



21 July 2023

Request

I am interested in whether the parish of Grouville is seeing a deterioration in parishioners paying rates as a result of their departure from the usual timelines for rates collection. I am also interested in whether they are applying a more heavy handed approach to collecting late payers and whether poor communication is playing a role. My questions are as follows -

1. Please provide the number of late payers of rates annually for the last five years.
2. For each of those years, the number of fines issued and the average value of those fines.
3. Whether there is an internal policy for Grouville on chasing debtors and whether a copy can be supplied.

Response

Rate demands are usually issued in July/August following the setting of the Parish rate by the Parish Assembly. The Parish Assembly agreed the 2022 rate per quarter at a meeting on 20 December 2022 and, as a result, rate demands were issued in early January 2023. It is anticipated, subject to the Parish Assembly setting the rate, that 2023 rate demands will be issued early autumn and 2024 rate demands in July/August.

1. The number of "late payers of rates" is taken to be those who had not paid their rates in full by the date of the surcharge. Article 27 of the Rates (Jersey) Law 2005 ("the 2005 Law") provides that a surcharge is levied on rates which have not been paid 3 months after the demand was issued.

The table below shows the number of ratepayers who received a surcharge, the total surcharge applied (also expressed as a % of the total rates for that year) and the average amount of surcharge for each ratepayer who received a surcharge.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
No. of ratepayers receiving a surcharge	169	190	146	174	149
Surcharges applied for year £	£2,684.19	£2,818.41	£2,939.69	£3,560.34	£3,156.40
Surcharges as % of Parish rates for year	0.46%	0.42%	0.44%	0.46%	0.36%
Average surcharge £	£15.88	£14.83	£20.13	£20.46	£21.18

2. Fines are not imposed for the late payment of rates.

Article 27 of the 2005 Law provides that a surcharge of 10% of the amount unpaid is levied on rates which have not been paid 3 months after the demand was issued. The table above shows the value of surcharges applied for each year, the surcharge expressed as a % of the rates for that year and the average surcharge.

3. There is no internal policy with regard to chasing debtors. The process followed is –
 - a. The Final Demand showing the surcharge applied is sent 3 months after the rate demand is issued. This includes the following text –
 - Outstanding debts must be settled within 10 days of this date otherwise we will start legal proceedings to recover the debt without further notice
 - If you are unable to pay your account please contact the Parish at the above address.
 - b. The Parish will attempt to contact the ratepayer after the surcharge is applied and before filing a claim through the Petty Debts Court; this is to ensure the ratepayer has received the final demand, to

explore whether a mutually convenient payment plan can be agreed, to understand if there is particular hardship and, if so, to signpost assistance available from the Citizens' Advice Bureau and the provision of Article 25(6) of the 2005 Law (reduction or remittance of rates on the ground of hardship). The Parish will seek to recover the largest debts first, these usually relate to companies rather than individuals.

