

Comité des Connétables

Minutes of the meeting held on
Monday 6th April 2020
(virtual meeting conducted online).

Present:

Connétable de St Laurent - Mrs D. W. Mezbourian, Chairman
Connétable de St Hélier - A. S. Crowcroft, Vice Chairman
Connétable de St Clément - L. Norman (present for part of the meeting)
Connétable de St Sauveur - Mrs S. A. Le Sueur-Rennard
Connétable de St Brélade - M. K. Jackson
Connétable de Grouville - J. E. Le Maistre
Connétable de St Jean - C. H. Taylor
Connétable de la Trinité - P. B. Le Sueur
Connétable de St Pierre - R. P. Vibert
Connétable de Ste Marie - J. M. Le Bailly
Connétable de St Ouën - R. A. Buchanan
Connétable de St Martin - Mrs K. Shenton-Stone

In attendance:

Mrs S. R. de Gruchy, Secretary

Non-exempt (public) under Freedom of Information (Jersey) Law 2011

Emergencies
Council
meetings -
COVID-19
coronavirus

1. The Chairman welcomed Connétables to the virtual meeting which was conducted online due to the social distancing requirements imposed to prevent the spread of COVID-19 during the coronavirus pandemic.

The Chairman reported briefly on recent meetings of the Emergencies Council and topics of discussion. The Connétable of St Ouen, in his capacity as Vice Chairman of the States Employment Board, outlined the business continuity arrangements for the States workforce, and the Comité noted the statements made by the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (EDTSC) offering support for businesses.

Community
Task Force and
Steering Group
meetings -
COVID-19
coronavirus

2. The Comité was briefed on the Community Task Force and Steering Group meetings as follows:

- a) the Community Task Force comprised Government of Jersey (GoJ) officers and the Chief Executive (CE), Parish of St Helier (POSH); a summary of the daily meetings was circulated by the CE to all parish secretaries and the Secretary was requested to forward this to Connétables.
- b) the Community Task Force Steering Group was a political group overseeing the Community Task Force; it was chaired by the Minister for Social Security and included the Chairman of the Comité des Connétables and the Connétable of St Helier. The Group met weekly, or more often as required, to receive reports/updates on work to deliver support to the community.

Arising from the Community Task Force Steering Group meeting, the Comité was informed that the example of the Parish of Grouville had been given as a parish 'card' had been issued to volunteers to use at a supermarket when shopping for vulnerable persons with the cost being reclaimed from the parishioner by the parish. The Comité heard from several Connétables on the similar arrangements made in their parishes to ensure that those unable to use a card for payment could still acquire the shopping they required.

COVID-19 - Parish administrations and business continuity

4. The Comité discussed arrangements being made by parishes to enable staff to continue to deliver parish services following the introduction of restrictions under the Covid-19 (Screening, Assessment and Isolation) (Jersey) Regulations 2020 and the Covid-19 (Restricted Movement) (Jersey) Order 2020. The arrangements included staggering working hours to ensure social distance was maintained and providing, where possible, for some staff to work at home. Parishes should consider issuing a letter of authorisation to staff whose work was deemed essential.

It was agreed clarification should be sought as to whether the maintenance of cemeteries and garden areas could continue on essential grounds. Arising from the closure of the States recycling and green waste centres, it was noted some parishes were hoping to make alternative arrangements to avoid householders disposing of green waste in the domestic refuse.

COVID-19 – refuse collections

5. The Comité discussed contingency plans for parish refuse collections following the question asked in the States of the Minister for Infrastructure by the Connétable of St Lawrence. The Comité noted that the contractors used by a number of parishes had provided an assurance that contingency arrangements were in place, whilst other parishes had their own workforce who collected refuse. Having recognised that the Department for Growth, Housing and Environment would not have the necessary vehicles to undertake refuse collections, the Comité agreed that parishes would seek to work together should any issues arise.

Policing of Beaches (Jersey) Regulations 1959

6. The Comité discussed a suggestion from a member of the public that the dog walking laws be relaxed in the summer to avoid congestion on beaches at certain times of the day and to enable social distancing to be maintained.

COVID-19 - dogs on beaches

The Comité was reminded that the restriction under the Policing of Beaches (Jersey) Regulations 1959 did not prohibit dogs being taken on a beach but did require a dog, from 1st May to 30th September, to be kept on a lead between 10.30 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. The Comité considered whether, whilst there was a lockdown on movement, dogs might be allowed off the lead for a longer period. Following discussion, the Comité decided by a majority to maintain the current restrictions as these did not prevent dogs being exercised on the beach but the restriction requiring the use of a lead would ensure social distancing was observed at times when the beaches would be at their busiest.

COVID-19 – High pressure hoses

7. The Comité discussed the request from the Medical Officer of Health circulated to parishes over the weekend that Parish Hall operatives should not use high pressure hoses for cleaning. The Comité was informed that several parishes used high pressure hoses to clean refuse vehicles and bins and that staff were equipped with appropriate personal protection equipment. The Comité was disappointed that Connétables had not been consulted prior to the directive being issued and that, despite having sought further information, the rationale had yet to be received.

COVID-19 – Road repairs

8. The Comité agreed to seek clarification as to whether road repairs were essential work as it was understood some companies were still operating although another company had closed.

COVID-19 and comms

9. The Comité was informed by the Chairman that she would be speaking with the newly appointed Director of Communications, Government of Jersey (GoJ), to outline the role of the parishes in Jersey and would seek assistance from the GoJ team should this be required by any Parish preparing communications.

Arising from this the Comité noted correspondence received by the Connétable of St Ouen asking that elderly persons should receive frequent written updates about COVID-

19 and the advice being issued as a number would not have access to emails, TV or radio. The Chairman was requested to address this with the Director of Communications.

Parish
community
support - Jersey
Evening Post

10. The Comité was informed of the offer of the Editor of the Jersey Evening Post (JEP) to assist vulnerable members of the community, and especially older parishioners, who were unable to purchase a daily copy of the JEP from the shops. To assist free copies would be delivered to each parish hall for distribution by parish teams and volunteers.

The Comité, whilst appreciative of the offer, considered there were logistical issues as Connétables were seeking to discourage footfall at the Parish Halls. However each would liaise with their Community Support Teams to see if a copy could be delivered with shopping (albeit this was not on a daily basis) and, if so, would contact the Editor to make arrangements accordingly. It was also suggested that the JEP might promote their delivery option to those who usually purchased the paper daily from their local shop.

Next meeting

11. The Comité agreed to hold weekly meetings online during the lockdown to keep all Connétables informed and to deal with any specific issues which needed to be addressed. The next meeting would be on 14th April 2020.

Chairman Date

