

**7. Tynwald Management Committee –
Third Report 2020-21: Tynwald Honours –
Report received and recommendation approved**

Mr Speaker to move:

That the Tynwald Management Committee Third Report for the Session 2020-21: Tynwald Honours [PP No 2021/0052] be received and the following recommendation be approved:

That Mr A.L. Ian Cottier be awarded the Tynwald Honour for his public service and charitable work on 5th July 2021.

The President: We turn now to Item 7, Tynwald Honours Report. Mr Speaker to move.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr President. On to a far happier subject now.

The 'Tynwald Honour' is the highest honour which the Isle of Man can bestow. There is no expectation that the award be made annually. It is awarded only to those individuals who have made an outstanding contribution over many years to one or more areas of Manx life. Hon. Members can see the full criteria for the award in paragraph 6 of the Report.

In light of the agreed criteria, your Committee has resolved to award the Tynwald Honour to Mr Ian Cottier, in recognition of his public service to the Isle of Man, particularly in the areas of education, music and the arts, and his long-term voluntary work in the third sector. A biography of Mr Cottier and his contribution to the Island can be found in the Report; however, I would like to briefly highlight to this Hon. Court some of Mr Cottier's achievements which led the Committee to its decision.

Born in Port St Mary in 1936, Mr Cottier is a proud Manxman who has contributed in many and varied ways to the Island. He will be well known to many as their former headmaster at the Douglas High School and St Ninian's High School, where he was a strong advocate of the Manx language and culture and orchestrated the introduction of Manx lessons for pupils in years seven and eight.

Since his retirement, Mr Cottier has dedicated a large proportion of his time to volunteer work, and he has been a volunteer steward for the Friends of the Gaiety for over 30 years. He has also been a long-term supporter and volunteer for both the Manx Blind Welfare Society and Care in Mann, and has also been a volunteer driver for Isle of Man Hospice and the Salvation Army.

Mr Cottier is probably best known for his long-standing involvement in the brass band scene in the Island, particularly as presenter of Manx Radio's *Time for Brass* programme, having presented more than 2,000 editions of this programme, and is the longest-running brass band radio presenter in the world.

Mr Cottier also served as a lay member on the Isle of Man Government Planning Committee for 13 years, with his final term ending just last year. As a former Chair of that Committee, and I know there are quite a few in this Hon. Court today – the other veterans of that post – I know that they, like me, will have had their grammatical education advanced as well as having benefited from his insight into planning matters. More information on Mr Cottier's career and significant contribution to the Island can be found in the Report before you.

Members were circulated in confidence about this proposal, so they could submit to the Committee, in private, any comments they may have. I am glad to say that no negative comments and plenty of positive comments were received.

Hon. Members, I am sure you will agree that Mr Ian Cottier would be a most worthy recipient of the Tynwald Honour. It is now necessary for Tynwald Court to decide whether the Honour should be bestowed on Mr Cottier, all being well, on Tynwald Day and in the Royal Chapel at St John's. I commend him to the Court

I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

Several Members: Hear, hear.

The President: Hon. Member for Ayre and Michael, Mr Baker.

Mr Baker: Thank you very much, Mr President.

I am delighted to second the motion. And as another former Chair of the Planning Committee I, too, experienced Mr Cottier in fine form, albeit perhaps it was not so much my correction of grammatical errors, although that seemed to be reserved particularly for many of the planning officers (*Laughter*) but it was certainly for his masterclass in terms of Manx pronunciation which he was truly excellent in. I think that speaks very much about who Ian Cottier is.

I think the Report in black and white is very compelling in its own right, and it is a good summary, but it does lack a little bit of colour about the individual. I think anybody who has met Ian and who knows him personally, will see him as a giant of the Island and somebody who I am certainly very proud to know and to consider as a friend, having worked for three and a half years alongside him and seen him in operation.

My observations of Ian in action were that he was robust; he was fair and balanced; he was hugely respected; always professional and well-prepared. And the respect in which he was held was illustrated by his leaving do, which I know Mr Perkins had the privilege of being at in the restaurant in Port St Mary – which was the only place it could possibly have been held, Port St Mary, if you know Ian's views on life (*Laughter*) – and it was attended by not just fellow Committee members, some ex-chairs, but also a wide range of planning officers as well, who clearly held him in very high esteem, and it was a real tribute. I judge people by how they leave a situation and to me that was a great testament to who he is.

I have also had the privilege of knowing him through his involvement in the brass band scene, particularly with the Rushen Silver Band. I am aware that not only is his record with Manx Radio exemplary, but he has had a huge off-Island impact in terms of his brass banding contacts and things he has influenced. I know when he was a deputy head in the Sheffield area, he restarted one of the major brass bands in that area, which is still going; and his contact book is hugely impressive in brass banding.

The Report touches on his community and third-sector involvement, which is still going, and he is certainly north of 80, which is a great example for us for all of us about what you can do as you become wiser and more mature in years.

I have got absolutely no doubt he must have literally impacted tens of thousands of people through his educational career, and I know the Clerk of Tynwald's Office employee colleague who drafted the report was in trepidation as to, when she showed the Report to Mr Cottier, whether she had got all her grammar and spelling quite correct! (**Mr Robertshaw:** Did she?) I believe that she did I think actually, Mr Robertshaw, yes.

So, to me, the Tynwald Honour is a great thing for this Hon. Court, and it is something I would hope that we can continue to present and bestow down the years. I think it is also a great thing for the Isle of Man and it enables recognition of special contributions.

So in commending Mr Cottier's nomination, I ask myself, why am I doing that? And, in simple terms, it is for his contribution over time; it is for the *breadth* of his contribution; and he certainly satisfies the criteria that are absolutely clearly laid out in the Report of being selfless and outstanding. I believe that Ian Cottier represents everything that this award looks for.

And with that, Mr President, I commend him to this Hon Court. Thank you.

A Member: Hear, hear.

The President: Hon. Member for Onchan, Ms Edge.

Ms Edge: Thank you, Mr President.

I am not sure if I am the only Member in here that had the privilege of having Mr Cottier as my headmaster, and I can honestly say he was a true headmaster! But obviously I have come into contact with him in later years, and certainly since I have had the honour of being in this hon. place, Mr President.

I too totally agree that there is nobody more fitting; and certainly the contribution he gave to education and the futures of young people that went through his school, and the opportunities that I am sure many have had, thanks to him being an absolutely excellent headmaster. When I did meet him, when I had become an MHK, I was not sure if it was because he remembered me for being called into his office one day, or through my family with regard to the brass band circuit because we were quite heavily involved in that.

But I cannot think of anybody more deserving than Mr Ian Cottier.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Hon. Member for Douglas South, Mr Quine.

Mr Quine: Thank you, Mr President.

As another of Mr Cottier's former pupils at St Ninian's High School, may I echo the sincere comments made by my hon. friends Mr Speaker; the Member for Ayre and Michael, Mr Baker; and the Member for Onchan, Ms Edge; and say what a befitting reward it would be for a fine and very proud Manxman.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Hon. Member of Council, Mrs Maska.

Mrs Maska: Thank you, Mr President.

It is a great pleasure today to witness this proposal. I came to know Ian Cottier through my time on the Planning Committee, and during that time I came to respect him absolutely for his wisdom, his eloquence, his understanding and knowledge, and his capacity to listen and engage in a process that is very tricky at times, but impacts on people's lives in a major way that can actually change their lives. His willingness to think outside the box, but follow policy, was inspiring.

I am also aware of Ian's generosity of spirit, not only in this wide – and, witness today, his educational role; but in his quiet, considerate contributions to charitable works across the Island over many years.

Ian's musical talents and expertise are also well known and have been evidenced today and in the Report, for which I thank the Hon. Members of the Honours Committee. But he is also well known for his long and dedicated support of the arts, and years of volunteering –quietly – as one of the Friends of the Gaiety.

His work connected to Sail Training for young people offered opportunities that some young people and those with disabilities would never otherwise have been afforded. I would thank him for that because I know, again, that has brought experiences that are incomparable to what you *can* do in life; and for some young people it has, again, changed their lives, having experience on ships like the *Francis Drake* and other vessels. He had a vision and I thank him for having that vision.

Last, but not least, he has a charming sense of humour, which he brings to everything he does; and he is also a great family man. So again, it is a great pleasure that I have today to support this proposal.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: The Hon. Member for Garff, Mr Perkins.

Mr Perkins: Thank you, Mr President.

As the third Chair of Planning that has served ... no, has *worked* with Mr Cottier and experienced his eagle-eyed and razor-sharp wit, I fully endorse the award that is being proposed for him.

I would just pick up on the sailing aspect. I mean, that is one thing that has not been widely mentioned here today. He put a lot of effort into bringing young people into the sailing world, and I happened to bump into him once in Ithaca, one of the Greek Islands! (*Laughter*). We knew that somebody from the Isle of Man was there, this great big Manx flag was being flown, and of course we walked into the nearest bar and lo and behold, (*Laughter*) it was Ian Cottier holding forth, trying his ancient Greek on some of the people that were assembled.

But it does give me great pleasure to endorse the award. It could not go to a more deserving person.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Mr Speaker to reply.

The Speaker: Well, Mr President, how do I follow that?

I welcome the positive comments from Hon. Members in respect of the character and the qualities of Mr Cottier. It is certainly clear, the esteem that he is held in, the advancement of knowledge he has brought to so many, whether formally or informally – and I think we need to find out a little bit more, Mr President, about what that meeting was about between Ms Edge and Mr Cottier in his office! (*Laughter*). But what he has brought to so many, with his trademark sense of humour, which has been much commented on.

Mr President, quite what his late wife, Linda, would have made of these comments, I leave to those who knew her to interpret and be the judge of. But speaking to Mr Cottier after the Order Paper was published and he knew this motion was on the Order Paper, he was humbled. He was humbled and incredibly proud to have been nominated for this especially Manx award for this special Manx individual.

I beg to move, Mr President.

Several Members: Hear, hear.

The President: Thank you.

Rules require me to put the motion to the Court. (*Laughter*) I am sure such is not really necessary, but I put it nonetheless.

Those in favour that Mr A L Ian Cottier be awarded the Tynwald Honour for his public service and charitable work on 5th July 2021, please say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.