



## PARISH OF ST HELIER



### Minutes of the Rate Assembly

Wednesday 16 July 2025 at 7.00 pm

Assembly Room, Town Hall

33/25	<b>Welcome &amp; Apologies</b>
	<p><b>Apologies:</b> Deputies Carina Alves, Max Andrews, Mary Le Hagarat and Lyndsay Feltham, Centenier Jane Pearce, Mario Pirozzolo, Mark Le Chevalier, James Corbett, and Malcolm L'Amy.</p> <p><b>Deputies in Attendance:</b> Stephen Ahier, Catherine Curtis, Inna Gardiner, Sam Mézec, Rob Ward and David Warr.</p> <p><b>Procureurs in Attendance:</b> Peter Pearce and John Baker</p>
34/25	<b>Item 1: Presentation of the Accounts (Financial Statements) for the Financial Year 2024/2025</b>
	<p>The Constable opened the Assembly by referring the Assembly to the Annual Report, which highlights the years achievements based on the estimates approved the previous year. There has been the opening of a new playground and the refurbishment of an existing one in Parade Gardens, St Ewolds, which previously parishioners had been willing to subside, has this year, for the first time broken even financially. The Constable thanked Parish staff and the many volunteers, who give of their time to the Parish. He also thanked the Honorary Police for all that they do, including Parish Hall Enquiries and policing a large events programme.</p> <p>Andrew Sugden, CEO, provided an overview of 2024/2025, thanking employees and honorary volunteers, who undertake their roles in an unassuming way. He listed the achievements of the workforce, including refuse and recycling who collect from 18,500 premises, the administration staff that process all manner of permits and licences, the Parks and Gardens team who won the best coastal town in Britain in Bloom, and were awarded a UK Gold Standard.</p> <p>The year saw a full events programme, which included a visit from the King and Queen. The Infrastructure team delivered a full roads programme, plus the completion of two playgrounds, and a Neighbourhood Improvement Area (NIA), as well as improving safety measures around schools. St Ewold's celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> birthday, it received a good inspection report and covered its costs. Westmount Nursery was the second nursery in the Island to achieve the Curiosity Approach award and ended the year in a good financial position.</p> <p>Andrew Sugden thanked Deputy Feltham for her idea to revamp the play areas in Parade Gardens, Procureur Baker for introducing playground designer, Emily Jennings, to the Parish. He thanked Deputy Gardiner for securing Government funding for the NIA's and Procureur Peter Pearce for his continued support of the Parish. The Assembly were informed that the annual report includes a statement from the Chef de Police. The Assembly, noted that the Parish is made up of an eclectic range of people from diverse backgrounds, and every person has a sense of pride in their role.</p> <p>The Parish has been working toward achieving carbon neutrality by 2030. It has reduced its Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 77%, and this will increase to 84% by the end of the year. Throughout 2026 the Parish will establish its Scope 3 emissions, and will provide a report to the Assembly, of what it will take to reach net zero and the costs involved.</p> <p><b>Accounts 2024/2025</b></p> <p>James Donald, Finance Director took the Assembly through a PowerPoint presentation of the Parish's Accounts / Financial Statements for 2024/25, explaining that the Parish had made a surplus of £500K against an estimated deficit of £100K. The margins are small with income being 2% above what was expected, mainly due to bank interest remaining high.</p> <p>Expenditure came in 1% below budget, with non-rates income reaching 53% of Parish income. This percentage this will drop in 2025/26, as St Ewolds will cease providing food for Samares Ward and children numbers at Westmount will return to normal levels.</p> <p>Staff costs came in £200K below budget, whilst the headcount has remained stable. Operation costs were above budget by a similar amount. There was an underspend of £35K on the NIA, which has been placed in the NIA reserve for future projects.</p> <p>The balance sheet shows cash of £9.2M, however the Parsh owes £1M to the Government for the Island wide rate. The Rates reserve increased by £100K, which left a surplus of 20 weeks net expenditure.</p>

	<p>Capital expenditure saw assets increase by £600K to buildings, with £580K being attributed to St Ewolds and £760K to vehicles. Procureur Peace revalued the Parish gold and silver which increased by £40K.</p> <p>St Ewold's and Westmount Day Nursery have both performed well, and in addition to this the Parish has been working on compliance, taking the form of a risk register and improved health safety practices.</p> <p><b>Auditors Report:</b></p> <p>Don Connolly, Auditor, from Alex Picot &amp; Co., explained that they had put the accounts through a rigorous and thorough check, and in addition the Parish Procureurs and the Accounts Committee have an active oversight. This is a clean audit, which meets his approval and is in accordance with accounting policy. This year in the interests of transparency, the accounts have additional disclosures.</p> <p><b>Questions on the Accounts:</b></p> <p>Deputy Ward questioned the reasoning behind dog licences, and what the Parish is doing to prevent dog fouling. He asked if preventive measures such as bags and bins are being considered. The Constable advised that the Parish is going to install additional signage, as it wants to encourage the public to have pride in the Parish.</p> <p>Deputy Ward asked, as Westmount Nursery had made a surplus of £64K, could this money be made available to improve their play equipment. It was explained that the Nursery is adequately catered for in the budgets.</p> <p>Deputy Gardiner congratulated the Parish on the transparency of the accounts, confirming the Government could learn from the Parish. She asked why residents parking fees had decreased when numbers had remained the same. It was clarified that there had been an error in 2024, and the Parish had allocated a small credit to all RPZ holders.</p> <p>Deputy Warr asked for clarification on whether Rates are charged on empty building sites. Parish Officers were unsure of the answer, but would clarify the following day. Clarification: A rateable charge is made for all empty sites, whether they be commercial, or awaiting planning determination. Deputy Warr also questioned alfresco charges.</p> <p>Bernie Manning asked since when had People's Park become a caravan park. It was explained that the fairground has been in the Island for several events, including the Weekender, Fete de St Helier and would remain for Battle of Flowers. In past years, their equipment has been vandalised and so the owners like to reside nearby. Mr Manning requested the caravans be screened off next year.</p> <p>A resident stated that narrow pavements were causing her difficulty when pushing her double buggy on La Grande Route de St Jean. The road in question is owned by the Government, however the Constable said he would address the matter with them.</p> <p>The Constable asked for a proposer and seconder, the accounts were proposed by Jackie Hilton-Egre and seconded by Deputy Warr. The accounts were adopted unanimously.</p>
<b>35/25</b>	<p><b>Item 2: The Connétable to present, and the Assembly to approve, the Estimates of the Parish of St Helier for the Financial Year 2025/26, in accordance with the terms of Article 21 of the Rates (Jersey) Law 2005</b></p>
	<p>James Donald presented the Estimates (Budgets) for 2025/26. He explained that there would be a drop in non-rates income of £175K, from last year's estimates, as the Parish had received £300K from Government as a one-off project for Halkett Street. In agreement with the Regulator, Westmount Nursery had been operating above capacity, St Ewold's as a temporary measure had been providing food to Samares Ward and interest rates have dropped by £150K. This is offset by a 5% increase in long-term care allowance.</p> <p>The Roads budget has increased by £162K, as the Roads Committee agreed a full roads programme, including Aquila Road, Winchester Street Tower Road, Broad Street, and to develop a scheme to prevent flooding in Vallee des Vaux. The Parish is going to remark disabled bays, undertake a second NIA in Poonah Road and place speed humps in Old St Johns Road.</p> <p>Staff costs have increased by £440K, allowing for a pay increase in January 2026. However, the Parish in the budgeting process have allowed for longer periods between an employee leaving and a new appointment being made. Operating costs have reduced by £350K, due to the Parade Gardens project.</p> <p>The Events budget has increased to enable the Christmas Light Switch on to become a 3-day event.</p> <p>There are plans for St Andrew's Park, the Parish is looking to create facilities for children aged 11-18 years and new formal gardens. The surplus of £500K from last year's accounts, will be put into the building reserve and ringfenced for this purpose. The Parish has also allowed the sum of £5K in the</p>

	<p>estimates, to trial the idea of community gardens.</p> <p>Capital Expenditure will see £850K being taken from the building reserve fund for the refurbishment of St Ewolds and £100K for 2 South Hill Cottages. Sums are required for IT, plant, and a replacement boiler at St Ewolds.</p> <p>The Parish is taking a new approach with vehicles this year, as the Parish has a relatively new fleet. It will trial sending a 7-year-old truck to the UK for refurbishment, this is a third of the cost of a new vehicle. It is hoped the process will extend the life of the truck for a further 6 years, and if the trial is successful, it will change the strategy moving forward. The Parish also plans to replace two street cleansing vehicles and an honorary police vehicle.</p> <p><b>Questions on the 2025/26 Estimates</b></p> <p>Deputy Warr asked what process would be in place to pick a designer for St Andrew's Park. Silvio Alves, Head of Infrastructure advised that a project group would be formed, consisting of the senior leadership team. There would be Procureurs involvement and public consultation to explore what parishioners would like to see delivered. Following consultation, a tendering process will begin, where interested parties would be provided with a list of the requirements, and expressions of interest would be sought. The chosen plans would be brought back to a Parish Assembly for approval.</p> <p>A parishioner said she would welcome the formation of a project group for St Andrew's Park and was pleased to hear that interested designers can submit expressions of Interest. She also asked if disabled badges could be applied for online. The Constable advised that the Parish is exploring this facility with Government.</p> <p>Deputy Ahier stated he is aware that there are changes planned to the Electoral Register, he asked if the Parish had allowed for postage of the annual forms in the estimates. Parish Secretary, Alison Roberts, advised that a sum had been included, as the law is not yet in place to remove this requirement.</p> <p>Deputy Gardiner welcomed improvements to the north of St Helier and would like to see a community centre built. She questioned why the Parks budget had decreased by £50K. It was explained that there is no longer a requirement for outside contractors, as the Parish's forestry team is back to capacity.</p> <p>Deputy Curtis stated the Parish has a balance sheet of £150M, however, 25% of St Helier children are living in poverty. She asked for a children's working group to be established and for children to feature in the Parish business plan. The Constable agreed to investigate this and to speak with interested parties.</p> <p>The Constable asked for a proposer and seconder: the estimates were proposed by Deputy Gardiner and seconded by Deputy Ahier. The estimates were adopted unanimously.</p>
<b>36/25</b>	<b>Item 3: Approve the Parish Rate for the Financial Year 2025/26</b>
	<p>The Assembly were advised that the Parish is recommending a Rate of 1.35, which is a cost-of-living rise, in line with RPI - an increase of 2.3%. The Constable asked if there were any amendments.</p> <p>There being no amendments, the rate of 1.35 was proposed by Procureur Peter Peace and seconded by Deputy Ahier, the Assembly unanimously approved the Parish rate.</p>
<b>37/25</b>	<b>Item 4: Election of the Accounts Committee to examine the Accounts for the Financial Year 2025/2026</b>
	<p>The Constable thanked the Accounts Committee for the work undertaken throughout the year, and informed the Assembly that the following members had indicated their willingness to seek re-election:</p> <p>Jackie Hilton, David Croxford, Sarah Richardson, Bernie Manning, James Corbett, Mario Pirozzolo, Jason Lagadu, Mark Le Chevalier, Danny Scaife and Shirley Madden.</p> <p>The Accounts Committee was proposed on bloc by The Dean and seconded by Kevin Proctor, the Assembly unanimously approved the appointments.</p> <p>The Constable asked if anyone else wished to join the Committee.</p>
<b>38/25</b>	<b>Item: 5 Approval of the appointment of Parish Auditors for 2025/2026</b>
	<p>On a proposition by Procureur Peter Pearce and seconded by Bernie Manning, Auditors Alex Picot &amp; Co were re-appointed for 2025/26; approval of the Assembly was unanimous.</p>
	<p>The Constable thanked the ratepayers for their show of confidence in the Parish. The date of the next Parish Assembly was confirmed as Thursday 31 July 2025 at 7.00 pm.</p>