

Comité des Connétables

Minutes of the meeting held on
Monday 9th November 2020
at the Parish Hall, Grouville and virtually.

Present:

Connétable de St Laurent - Mrs D. W. Mezbourian, Chairman (attended virtually for part of the meeting)
Connétable de St Hélier - A. S. Crowcroft, Vice Chairman (not present for items 3, 7, 15-20)
Connétable de St Clément - L. Norman
Connétable de St Sauveur - Mrs S. A. Le Sueur-Rennard (attended virtually for part of the meeting)
Connétable de St Brélade - M. K. Jackson – acting Chairman for part of the meeting
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 (attended virtually for part of the meeting)
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

Mr A Queree,
former
Connétable of
St Ouen

1. The Comité recalled, with sadness, the death of Mr A Queree and paid tribute to his service as Connétable of St Ouen from 1984 to his retirement in 1994 and as Vice Chairman of the Comité from February 1989 to 1994. Mr Queree had also served as a Roads Inspector, Vingtenier and Centenier and was elected a Jurat of the Royal Court (1996-2004). One minute silence was observed as a mark of respect.

The Carbon
Farm - info. on
carbon
offsetting

2. The Comité received information about The Carbon Farm Jersey, a plant nutrition and bio - simulates consulting company, and noted the invitation to contact the company should any Connétable wish to visit the premises to learn more about its work.

Emergencies
Council
meeting

3. The Comité, with reference to its minute no. 7 of 12th October 2020, received a report from the Chairman on the recent Emergencies Council meeting.

Honorary
Police – update
on duties
during
pandemic

4. The Comité welcomed Centenier D Scaife, Chairman, and the Secretary of the Comité des Chefs de Police who outlined the role of the Honorary Police in the last 6-7 months during Covid-19. Centenier Scaife said there had been significant challenges during the pandemic and the Honorary Police had assisted with a number of States of Jersey Police (SOJP) operations including –

- Operation Talla – to minimise the impact of Covid-19
- Operation Canvass – to target late night speeding on roads
- Operation Optical – to target anti-social behaviour
- Licensed premises checks – had been carried out with Environmental Health (EH) officers and the SOJP to review compliance with public health guidelines

including track and trace and physical distancing requirements. Non-compliance could be reported to the Licensing Bench and to EH as a health and safety issue.

The Court processes (Parish Hall Enquiries (PHEs) and Centeniers attendance in the Magistrate's Court) had been suspended but had now resumed in a limited manner and the judicial processes had become paperless. SmartLink provided for communication between SOJP and a Parish. In the current circumstances, the Comité des Chefs de Police had decided that the Honorary Police should not assist at events for the time being. The well-being of members of the Honorary Police was also being addressed jointly with the Honorary Police Association to ensure the welfare of all officers.

In reply to questions, Centenier Scaife confirmed that members of the public were becoming more complacent and less receptive to ongoing public health restrictions and the return of students from the United Kingdom could increase the risk of coronavirus spreading. The Chief Officer of SOJP had given his full support to the Honorary Police including assisting with the provision of PPE. Centenier Scaife said that all Parishes were still recruiting following the campaign early in 2020 and suggested the Honorary Police Forum should meet again with a further push on recruitment during the winter months. The Connétable of St Clement was delighted to report that his Parish now had a full complement of officers. The Connétable of St Mary suggested consideration be given to enable Vingteniers and Constables Officers to shadow a Centenier so they might consider seeking election to that position.

The Comité recorded its sincere appreciation and thanks to all members of the Honorary Police for their outstanding work throughout the Parishes during this exceptional time which it agreed should be publicly acknowledged. Whilst a number of members had been required to shield or, due to work commitments e.g. in health care, had been unable to undertake duties, the role had ranged from supporting the vulnerable to enforcing lockdown and dealing with anti-social behaviour. Members had shown the value of the Honorary Police during an unprecedented period and the Parishes had worked to support each other through the sectors established for this limited period.

States of Jersey
Police and
Community
Police Officers

5. The Comité, with reference to its minute no. 7 of 10th February 2020, received the Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police (SOJP), who outlined proposals for community SOJP officers across the Parishes. The Chairman and Secretary of the Comité des Chefs de Police were present for this item.

The Chief Officer said that he saw community policing as the bedrock for all that the SOJP did as it could prevent problems escalating. He thanked the Connétables for all the excellent work which had preceded his appointment and reported that, in the last few months, some 30 new SOJP officers had been recruited and trained on island (due to Covid-19 restrictions) and this, in turn, had provided the capacity for SOJP to recruit 16 officers who would be community police officers. Each had been interviewed for the role and had other specialist police experience, for example in CID, child protection etc. The community officers would work as a team but with a named officer for each Parish; a buddy system would ensure cover during absence and to provide a level of service. The appointment of community officers was seen as a collaboration with the Connétables and Chefs de Police but it would be important to measure the success of the scheme. The challenges of Covid-19 had shown how well the SOJP and Honorary Police worked together and community police added to this.

The Comité asked that a profile and the contact details of each officer be provided for parishioners for publication in Parish magazines. Questions were also asked about the community officers' involvement with licensed premises issues, the longevity of the scheme and shifts to be worked and the ability to address on-going community issues for example in relation to parking. The Chief Officer replied that he expected community officers to be adept and skilful in solving problems including, where longer term solutions might be needed, drawing in others in the community and/or government who could help find a solution. Shifts would suit the needs of the role. The Chief Officer was asked to convey thanks to the officers who had recently assisted with situations in one Parish. The

Connétable of St Clement, in his capacity as Home Affairs Minister, was enthusiastic about community policing and said that much work had been carried out to ensure the SOJP budget was able to fund an increase to 215 SOJP officers so that this team could be recreated.

Following discussion, the Comité thanked the Chief Officer, the Chairman and Secretary of the Comité des Chefs de Police, for attending and they then withdrew from the meeting.

Composition and Election of the States:
Proposed Changes
P.139/2020 and 2 amendments

6. The Comité discussed the proposition of the Privileges and Procedures Committee (PPC), and amendments of Deputy J Maçon and the Connétable of St Clement relating to changes to the composition and election of the States, namely -

Composition and Election of the States: Proposed Changes [P.139/2020]

Composition and Election of the States: Proposed Changes (P.139/2020) – amendment [P.139/2020.Amd]

Composition and Election of The States: Proposed Changes (P.139/2020) – Second Amendment

The Comité discussed whether it wished to present comments and/or any amendment to the proposition and the following comments were received.

- The sub-committee previously appointed (Connétables of St John, St Peter and St Martin) had met and had noted the success of the recent all-island election in Guernsey to elect 38 States members; might this be an option to elect 37 States members and 12 Connétables as members of the States?
- Parish boundaries were important and the Connétable of St Clement outlined the reason for his amendment which respected these boundaries but enabled a person to stand as both Connétable and States member if he/she wished.
- The Connétable of St Martin informed the Comité she had lodged an amendment that ‘None of the Above’ should be an option on all ballot papers for the election of States members; this would address the concerns expressed that some positions, including Connétables, were uncontested.
- The Connétable of St Helier commented that the amendment of Deputy Maçon, whilst increasing the number of States members, would retain the Connétables as members of the States whilst improving the voter equity and he favoured the retention of the Parish system.
- The Venice Convention was clear that local geographical boundaries should be respected.
- The proposition of PPC appeared to focus on voter equity yet the Connétables understanding from the election observer training they had undertaken was that this was not a core concern of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association election observers. The focus should instead be on increasing voter turnout rather than making changes to the composition of the States.
- The sub-committee had also considered the benefits of single transferable vote but it was decided this was a matter for future discussion.
- Turnout at Parish meetings to consider the previous proposition of PPC (P.126/2019) had demonstrated overwhelming opposition to similar proposals.
- The creation of super constituencies could cause greater turmoil for electors in understanding the district in which they would vote and the candidates. The range of proposals for super constituencies failed to consider parts of St Helier becoming a district with parts of other Parishes.

In conclusion the Comité decided it should present comments reflecting the importance of Parish boundaries and the retention of Connétables as members of the States.

Jersey
Electricity/
Parish “Micro-
forest”
Partnership

7. The Comité, with reference to its minute no. 3 of 12th October 2020, received an update from the Jersey Electricity Company Limited on the ‘micro-forest’ partnership between all Parishes and Jersey Electricity (JE). The Comité noted that JE had already met with, or scheduled meetings with, the Connétables of St Clement, St Saviour and St John and heard from other Connétables that plans were in hand to identify suitable sites for ‘micro-forests’. JE had issued a press release about the project and, since its presentation, had become aware of a similar work stream by the Government of Jersey and Jersey Trees for Life (JTFL) called ‘Tiny Forests’ which followed the same base concept as ‘micro-forests’ and had JE’s backing and support though did not alter its mutually agreed vision for 12 planting schemes, one in each Parish.

The Comité was also informed that the Chairman had written to H. M. Receiver General asking if he might be able to assist with this project (by providing areas under his administration which were not otherwise in use and making them available to be planted as a micro-forest). The Receiver General had replied that the Crown, in conjunction with JTFL, was currently undertaking some tree planting on several of its sites throughout the island but he would contact the Comité if he was able to identify an area which would meet the criteria for a micro forest as he was keen to support any tree planting projects. Arising from this the Chairman had also been contacted by JTFL about the project.

The Comité noted that individual schemes were progressing but commented that a degree of co-ordination was required and it would seek to meet with representatives of JE early in 2021.

Next meeting

8. The Connétable of Grouville was thanked for his hospitality and the Comité noted the next meeting was on 7th December 2020.

Chairman Date