

# Comité des Connétables

Minutes of the meeting held on  
**Monday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021**  
at the Parish Hall, St Peter.

## **Present:**

Connétable de St Laurent - Mrs D. W. Mezbourian, Chairman  
Connétable de St Hélier - A. S. Crowcroft, Vice Chairman (present for items 1-5, 16, 17)  
Connétable de St Sauveur - Mrs S. A. Le Sueur-Rennard (present for items 3-7, 16-20)  
Connétable de St Brélade - M. K. Jackson  
Connétable de Grouville - J. E. Le Maistre  
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  
Connétable de St Jean - A. N. Jehan  
Senior Procureur du Bien Public of St Clement - Mrs S Pearmain representing the Parish  
in accordance with the rules of the Comité agreed at its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> March  
2011 owing to the vacancy in office of Connétable (not present for items 1-2)

## In attendance:

Mrs S. R. de Gruchy, Secretary

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

Connétable of  
St Clement

1. The Comité recorded with deep sadness the passing of Connétable Len Norman of St Clement. Mr Norman had served as Connétable since 2008 and was a much-valued member of the Comité having also served as Vice Chairman (2013-2014) and as Chairman (2014-2018). One minute's silence was observed as a mark of respect.

Minutes

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021, having been previously circulated, were taken as read and were confirmed.

Draft Elections  
(Miscellaneous  
Amendments)  
(Jersey) Law  
202- P.56/2021

3. The Comité, with reference to its minute no. 10 of 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021, welcomed Deputy C Alves, Chair, and Deputy R Labey, Privileges and Procedures Committee (PPC), and the Principal Committee and Panel Officer to the meeting. The Deputy Greffier of the States (DGOS) and the Legislative Drafter (LD) joined the meeting virtually as part of the PPC delegation. Also in attendance were the Parish Secretaries or Executive/Administration officers from the Parishes of St Brélade, Grouville, St Helier, St John, St Lawrence, St Martin, St Mary, St Ouen, St Peter and Trinity.

Deputy Alves thanked the Comité for the invitation to meet though ideally the meeting would have been prior to the draft Elections (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Jersey) Law 202- (P.56/2021) being lodged with the States for debate on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2021. The proposition was the second tranche of amendments to legislation to respond to the recommendations contained in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Election Observers Mission (EOM) Report published after the elections in 2018. PPC welcomed feedback on P.56/2021 and would then consider bringing amendments to the proposition. There would be a briefing for all States members prior to the debate and PPC had also met with the Council of Ministers, the Judicial Greffier and Scrutiny. Deputy Alves then outlined the main changes to current legislation as follows –

Jersey Electoral Authority (JEA) – the EOM had recognised the important work of the Parishes and had been very positive about the machinery of elections but critical of elements before and after and had referred to the possible conflicts of interest. The creation of the JEA was seen as a positive step to improve the work of the Parishes. The JEA would provide independent oversight through the 3 pillars of the States and Judicial Greffes and the Parishes but the Parishes would still run the elections. The JEA would be set up for the 2022 elections, almost as a shadow body, and would include representatives of the States Greffe, Parishes and Judicial Greffe. The JEA would deal with the nomination process and provide a sounding board during the elections e.g. if there were problems for candidates with the placing of posters, expenditure etc. There was the potential for the role of the JEA to evolve in the future.

Electoral Administrator role - it was also proposed the Electoral Administrator role be removed from the Connétable and placed with the Parish Secretary or a nominated employee of the Parish. The Comité said that the law currently provided for the senior Procureur du Bien Public to undertake the role of electoral administrator in the event the Connétable was a candidate in an election and queried why this was not acceptable. Deputy Alves replied the change was to provide more oversight on a wider level and that the Parish Secretary role would never be a vacant position. Deputy Labey said that, in St Helier, the running of the election rested with a Parish employee though he presumed a Parish could nominate a Procureur as the electoral administrator if preferred. However, the ideal was that the electoral administrators of all the Parishes would meet together and then nominate a representative to the JEA. The Parish Secretary was seen as independent, in the same way that Civil Servants and the Judicial Greffe were independent. It was about perception and culture – it was very important to introduce this change which reflected international standards for modern elections and PPC wished to change the culture of elections so that candidates had nothing to do with the election. With the introduction of the NOTA (None Of The Above) option on a ballot paper all Connétables would be a candidate. The States Assembly and Ministers should understand that once an election had been announced the Assembly was dormant.

In relation to the drafting of this provision, the LD explained that there must be a default position, which was the Parish Secretary or an employee as currently proposed, but draft Article 12 permitted the JEA to appoint the electoral administrator if the Parish Secretary position was vacant. Following further comments, the Chairman said the Comité would consider the proposal, including whether it should remain with the Parish to appoint the electoral administrator. In relation to the liability of the electoral administrator, attention was drawn to the provisions of Article 71 of the Public Elections (Jersey) Law 2002 (PEL).

Parish elections - the proposals were time critical to implement the EOM recommendations for the 2022 elections (for Connétables and Deputies) but avoided changes to the Parish election process for the Procureur du Bien Public or Centenier though PPC would be prepared to review this with a sub-committee including Connétables and Parish Secretaries. Ultimately the JEA would become the election observers and, if the Connétables wished to have an audit or observers at Parish elections, this could be extended to the elections for Procureurs du Bien Public and Centeniers.

Nomination process and hustings – the proposed changes included the validation and announcement of candidates to make the nomination process more effective. This was to avoid any candidate withdrawing due to defects in the nomination, for example with the proposer or seconders. It would also provide more time to check the forms. It was pointed out to PPC that the issues in 2018, when two candidates had withdrawn, related to errors made by the candidates when completing the nomination form – the nomination form had since been revised so it was easier to complete.

Nominations would be handled by the JEA and, when validated, the candidates would be announced by the JEA as there needed to be an effective start to the election. Each district could decide if it still wished to hold a ‘nomination meeting’ but these should be redesigned as those nominated would already be candidates prior to such a meeting being held (and would be announced on vote.je). The Comité queried why it was necessary for

the JEA to announce nominations as many enjoyed the traditional ‘nomination meeting’ which would become defunct as it would have no validity in law. The Comité asked how such meetings might be arranged where a Parish had an election for Connétable but was part of a constituency for Deputy which included more than one Parish. PPC said that a meeting of candidates would be sensible so that they might plan the hustings they wished to hold and, ideally, this should take place on the day the nominations were announced. Consideration should be given to the hustings format as they could be drab affairs and did not embrace technology or engage the public.

Nomination form - ten signatories would still be required for nomination. There would be a 1-week window in which forms must be submitted to the JEA and this would ensure a potential candidate had time to remedy any defects. The JEA would liaise with the Parish Secretary to ensure the nomination was valid and there would be a cut-off point. The form could be completed online or in paper and would require candidates to provide the information required (such as a photograph, manifesto etc) and to agree e.g. to the code of conduct, review of expenses etc. The JEA, rather than the Judicial Greffe, would have oversight of election expenses and would ensure returns were prepared for potential audit. The nomination form would not be prescribed but the Law would specify the details required on the form. The Comité queried whether a person might object to providing ancillary information such as a photograph or manifesto to the JEA or Government but was informed that the JEA would be independent of Government, as was the States Greffe and vote.je. There was an obligation to display in polling stations the photographs of the candidates.

Election process, postal voting and returns – the proposals, including the option of postal voting for all electors, were outlined. PPC hoped that the option of postal voting would increase turnout and referred to the high turnout for the 2020 Guernsey States elections (the postal voting had been managed by a United Kingdom company). The provision of postal voting for the election of Procureurs du Bien Public and Centeniers could be considered in due course.

The centre would meet the cost of Deputy elections, as they had done for Senators, and the JEA would oversee the returns form for the Autorisé to complete (this would be streamlined so it was easier to complete and for the announcement of the results).

Parishes were likely to have the same polling stations as in previous elections though there might be some changes e.g. following the change in St Helier constituency boundaries. The count would still be undertaken by the Parish (though postal votes could be counted by the centre) and the result would be announced as it had been for the Senators elections. Ultimately it was hoped that every elector would be able to vote at any polling station but this depended on a new electoral register system and might not be in place for 2022. The Connétable of St Helier asked whether there might be a trial in 2022 whereby St Helier electors could vote at any St Helier polling station. PPC welcomed the views of the Connétables on this option and pointed out that, if approved, the provisions in P.56/2021 would extend the powers of the States Assembly to make Regulations and so provide a shorter timeframe for certain future amendments to the PEL.

Following discussion, the PPC delegation was thanked for attending and then withdrew from the meeting.

The Chairman recapped on the proposals in P.56/2021 and drew attention to the Comité’s response to PPC (December 2018) commenting on the EOM recommendations. The Comité also heard comments from Parish Secretaries/administrators on the proposals. It was agreed that each Connétable should discuss the proposals with his/her Parish Secretary and provide feedback to the Comité Secretary by 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021 as the deadline for lodging amendments to the proposition was 6<sup>th</sup> July 2021. The Parish representatives were thanked for attending and then withdrew from the meeting.

- Jersey Royal Potato Growing Competition
4. The Comité agreed to write to the Executive Director of the Genuine Jersey Products Association to suggest that for Liberation 77 the Jersey Royal Potato Growing Competition participants should include ‘Occupation VIPs’ in each Parish. The weigh-in would be hosted by each Parish on an agreed day and thus become a community event.
- Draft Children and Young Persons Law 202-
5. The Comité, with reference to its minute no. 14 of 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021, received a presentation on the draft Children and Young Persons Law 202- from the Senior Policy Officer and Group Director of Policy, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance, Government of Jersey. The Comité was informed that children’s outcomes and wellbeing were not currently promoted or improved due to a combination of factors and it was proposed to remedy this with a robust legislative framework, providing the right help for children at the right time, establishing a common model of wellbeing and a duty to cooperate. The eight indicators used to define wellbeing offered an holistic view of each child or young person, identifying strengths as well as barriers to growth and development. The draft Law would include a requirement to prepare a children and young people’s strategic plan and would cover corporate parenting and support for looked-after children and care leavers. The draft Law would be debated by the States in Q3/2021 with an Appointed Day Act in Q1/2023 to allow for implementation including new procedures, guidance and training. Corporate Parents were set out in the Schedule and, in relation to Public Authorities, included the Parishes and the Honorary Police.
- The Comité commented on social issues including the lack of respect shown by children and young people and anti-social behaviour and enquired about progress with the Youth Justice Review. In reply to questions the Comité was informed that there were two projects with similar timescales – the draft Law sought to protect the most vulnerable whilst the Review would look at the action that could be taken. Research showed that the higher the number of adverse childhood experiences (ACE) the greater the likelihood of a poorer outcome. Children were defined as persons up to the age of 18 and young people were care leavers and those with disabilities up to the age of 25. The Comité also commented on the need for appropriate funding to ensure the provision of Childcare Officers and was assured that this funding had been allocated. The Connétable of Trinity, as the Comité’s representative on the Corporate Parenting Board, advised that the Board had not met since July 2020. The officers undertook to provide a response to the comments and, having been thanked for attending, then withdrew from the meeting.
- Affordable Housing: Supply and Delivery – Scrutiny Review
6. The Comité considered the invitation of the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel to submit comments on the Affordable Housing: Supply and Delivery – Scrutiny Review. The Comité agreed that this was a matter on which Connétables should respond individually and requested the Chairman to reply accordingly.
- Achieving Carbon Neutrality - Citizens Assembly report R.95/2021
7. The Comité discussed the recommendations in the report “Achieving Carbon Neutrality – Report Of Jersey’s Citizens’ Assembly On Climate Change” (R.95/2021) which had been presented to the States by the Minister for the Environment. The Citizens’ Assembly had made a number of recommendations including that each Connétable should arrange for there to be a Parish Assembly to discuss the climate emergency, the recommendations, and how the parishes could contribute to the achievement of carbon neutrality. The Comité noted that climate emergency groups had previously been established in two parishes and that enquiries had been made of the Greffier of the States to ascertain the interest of those serving on the Citizens’ Assembly to assist further in their parish.

- Honorary Police – support for island events
8. The Comité, with reference to its minute no. 25 of 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021, noted correspondence between the Chief Minister and the Chairman and the Chairman of the Comité des Chefs de Police about island events and the reconnection route. The Chief Minister advised that the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) had considered the previous correspondence from the Chairmen, and the concerns expressed therein, but was of the view that at this point in time, given continued low rates of infections and the progress of the Island's vaccination programme, there were no compelling reasons not to proceed to stage 7 of the reconnection map. In relation to larger indoor and outdoor events the Chief Minister had been asked for an indication of the level of infection that would trigger calling a halt to some or all events and a reply was awaited.
- Honorary Police – group insurance policies
9. The Comité, with reference to its minute no. 1 of 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021, noted that the actual premium for the Legal Expenses Policy was £3,225 for the year (not £3,000 as recorded).
- Jersey Utility and Road Authority Forum (JURAF) Meetings
10. The Comité noted that the Jersey Utility and Road Authority Forum (JURAF) had been established so there was a mutual understanding of the requirements and expectations between both Utilities and Road Authorities (the Parishes and Infrastructure, Housing and Environment (IHE)) on topics such as reinstatement specification, safety, new standards and Codes of Practice, Permit management, Trafficworx, etc. Representatives of each Parish (Roads Committee and Secretaries) were invited to attend and contribute.
- JE micro-forest projects
11. The Comité, with reference to its minute no. 7 of 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021, received a highlight report from Jersey Electricity plc (JE) on the Parish Earth project and noted that a letter had been sent to the Minister for Environment asking that he waive the planning application fees for all Parishes where a planning application was required to change the use of land proposed for the micro-forest project.
- Arising from this the Comité noted the launch of the Government Countryside Enhancement Scheme (CES) and that applications were welcomed from farmers, growers, land managers and owners, businesses, charities, schools, Government Departments and the general public for any environmental projects that might qualify for a grant to help conserve and enhance Jersey's countryside. The Countryside Enhancement Scheme (CES) supported projects that would benefit the natural environment on a local, island-wide or international basis. Applications could be made online before 28<sup>th</sup> June 2021.
- Diversity Forum – public event June 2021
12. The Comité noted a letter about the States Assembly Diversity Forum public event to promote engagement in the Island's civic life. The intention was to invite members of the public to find out more about the work of the States, standing for election and getting involved with a Parish directly from people who were currently in those roles. The Diversity Forum, which included the Connétables of St Ouen, St Peter and St Martin, offered its support to Parishes in organising similar events to promote civic engagement in the Island. The Chairman was requested to reply that Connétables would be pleased to offer their Parish Hall for similar events.
- COVID-19 Vaccination Programme
13. The Comité noted the heartfelt thanks from the Head of the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme on behalf of everyone at the vaccine centre for the Parishes support which had helped to achieve a key milestone of over 100,000 doses of the vaccine administered.

Interim Chief Executive Officer, Government of Jersey

14. The Comité, with reference to its minute no. 5 of 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021, noted a letter from the Interim Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Government of Jersey following his meeting with the Comité. Having spoken with colleagues, the CEO was reassured that government was committed to making it easy for customers to get the service and support they needed, recognising that customers had different needs in terms of how they accessed the government’s services. The CEO said that government was keen to continue to strengthen its links with Parish Halls and Parish support teams who might be acting as individual support for parishioners.

Next meeting

15. The Connétable of St Peter was thanked for his hospitality and the Comité noted the next meeting was on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

Chairman ..... Date .....