

# Tynwald War Committee Records 1939-1946

## Overview

Governance of the Isle of Man during World War Two was overseen by the Lieutenant Governor and the members of Tynwald. The restrictions and unusual circumstances created by war required expert guidance and informed decision-making. The Lieutenant Governor of the Isle of Man convened a special War Committee that met regularly to consider and plan the Island's response to the War.

### 1) War Emergency Precautions Committee Minutes: Aug-Nov 1939

**Reference number: S18/1/6**

The War Emergency Precautions Committee Minutes record the meetings and decisions made to prepare the Isle of Man for wartime conditions. At this time, the Government answered to the Lieutenant Governor, Vice Admiral William Spencer Leveson-Gower; the power of elected representatives (e.g. Members of the House of Keys) was limited. In a change to this status quo, the War Emergency Committee included MHKs as well as the Lieutenant Governor and senior civil servants.

The minutes of these committee meetings are short; we hold them only in draft format. Issues considered include:

- Recruitment of extra staffing to aid implementation of food and fuel rationing
- Provision of gas protection
- Re-establishment of the Loyal Manx Association
- Legislation progressing through the UK Government

Members of this Committee included Deemster William Cowley (Chair), the Speaker of the House of Keys, and five other members of Tynwald. The War Emergency Committee functioned until it was replaced with the War Committee of Tynwald in November 1939.

### 2) War Committee of Tynwald: Nov 1939-1945

**Reference numbers:**

**Government Secretary's minutes: S18/1**

**Deemster William Cowley's minutes: S18/2**

Tynwald reconstituted the War Emergency Precautions Committee as the War Committee of Tynwald in November 1939. Deemster William Cowley was reappointed as Chair. Again, the purpose of the committee was to consult with, co-operate with, and advise the Lieutenant Governor of the Isle of Man and senior civil servants on all matters relating to the governance of the Island during the conflict. Like its preceding incarnation, the Committee reported to Tynwald.

Two distinct sets of minutes were taken from each Committee meeting. The first set were created by Deemster Cowley. These minutes are much less detailed than the second set, which were created by the Government Secretary Bertram Sargeant.

### **3) General Advisory Committee: 1945-1946**

**Reference number: S18/2/14**

The War Committee of Tynwald was changed in name to the General Advisory Committee as a response to the end of hostilities in 1945. This Committee functioned for a year. The purpose of the committee was to advise the Lieutenant Governor of the Isle of Man, Air Vice Marshal Sir Geoffrey Rhodes Bromet, on matters relating to the transition to peace time.

### **4) Custodial History**

These records were created by the Chief Secretary's Office. They were retained in the Central Government Office building until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, when they were transferred to the Isle of Man Public Record Office.

### **5) Why the Tynwald War Committee Records are Useful**

These minutes record decisions taken by the Lieutenant Governor and senior civil servants during World War Two, covering high-profile issues such as defence of the Island, co-operation with the Imperial Government and UK Armed Forces, and emergency legislation. Everyday management of the Island is also covered, including issues such as rationing, unemployment, conscription and the wartime economy.

These sets of minutes are also significant to people interested in the constitutional history of the Isle of Man, as they record Tynwald's co-operation with the office of the Lieutenant Governor.

### **6) Accessing the Tynwald War Committee Records**

All of the minutes of the War Committees are available to the public. As some of the Public Record Office records are held on a separate site, it is advised that a prior appointment is made before visiting, so that any required records can be located ahead of time.

### **7) Contact Us**

We welcome enquiries relating to any aspect of the information given in this factsheet. To ask us any questions or to arrange an appointment, please contact our public enquiries service on 01624 693569 or email us at [public.records@gov.im](mailto:public.records@gov.im). For more information about visiting the IOMPRO, including our opening hours and identification requirements, please see our service guide: [www.gov.im/pro](http://www.gov.im/pro).