**Time for Tynwald to party?**

Date: 14 October

This week the Voltaire Society hosted Chris Robertshaw MHK, Devon Watson ( Manx Labour Party ) and Michael Josem ( Lib Vannin ). The discussion was around whether Tynwald would benefit from a party-system.

On the one hand, the case was made for upholding the tradition of independent MHKs, a collection of 24 local representatives working collectively for the good of the island. Moreover, with just 24 seats, is Tynwald large enough to cater for a workable party system? At the same time, there was vigorous discussion about aspects of potential democratic deficit in the current system, such as weak accountability, the dangers of over-bureaucratisation, the need for improved governance and the absence of a public vote for the position of Chief Minister.

Such was the depth of discussion, the session ran on until 5.00 pm, breaking the previous record for the longest Voltaire meeting. Thanks to all three speakers, and congratulations to Devon on his election in the Douglas by-election the very next day. Further proof that Voltaire can do wonders for your political career!

In the end, of course, if a party system is what the electorate wants, it can have it – by voting for it in next year’s general election.

