



**FIRST REPORT OF THE TYNWALD
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FOR THE SESSION
2007-08**

TYNWALD MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Hon S C Rodan SHK (Garff)

The Hon N Q Cringle MLC

Mr C G Corkish MHK (Douglas West)

Hon A V Craine MHK (Ramsey)

Mr J R Houghton MHK (Douglas North)

The Tynwald Management Committee is concerned principally with questions related to the accommodation of the Legislature and the services and facilities accorded to Members in the exercise of their duties and with oversight of the Office of the Clerk of Tynwald.

The powers, privileges and immunities relating to the work of a committee of Tynwald are those conferred by sections 3 and 4 of the Tynwald Proceedings Act 1876, sections 1 to 4 of the Privileges of Tynwald (Publications) Act 1973 and sections 2 to 4 of the Tynwald Proceedings Act 1984.

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All correspondence with regard to this Report should be addressed to the Clerk of Tynwald, Legislative Buildings, Finch Road, Douglas IM1 3PW.



TYNWALD MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

BROADCASTING AND WEBCASTING OF PROCEEDINGS

**To The Honourable Noel Q Cringle MLC, President of Tynwald, and
the Honourable Members of the Council and Keys in Tynwald
assembled**

Background

1. In October 1983 a Report of the Tynwald Management Committee on the Broadcasting of Tynwald recommended that no proceedings be broadcast except for the budget debate, and other matters which Tynwald had resolved from time to time should be broadcast. The Report was approved, and it meant in practice that all other broadcasts of proceedings would require specific approval from Tynwald. In March 1987 the Court agreed that the Budget debate should be broadcast live in future years, unless Tynwald decided otherwise.
2. In June 1992, the House of Keys authorised the broadcasting of Question Time with effect from October 1992, subject to negotiation with Manx Radio. The outcome was that the whole of Question Time was to be broadcast, and that Manx Radio would also be permitted to use clips from Question Time in news and current affairs broadcasts, subject to agreed guidelines.
3. In July 1994, Tynwald discussed a motion to broadcast in full the Court's proceedings but voted not to proceed with the proposal. In April 1995, however, it was decided to begin the live broadcasting of Tynwald Question Time from October 1995, and also the annual Government Policy debate. In 2003 the annual Policy Debate was replaced by the Government's Annual Report.

4. Manx Radio was, and is, permitted to use clips from live broadcasts in subsequent news and current affairs programmes, subject to Guidelines agreed with the President of Tynwald. Among other things, they require Manx Radio to exercise balance and maintain fairness in the use of extracts, and not to use them in programmes that are not serious news programmes. The Guidelines used by Manx Radio to govern their use of extracts from live broadcasts in subsequent news and current affairs programmes are attached as Appendix 1. In addition Manx Radio maintain a sound archive of broadcasts.

5. In October 2003, our immediate predecessors recommended that:-

“live continuous broadcasting by Manx Radio of the proceedings in Tynwald should be permitted at the pleasure of the Court, with no interruption beyond the interposition of appropriate programmes during adjournments of the Court”.

That recommendation was carried, and took effect in January 2004.

6. Further recommendations, also carried were:-

(i) *that Manx Radio be permitted to install a web camera in the Chamber to show on Manx Radio’s website a full view picture of all Members at all times to be changed at one minute intervals, subject to any agreed changes with the Tynwald Management Committee, and to stream proceedings live onto their website, with a written indication of which Member is speaking and which item is being discussed;*

(ii) *the responsibility for monitoring the broadcasting of proceedings should rest with the Tynwald Management Committee;*

(iii) *the Guidelines used by Manx Radio to govern their use of extracts from live broadcasts in subsequent news and current affairs programmes at Appendix 1 should be applied to all broadcast material;*

(iv) *guidelines should be drawn up by Manx Radio in consultation and agreement with the Tynwald Management Committee to specify the role of the presenter.¹*

¹ In the event, such extra guidelines have not proved necessary.

7. The reasons which supported these recommendations included:-
- live broadcasting provides the electorate with the opportunity to be better informed about the work of Tynwald and its Members;
 - the accountability of Members to the electorate is enhanced if the electorate have the opportunity of hearing in full what their respective Members actually say in each debate;
 - broadcasting helps to underline the commitment to open and transparent government;
 - broadcasting of Tynwald proceedings helps to overcome the perception of some people that Question Time is the whole of the work of Tynwald; and
 - greater coverage of the proceedings of Tynwald can assist in improving turnout in general elections.
8. Since Manx Radio has the facility to split programming between the FM and AM frequencies, the station is able to allocate the AM frequency to continuous broadcasting of Tynwald without the need for news or advertising interruptions - though given the timing of the midday adjournment it is possible for other material to be broadcast on that frequency then.
9. The recommendations in 2003 were supported by evidence of public interest in extending the broadcasting of Tynwald's proceedings emerging from audience research undertaken on Manx Radio's behalf that year by NOP. In it, a general question was asked, "Have you ever listened to any broadcasts of the House of Keys Question Time or the Tynwald Question Time - either live or repeat broadcasts?". In response, 43% of the adult population (measured as people aged 15 and over) answered, "Yes". This confirmed earlier research for the station by Gallup in 1996, which suggested that 32% of the adult population was 'definitely' or 'probably' interested in listening to extended coverage of Tynwald sittings.

Broadcasting Select Committees

10. These soundings were not of course measures of actual listening over a defined period, and unfortunately there has been no audience research to establish since 2004 what the listening figures for broadcasts of Tynwald now are. Anecdotal evidence, however, suggests that the level of radio listening is certainly not insignificant, and Manx Radio have now approached your Committee with a request in principle to broadcast the public hearings of the Select Committee on the Manx Electricity Authority.
11. Given the now well established and satisfactory experience of broadcasting the main Tynwald proceedings, we can see no reason in principle why it should not be extended to select committees. The public hearings of select committees are recorded and published in Hansard in the same way as the main proceedings, and to certain sectors of the public they may well be of greater interest since they will often be dealing with very specific and localised issues.
12. The reasoning which we have noted in support of the decision in 2003 to broadcast Tynwald proceedings live, however, which opposed selective excerpts only, applies equally to select committees and to choosing which to broadcast and which not. Any sector of Tynwald's work is part of the democratic process, and its accessibility to the public must as far as possible be provided on a uniform basis.
13. Your Committee do not believe that it would in general be acceptable to Members or to the public, in the context of the broadcasting of any part of Tynwald's activities, to make it a matter of editorial discretion whether a particular select committee hearing should be broadcast or not. If issues considered important by one Member, or that Member's constituents, did not attract editorial interest, the Member concerned could then have, we believe, a justifiable complaint.
14. There are, however, human and financial resource implications for Manx Radio which mean that they could not undertake a programme of non-selective broadcasting of committee hearings at present.

15. We therefore recommend that Manx Radio should be authorised to broadcast the public evidence hearings of all select committees – or any other committee for the time being holding a similar hearing, such as the Public Accounts Committee – on the same basis as that on which Tynwald proceedings are now broadcast, but only when adequate resources can be made available to enable non-selective broadcasting to take place.

Broadcasting via the World Wide Web -

16. Currently Manx Radio's programmes are streamed live onto the Manx Radio website, which considerably increases the number of potential listeners and makes listening to the station available worldwide. This includes the continuous broadcasting of Tynwald and, if introduced, would include the broadcasting of select committees likewise.
17. In addition, three web cameras are located in the Tynwald Chamber to show the listener who is speaking; the picture is in principle static, but is refreshed with increasing frequency as the technology improves, and is gradually approximating to a live video stream. The full chamber is shown, but there is no special focus on the Member speaking. The relevant extract from the Order Paper is displayed, to indicate the subject under discussion; this corresponds to the brief voice-over comment of the radio presenter, which serves the same purpose.
18. As technology moves on, there are understandably now calls for such diffusion to be more widespread, and for an immediately accessible sound archive to be available so that listeners who have not been able to hear the contemporaneous broadcast should be able to revisit the sound record of debates when they are free to do so.
19. The principal concern which has been expressed has come from a lobby known as the Positive Action Group (PAG), whose detailed proposals we reproduce at Appendix 2. Several Members of Tynwald and the Clerk of Tynwald attended a public meeting organised by PAG on 22nd October 2007 about their proposals, which consisted of a presentation by a market leader in the relevant technology, and a question and answer session afterwards.

20. No detailed examination of the costs of such a development has been undertaken, but estimates from PAG have indicated that it would be in the region of £30-40,000; we believe that in addition to that the recurring running costs in equipment and personnel would be likely to be of the order of £15,000 annually.
21. Our information from Manx Radio is that public access to their own website carrying the audio and video streams of Tynwald is very low, and there is no audience research of which we are aware to suggest that the take-up of any more widely available webcasting would be significant. In the circumstances, your Committee would see it as premature to initiate proposals for expenditure of the order indicated by PAG. There is, in addition, a possible legal difficulty to be resolved, on which we are taking advice, though there is reason to believe that it will not ultimately be an obstacle.
22. We also draw attention to the fact that the *Early Publications* edition of Hansard on the Tynwald website (in which the text is definitive, but only the formatting and layout of the pages remains to be added) is now available only two or three days after the sitting. When the current installation of voice recognition technology is complete, we expect that delay to be reduced to twenty four hours. Taken together with public access to the chambers at all times, and the contemporaneous broadcasting of debates, there are thus already three ways in which the full content of parliamentary business comes before the public.
23. In order to make the existing audio and video streams more easily and widely available to the Media, however, preliminary discussions have been held to seek possible solutions. One possibility which appears attractive at present could be for the Tynwald website to be established as the central audio and visual distribution point, and for Media websites to link into it. In this way, radio stations or newspapers could re-diffuse the streamed material, and add archiving access facilities if they wished.

24. It might well in such circumstances be desirable, in the interests of ensuring an appropriate use of parliamentary material, to offer such links on terms provided by licences issued under authority of Tynwald. The advantage of that would be that Tynwald could ensure that the look and presentation of material is consistent with responsible publication, and ensure that each licensee displays the Court's proceedings correctly.
25. We have been made aware, however, of current developments at Manx Radio in relation to their website for the introduction of a substantially reconfigured News Section, with the functionality to provide for the instant display of voting details from the e-voting system now in use in Tynwald, a searchable archive of votes and a searchable audio archive. All these facilities would go a long way to meeting the suggestions that have been referred to above, but are still in gestation and will see further development before they are complete.
26. **Your Committee accordingly recommend that further study of the best means of enhancing the existing webcasting of Tynwald at present done by Manx Radio should be undertaken and a report made to the Court by the December 2008 sitting.**

News analysis

27. In the Report by our predecessors in 2003 which is mentioned above, the comment was made:-

*"With the introduction of live continuous broadcasting of proceedings, a programme broadcast after each monthly sitting of the Court, similar to the BBC's Radio 4 *Today in Parliament* programme, summarising what had taken place with excerpts, would be a natural complement."*

"Your Committee are therefore pleased to note that Manx Radio would propose to broadcast such a programme. It could only be helpful in further educating the public, and raising public awareness regarding the work of this Honourable Court. We would therefore hope that Manx Radio would introduce such a programme into its regular broadcasting as soon as practicable."

28. It is unfortunate that Manx Radio have not been able to take this suggestion forward, and we record our hope that it will not be lost sight of. However extensive and widely diffused broadcasting or webcasting of entire proceedings becomes, your Committee believe that the majority of listeners will not be able to spare the time to tune in to lengthy debates. The excerpts from debates available in news bulletins are necessarily very brief, and subordinate to a much larger editorial content.
29. If the electorate is to become more familiar with the reality of parliamentary work, an enhanced analysis of proceedings is desirable. We therefore continue to see a longer term advantage in a style of programming which incorporates as much as possible by way of extracts from the debates themselves, with only a minimum of editorial comment.

Recommendations

- (i) **that Manx Radio should be authorised to broadcast the public evidence hearings of all select committees – or any other committee for the time being holding a similar hearing, such as the Public Accounts Committee – on the same basis as that on which Tynwald proceedings are now broadcast, but only when adequate resources can be made available to enable non-selective broadcasting to take place;**
- (ii) **that further study of the best means of enhancing the existing webcasting of Tynwald at present done by Manx Radio should be undertaken and a report made to the Court by the December 2008 sitting.**

S C Rodan (Chairman)

C G Corkish

A V Craine

N Q Cringle

J R Houghton

February 2008

APPENDIX 1

Broadcasting Guidelines

APPENDIX 2

Positive Action Group Proposals

Parliamentary Copyright

available from:

The Tynwald Library
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