



LIBERTARIAN

Liberal Vannin Party

31 st January 2010

Bringing Politics back to the people

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THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The agenda is as follows.

10-30 Coffee

11-00 Start Short opening address by Kate Beecroft, the national chairman, welcoming everyone, covering admin and the days events,

11-10 Branch Chair reports of some 5 mins duration followed by any questions from the floor.

11-30 Short report from the membership secretary on how the party has grown in the last year and any relevant items.

Followed by the election of the executive;

Peter Karran will call for nominations for Party Chair and follow to a vote.

The new Chairman will call for a show of hands for the positions of;

Vice Chairman,

Secretary / Membership secretary (dual post)

Treasurer,

In that order.

NB, If only one candidate is put forward the Chair will ask for a show of hands to confirm the appointment.

After the election there will be an address on the topic of 'How the parliament of the Isle of Man is organised, followed by questions.

12:55 Or thereabouts, award of the 'Libertarian Award' by Peter Karran MHK.

LUNCH 1300- 1400 sandwich type lunch organised by the party members.

14-00 Presentation of the Constitution Document by Phil Cottier and a vote on accepting it as the Party Constitution.

Followed by the Policy Document by Pat Ayres and a vote on accepting it

15-00 Depending upon the length of the debate we will move on to a closing address by Peter Karran MHK

15-10 Thanks given and seminar closed by Chair

Close.

I trust that we have at least as good a turn out as that enjoyed at our Annual Conference last year. The Party will only be as good as its members collectively make it and this is another real opportunity to have your say. Entry is free and open to all with the proviso that if votes are called for on any subject then only members may do so.

While we hope you join in debates, we do ask you to resist getting too involved as time is limited. There is opportunity to approach speakers after the event and during breaks.

Thanks to all that attended yesterdays presentation on electioneering. Well received and thanks to Erica and Richard Kemp for their hard work.

VAT what to do?

Now Mr Darling has given his pre-budget speech and not doing anything about which we didn't already know, the Island is looking more closely at VAT and how it is collected here. Mr darling was told by Mr Brown (UK version) not to increase any taxes other than the expected 2.5 % VAT rise.

What can we do here ? Really we only have two alternatives (I do not include the 'do nothing' option). The first is we scrap VAT on the Island altogether.

Now this might well seem a

good idea at first glance and a sort of two finger gesture to the UK Government. However, despite people imagining we would attract more business to us as a 'tax haven' (!!), it is not a good idea. We would lose yet more income and that is what we MUST avoid. The alternative, and much more viable

course, would be to pass legislation to the effect that all companies/businesses etc who are liable for VAT pay it on the Island to the Manx Treasury. This would mean that UK chain

stores, for example, who have a shop on the Island would pay VAT to us instead of the UK.

We could instead call this a 'Profit Tax'. This would mean some of the tax now paid to UK would be paid to us before any tax on profits was calculated across.

Whatever we choose, doing nothing is not an option, so the usual shrug of the shoulders and 'we can do nothing' attitude from Tynwald must not be tolerated. Phil Cottier.

LIBERAL VANNIN PARTY

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Democracy, a pipe dream?

The majority of people in the Isle of Man would say that we have democracy here, but do we? Most of our politicians are independents, they produce their own personal manifestos and we, the public, cast our votes dependant on whose manifesto and personality resonates with us. We believe that when elected, our MHKs will adhere to the manifestos that we voted on. The reality is rather different. Once elected our MHKs are virtually powerless to carry out their election promises when confronted with the block vote of the Council of Ministers. We have no say as to who will be governing us as the Chief Minister chooses the Council of Ministers and they form the government. We have no choice as to whom we want as Chief Minister as this is not decided until after the election. We do not know what the government's policies will be when we cast our votes as we do not know who will be

in government. Just as concerning is the fact that when the Council of Ministers is formed they sign a "Code of Conduct" which effectively removes their right to speak against any government decision.

"A Minister may speak against any proposal in the Council of Ministers,

but he must subsequently either support the policy decided upon or resign."

There are some exceptions,

"A personal or political dislike of a Council of Ministers' decision is not in itself a sufficient justification for an exemption from collective responsibility. In cases where a Minister feels personally or politically unhappy with a particular policy or Council decision, the proper forum for discussion of the matter is the Council of Ministers.

If the Minister is unable to persuade Council to accept his thinking after full and frank discussion, he must accept the decision reached by Council. Any subsequent public dissent must be regarded as an unacceptable indulgence."

Can we really feel that we have independent political representation when to speak out against what they feel is wrong is classed an "unacceptable indulgence" and they have to resign?

This system of government is outdated, requires reform and is costing you, the taxpayer millions of pounds. Changes can only happen if you vote Liberal Vannin. We state our policies in our manifesto and these do not change after we are elected. When voting for us you will know who the Chief Minister will be provided we get sufficient parliamentary members elected.

Do you still feel that we have democracy now? If not, vote Liberal Vannin at the next elections.

**A
minister
may
speak,
but
must
resign
as
a
result**

Ministerial code

ABROGATION

The dictionary defines 'ABROGATION' as to do away with or annul especially by authority.

There are many facets to 'abrogation' of the Island's financial responsibilities as dictated by the UK Government and one must be careful not to advocate a carte blanche attitude, effectively telling the UK to go find its money elsewhere. The process is not one which could be undertaken overnight and the shortfall in any monies **MUST** be found on the Island if we were to sever all financial links with the UK. The responsibility of finding the money to offset this shortfall is Tynwald's and, unfortunately, Tynwald seems unwilling to publish figures which would help this process.

As an example of where the Island could begin the process, we could look at Jersey and Guernsey, both 'Crown Dependencies, and both of whom have no Customs and Excise agreement with the UK. This may be only a small step but when the UK Government (and to some extent, therefore, the taxpayer), are funding the banking system across to the tune of £850 billion, it would seem appalling that people on the Island have to contribute to this and to the Customs and Excise funds as well.

The whole idea of 'abrogation' should be attacked as a stealth exercise. A bit by bit or 'slowly, slowly, catchy monkey' approach would be possible and, ultimately, worthwhile but it won't work until we know exactly what figures are involved. That is down to Tynwald and that is where we must start.



Confidentiality

There are some things that are justifiably confidential. Personal information, such as medical records, obviously falls into this category. But what about commercial confidentiality, salaries or out of court settlements?

There are many instances where confidentiality seems unjustified and Liberal Vannin believes that confidentiality should be the exception rather than the rule.

When making payments to any person or company the government is using **your money**. Isn't it right that you know what they are spending on **your behalf**?

There have recently been a number of out of court settlements with government employees. You were their employer. Is it right that you do not know what they were paid?

Commercial confidentiality clauses are used in circumstances where, if the information was openly available, it would give the competition an unfair advantage or undermine national security. Unless there are exceptional circumstances all businesses wanting to do business with government should waive any right to confidentiality.

A prime example is the Steam Packet user agreement. Even our MHKs were not allowed to see this agreement in its entirety prior to voting on it in Tynwald, on the grounds of confidentiality. Surely this cannot be right? How can our elected representatives vote for or against something when they do not even have all the facts? What were the grounds for confidentiality? It cannot give the competition an unfair advantage as there is no competition – this is a monopoly situation.

Even in cases where there is competition it has to be in the public interest for the final contract to be in the public domain. One argument against this is that when the contract goes out for re-tender at the end of the contract period the competition will know what the current terms are and will therefore have an unfair advantage. This does not make sense. The only entity with an unfair advantage under the current system is the one that already has the contract. They are the only ones who know the current terms and therefore have the advantage when re-tendering takes place.

In normal business, and even day to day living, when you want a particular job done you normally get several prices. You don't tell anyone what those prices are until you have them all. You can often negotiate a reduction by referring to other quotations received. Does government try to get "the best deal" when spending **your money**? But that is a whole separate issue.

To summarise, Liberal Vannin believes that anyone either employed by government or doing business with government should sign a waiver to confidentiality as part of the terms of employment or tender process unless there are proven exceptional circumstances.

Kate Beecroft

Party Chairman



Summer of 2010: Membership Campaign

The Party feels the time is right to campaign in order to increase the membership by asking sympathetic members of the electorate to join us so that true democracy can return to Tynwald. Not everyone wishes a high political profile but in the Liberal Vannin Party it is the grass root membership that has the real power over the party and its aspirations. "Bringing politics back to the people" is the way forward so please join and have your say in how in the Island's determines its future. A target for the existing members is to recruit one person by the Annual conference in early 2010. Having some 200 members will ensure a lively debate when we consider our updated "Constitution" and written policies.

You will find a membership form at the back of this paper, give it some thought and if you can help us to return democracy to the island fill it in and post it on.

Reciprocal Health Agreement

The cessation of this agreement with the UK on 1 April next year does not have the same financial implications for the majority of us as the amendment to the Revenue Sharing Arrangement but from a humanitarian point of view it is much more important. The reduction in the income for the Island will affect everyone but the cessation of the Reciprocal Health Agreement will most affect those least able to cope with its effects – the elderly and the sick.

The agreements with Jersey and Guernsey ceased in April this year but the Manx government negotiated an additional year to allow an alternative to be put in place. But what did they achieve during this additional time? Absolutely nothing!!! And that was what Tynwald resolved to do. Nothing!!!

Our Party Leader, Peter Karran MHK, tabled a motion with a suggestion for an entry and exit tax to be imposed on all travel. The income generated from this was to be used to purchase insurance for Isle of Man residents visiting the UK and for UK visitors coming to the Island. He was only requesting that the suggestion be investigated and its viability reported back to Tynwald in December. He could not even get someone to second this motion.

At a later sitting of Tynwald he further questioned the DHSS Minister, Eddie Teare, as to why he would not even investigate this alternative, particularly as it was the only one on the table. The Minister gave two reasons. Firstly, if he did so it would not give sufficient time to warn everyone that if they were travelling they would need private insurance (or very deep pockets). This is a bizarre reason. You cannot decide not to do the right thing on the basis that this would not give you enough time to do the wrong thing. The second reason was that it would not be popular because some people would be charged for something they already had and would, in effect be paying twice. Again this is not a logical reason. We all pay for things that we do not use or pay again for a service that is already provided. Some people have private health insurance but this does not prevent their taxes being used to provide a health service. Some people do not have children but they still contribute to the education budget.

A society should be judged by how they look after the weak and vulnerable in that society. People should judge the current government on those terms. It will be a damning indictment.

Kate Beecroft.

Since this was first written there have been developments;

Tuesday, 19 January - Eddie Teare accompanied Chief, Minister, Tony Brown to Westminster to meet with Andy Burnham, Minister of State for Health. As anticipated, this achieved nothing.

Wednesday, 20 January - The following day Liberal Vannin issued a press release to explain their alternative solution. This also achieved nothing as most of the popular press did not use it.

Thursday, 21 January - Flyers were produced explaining the situation and Liberal Vannin's solution.

Friday, 22 January - Distribution started.

Sunday, 24 January - Peter Karran MHK took part on Mannin Line.

Monday, 25 January – Peter Karran gave Members of Tynwald a briefing about the presentation scheduled for Wednesday, 27 January. He also gave all members who attended a corporate profile brochure of the ultimate insurer so that they had time to study it and ask any questions at the presentation.

Tuesday, 26 January – Eddie Teare rang the London office of the insurers to warn them that Liberal Vannin was not in government and that their trip could be a waste of time.

Wednesday, 27 January – the presentation took place followed by a further presentation for the media. Both presentations were well received.

I WOULD LIKE TO JOIN THE LIBERAL VANNIN PARTY

I am a member of another political organisation [] I am not a member of another political organisation []

My contact details are:-

Name:

Address:

Telephone:Mobile:

Email:

There is an £18 membership fee, feel free if you should also wish to make a contribution to our funds, please enclose your cheque when returning this application form. (Make cheques payable to Liberal Vannin Party)

Return to: The Treasurer, LV Party Ann Cain, 7 Coronation Terrace, Strang, Braddan IM4 4TA

A big thank you to all contributors to this publication from the editor, publisher, printer and the person to get the last word, as always.

Pat Ayres 31/1/2010.