



## UK Tentative List of Potential Sites for World Heritage Nomination: Application form

Please save the application to your computer, fill in and email to:  
[UKTL.Application@culture.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:UKTL.Application@culture.gsi.gov.uk)

The application form should be completed using the boxes provided under each question, and, where possible, within the word limit indicated.

Please read the [Information Sheets](#) before completing the application form. It is also essential to refer to the accompanying [Guidance Note](#) for help with each question, and to the relevant paragraphs of UNESCO's *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, (OG) available at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines>

Applicants should provide only the information requested at this stage. Further information may be sought in due course.

### (1) Name of Proposed World Heritage Site

Tynwald Hill and environs: Norse assembly sites of North West Europe

### (2) Geographical Location

Name of country/region

United Kingdom – Crown Dependency – Isle of Man

Grid reference to centre of site

OSGB227821481878 - 54° 12' 13"N, 4° 38' 29"W

Please enclose a map preferably A4-size, a plan of the site, and 6 photographs, preferably electronically.

### (3) Type of Site

Please indicate category:

Natural  Cultural  Mixed  Cultural Landscape

### (4) Description

Please provide a brief description of the proposed site, including the physical characteristics. 200 words

Tynwald (Norse for “parliament field”) is the continuing name of the Manx parliament which is the national parliamentary and legislative assembly of the Isle of Man, an internally self-regulating dependency of the British Crown. Tynwald Hill at St Johns is the traditional outdoor assembly site at which on 5<sup>th</sup> July each year (the Island’s national holiday - Tynwald Day) Tynwald Court sits in open session. It is core to the Island’s national pride, identity and independent historic traditions.

Tynwald lies in a natural amphitheatre near the centre of the Isle of Man, surrounded by several summits rising to 3-400m to the east and south-west, 2-4km away. It stands on a small plateau of sand and gravel between a river to the north and smaller tributary streams to the south. Roads, likely to have been in use for centuries, lead to the site from the west, north, south and east. The nearest harbour is at Peel, 4km to the west, which provided links to the rest of the maritime Kingdom of Man and the Isles (now the Hebrides) created by the Norse in the 11<sup>th</sup> century CE.

The principle historical features of the site are Tynwald Hill itself, a 4-tiered assembly mound standing over 3m high, and the Royal Chapel of St John the Baptist (built 1847-9) connected to the Hill by a processional way, all three elements being enclosed within precinct wall also constructed in 1849. There is strong historical, documentary, physical and archaeological evidence for an earlier chapel, extensive Christian burial grounds, pagan Viking burials and a Bronze Age burial mound.

The site is surrounded by a fairfield, landscaped grounds, and the village of St Johns.

### (5) History

Please provide a short summary statement of any significant events in the history of the site. 200 words

The earliest documentary reference to Tynwald by name is in the 13<sup>th</sup> century

Chronicle of the Kings of Man and the Isles in an entry for 1228. Vikings of mixed Norse, Hebridean and Irish heritage settled on the Isle of Man from c.900CE, and customarily created parliamentary and lawgiving assemblies, or *things*.

Historically, Tynwald was a repository of laws and a means of resolving disputes. It was held annually, at Midsummer, though courts could be convened at other times if necessary. No weapons were allowed in the defined area within which the assembly took place.

Tynwald continued as a meeting place and an institution despite the takeover of the Isle of Man by Scottish overlords in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and by the English in the 14<sup>th</sup>, and is frequently mentioned in Manx statutes from the early 1400s onwards. The references for 1417 are crucial in describing the organisation of the ceremonial, and the officials involved; these have changed little down to the present.

The modern ceremony takes place on the original site, though some of the setting dates from the Victorian era. Its most important functions are to promulgate new laws, and to provide the opportunity to seek redress of grievance.

**(6) Why do you think this site should be inscribed as a World Heritage Site?**

Give reasons. 200 words

Tynwald Hill and its environs represents the single surviving continuous use of an historic cultural tradition as result of Viking diaspora and Norse settlement in NW Europe / N America. It stands as the most visible continuing physical example of these traditions, and the ceremonies which take place there embody the principles of the Viking and Norse assemblies and associated Celtic traditions in the light of a modern democratic process through a ceremony whose core elements are essentially unchanged since at least 1417 (the earliest detailed account).

Tynwald Hill represents part of the alternative cultural history of the British Isles and the North Atlantic and the historic connections in those areas which are no longer explicit in modern state party boundaries.

It is proposed that Tynwald Hill be submitted as part of a serial transnational site covering major Norse assembly sites (or "Thing sites") of N W Europe.

**(7) Please say why the site has Outstanding Universal Value and specify the main features which underpin its importance. 200 words**

Tynwald can justifiably be called the oldest continuous parliament in the world and Tynwald Hill is its traditional meeting place continuing into the present day. With the Viking diaspora and Norse settlements, the Isle of Man became the heart of one of the Norse kingdoms within which assemblies for judgements and law giving played a key role. In parallel to sites in Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Orkney, Shetland, Scotland and Norway, Tynwald Hill acted as a “national” assembly. But unlike the other sites Tynwald Hill continues in use as the site of national assembly for the Isle of Man, strongly drawing on traditions which are centuries old and reflecting the principles of the Norse assembly influenced by the Celtic land in which they settled.

This site is not simply the ancient mound on which the assembly took place and continues to meet on 5 July, but the whole ceremonial theatre for the event: church, processional way, assembly site and Fairfield. As a result the sites significance is in its continuing cultural use every bit as much as its historic integrity.

Westminster is on the UK World Heritage List as an historic site of parliamentary assembly. Tynwald Hill (and other Thing sites) represent a far older tradition and, in the case of Tynwald and Tynwald Hill, one which still operates.

## (8) Outstanding Universal Value

Please state which of the [10 UNESCO criteria for Outstanding Universal Value](#) the proposed site meets, and describe briefly why the criteria were chosen. Please see criteria note at the end of the form.

UNESCO criterion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Why was this criterion chosen? 100 words
(i)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(ii)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(iii)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	This is the site of the world’s oldest continuous parliamentary assembly with physical features and continuing cultural use for assembly, law making, appointment of officers and opportunities for the people to seek redress for grievances. The core cultural activities draw on centuries of tradition and can be demonstrated to be essentially the same as those which were documented in the early 15 <sup>th</sup> century
(iv)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The exemplar of the Viking and Norse assembly site placed in a significant location and with continuing use. A unique combination of assembly site (Tynwald Hill), the Royal

<b>UNESCO criterion</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Why was this criterion chosen?</b> 100 words
		Chapel of St John the Baptist, the processional way linking the Hill and Chapel, the Fairfield and commemorative areas.
(v)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(vi)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The current continuing use of Tynwald Hill and its environs as the parliamentary assembly site on 5 <sup>th</sup> July demonstrating the fundamental law-giving and judgement making of the Viking and Norse assembly sites, now in the context of a modern democracy.
(vii)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(viii)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(ix)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(x)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**(9) Authenticity (for cultural or mixed sites only)**

Authenticity concerns the current state of conservation of a cultural or mixed site; especially whether its importance, its Outstanding Universal Value, is still obvious from its physical condition. Please outline the condition of the site. 200 words

The enclosure containing Tynwald Hill, the processional way and the Chapel of St John was constructed in 1847-9; the chapel and the way also date from this time, and are replacements of earlier, similar elements. Earliest paintings, lithographs and maps show the previous chapel, and demonstrate that the hill itself, and the general layout of the site have remained unchanged since at least the later 1700s.

Documentary sources for 1417 describe the hierarchical arrangement of officials on the hill and the elements of the ceremony; these are largely unchanged today. The traditions associated with Tynwald bear striking similarities with those for other major *thing* sites such as Thingvellir in Iceland, demonstrating their shared heritage.

Geophysical survey has suggested the presence below groundlevel of buried features which may represent an earlier enclosure around the hill, but this has not been tested by archaeological excavation. The hill itself has never been archaeologically investigated.

Various historical and archaeological remains discovered around Tynwald,

particularly burials dating back as much as 3,000 years, reinforce the unusual and extraordinary character of the place through time. Other Scandinavian-influenced assembly sites share this association with burials and social memory and ownership through ancestry.

### **(10) Integrity**

For cultural or mixed sites, please state how much original fabric is included in the proposed site, and its condition. For guidance on how the test of integrity is met for natural sites under criteria (vii) – (x), please refer to the OG 90-94. Information Sheet 6 also provides help on this point. 200 words

Sand and gravel extraction – now ceased – has impacted peripheral areas of the plateau on which Tynwald and the village of St John’s stand as recently as the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. This has not affected the area proposed for protection, but has impinged on the landscape that existed when Tynwald was created, leading to discoveries of pagan and Christian burials. One of the sandpits is now incorporated into the landscaping associated with the Tynwald Fairfield.

A narrow road to the west of Tynwald Hill was improved in 1848 as part of the same works which saw the construction of the present Chapel of St John and the placing of the Hill within an enclosure. As a direct result of this a Bronze Age burial mound was disturbed and a burial cist uncovered, which is still preserved.

As Tynwald as an institution has survived for 1,000 years, there have inevitably been a few alterations to the site, as detailed in (9) above. There have also been some minor repairs to the hill itself, giving rise to modern folklore that the hill is built of materials from each of the Island’s parishes.

Nevertheless, the ‘idea’ of Tynwald, the open-air court and parliament, retains its integrity.

### **(11) Are there other examples of this kind of site already on the World Heritage List?**

Yes  No

If yes, please list. 100 words

The Icelandic Althing site is already represented on the WHL within the Icelandic WHS of Thingvellirvatn. Its connection with other Viking and Norse assembly sites (and especially to Tynwald Hill on the Isle of Man and Tinganes in the Faroe Islands) was explicitly referred to in the nomination documents and the prospect of a serial transnational application alluded to in the assessment and others merit strong consideration for a serial transnational nomination.

**(12) What distinguishes this site from other similar sites?**

150 words

Throughout the Viking and Norse world assembly sites were established at various levels: farmers' assemblies, local assemblies and regional/national assemblies. Most went out of continuing use during the medieval period, but three of the regional/national assembly sites have longer continuity: Thingvellir in Iceland; Tinganes in the Faroe Islands and Tynwald.

Of these, Tynwald Hill is the only site which has continuing and continued use as an assembly site, being the focus of the national day on the Isle of Man on 5 July.

**(13) How does the site contribute to meeting UNESCO's priorities for a balanced World Heritage List?**

200 words

The site is not simply an ancient monument, but a miniature cultural landscape within which the continuity of Viking, Norse and earlier traditions play a critical role in the identity of a modern democratic state with historic connections across the North Atlantic which cuts across the boundaries of the modern 'state parties' in the terms of the convention. This 'alternative cultural history' and affiliations (which are not the same as the cultural history and affiliations of the present UK state party boundaries) and the continuing cultural use of the site are very much in keeping with the global strategy to recognise 'traditional' use of landscape.

The site has developed and continues in use as a result of the movement of peoples – the Viking diaspora and the Norse settlement.

As part of a serial transnational bid from countries in NW Europe, the nomination of this site would present an underrepresented aspect of cultural heritage which otherwise is likely to be overwhelmed by 21<sup>st</sup> century boundaries and concerns which often do not adequately reflect the value of past cultural affiliations.

**(14) What benefits do you think World Heritage Site inscription would bring?**

Please indicate the main opportunities and benefits.

Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tourism	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Regeneration	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conservation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Protection	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please describe. 100 words.

Inscription would increase the coherency of site protection, conservation and management. The site is already a very significant visitor destination, especially on Tynwald Day for the annual parliamentary assembly. Inscription is expected to increase attention at that date and provide opportunities for improving interpretation at other times. The site already has a role in citizenship in education on the Isle of Man. Inscription would be expected to increase attention in education to ancient parliamentary sites and traditions in other countries.

**(15) Are there any known threats to the proposed World Heritage Site?**

Yes  No

Please indicate any proposed developments, or other potential impacts on the site.

Impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Please describe. 100 words for each issue.
Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The site itself is under consultation for a dedicated protective Act and there are proposals for an adjacent Conservation Area. The site is already recognised within the Local Plan in terms of Isle of Man Government interest in inscription as a UNESCO WHS
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**(16) Legal Protection**

Please list any legal and other protections, including cultural and natural designations, which cover the whole or part of the proposed site. 200 words



Under Consultation: Draft Tynwald Hill Bill  
Government ownership of site transferred from the Crown

**(17) Ownership**

Please list the main owners of the site, where possible.

Department of Infrastructure, Isle of Man Government

Do the owners support the application? Yes  No

A statement of support from the principle owners of the proposed site should be attached to the application, preferably electronically.

**(18) Local Authority support for the site**

Please list all Local Authorities with an interest in the proposed site.

German Parish Commissioners.  
The Commissioners are still in process of considering the proposal and will be giving final consideration to it on Wed 16 June 2010.

Does the proposed site have local Authority support? Yes  No

Please attach a statement of support from each one in relation to the application.

Please indicate whether the site is included in the local plan/s by specific policies.

Yes  No  Partly

Please describe. 200 words.

In St Johns Local Plan the ambition of the Isle of Man Government to have Tynwald hill inscribed as a World Heritage Site has been recognised as a material constraint on planning decisions.

### **(19) Stakeholders**

Please list the main parties with an interest in the site. 100 words

Department of Infrastructure, Isle of Man Government  
German Parish Commissioners  
Tynwald Management Committee  
Isle of Man Diocese, Church of England  
Manx National Heritage

### **(20) How will the Site be managed?**

Please outline the management arrangements for the proposed World Heritage Site, including where the responsibilities lie. 200 words

The Tynwald Hill Bill identifies Tynwald Management Committee as having responsibility for the area and provides an opportunity for a sub-committee to be formed specifically for this. Manx National Heritage has been asked by Council of Ministers to take a lead in developing the documentation and other arrangements in the area. The Department of Infrastructure is principal owner and accepts advice from Manx National Heritage in the assessment and management of the site. It is expected that on successful passing of the Bill that the present arrangements will be formalised and that a stakeholder group to include local residents and other users will also be developed.

**(21) Funding: the nomination**

Please indicate how the preparation of the nomination would be funded.  
100 words

The funding for the nomination would come through Manx National Heritage and derive from a number of Government and charitable sources. Core content in relation to understand further the nature of the site and its international relationships is being developed through partnership in the Northern Periphery Programme “Thing Sites International Networking Group”.

**(22) Funding: management**

Please outline how the future management would be funded. 100 words

Management of the site would principally be through the owners – the Department of Infrastructure, with advice from Manx National Heritage, consultation with key stakeholders and guided by Tynwald Management Committee.

**Name and Contact Details of Applicant**

Name	Edmund Southworth
Status	Director
Address	Manx National Heritage Manx Museum Kingswood Grove Douglas Isle of Man IM1 3LY
Telephone	01624 648000

Email	
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Completed applications should be forwarded, preferably in electronic format, to the World Heritage Team, Department for Culture, Media and Sport at the following email address: [UKTL.Application@culture.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:UKTL.Application@culture.gsi.gov.uk)

Any material that cannot be sent electronically should be sent to the following address:

World Heritage Team, Department for Culture, Media and Sport  
2-4 Cockspur Street  
London  
SW1 5DH

The closing date for applications is 11th June 2010

## UNESCO's criteria for the assessment of Outstanding Universal Value (para 77 of the Operational Guidelines)

- (i) represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
- (ii) exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;
- (iii) bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
- (iv) be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;
- (v) be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;
- (vi) be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.
- (vii) contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;
- (viii) be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;
- (ix) be outstanding examples representing significant ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;
- (x) contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.