

Initial Address by Andrew Jessopp

The IoM is facing financial uncertainty and constrained budgets for public expenditure.

The current national broadcaster, Manx Radio receives between ½ and 1 million pounds subvention each year and questions have to be asked whether the tax payer is getting value to money.

In December 2012 Tynwald reaffirmed its commitment to public broadcasting but still decided to form a select committee “to examine the matter of the policy, delivery, cost and scope of Public Service Broadcasting; and report with recommendations.”

The Speaker, Steve Rodan, Zac Hall and Richard Ronan have been tasked with this review and have asked for public responses to these issues by 31st January.

This meeting isn't going to be able to explore all of these issues but hopefully you will have a few more ideas on what you may wish to say to this committee by the end of the evening.

Joining us this evening are two well known media figures on the Island.

Firstly we have 3FM Managing Director, Ron Berry. Perhaps known to some of you from his many years running The Agency, a local PR, Advertising and Marketing company; it is probably more likely you will recognise his voice rather than his face if you are a regular 3FM listener. Ron is going to give us a presentation on his proposal to reform public broadcasting on the Island, and hopefully we are going to be reassured by him he won't be adopting a slash and burn approach to 'talk radio' if he takes control of 'Manx' radio.

Would perennial favourites such as Mandate, Agenda, Sunday Opinion, Perspective, and dare I

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say it, the Mannin Line be safe in his hands, and could we expect the same level of coverage of current affairs and news in the future. We shall see.

Once Ron has given his presentation, he is going to be joined in the ensuing discussion and Q&A session by seasoned hack, Bill Dale.

Bill has an involvement in the printed media on the Island from what seems like Victorian times and few others on the Island can probably bring the same level of insight into news publishing on the IOM than Bill.

It will be interesting to hear his views whether an amalgamation of broadcasting media on the Island will do the same for radio as the virtual monopoly Johnson Press has on the printed word in the Island.

Furthermore, in an Island where investigative journalism is already at about the lowest level possible whether the threat of tougher regulation of the press, post Levenson, will make it even easier for the Manx press to ignore investigating matters of public interest.

Finally, Roger Watterson, who regular attenders of our meetings will know often records our proceedings for Manx Radio has had to send his apologies. Roger was due to be a panel member tonight but unfortunately he can't make it. However, I am aware there are members of the Manx Radio management team in the audience I will invite them to make a comment before we get into our debate.