

Comité des Connétables

Minutes of the meeting held on
Monday 14th October 2019
at the Parish Hall, Grouville.

Present:

Connétable de St Laurent - Mrs D. W. Mezbourian, Chairman
Connétable de St Hélier - A. S. Crowcroft, Vice Chairman (not present for item 22)
Connétable de St Clément - L. Norman
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 Ste Marie - J. M. Le Bailly
Connétable de St Ouën - R. A. Buchanan
Connétable de St Martin - Mrs K. Shenton-Stone

An apology for absence was received from the Connétable de St Pierre - R. P. Vibert.

In attendance:

Mrs S. R. de Gruchy, Secretary

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

Minutes

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 16th September 2019, having been previously circulated, were taken as read and were confirmed.

Public Services
Ombudsman -
consultation

2. The Comité, with reference to its minute no. 7 of 16th September 2019, gave further consideration to the Jersey Public Services Ombudsman Consultation paper. The proposals were for an independent Ombudsman to look into complaints against public services. Having discussed the proposals and the current system, namely the States of Jersey Complaints Panel established by the Administrative Decisions (Review) (Jersey) Law 1982, the Comité was of the view that the current system worked well but should be given additional resources if it was not currently able to investigate a complaint.

The Comité also noted that ombudsman schemes covering the public-sector dealt with complaints against bodies that were directly or indirectly subject to democratic accountability. They usually issued non-binding recommendations rather than binding decisions and usually focussed on maladministration. The Comité agreed that the maladministration of a parish should be open to investigation and therefore the role of the Complaints Panel might be extended or widened to cover a parish. However it should not be possible to replace the decision of an elected body and there already existed appeals processes in much legislation. The Comité requested the Chairman to respond accordingly with its comments.

Office – budget
2019-2020

3. The Comité, with reference to its minute no. 3 of 16th September 2019 confirmed the contribution to be made by each parish towards the budget for 2019/20 for the office (£8,840) and the Comité des Chefs de Police (£125).

Corporate Parenting Board	<p>4. The Comité agreed that the Connétable of Trinity should replace the Chairman as the Comité's representative to attend meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board.</p>
Pyrotechnics Articles Regulations – proposed consultation	<p>5. The Comité was informed that the Minister for Home Affairs would be launching a consultation on draft Pyrotechnics Articles Regulations. The Regulations would need to be enacted before the Explosives (Jersey) Law 2014 could be brought in to force. The Minister would be invited to attend a future meeting to outline the proposals which would include provision for the licensing of firework displays and the licence scheme.</p>
‘Cake and Cabaret’ at Parish Halls	<p>6. The Comité received a paper outlining the proposed ‘Cake and Cabaret’ event which ArtHouse Jersey hoped would tour the Parish Halls in 2020. The event would be funded by ArtHouse Jersey as part of their community outreach and would be supported by Age Concern but various assistance was also requested from parishes. The event involved providing an afternoon of tea and variety entertainment (live music and singers plus other variety performances) for older members of the parish (65 years and over). The Comité discussed the proposal and heard from Connétables of the range of events currently provided at parish halls for senior citizens. The Comité decided that each Connétable should meet with the Producer, ArtHouse Jersey, to inform of the current parish events and discuss how ArtHouse Jersey proposed to resource and deliver its event.</p>
Visit Jersey – ambassadors	<p>7. The Comité was informed that Visit Jersey would be launching “The Big Weekend” project in early 2020. The project would help islanders to ‘fall in love with tourism’ and become ambassadors for the island’s great attractions and activity providers and would also be a showcase opportunity for the islands businesses.</p>
UNCRC – incorporation into domestic legislation	<p>8. The Comité noted that proposals for indirectly incorporating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into domestic legislation were being prepared and included consideration of the role of the parishes in implementing the UNCRC. A presentation would be made to the Comité at a future meeting and there would also be a period of consultation later in the autumn.</p>
Jersey Overseas Aid – GoJ 2020 plan	<p>9. The Comité received Deputy C Labey, Chair of Jersey Overseas Aid (JOA) and Minister for International Development, and the Executive Director JOA, who outlined the Jersey Overseas Aid proposals and programme contained in the Government of Jersey (GoJ) 2020 plan.</p> <p>The Comité was informed that JOA’s budget had not changed since 2016 and, in real terms (and as a proportion of tax and GVA), it had declined since 2015. It was also significantly below international targets and averages and below previous commitments made by the States. The 2020 GoJ plan was to first reverse the decline in the overseas aid contributions and then, from 2021, gradually increase the aid. This was affordable as for every £10 paid in tax, 13.7 pence was spent on aid and, by 2023, it was proposed this should increase to 17.2 pence. Overseas aid was important to the island for a number of reasons and JOA’s achievements for over half a century had included alleviating the suffering of those afflicted by poverty, conflict and natural disasters; almost 1,000 Islanders contributing in person by participating in one of JOA’s Community Work Projects (which had run since 1972) or working for a Jersey-based charity; and a focus on development work and on the effective allocation of humanitarian aid. JOA had also provided numerous opportunities for Islanders to pursue projects and work (paid or voluntary) in international development.</p> <p>The Comité discussed with the delegation the governance of JOA, the value for money and the risk management of its work and projects. Following discussion the Minister and CEO were thanked for attending and then withdrew from the meeting.</p>

Draft Shops
(Regulation of
Opening)
(Amendment)
(Jersey)
Regulations
201-
(P.93/2019)

10. The Comité, with reference to its minute no. 8 of 16th September 2019, received the Policy Principal, Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (EDTSC) and noted the apologies of the Minister who was unable to attend. The Comité was informed of the changes which would be made to the current Sunday trading scheme should the draft Shops (Regulation of Opening) (Amendment) (Jersey) Regulations 201- (P.93/2019) be approved by the States. These included introducing a restricted hours permit, deleting the blanket permit (after 2019) and increasing the fees payable for filing an application for a Sunday trading permit.

The Comité noted that the draft Regulations, if approved, would come into force 7 days later (the debate was scheduled for 22nd October 2019) but that there would only be three Sundays (3rd, 10th and 17th November 2019) for which a shop could apply for a 'restricted hours' permit before the blanket permit commenced on 24th November 2019. The Comité discussed the practicalities of determining an application for a restricted hours permit for 2019 and was informed that the Minister would welcome trading being permitted for these three dates though he was realistic regarding the administrative implications. Several Connétables indicated they would be willing to consider such applications. The Shops (Regulation of Opening) (Jersey) Regulations 2011 provided that the Comité might approve forms of applications and permits for the purposes of the Regulations (though if not so approved the Connétable of a parish might, in the interim, approve the form) and it agreed these forms should be considered at its next meeting.

The Policy Principal was asked about policing of the law and whether trading might be permitted on Christmas Day; he replied that policing was the responsibility of the States and Honorary Police and the current amendments made no material change to trading on Christmas Day or 26th December. The Policy Principal was thanked for attending the meeting and then withdrew. The Comité approved comments on the draft Regulations for presentation to the States.

Parish
Assemblies:
revised
arrangements
(P.92/2019)

11. The Comité, with reference to its minute no. 4 of 16th September 2019, received Senator S Y Mézec to discuss his proposition "Parish Assemblies: revised arrangements" (P.92/2019) which had been lodged for debate on 22nd October 2019. The Chairman informed the Comité that Senator Mézec had notified her of his intention to lodge the proposition but had indicated his willingness to meet the Comité to discuss the proposal.

Senator Mézec said that he would be willing to defer the debate or to withdraw the proposition should the Comité consider there was a better way forward; he had lodged the proposition following the St Helier Parish Assembly which was held to agree the sale of St Helier House. The aim of the proposition was to consider what more could be done to engage with parishioners particularly when there was an important item to be considered and when some might be unable to attend a meeting on a weekday evening. He hoped the suggestion of a proxy vote, or voting on the next day, would enable more to vote when there was a contentious issue to be decided.

The Comité discussed with Senator Mézec some of the practicalities and issues relating to the proposition and commented that, in Connétables' experience, Parish Assemblies were well attended when there was an important or contentious matter to decide. The Chairman referred to the Parish Assembly in St Lawrence on 26th February 2018 to discuss the provision of disabled facilities at the Parish Church and that, to accommodate all those attending, facilities were arranged at both the Parish Hall and the school such that all those attending could hear, participate in and vote at the Parish Assembly. However, the difficulty of accommodating all those entitled to attend a Parish Assembly was recognised and there was discussion of how best to publicise such meetings. Following discussion the Comité proposed Senator Mézec be invited to join a working group to consider the arrangements for Parish Assemblies; the membership of such a group would be agreed at a future meeting. Senator Mézec confirmed he would withdraw P.92/2019 and, having been thanked for attending the meeting, he then withdrew.

Brexit -
Vulnerable
People
Working Group

12. The Comité, with reference to its minute no. 1 of 10th June 2019, received the Head of Business Support, Justice and Home Affairs; the Policy Principal, Department for Strategic Policy, Performance and Population and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Jersey Citizens Advice Bureau Limited who provided an update on preparations to assist vulnerable people in the event of a no-deal Brexit on 31st October 2019. The Comité was reminded of the leaflet “Guide to Preparing for Brexit” recently distributed to households in the island to advise where to seek advice and support if required. The planning included emergency contact numbers should any person be adversely affected by food shortages. The CEO outlined arrangements being made with the existing providers of food banks in Jersey and how vulnerable persons would be referred for support.

The Comité asked whether each Connétable would be provided with the names of vulnerable persons within his/her parish so that appropriate assistance and support could be offered but was informed that data protection restrictions would prevent the sharing of such information other than when referring for a valid service. The Connétables were particularly mindful that older persons who were vulnerable and in need might be less ‘visible’ than families with children.

The delegation asked that applicants for an IDP (international driving permit) should be reminded by parishes that a ‘green card’ issued by an insurance company would also be required for those driving abroad and that pets could only travel if a valid ‘pet passport’ had been issued. Following discussion the delegation was thanked for attending and then withdrew from the meeting.

Next meeting

13. The Connétable of Grouville was thanked for his hospitality and the Comité noted the next meeting was on 11th November 2019.

Chairman Date

