettle that needs to be grasped”, not just when it comes to boxing but also in relation to other sports.

**TUV MPs will fight to ensure that sportsmen and women from Northern Ireland have the right to represent the UK on the world's biggest stage and to represent Northern Ireland at all levels of international competition.**

TUV will continue to highlight inequality in funding for sporting organisations. We oppose preferential treatment to the GAA while other sporting bodies are left comparatively with a pittance.

## **Animal Welfare**

The welfare and protection of animals is an issue often overlooked by parties in Northern Ireland. TUV will strive to highlight inadequate legislation which undermines the necessary measures required to safeguard many innocent creatures from inhumane treatment. Punishments must be sufficient to deter abuse and neglect. We strongly advocate mandatory registration for breeders and the integration of micro chipping domestic pets in conjunction with council licensing. Financial penalties should be introduced for those who abandon pets, which can then be utilised to sustain a programme of neutering instead of automatic culling of stray or homeless pets.



 [www.tuv.org.uk](http://www.tuv.org.uk)

