

5. BILL FOR THIRD READING

5.1. Marriage and Civil Partnership (Amendment) Bill – Third Reading approved

Mr Bell to move:

That the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Amendment) Bill 2016 be read a third time.

[formerly the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill 2016]

The Speaker: Bill for Third Reading: the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Amendment) Bill. I call on the mover, the Hon. Member for Ramsey, Mr Bell.

Mr Bell: Mr Speaker, a Bill of this nature was always going to attract a lively debate but I would like to thank all Members for their fair and balanced contributions to that debate.

There were no outstanding questions remaining to be answered after the clauses stage, but I would like to reiterate the main points of the Bill for clarification. It will allow same-sex couples to be married in the Island by way of a civil ceremony, and in law those marriages will be equivalent to the marriages of opposite-sex couples.

The Church of England and marriage according to its rites is entirely excluded from the scope of this Bill. It will permit the marriage of same-sex couples, according to religious rites and usages of other religious organisations if – *and only if* – the governing authority of such an organisation has opted into that process. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) It provides that there will be no obligation or compulsion on religious organisations or individuals to carry out or participate in the religious marriage ceremony of the same-sex couple.

It makes some consequential amendments to the Sharing of the Church Buildings Act.

It allows recognition in the Island of the marriages of same-sex couples that were lawfully entered into outside the Island.

It amends the Matrimonial Proceedings Act 2003 to provide for same-sex couples to be able to divorce, and it amends the Civil Partnership Act so that those couples who wish to do so can in fact convert their civil partnership into a marriage.

Finally, it now extends a right to civil partnership to heterosexual couples on the same basis as homosexual couples.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move the Third Reading of the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Amendment) Bill.

The Speaker: Hon. Member, Mr Shimmin.

Mr Shimmin: I beg to second and reserve my remarks.

The Speaker: Hon. Members, I put the motion that the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Amendment) Bill be read for a Third Time. 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

AGAINST

Mr Hall
Mr Robertshaw
Mr Teare

Mr Gawne
Mr Joughin
Mr Karran
Mr Malarkey
Mr Peake
Mr Ronan
Mr Shimmin
Mr Singer
Mr Skelly
The Speaker
Mr Thomas
Mr Watterson

The Speaker: There are 17 votes for, 3 votes against. The motion therefore carries.

Mr Karran: It is very handy being out the room.

The Speaker: Hon. Members, that concludes the business of the House today. The House will now stand adjourned until the next sitting which will take place at 10.30 a.m. on 15th March in Tynwald Court.

The House adjourned at 12.05 p.m.