



PARISH OF ST HELIER



Minutes of the Parish Assembly	
Wednesday 6 November 2019 at 7.00 p.m.	
Assembly Room, Town Hall	
53/19	Welcome and Apologies –
	<p>Apologies: Deputy Judy Martin, David Croxford and Steve Beddoe</p> <p>Deputies in Attendance: Deputies: Stephen Ahier, Mary Le Hegarat, Geoff Southern, Rob Ward and Carina Alves</p> <p>Procureurs in attendance: Peter Pearce and Geraint Jennings</p>
54/19	Item 1: Approve the minutes of the Parish Assembly held on 25 September 2019.
	<p>Proposer: Deputy Stephen Ahier, Seconder: Barry Le Feuvre</p> <p>The minutes were adopted</p>
55/19	Item 2: To approve the establishment of a shadow Conseil Municipal for St Helier during 2020 P06.2019*.
	<p>Proposer: Deputy Rob Ward, Seconder: Deputy Stephen Ahier</p> <p>Jason Turner, Parish CEO, gave a brief synopsis of the formation of the Municipal Reform Working Group. He explained the Group consisted of the Roads Committee, a Deputy and the Constable of St Brelade. The Group considered what works well in the current system, as well as, what could be improved. The Group also undertook research on other jurisdictions, which has led to the production of the report you see today. The Working Group has a clear outcome and supports the formation of a Shadow Conseil. The aim is to trial the concept and report back to the Parish Assembly at end of next year.</p> <p>The overall Parish aim identified by the Group is: St Helier is a vibrant, safe, engaging and attractive Parish where people chose to live, work and visit.</p> <p>Jackie Hilton stated that this morning's Roads Committee had made a big decision, which went against the views of the parishioners present. Mr Jennings has told her that the decision of the Roads Committee is paramount and overrides any decision made by a Parish Assembly. The Committee voted in favour of a road being opened, which is concerning. She asked whether the Conseil Municipal would be more democratic than the system we have now and would its decisions be open to challenge by Parishioners.</p> <p>The Constable referred to Page 5 of report, which reads, the Parish Assembly remaining the ultimate decision making authority being able to call in decisions of the Conseil. Whether a Roads Committee can override a Parish Assembly, is a matter for investigation.</p> <p>Geraint Jennings explained that the shadow Conseil would have no powers during the trial and what powers a Conseil would have moving forward, is ultimately up for discussion.</p> <p>Ted Vibert asked if an election of a Conseil would include both ratepayers and those on the electoral role. He said that devolution by taking powers from the States would be more expensive e.g. if the Parish takes over things like the main roads. He asked who will ultimately make the decision of what powers are transferred, will it be the Conseil who make it, or another Parish Assembly.</p> <p>The Constable said it would not be any more expensive to run the Parish Shadow Conseil for a year. Elections will be for electors and will take place at a Parish Assembly before the end of the year. The Parish would want to ensure that any power taken from the States comes along with the relevant income, as no Parishioner would like to see an increase in their Rates because of Municipal Reform. The Working Group has not yet determined the criteria for the younger person, there would need both a minimum and maximum age.</p> <p>Geraint Jennings stated it was important to maintain the existing powers and voting powers of the Parish</p>

Assembly. What he would see happening, is rather than a small number of people making big decisions; Municipal Reform would enable more people to be involved. It is likely that if the States look to devolve any powers they will put in place a responsibility clause, which would make those elected ultimately responsible.

Deputy Southern asked would the Conseil meet at same time of day as the current Roads Committee. In his view meetings currently take place at the wrong time of day; to encourage diversity and to include more people, surely the meetings would need to be held in the evenings

The Constable stated that would be something for the Shadow Conseil to explore during next year; as far as he is aware most Councils in the UK, meet in the evenings.

A gentleman stated shouldn't that decision be taken before the election takes place, so people are aware of what is required before putting their names forward for election, as it excludes working people. The Roads Committee need to think about this before electing a Shadow Conseil. Meetings do not always have to take place in the morning.

Deputy Ward said there needed to be an increase of democratic powers to Parishes. The Parish would need to work hard to get voters to turn out for elections and seek to increase the time span of elections i.e. the Procureurs, as there was an average of 1.1% turnout. The Parish needs to encourage diversity, it is essential if these proposals are to work.

The Constable said the turnout that evening was not huge, he had just been at the opening of a brewery and there was three times the number of people present.

Mr Everson stated that if the planning application process that is proposed were to take place, there would be extra costs involved in administration; as the Parish would have no additional income, how could it possibly carry it out. The Parish would need to appoint a Planning Officer and how much would it cost the Parish to provide this level of expertise.

The Constable stated that under such circumstances planning fees should come to the Parish. Currently there is a policy for straightforward applications to come to the Parish and why take up Central Governments time. The Parish will not be able to take additional services, unless we can negotiate appropriate finding.

Geraint Jennings said the public would notice no changes next year, as it is a Shadow Conseil with a trial, taking place behind the scenes. Who knows what powers the Parish will get from negotiations and discussions; he gave an example of alfresco permits.

Mario Pirozzoli said he had been co-opted on the Council in Stoke and having worked within that, it makes him feel confident that if we can devolve the powers, we can achieve so much to increase the vibrancy of town. Will there be the opportunity to co-opt certain members with the right expertise for the right issue or event.

Geraint Jennings stated the Parish Assembly has the power currently to vote in ad-hoc committees or members. Shadow members will have their own discussion see how it would work and which Committee format would be best

John Baker said he was looking to support the proposition, it's about increasing democracy, increasing the contribution of others and getting more involvement in the Parish e.g. lifeboat collections, the Bailiff has to make decisions on marquees and permits for the seaside festival.

Guy Morris asked if you manage to get planning powers how it will work.

The Constable stated this is the work for the next year, we need to establish from the States what if anything they can devolve; plus establishing the checks and balances, they would put in place.

Geraint Jennings stated Roads Committee powers are limited, as lot of things will still be outside of the remit of the Shadow Conseil. It will give the Parish an opportunity to look at it differently without affecting the current process.

Jackie Hilton asked if someone could expand on the wording Engagement on page 38 of the report

Jason Turner said it is about identifying a way of allowing those who wish to express a view to do so and recognising that not everybody can attend a Parish Assembly, there may be a desire to vote without having to attend in person.

Geraint Jennings said the idea would be for us to develop a newly elected body, who would be elected at public elections by the whole Parish, and not as in the case of the Roads Committee elected at a Parish Assembly, the week before Christmas. Public elections provide an opportunity for debate on all issues, Parish wide. It would mean the public could approach any of their elected officials and able to involve them, it wouldn't have to be a Procureur or Constable, any member would be able to bring a matter to the Conseil, making it more approachable, open and transparent

The Constable said that the meeting had raised a couple of questions

1. When will the Conseil meet?
2. How will we generate interest to elect five people next month?
3. The Criteria of a Youth Member cut off at some point through age, but want to appeal to the young people of St Helier.

This is a big opportunity for others to get involved next year. He explained the date of the Assembly was not to keep it out of the Town Crier; his deadline for making amendments to the Government Plan which is Sunday. Depending on the outcome of tonight's Assembly, he would be able to put the States on notice and commence negotiations. It was important to bring the matter to an Assembly for approval as he didn't want the States to turn it down and the idea fall the first hurdle

Mr Gosselin said Parishioners had been left to rely on a JEP article to find out what was being proposed, as no further information has been made available. He had identified that any discussions undertaken by the Roads Committee had taken place as part of the B Agenda and were therefore confidential and not available under an FOI request. He specified three dates of meetings, 20th June, 17th October and December 2018 and stated that at four separate meetings of the Working Group all discussions had been kept hidden from Parishioners. Mr Gosselin asked should the Parish Assembly not have approved the setting up of a Working Group, did a Parish Assembly agree to its formation and if so why can't he find the minutes. What is the Law that this refers to and what is its name. Mr Gosselin said he had not had time to read the large report in detail but his views are it is a conflict of interests and corruption. In the future, it looked as if the Parish would be involved in planning applications, and the Parish is already conflicted when large developers make applications within St Helier. There are similar conflicts in licensing re: fees for alfresco permits. Finally, he wished to comment on parking and the disastrous plans to make Havre Des Pas one way.

The Constable commended Mr Gosselin on the amount of work he had undertaken to prepare for the Assembly. He advised Mr Gosselin that it was a pity he had not arranged to meet him prior to the Assembly, so he could allay Mr Gosselin's concerns. The Constable said the Parish didn't have to rely on a decision of a Parish Assembly to approve the formation of a Committee, in the same way as other Parish groups don't need Parish Assembly approval for example the Climate Change Working Group who had also met throughout the year. The Constable stated this proposal is to let the Parish trial it for a period of one year to see if it is successful.

Geraint Jennings said the Working Group had been made of the Roads Committee and others. There has been much public discussion; it has not been done secretly. He himself has been banging on about reform for several years and his view has been made available to the public in both of his election manifestos. If the media have chosen to report more on this matter then the public would be better informed. It is his belief that the media could cover Parish Committees and decisions much better.

Ted Vibert asked would the Constable be Chairperson of the Conseil and would the meetings be held in public with seats available for the public, as in the case of States Scrutiny Panels; so the public could see what was going on.

The Constable stated he didn't know whether the Constable would Chair the Group yet, the Working Group had considered a number of models. He personally would like to see the Constable chair the Conseil and thought that if St Helier was seeking to encourage other Constables on board, he is sure they would agree with him, as they would not like to see their role diminished. The Constable said he would like to chair the Conseil as he has statutory powers under law and therefore felt it needed to remain with him.

A secret ballot was taken there were 39 votes For and 6 against, with there being no spoilt papers

	The Constable thanked the media for its presence and advised the Assembly that the Trenton twinning initiative would be brought before the next Assembly.
56/19	Appreciation.
	The Constable stated that it was Martin Roberts last Parish Assembly after having worked for the Parish for forty-six years. He thanked Martin for his contribution and asked the Assembly if they wanted to express their appreciation.
	The date of the next scheduled Parish Assembly is Wednesday 27 November 2019