



PARISH OF ST HELIER



Minutes of the Rates Assembly

Wednesday 29 July 2020 at 7.00 pm

Assembly Room, Town Hall

59/20	<p>Welcome & Apologies</p> <p>Apologies: Deputy Judy Martin, Jackie Hilton,</p> <p>The following Parishioners could not attend in person but gave apologies and are taking part electronically by Zoom: Stewart Mourant, Stephen Laugee, Sarah Richardson, Thomas Muldoon</p> <p>Deputies in Attendance: Stephen Ahier, Rob Ward, Inna Gardiner</p> <p>The following Deputies could not attend in person but gave apologies and are taking part electronically by Zoom: Deputy Carina Alves Deputy Mary Le Hegarat</p> <p>Procureurs in Attendance: Peter Pearce & Geraint Jennings</p>
60/20	<p>Item 1: Presentation of the Accounts for the Financial Year 2019/2020</p> <p>The Constable opened the Assembly by asking for a minutes silence, as tribute to former Deputy Ben Fox who passed away in May.</p> <p>The Constable explained how the Assembly would be run and made reference to the relationship between the Parish and the States, by explaining that whilst the Welfare burden had been taken on by the States, there was still inequality in relation to services, such as parks and gardens and public toilets. The Constable confirmed he would; along with the Parish Deputies continue to fight for equality.</p> <p>The Constable reported there was money in the kitty from the Jersey Development Company for Urban Regeneration, he said the States needed reminding from time to time that the money was not for nice to have projects but for urban regeneration. The master plan being created would be the first expenditure of this money.</p> <p>The Constable reported the Shadow Conseil is in discussions with States Ministers, there have been good meetings held on licensing and planning, It is hoped that when the Shadow Conseil come back to Assembly to report their progress that the Assembly will be eager to set up a permanent Conseil which will require States approval.</p> <p>Challenges for 2020/21 are as always the Parish finances, the development of St Ewold's and Municipal Reform.</p> <p>The Constable expressed his thanks and gratitude to all those involved with the Parish whether they be honorary volunteers or employees, for the many hours of service and dedication they gave.</p> <p>Don Connolly from the Auditors Alex Picot & Co reported that audits are not immune from the pandemic and whilst it wasn't possible for his team to descend on the Town Hall as in recent years, he could report there had been good dialogue from the Parish. He assured the Assembly that the standard of the audit has been maintained and therefore the accounts show a true reflection.</p> <p>Neil Macdonald the Director of Resources took the Assembly through a PowerPoint presentation of the Accounts, (Financial Statements) for 2019/20. It was explained that Income was lower than last year, because of parking fines, paycards, RPZ's and alfresco's, which were all impacted by the pandemic.</p> <p>Expenditure has increased in relation to legal and professional fees as there had been costs incurred following a retirement, delay in a replacement and therefore an external company having to be engaged as an interim measure. There was also an increase in relation to improvements made to the building at Westmount Day Nursery</p> <p>Covid 19 had resulted in a loss of revenue of £150K, in addition PPE had been required and a number of laptops purchased for working from home and therefore the true impact had been £190K</p>

Questions on the Accounts:

Sam Mezec stated that on page 17, equipment and maintenance fell below budget, whilst legal and professional fees were above budget. It was explained that the Parish had not able to complete all repairs it had expected to due to Covid19, and that due to a retirement in HR an external provider had been appointed.

Edward Trevor asked if confirmation could be given that no money was spent during the past year on the closure of Broad Street, either directly or indirectly via a contribution to the States and also confirm that the budget to be discussed later this evening that the same applies. Please also confirm that no money will be spent on Broad Street or any other Parish or States roads without prior approval of a Parish Assembly after full consultation on any proposals covering temporary or permanent closures, other than for road or pavement repairs.

The Constable stated the Town Centre Manager has been working in partnership with the States to keep business operating. There would have been expenditure from that budget as it was her role to keep town moving.

Kevin Proctor said he noticed there had been no increase in valuation of land and buildings owned by the Parish this year. It was explained the Parish are required to do this every five years and a re-evaluation will take place in this financial year.

John Baker asked how St Helier House had affected the Parish's finances and what were the on-going costs of an empty building. He asked could the Assembly be informed as to the future of St Helier House? The Constable stated the matter of St Helier House will come before a future Parish Assembly and that no decisions would be made this evening. The total cost this year has been under 10K for Insurance and small repairs to make the building safe.

Deputy Ward asked for details in relation to the 9K contribution to Comite des Connetables and what it was used for. It was explained that this was in relation to the Comite Office admin and Chef De Police admin, the costs of which were split between the 12 Parishes.

Peter Pearce asked if the number of full time employees at the Parish, had it gone up, down or stayed the same. It was reported it had gone down a bit over the last year and was just over two hundred.

Deputy Gardiner asked why there was a drop in recycling income. Tony Andrews stated the income from cardboard had dropped significantly across Europe. Instead of receiving income, the Parish were required to pay towards the cost of shipping. The only product attracting a good price at present is metal, which is going some way to subsidise the costs.

The Constable thanked the Director for the presentation and asked if there was a proposer and seconder for the Accounts.

The Accounts were proposed by Procureur Peter Pearce and seconded by Edward Trevor and were unanimously adopted.

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Item 2: To adopt the Parish of St Helier Strategic Plan 2020 - 2025

Jason Turner, CEO presented the plan, explaining the reasoning behind it is to do things better and make a difference for parishioners. He took the Parish through the main elements being six main objectives, with three areas crossing the whole plan, there were then six operational principles identified

Lyndsay Feltham asked the time scale and how KPIs would be reported. It was explained there are some already in place, and work is underway on others. At present the Parish is paying particular attention to sickness rates of staff and tonnage of waste as examples.

Deputy Rob Ward stated Strategic plan target 1, what links are there to the Island Plan and specific commitments to St Helier to support that. He questioned diversity at the meeting with nobody present under the age of 29; he felt St Helier should be feeding into the government sustainable transport policy. Jason Turner said the plan was a framework of where the Parish was trying to get to and he believes there are opportunities to influence others externally; he gave the Climate Group, as a specific piece of work, in which the Parish can lead by example and show others what is possible. The Shadow Conseil has expectations of what the Parish require from others to help deliver strategy. Deputy Ward suggested the Parish go back to its house diagram, and make a fourth area across the document, that of working with the States, as it is fundamental to what we need to do.

Edward Trevor stated that to achieve No 5 business to thrive, they will not be able to do this if roads

are closed. There have been many complaints from Broad Street, the road is closed but people are still walking on the pavements. It is surprising the numbers of people who are not making deliveries but are pulling up to get coffee chocolate, papers etc. and cyclists are not using the road properly. Businesses are finding they can't get deliveries done before 11am. If you want to close roads you need to do something about RPZ's and make the cost of parking in an RPZ nearly the same price as a season ticket.

A lady commented that when people consider No. 2 accessibility, they are considering able-bodied people and not those with disabilities, you need to take everyone in to the mix. The Constable said the Parish didn't close the road and that problems needed to be taken up with the Minister of GHE. In relation to RPZ's he hears from some people who think they are too expensive, others who think they are too cheap and others who wish they had never been invented, he believes over 600 parishioners enjoy car ownership as a result of the scheme, the Income from which pays for the policing and administration.

Deputy Gardiner asked if the Parish was looking to provide affordable houses like other Parishes and sheltered accommodation, if they were, would they be for St Helier residents only. Jason Turner said this fitted with No 3 of the plan, social engagement, inclusion and well-being. The Parish are working with Andium; there was little detail at present as they were still in discussion. Any plan drawn up will come back before a Parish Assembly.

John Baker said that in relation to Broad Street the Town Centre Manager had assured him retailers are very happy with the closure, I am very happy and I have a business in King Street, I believe there are businesses in Dumaresq Street who are unhappy about the moving of the disabled parking. Vine Street would have been an ideal location for this but unfortunately, it is used by the Jurats, the bus stops could have been moved. Where this has been introduced in towns and cities in the UK, it has proved to be a success once people adapted to it.

Steve Jewell disagreed it was about the disabled bays, he stated the strategic plan said the Parish would listen to businesses and this hasn't happened. Businesses have provided evidence to Ministers to show their decision-making was affecting their business. Whilst they could understand the reasoning behind Covid, those reasoning's have now gone

A lady asked the timeline on the strategic plan. Jason Turner explained the plan went through to 2025, year by year it would be reviewed, for instance with climate change, the plans were adopted last year, this year we are replacing some of the vehicle fleet, and changing the heating source in one building, this will continue year after year with the outcomes being achieved later down the line.

Mr Hairon stated it is wonderful we now have Zoom but is there any money in the budget to move towards electric voting. We try to think of St Helier as moving forward but we need to help parishioners to vote. There are 30,000 parishioners and this building not fit for purpose and the meeting is not fit for purpose, numbers are already reduced due to one meter safe distancing. Why should people in this room vote on a strategic plan when there are 30,000 in the Parish entitled to vote, St Helier needs to do better. Jason Turner stated Municipal reform and how the Parish works, is part of what is being considered by the Shadow Conseil, they have set up an Engagement Committee and on their agenda is electronic voting, it is not within our gift now. The Constable agreed that not all parishioners can get in the building, or any other building in the Island and with 18,000 parishioners eligible to vote it is not acceptable. He has taken the matter up in the states, and has asked if the Parish could organise referendums, he has been told the law prevents it. The Constable is on PPC and is going to request that St Helier be used as a guinea pig in a trial of electronic voting.

Fiona Potigny on Zoom asked in relation to No. 5, if the Parish would be providing direct financial support to businesses. The Constable said it had already provided direct financial support by reducing alfresco permits to assist hospitality during the pandemic, any other grants would need to come before a Parish Assembly, as you could end up supporting one group and not another. He said he had been asked by businesses for a rates holiday, but explained commercial rates in Jersey are only a fraction of a business's expenditure compared to the UK. Parish services had continued and we had to pay our staff, if businesses had seen a rates reduction then domestic rates would have increased to subsidise business. The Parish are trying to increase footfall in the town and are in discussion with Government and others to improve this. It has been agreed by the States that the Island wide rate stay the same a support to business

Fiona Potigny asked about No. 4 Jerrias language plan for the Parish. Procureur Geraint Jennings said the States had adopted Jerrias as an official language, which has resulted in States bodies

	<p>adopting a plan, based on Scotland and the Gaelic language, where they had to develop themselves according to their needs and activities. You will notice the Parish have electronic signs in Jerrias at the entrance to the Town Hall. The Parish is looking at the language plan template to ensure it meets its responsibilities</p> <p>The Constable thanked Jason Turner, CEO for the presentation and asked if there was a proposer and seconder for the Strategic Plan</p> <p>The Strategic Plan was proposed by John Baker and seconded by Deputy Ahier and was unanimously adopted.</p>
	<p>Due to his upcoming retirement, Tony Andrews, Director of Municipal; Services made a presentation about his time and experience of working for the Parish. He explained some of the improvements that had been made in the parks and the challenges and devastation caused by the storm in 1987. He touched on a number of recent changes that have benefited those living on the edge of St Helier, including Havre Des Pas and Westmount Gardens, Val Andre. He praised the community, the many volunteers and schools he had worked with and thanked his colleagues for their support. He commended Parish staff for the exceptional work undertaken during the lockdown</p> <p>John Baker commented that in relation to Parade Gardens you would not know there is a pandemic, it has not looked better in recent years. The Constable and the Assembly showed their appreciation for Mr Andrews 49 years of service.</p>
62/20	Item 3: Presentation of the Estimates Budgets for the financial year 2020/21
	<p>The Director of Resources presented the estimates, budgets for 2020/2021, explaining that 3% has been projected for the pay increases in January 2021. Road expenditure had increased so that the Parish could catch up on work it had been unable to complete during the lockdown. The Assembly were reminded that because of the pandemic May and June saw 350K of lost revenue. In this year's budgets, money had been set aside to purchase electric vehicles and a new Accounts and HR system. It was confirmed that the recommendation was to keep the rate at 1.15, which had remained static since 2014, whilst the RPI had risen by 17.7 % during the period, although there had been an increase in quarters by 6.75% due to the States paying rates.</p> <p>John Baker asked if St Helier House has affected the situation and will there be an income stream, or is there a risk it will lose money. It was explained that any scheme will come back to an Assembly, but it was confirmed there was nothing in this year's budgets in relation to the project</p> <p>Fiona Potigny asked over Zoom about the 50K overspend for legal and profession fees and why this coming year the budget was a similar amount of 145K. It was explained the Parish had to provide HR services and it was not an overspend, as the Parish were not paying staff who would have delivered the service. It is consistent this year as the Parish is recruiting an HR adviser who starts shortly, they will have a probation period and need support but will reduce over time.</p> <p>The Constable asked the Assembly to agree the presentation of the estimates, budget and asked if there was a proposer and seconder for the presentation. He stated it had been a historic moment this evening when a member of the public had asked a question to the Assembly via Zoom,</p> <p>The presentation of the Estimates were proposed by John Baker and seconded by Julian Rogers and were unanimously adopted.</p>
63/20	Item 4: To approve the Estimates, Budgets for the Financial Year 2020/21
	<p>Kevin Proctor asked why dog licences had increased in revenue, was the price going up? It was explained that the cost had increased in March 2020; it is now double what it was.</p> <p>The Estimates were proposed by Geraint Jennings and seconded by Peter Pearce and were unanimously adopted.</p>
64/20	Item 5: Approve the Parish Rate for the Financial Year 2020/21
	<p>The Constable asked if there were any amendments, higher or lower, to the proposed rate of 1.15p.</p> <p>The Assembly were advised that it was proposed to keep the rate the same as last year and that a St Helier Procureur had suggested the Island wide rate remain the same, which had been agreed by the States.</p> <p>There being no further amendments, on a proposition by Procureur Geraint Jennings and seconded by Procureur Peter Pearce the rate of 1.15p was unanimously approved by the Assembly.</p>

65/20	Item: 6 Election of the Accounts Committee to examine the Accounts for the Financial Year 2020/2021
	<p>The Constable thanked the Accounts Committee for all the hard work conducted throughout the year, and informed the Assembly that the following Committee Members had indicated their willingness to seek re-election:</p> <p>Jackie Hilton, Bob Le Brocq, David Croxford, Sarah Richardson, John Baker, Stewart Mourant, Bernie Manning, Steven Beddoe and Mario Pirozzolo.</p> <p>On a proposal by Edward Trevor and seconded by Julian Rogers, nine members of the Accounts Committee from 2019/20 were unanimously elected enbloc for 2020/2021. There was an additional member Jason Lagadu proposed by Geraint Jennings and seconded by Mr Stegenwalner; taking the total of the Accounts Committee to ten for 2020/2021, which the Assembly approved unanimously.</p>
66/20	Item 7: Approval of the appointment of Parish Auditors for 2020/2021
	<p>On a proposition by Procureur Peter Pearce and seconded by Procureur Geraint Jennings the Auditors Alex Picot & Co were re-appointed for 2020/21, this gained unanimous approval of the Assembly. On behalf of the Parish, the Constable thanked Don Connolly and his team for all their hard work.</p>
	<p>The Constable thanked the ratepayers for their show of confidence in the Parish; he thanked the Auditors, the Procureurs, the Accounts Committee, all Parish employees for all their hard work. The date of the next Parish Assembly was confirmed as Wednesday 26th August 2020 at 7.00 pm.</p>