

**5.1. A Bill to rename Douglas West –
Leave to introduce –
Motion carried**

The Hon. Member for South Douglas (Mr Malarkey) to move:

That leave be given to introduce a Private Member's Bill to rename the Douglas West constituency; and for connected purposes.

The Speaker: We turn now to Item 5, leave to introduce, and I call on the Hon. Member for Douglas South, Mr Malarkey, please.

Mr Malarkey: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

This is probably the shortest Bill that will come before this House this coming session – I certainly hope.

As Members are aware, I was not a Member of the House when the Representation of the People Act 2015 was brought through with boundary changes. When I saw the final boundary change, it came to light that suddenly Douglas South had become Douglas West for some unknown reason.

Mr Speaker, Douglas South, the boundary, was always the largest constituency in Douglas, because over the years it has grown. It started off at Douglas Head, going along, taking up Pulrose and Anagh Coar and then, as Farmhill came in and then Ballaughton, the constituency grew to be the largest one in Douglas.

Under the latest reshuffle of the boundaries Douglas South did not actually take in any other boundaries. It actually lost quite a lot of its boundary: it lost Douglas Head, Peel Road and Hillside Avenue. Other constituencies within Douglas expanded, including Douglas West, which went further into central Douglas and ended up having a name change from Douglas West to Central Douglas. It is beyond me and I have not been able to get any explanation why suddenly it was in the wisdom of those who were on the committee that looked at it to rename Douglas South 'Douglas West', which is not only ... confusing because people who live in Douglas South do not understand why they are now going to be called Douglas West.

Mr Watterson: It wasn't their only stupid idea.

Mr Malarkey: Douglas South, as it stands at the moment, is the last territory you will go through on the way to the Airport, because it is still south of Douglas. It does border slightly to the west of Douglas, but it is still the most southern area of Douglas.

So I am asking for leave to introduce today for a one-word change in the Representation of the People Act 2015 to allow what is now in the Act as 'Douglas West', that was Douglas South, to come back to being Douglas South.

Whilst canvassing, Mr Speaker, knocking on doors – and this was not a conversation we were having with constituents – I had little old ladies saying, 'Well, where are we going to have to go to vote now? Are we going to have to go to Douglas West?' It just causes pure confusion.

So, all I am asking for is the support of the House to introduce the Bill. It is cost neutral. It took the Attorney General's office 10 minutes to email me back with the primary legislation. Unfortunately, it needs primary legislation to change that within the Act. With a fair amount of support and suspended Standing Orders, this could be done extremely quickly before Christmas, going through both Branches, so that we will not hold up any people going forward for the next Election.

I beg to move, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Douglas South, Mrs Beecroft.

Mrs Beecroft: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I am happy to second this leave to introduce because I think if it clarifies things and makes it easier to understand. Anything that makes the democratic process more clear and more easy to understanding I think should be supported.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Onchan, Mr Quirk.

Mr Quirk: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I am quite happy to support my hon. friend and colleague from South Douglas, Mr Malarkey, on this particular change.

I too tried ... because in Onchan, in our constituency – Mr Karran, *our* constituency – we lose a fantastic amount of people in another area, to Garff.

My only contention, really, at the end of the day – and it is not viable for today, really – is that you would look after them, because there are some people who live in Onchan for the local authority elections.

I will be 100% supporting the Member for South Douglas to move this further.

The Speaker: I make no comment! (*Laughter and interjections*) Least said, soonest mended.
Mr Thomas.

Mr Thomas: No problem with the change of the name. Obviously, Douglas South is a traditional name.

Douglas West existed between 1956 and 2016 and is one that ... I have the privilege of being one of the last Members to represent that constituency, if the name is not re-used.

Two substantive points I want to make. I want the Member to assure us that there would be no consultation to do with this name change, because some people might read the Code on Consultation such as there has to be consultation, but to me it seems absolutely clear that there is no need to do any consultation.

More importantly, it seems to me incredibly surprising that we cannot just change a name through an Order if we can change the mechanism by which we are going to elect (**Mrs Beecroft:** Hear, hear.) to the second Chamber ... [*Inaudible*]. When I was talking with Mr Turner, who is looking at not only registration issues but also electoral issues, I tried to include that in the scope of his investigation, and it seems to me this is perfectly ... This should be handled by the Electoral Commission in future, (**Mr Watterson:** No chance.) and I hope that Members agree with me that that would be the right way to deal with such a trivial issue in many senses.

Mr Watterson: They know nothing.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Castletown.

Mr Ronan: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

If I could just get some reassurance off the mover that this is what it says and there will be no what he perceives as possible mischief-making further down the line. We have been through a rigorous process to equalise the boundaries across the Isle of Man to make it fair and equal for every voter in the forthcoming elections and thereon going forward. So just reassurance that this is a simple name change and Bill will not be changed in a way where debate could be had where we could go through another round of moving backwards or turning the clock backwards.

Mr Quirk: ‘Democracy’, it’s called.

The Speaker: I call on the mover to reply. Mr Malarkey.

Mr Malarkey: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Firstly, I would like to thank my seconder and also the Member for Onchan for his support.

If I could answer the last speaker, Minister Ronan, first, from my point of view this is simply a name change. If anybody wants to try and hang something onto this going through it is up to this House to stop that happening. (**Mr Karran:** Hear, hear.) That is out of my control. I just want a simple name change and I want it going through quite quickly so we are not holding the Cabinet Office or anybody else up on any paperwork that has to be done for the next Election. That is the in the hands of this House.

With regard to consultation, I believe I have already consulted. I have just done a by-election. I have spoken to the constituents in South Douglas. I know what they want. It did come up on several occasions, so I have consulted.

I thank the Member for the current West Douglas, before it disappears, for comments over this being primary legislation authorisation. I think that is a bit much, but I am guided by ... This is the only direction I can go. It should be done by an Order and I think the Chief Minister has taken that on board and maybe we can, in future, move things a little bit quicker in this Hon. House.

With that, I beg to move for permission to introduce.

The Speaker: Hon. Members, I put the motion as set out at Item 5 to grant leave to introduce. Those in favour, please say aye; against, no. The ayes have it.

A division was called for and electronic voting resulted as follows:

FOR

Mrs Beecroft
Mr Bell
Mr Boot
Mr Cannan
Mr Cregeen
Mr Gawne
Mr Hall
Mr Houghton
Mr Karran
Mr Malarkey
Mr Quayle
Mr Quirk
Mr Robertshaw
Mr Shimmin
Mr Singer
Mr Skelly
Mr Teare
The Speaker
Mr Thomas
Mr Watterson

AGAINST

Mr Harmer
Mr Ronan

The Speaker: With 20 votes for and 2 votes against, the motion therefore carries.