



REPORT OF THE TYNWALD MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

BROADCASTING AND WEBCASTING OF PROCEEDINGS

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Chairman

Mr C G Corkish MHK (Douglas West)

Hon D C Cretney MHK (Douglas South)

The Hon N Q Cringle OBE MLC

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.

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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 which were also carried included:-

- (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*

7. The reasons which supported these recommendations were as follows:-

- 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.

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

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.
10. The Broadcasting and Webcasting of Proceedings report of the Tynwald Management Committee in February 2008 contained a recommendation 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."

This report, which has taken a considerable time to prepare, is a response to that recommendation. As Members will see below [paragraph 17], initial research was disappointing, as it indicated that the cost of any webcasting would be more than what would be justifiable. Since then, likely savings have been identified and the range of affordable possibilities is much greater.

11. **What is Webcasting?**
Webcasting or 'streaming' is a technique for providing live and on demand i.e. watch again, content over the internet. Audio and video content is compressed, reducing the file sizes so they are small enough to travel over the internet. A local player then decodes and plays these files to the viewer. Picture quality is dependent on a number of factors, including bandwidth – literally, the amount of information that any given internet connection can carry at a time.
12. It is possible to synchronise the video with speaker names, contextual information such as supporting documents, links and presentations to ensure that the viewer can make sense of what they are watching. Indexing of content also enables users to get back to the content they are interested in at a later date, a feature which may also be of benefit to Members.

13. For video it is usual to have fixed cameras capable of remotely operated tilt and zoom functions so that it is possible to focus on the Member speaking and have wide angle shots.

14. **Why Webcast?**

Actually seeing and hearing someone speak is far more compelling than reading the same words, and sites such as the BBC iPlayer and YouTube have made video a commonly accepted online tool. Producing audio and/or video recordings of our sittings would provide Tynwald with another way of communicating with the public and engaging citizens in the democratic process by increasing accessibility and transparency.

15. There has been some demand for this locally, particularly from the Positive Action Group and other parliaments are certainly starting to engage with their electorate in this way. Other jurisdictions provide the following:

Service	Jurisdiction
Audio and Video; Live and Watch Again	Eire, Scotland, Northern Ireland, UK, Wales
Live Video	Barbados
Audio	Malta
No Service	Alderney, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Cyprus, Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Guernsey, Jersey

We offer the options set out below for consideration, if Tynwald Court agrees to expand its web based coverage.

16. **Considering Webcasting**

When coming to a decision about the type of coverage preferred there are some points which Members may like to consider, in addition to the costs outlined below, before coming to their decision:

- Which service would be appropriate for each Chamber?
- What part of sessions, if any, should be transmitted live?
- Will the same service be required for committee sessions?
- If comprehensive video recording takes place is it possible that the legal status of Hansard, as the official report, could be questioned if any differences were perceived between the written record and the video recording?
- What sort of coverage would be permitted? It is usual to switch between wide shots and close ups on the Member speaking.
- Under what circumstances would we allow others to use our coverage?
- Will our coverage replace Manx Radio's website coverage?

- What concerns do Members have about being filmed?
- How long will listen/watch again files be publically available? Video files are large and so we may choose to set a retention period or switch to cheaper storage media.

We have not addressed these wider issues in this report, as they are best explored in debate in the Chamber. We set out below some of the options for proceeding with broadcasting, if Tynwald court agrees to do so. We invite Members to consider the above points and address them in debate.

17. **Webcasting Options for Tynwald and the Branches**

Before preparing this report a number of different options were considered including solutions from Synergy IT, Manx Radio and Public-i. Of these Public-i offered the most cost effective option, a video solution, which included sufficient rented hardware to cover one Chamber at any time. The cost was approximately £20,000 per annum excluding operator costs, which have been estimated at an additional £13,500 per annum. This is a significant financial commitment and so it was decided to ask the Head of Information Service to look for alternatives before presenting this report.

18. Further investigation has now been undertaken with help from a local company, Element 9, who have particular expertise in this area. Four options with estimated set up and annual running costs are set out below. When considering the options the following points should be borne in mind:

- Set up costs relate to services in **any one Chamber at one time**. To provide any of the following in two Chambers concurrently, therefore, two set up costs should be allowed and running costs would increase.
- All options require an operator whose time is not currently budgeted for in the Clerk of Tynwald's Office headcount. Buying in staff would cost in the region of £40 per hour with increased rates for evening sittings. In preparing the costs, an estimated 270 sitting hours per year have been allowed.
- In all cases costs are best estimates and assumptions have been made regarding the coverage time and average listeners or viewers. The final set up costs will be dependent on the options selected for each Chamber.

The Options

19. **Audio - Listen Again**

This option means that we would be able to take a copy of the feed from our voice recording system and edit it into sections (podcasts) which the public would be able to listen to on our website or download to listen to on a device such as an iPod later.

Set Up Costs	
PC with audio capture card and appropriate free software	£500
Engineer Install Time	£500
Estimated Set Up Total :	£1000
Continuing Costs - Annual	
Operator - Staff Time for editing approx 15 hours per month.	If hired £5400
Estimated Annual Running Costs:	£5400.00

As this would be delivered via our own remote server we may find, if the take up is good, that our monthly bandwidth charges increase. Editing into sections would commence at the start of each break in proceedings.

20. Live Audio & Listen Again

This option means that we would be able to take an existing feed from our sound capture system which the public would be able to listen to live on our website. Listen again as described above would also be available.

Set Up Costs	
PC with audio capture card and appropriate free software	£800
Engineer Install Time	£600
Estimated Set Up Total :	£1400
Continuing Costs - Annual	
External <i>Shoutcast</i> Audio Streaming Server for live transmission allowing up to 100 concurrent listeners.	£600
Operator - Staff Time for set up and editing approx 20 hours per month.	If hired £7200
Estimated Annual Running Costs:	£7800

21. The video set up outlined in the next two paragraphs includes a price for three cameras. With notice these could be moved between Chambers (provided they are mounted in an accessible location) and even onto a tripod if required. However cabling into all rooms where the cameras may be located would be required. The cameras quoted would provide video output of sufficient quality to provide to broadcasters should that requirement arise in the future.

22. Video Watch Again

This option means that the video of the sessions would be edited into sections (webcasts) which the public would later be able to watch on our website or download to view on an alternative device.

Set Up Costs	
PC with video capture card, remote control unit, software and fitting hardware.	£5000
3 Cameras - Sony EVI-D70	£2625
3 S-Vid Camera cables	£255
3 Remote Control Cables	£315
Engineer Install Time	£1200
Estimated Set Up Total :	£9395
Continuing Costs - Annual	
Operator - Staff Time throughout to switch between cameras and close ups, add captions and edit for watch again.	If hired £13500
Estimated Annual Running Costs:	£13500

As this would be delivered via our own remote server we will probably find if there is even a moderate take up our monthly bandwidth charges will increase. However this could be done as required. Editing into sections would commence at the start of each break in proceedings.

23. Watch Live and Watch Again

This option means that video of the sittings would be shown live on our website. The output would also later be edited into sections (webcasts) which the public would be able to watch on our website or download to view on an alternative device.

Set Up Costs	
PC with video capture card, remote control unit, software and fitting hardware.	£5000
3 Cameras - Sony EVI-D70	£2625
3 S-Vid Camera cables	£255
3 Remote Control Cables	£315
Engineer Install Time	£1200
Estimated Set Up Total :	£9395
Continuing Costs - Annual	
External <i>Streamzilla</i> Video Streaming Server allowing up to 100 people to view the live stream concurrently based on 30 hours per month	£5640
Operator - Staff Time throughout to switch between cameras and close ups, add captions and edit for watch again.	If hired £13500
Estimated Annual Running Costs:	£19140

24. We are very conscious of the need to keep costs to a minimum. We consider that an interim experimental period would be useful in order to assess how much an enhanced facility would be used. We believe that the live and listen again audio facility provides the best option for value for money in terms of providing online access to the public on an experimental basis. Accordingly, we make the following recommendation.

Recommendation

The Tynwald Management Committee recommends that as part of the development work being undertaken to modernise the Tynwald website that a live and listen again audio facility be provided with Manx Radio continuing to broadcast proceedings on the radio and via their webpage; and that both websites be monitored, to measure usage, over a period of twelve months before reconsidering the expenditure to upgrade to a video service.

S C Rodan (Chairman)
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