



**5 April 2019**

### **Request**

With regards to the comments made by Connétable Richard Vibert regarding the complaints made against the public that use the Le Port area for staying in motorhomes/campervans, I ask the following questions\* -

- 1) What was the amount of complaints made?
- 2) What were the complaints?
- 3) What is the number of people that made the complaints?

Please can you provide supporting documentation to your answers.

*\* clarification received that details are requested for July 2014 to date.*

### **Response**

The number of complaints listed in this response relate to a complaint received by way of letter or email. In addition the Connétable and honorary police have received complaints by phone call or face to face; whilst these have not been recorded the issues raised have been acted upon where possible.

Many comments and complaints have also been made through social media and in online responses to media articles but these are not included in this response.

1. From July 2014 to 20 March 2019 the parish has received 22 complaints.
2. The complaints are against motorhomes/campervans being parked at Le Port, and also complaints about the misuse of the area, rubbish being left and vehicles being abandoned.
3. Each complaint is by a different person so 22 people.

Details of the 22 complaints are listed below; exemptions have been applied to nos. 15, 20, 21 and 22 under Article 25(2) of the Freedom of Information (Jersey) Law 2011. See exemption details below.

#### **FOI exemption applied:**

#### **Article 25(2) - Personal Information - Personal data, applicant not subject but supply contravenes data protection principles**

Information is absolutely exempt information if –

- (a) it constitutes personal data of which the applicant is not the data subject as defined in the Data Protection (Jersey) Law 2018; and
- (b) its supply to a member of the public would contravene any of the data protection principles, as defined in that Law.

1)

I am writing in relation to people sleeping overnight in camper vans at beach car parks. As I am sure you are aware this is in direct contravention of the permit they receive from the planning department. Contravening the rules governing the issue of the permit can result in the confiscation of their vehicle.

I am a regular beach user and find the owners of the vehicles very inconsiderate, they either park up sideways on taking up several parking places or park and put up awnings, again taking up several parking spaces. When they sleep overnight I have regularly witnessed them using the doorway to the bunker at La Port as a toilet. In the heat of the summer the smell is very unpleasant. They tend to leave all their empty beer cans and bottles out overnight only clearing up in the morning when they eventually wake up creating an eyesore to people who are up early to enjoy the beach.

Having a car park full of people drinking and playing music all night is very intimidating.

It is about time the Parish enforced the rules governing the permits not considered allowing them to park (which I am sure would involve a change in the law)

2)

I regularly surf at La Port and have been increasingly concerned about the large motorhome vehicles parked over long weekends. Currently there is a large motorhome vehicle badly parked at the right entrance to the car park area leaving only a narrow gap to get by to the rest of the car park with no owner in site, has it broken down? I know it has been there for at least two days and it is in the same position but it may have been there longer, probably over the Easter weekend.

It has been causing concern, some of the surfers have a picture of it on their Facebook pages, and they have also been banging on its doors to speak to its owners who obviously have left it there by day. It has left a very tight squeeze to get into the car park; certainly an emergency vehicle may find restricted access

3)

I am writing to voice my serious concerns regarding the recent proposal to allow certain over size vehicles permission to park around the island.

Being a local and having spent most of my life enjoying St. Ouen's bay, last summer was nothing short of a disaster.

In certain areas the complete sea view was blocked by huge camper vans and with the weight of them many car parks having a massive increase of pot holes. Sadly, it appears that most of the vehicle owners are not local to the area(s) and thus have little consideration for the natural beauty. They are only concerned with themselves getting the very best parking spots, often long ways, to enjoy the views with zero consideration given to those that have frequented the areas for many years. I see no harm at all in people enjoying our Islands wonderful areas but I can assure you of this.

There is a huge difference in a few people quietly staying overnight in little van's or cars and respecting an area to you allowing what can only be described as mobile houses with chemical toilets & showers ruining it for everyone else, including local business. The result being that every place these Mobile House's go will be chained up at Sunsets and everyone will suffer. Imagine the current economic climate and those running food/clothing outlets and having a fleet of mobile homes appear and all cooking for themselves, filling the rubbish bins, feeding sea gulls sitting in arm chairs while these business's customers can't even find anywhere to park

4)

I am writing to express my opposition to camping along St Ouen's Beach. Unfortunately my observation of human nature is that people generally do not clean up after themselves. I have witnessed people who go down in their vans and leave all kinds of rubbish strewn around. People can be noisy, and so are the engines which will bring extra pollution. If we allow camping it will create more work for TTS and the States to clear up after them! We will need more ugly bins in order to accommodate for their lifestyle, because after all they are 'living' at the beach. If we allow camping the bay will become even more crowded, it will ruin what is left of the tranquillity and natural environment the bay is best known for. If we allow camping the beach will be ruined for

other beach goers - Let people come for the day and then drive home. We would just encourage congestion and a lack of space for other beach users to park. I believe it will also cause aggravation and frustration for other beach goers who like to enjoy the beach for the day. In fact, the overnight campers just 'take over' large areas and can be intimidating to others, especially at night when they burn large fires along the sea wall.

The tension already exists, please keep St Ouen's natural and special - do not allow these monstrosities to camp in the car parks!

5)

Having attempted to walk along the sea wall from "El Tico" northward last Friday evening, a beautiful evening and idea, made difficult by the amount of people who appear to be in residence along that stretch, accompanied by their belongings spread across the seawall.

Tables Chairs and barbecues extended along the walkway, washing hanging on the railings, the whole giving the impression of a gypsy encampment. There are many who want to enjoy the outdoors and a stroll after dinner, particularly in current weather, but last Friday's experience of forcing our way through the rude, obstructing people in St Ouens bay an intimidating experience. A shabby patch, not to be recommended to a tourist and the shameful ruination of a favourite area for many.

6)

A camper van had been left but now replaced by his car. The car has not moved in a couple of weeks due to lack of petrol/ diesel and flat tyre. This sort of abuse ruins it for the rest of us who only visit for a night yet have to see that he is virtually living in his car.

7)

I drive along the five mile road on many occasions and am saddened to see the sight of so many camper vans parked by the sea wall, most of them staying overnight. This certainly blights the beautiful view to the sea and looks more like a caravan camp site found in the UK, something I assume you do not want to see in your parish.

8) I feel I have to write to express my utter dismay after driving down to watch the sunset at St Ouen on the St Peter's Parish section, on what was one of the most beautiful early evenings Jersey has to offer.

There were several loud radios blaring music but my main concern was the level of alcohol consumption. Many of the people on the sea wall would clearly not have been capable of moving a vehicle should they have been asked, several people having a problem walking in a straight line & swearing.

I am not against people enjoying the area and drinking alcohol with their barbecues. It was the level that had been consumed that firstly made me feel uneasy and secondly the implication for tourists with young families being intimidated with the "residents'" behaviour.

Surely a restriction to the length a vehicle can be left there would be a start (maximum 8 hours), also a ban on music being played on beach areas as is the case in many beauty spots around the world.

9) If it is illegal to sleep in a camper van what validity is there In a parish assembly meeting voting to allow it? What is superior, the law or a parish assembly decision? If the answer is the law why is it not being enforced?

10) We are incredibly fortunate to have such a beautiful area on our doorstep but it is only beautiful because of its unspoilt nature. The thought of a handful of camper vans and their owners spending a night or two in such beautiful surrounding seems innocuous enough but it has now got completely out of hand. Apart from spoiling the natural beauty of the area, some of the campers are making a mess, creating fire hazards, and showing no consideration for anyone else. It is, at times, almost intimidating to walk the promenade gauntlet of bodies, BBQs and music systems. It is interesting that neither St Brelade nor St Ouen allow overnight camping. Maybe St Peter should do the same. People could still enjoy a pleasant evening by the beach but

would have to drive home afterwards. Considerate camper van owners would be equally affected which is a pity but I don't know how you would differentiate between good and bad. In the grand scheme of things and within the context of the Island's population, only a very small percentage are causing a problem but they are spoiling the pleasure of a much greater number. That, and the detrimental effect to the beauty of one the Island's greatest natural resources, would make me lean towards a ban on overnight camping (as per the law) as well as a limit to the number of vans at any time. If that needs policing, then charge.

11)

As you appreciate, there have been many changes over the years, but one thing I know is that the true surfers in the area are very good stewards of the bay.

I said I was concerned at the size of the area in relation to how many vehicles there are and also I am concerned about the smell and lack of facilities. I have had reports of aggressive behaviour which is sad to hear. In my opinion there is an element who does not share the surfing ethos which is to look after our oceans and our environment.

I understand you will have a difficult decision to make regarding the management of the area and endeavouring to keep everyone happy will be challenging.

12)

It was with interest that I read of the concern, by you, of the deplorable state of the area around Le Port. In my opinion the area has degraded even more.

We can no longer set off to St Ouen and expect to be able to enjoy it as all that is seen is wall to wall mobile homes. How has this been allowed to happen?

13)

As campervan owners and people who enjoy jersey for what it truly is it would be an absolute travesty to put a universal ban on sleeping in vehicles in public places. There is a lovely van community at the bay and has been for decades. The water splash is part of that community and although we don't really go there personally, it is inevitable that people will go there and at the weekend there will be an increase in noise level and drunken antics as well as a younger crowd. A lot less harmless than that of what will be seen in town at night or even in the town parks by day!

There has indeed been an increase in mobile homes on the island therefore the van community needs to be embraced. People of the island who work hard need to be able to have their down time and enjoy jersey at its best and bring friends and families together in their vans with food, drink, pets, enjoying the great outdoors. We absolutely need an infrastructure that supports this rather than punishes it.

Currently we agree at the weekends it can be an eye-saw at St Ouens with all the vans. It looks cluttered and motorhomes are taking up excessive space. This reduces space for cars and vans for people who just want to go and have surf or spend time on the beach. One vehicle can potentially take up the equivalent of three standard parking spaces (and that is just the width). We feel it is the recent arrival of the extra-large motor home and their accessories that is causing an issue at St Ouens in particular

14)

Firstly, congratulations on gaining the position of Constable and well done for your stance so far regarding camper vans at the sea wall at the bottom of Jubilee Hill. I don't think that litter or noise is really the issue here. This is a favourite spot for many. People stop there to enjoy the beach, to stroll along the sea wall, to enjoy the views and take photographs, to have picnics and bar-b-ques, to walk dogs and for many, particularly older people, also to park and enjoy the sea views from their car. However, the overwhelming presence of so many large camper vans has crowded out these visitors on many occasions this summer.

The very expression "community of campers" (as expressed by the JEP editor on Monday 3rd. Sept.) implies that one "belongs" to this group, or does not, if you don't have such a van. His suggestion, that surely we should welcome a group of likeminded people "claiming" a small corner of the island as their communal base,

is surely the problem here. It would appear that this group would like to "claim" a most popular spot, to the detriment and unofficial exclusion of other members of the public.

Of course, like-minded people should be able to have a rendezvous, just not one of THE most popular spots, normally loved and enjoyed by a diverse section of Jersey's population.

"The Parish" could really help here. As you know, there are a number of other, less-used parking places along the sea wall north of Big Verne's. Perhaps some tarmac could be laid and licence allowed for some small mobile food/drink facility to enable the camper-van groups to gather and enjoy the sea front with less impact on the rest of us?

Some years ago, Hoby Cat enthusiasts "claimed" the lovely corner of sand to the left of Le Braye slipway. Fortunately they were moved on and this area is always occupied and enjoyed by various members of the public, as it should be.

Would it be acceptable if a very large group of like-minded people (dog owners, or bikers, or evangelical Christians perhaps) decided to "adopt" the grassy fountain garden on the sea front at St. Brelade's Bay, and moved in en masse, elbowing out all the locals and visitors who love that spot? To move into favourite public areas, and claim it for yourselves so that the rest of the public feel unwelcome is surely not appropriate.

15)

Yesterday I noticed a [*non-Jersey registered*]\* Campervan at Le Port. Is this the sign of things to come? The wedge is getting thicker.

\* *exempt under Article 25*

16)

We are writing to you as concerned ratepayers of St. Peter, we believe La Port in St. Ouen's Bay is in the Parish of St. Peter, where these massive camper vans are parked.

Over the last fifty years or so we've been able to enjoy the family tradition of having an ice cream at La Port car park in the summer and admire the view across the bay, now in the summer we often have these huge camper vans in the way, often both sides of us.

We were under the impression that most of the bay was a nature reserve, but these oversized white metal rectangles are blighting that landscape, they might as well erect a huge rectangular white metal structure at Le Port. To be honest the area is looking pretty down market compared to what it was.

We believe what would be a sensible idea, would be to put a height restriction U shaped overhead bar on the entrance of the car park, so nothing bigger than a Volkswagen Beetle van could get through.

These "Aires" like you in France, you only get on motorways or main roads, not on some small island. There are plenty of campsites in Jersey where people can pay to park. We've heard rumours of people wanting free camping, but we don't get anything free and would expect to pay

17)

I just wanted to send a quick note to say that I fully support the ban on long term overnight stays at Le Port.

As a surfer and a classic campervan owner you would think I would be upset but I have watched with disgust the growing sea of plastic caravans in the bay, many of which seem to appear Friday evening and stay until Monday morning - frankly they have pushed it and ruined it for everyone.

I have heard stories of people not being able to park in certain spots because 'that's where so and so parks, you can't park there' as well as chemical toilets being emptied into the public showers so I am glad it's being stopped and would really hope to see the new rules being enforced.

It is a shame that the odd surfer waiting for the waves in the morning, or a Splash party goer sleeping it off in the car has somehow turned into an impromptu caravan park but if a ban means getting rid of this eyesore then I'm all for it.

I live in St Helier - we sacrifice our environment so the rest of the island stays green and pleasant - I'm ok with that - but it does mean you, as the steward, have to make difficult decisions like this.

I hope the ruling stays in place and won't require French style barriers to enforce

18)

Please Gentlemen do not cave in to the motor home community re restrictions at Le Port they were taking over the area.

We need to share this beautiful site.

At weekends particularly, it is almost impossible to park a car.

19)

This van & mobile home have been down Le Port for over 4 weeks , they also have bikes with them, it is normally parked on other side of blocks as of today 20/08/18. Like a lot of the vans, they also have cars with them which they use to go to work on; some have two cars with them! Some of them are taking the mickey as a car Le Port user I can sometimes not get a space for my family. A lot of families take their big vans there for days and just come down in their cars. Please do something about it.

20)

I wanted to express my support for your stance in relation to Le Port. I have lived in [*area of Jersey*]\* for a number of years & go valuing along the beach & the sea wall as often as I can. I collect rubbish when I do & am dismayed by the amount of rubbish that is left by those who visit the area & claim to love it. You and the authorities are not stopping anyone from enjoying the area, rather the opposite, everyone may have access to the beaches natural beauty & it is not monopolised by a small number who create a carpark, which damaged the natural environment. The permanent nature of the "community" has been intimidating for those who are passing through.

\* *exempt under Article 25*

21) and 22) are photographs of vehicles parked at Le Port and are exempt under Article 25.

