

## Order of the Day

### 1. Election of the President of Tynwald in accordance with the Constitution Act 1990 – Mr Skelly elected

25 **The Deputy President:** We now turn to Item 1, election of President. This election is governed by the Constitution Act 1990 and also by Standing Order 5.3.

The election will be carried out electronically. As a change to the previous procedure, the vote will be public, as is now the case for Committee decisions.

30 In this election, the Constitution Act provides three categories who are eligible to be elected as President of Tynwald: firstly, a Member of the Keys; secondly, an elected Member of the Council; and, finally, the immediately retired President, which Mr Rodan has assured me is not relevant today. *(Laughter)*

35 I remind Hon. Members of the procedure. Candidates are nominated. Once a candidate has been nominated, a seconder for that nomination will be sought before further nominations are taken. When all those whom the Court wishes to nominate and second have been nominated and seconded, the Clerk of Tynwald will read out the list of candidates in the order which they appear on the electronic ballot paper. Even if there is only one candidate, there will be a ballot as the successful candidate must have a majority of votes of Members present and voting.

If that is clear, Hon. Members, I now call for nominations.

40 Mrs Barber.

**Mrs Barber:** Thank you, Mr Deputy President.

I rise to propose Mr Speaker, Juan Watterson, for the presidency of Tynwald.

45 Mr Speaker has set out an ambitious vision for the future role of President, including increasing youth and wider public engagement, a focus on a progressive parliamentary setting and a commitment to increasing diversity and accessibility within this Hon. Court.

50 Mr Speaker's experience as presiding officer in both Keys and Tynwald, as well as virtual Tynwald, has been one of taking leadership in difficult times. Thanks to virtual Tynwald, our parliament continued when many others were paralysed. Mr Speaker prioritised a hybrid solution for House of Keys sittings that has ensured that no person is disenfranchised due to health or vulnerability, and worked only yesterday to achieve a hybrid solution to Tynwald for the same reasons.

55 Mr Speaker's parliamentary experience is significant. As a Member of this Court for 15 years, he has been on over 20 parliamentary committees, including a number focused directly on parliamentary structures. He has also held roles on the Standing Orders Committee, Tynwald Management Committee and the executive committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

60 I have been with Mr Speaker on a Commonwealth conference and can attest to the high regard he is held in around the many different regions of the CPA, presiding over debates with representation from across the Commonwealth, and competently co-ordinating speakers and translators on both sides of sometimes challenging discussions – much like this Hon. Court, but without the translations.

Mr Deputy President, in Mr Speaker, you will find an active and enthusiastic advocate for the work of this Court, who I commend to you for this role.

65 I beg to move.

**The Deputy President:** Thank you, Mrs Barber.

Now, I have an indication on the Teams chat that Mrs Poole-Wilson intends to second. As such it is not appropriate for me to take part in presiding over the election.

70 We will therefore need to have an Acting President to take the Chair, and I seek nominations.  
Mr Robertshaw.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Robertshaw):** Thank you, Mr Deputy President.

75 I beg to move that in accordance with the Constitution Act 1990, section 5(4), the Attorney  
General be appointed Acting President of Tynwald.

**The Deputy President:** Thank you.  
Mr Cregeen.

80 **Mr Cregeen:** Thank you, Mr Deputy President.  
I beg to second.

**The Deputy President:** Now, if there are no other nominations, I declare Mr Attorney to be  
Acting President, and there will be a short suspension of the sitting while he takes the Chair.  
Mr Attorney.

*The Attorney General took the Chair as Acting President.*

85 **The Acting President (The Attorney General):** Thank you, Hon. Members.  
I will continue to call for candidates to be nominated. We have had a nomination from  
Mrs Barber in respect of Mr Speaker. Is there a seconder? *(Interjection by the Deputy Clerk)*  
Mrs Poole-Wilson, do you wish to second the nomination of Mr Speaker?

90 **Mrs Poole-Wilson:** Yes, Mr Acting President. I wish to second the nomination of Mr Speaker.  
I have worked with Mr Speaker on the Public Accounts Committee for the past few years and  
can attest to his strong work ethic and passion for the institution of Tynwald.

95 Of course, the role of President is not just within this Court but within Legislative Council, as  
well as in the wider Manx community. Having been in the Speaker's Chair for the last five years  
and co-ordinated work between the Branches, I am sure he will be able to hit the ground running  
as presiding officer in Legislative Council and act as an effective spokesperson for that Branch, as  
well as for Tynwald.

100 As a member of the CPD Working Group, I have seen Mr Speaker's passion for educating and  
supporting Members in their work. I believe his commitment to continuing and developing this  
work to enable Members to expand their skills and knowledge means the public will ultimately be  
better served.

105 Mr Speaker's love of Manx history and political history will also, I believe, serve him well as he  
represents Tynwald in the wider community. Within this place, his thorough knowledge of  
Standing Orders and of important matters such as parliamentary privilege and conflicts of interest  
are a vital ingredient for a successful presiding officer.

This is an ancient and honourable institution, and Mr Speaker has demonstrated his ability and  
set out his vision as to how to take it forward. I therefore recommend his nomination to Hon.  
Members.

110 Thank you, Mr Acting President.

**The Acting President:** Thank you, Mrs Poole-Wilson.  
Are there any further nominations? Mrs Caine.

115 **Mrs Caine:** Thank you, Mr Acting President.  
I would like to propose the Hon. Member for Rushen, Mr Skelly, for the position of President  
of Tynwald.

120 It has been my privilege to know and work with him for more than 25 years. We were first introduced when Mr Skelly operated a successful travel and tourism business in California and represented Isle of Man tourism in the course of his business and leisure time. Indeed, he was proud of his Manx roots and heritage and as a past President of the North American Manx Association, which he continues to support, with the Manx Youth cultural awards earlier this month.

125 Originally from Ramsey, Mr Skelly settled in the south of the Island when he returned to these shores to raise his family. I had been involved in the organisation of Tynwald Fair enhancements, previously under the co-ordination of the late Capt. Andrew Douglas, and upon Capt. Douglas's election to the Keys, Mr Skelly was persuaded to take on the co-ordination of Tynwald Fair, which he did for several years with energy and aplomb, alongside running a successful business.

130 Mr Skelly was then elected Member of the House of Keys for Rushen at his first attempt in 2011. He served in the Department for Economic Development in most delegations, gaining a wide understanding of business, plus reflecting his interests in the arts. He was appointed Chair of the Arts Council for the Year of Culture in 2014.

135 He was briefly in the Infrastructure Department, becoming Chair of the Planning Committee, before a three-month spell as DoI Minister in 2014. Following a reshuffle, Mr Skelly was appointed DED Minister for the last two years of the previous administration.

140 Following his re-election in 2016, Mr Skelly was reappointed Minister for Economic Development, which he successfully restructured and relaunched as the Department for Enterprise. Having had the privilege of serving in the Department under Minister Skelly since 2016, I have been impressed with the democratic way Department meetings are conducted, and I have benefited from his wise counsel on a number of occasions.

145 Mr Skelly has, I believe, the skills and experience to become our next presiding officer. He is someone who has always embraced the principles of public life. His style is understated, but firmly confident, in being a modern Manxman with traditional values. He has demonstrated to me in political and professional life, selflessness, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, leadership and integrity. He would come to the parliamentary side of the role with fresh eyes. I feel he would be a new broom and I am happy to propose he become the fifth President of Tynwald.

Thank you, Mr Acting President.

150 **The Acting President:** Thank you, Mrs Caine.  
Mr Henderson.

**Mr Henderson:** Gura mie eu, Lhiass-eaghtyrane.

155 I wish to second the nomination of Mr Skelly. Lhiass-eaghtyrane, Hon. Members, what I am looking for here is someone who can provide a strong presence, demonstrate leadership skills, the ability to use a mature, pragmatic and balanced approach, underpinned by a diversity of appropriate background experience. I am also looking for someone who is an excellent and exceptional communicator, patient, pragmatic, but at the same time able, without fear or favour, to exert the authority as our presiding officer.

160 I want the successful candidate to be able to lead our Tynwald, both within the Court and nationally and internationally at all levels of parliamentary diplomacy. They must be able to do this at many different levels and to the high standards required by the role of Eaghtyrane, President of our Tynwald. They must be able to operate and have a good working knowledge of our procedures and Standing Orders, apply them fairly, proportionately and, again, without fear or favour. I want someone who can carry the respect of our Court, our Government and our Island.

165 I have known Mr Skelly for many years and have watched him acquit himself with all the attributes I have just outlined in his back-bench, Government and parliamentary roles, which are many and diverse, to exemplary and high standards as Minister, CPA delegate and ambassador for the Island, including to the British-Irish Council, to the level this position requires.

170 To this end, I have no hesitation in seconding the Hon. Member, Mr Laurence Skelly, as he has indeed all the qualities, maturity, experience and requirements for the position of President of Tynwald.

Gura mie eu.

175 **The Acting President:** Thank you, Mr Henderson.

Are there any other nominations?

Hon. Members, I am satisfied that all those who the Court wishes to nominate and second have been so nominated and seconded. I will ask the Clerk of Tynwald to now read out the list of candidates in the order in which they appear on the ballot paper.

180 **The Clerk:** Mr Acting President, the candidates appear in alphabetical order: Mr Laurence Skelly; Mr Juan Watterson.

**The Acting President:** Hon. Members should now vote. *(Interjection by the Deputy Clerk)*

185 Yes, to those Hon. Members who are sitting remotely, could you please type the name you are voting for in the chat box.

*A ballot took place and electronic voting resulted as follows:*

**Vote Results**

Mr Skelly	20
Mr Watterson	12
Number of spoilt papers	1

**Voting for Mr Laurence Skelly**

Dr Allinson  
Mr Baker  
Mr Boot  
Mrs Caine  
Mr Callister  
Mr Cannan  
Mrs Christian  
Mrs Corlett  
Mr Greenhill  
Mr Harmer  
Mr Henderson  
Mr Hooper  
Mr Peake  
Mr Perkins  
Mr Quayle  
Mr Quine  
Mr Shimmins  
Mr Skelly  
The Lord Bishop  
Mr Thomas

**Mr Watterson**

**Voting for Mr Juan Watterson**

Mr Ashford  
Miss August-Hanson  
Mrs Barber  
Mr Cregeen  
Mr Deputy Speaker  
Ms Edge  
Mrs Lord-Brennan  
Mrs Maska  
Mr Mercer  
Mrs Poole-Wilson  
Mrs Sharpe

190 **The Acting President:** Thank you, Hon. Members. The ballot reveals that the number of votes for Mr Skelly is 20; the number of votes for Mr Watterson is 12. Accordingly I declare that Mr Laurence Skelly has been elected President of Tynwald to hold office until the day of the first ordinary sitting of Tynwald in July 2021 ... 2026. *(Laughter)* I beg your pardon, Hon. Members. My Clerk has briefed me incorrectly! So sorry.

Hon Members, that concludes this Item of business on our Order Paper. The Court will now suspend for five minutes to allow our new President to take his seat.

Thank you, Hon. Members.

*The Court adjourned at 10.50 a.m.  
and resumed its sitting at 10.55 a.m.*

*Mr Skelly took the Chair as President.*

[MR PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

195 **The Deputy Clerk:** Hon. Members, please rise for the President of Tynwald.

**The President:** Please be seated.