

## **Minutes of a Parish Assembly held in the Parish Hall on Wednesday 19th July 2023 at 7.30pm**

**PRESENT:** Le Connétable, Le Recteur, Don Connolly of Alex Picot, Deputies Hilary Jeune and Andy Howell, Sue Morin and 33 parishioners

**APOLOGIES:** Deputies Kirsten Morel and Elaine Millar, Trevor Tirel, Martin Whitley

The Connétable welcomed everyone and introduced Don Connolly of Alex Picot to the Assembly.

He then read the convening notice:

An Assembly of Principals and Electors of the Parish will be held in the Parish Hall at 7.30pm on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2023, to conduct the following business: -

- 1) Receive and if deemed advisable approve the Minutes of the Parish Assembly held on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023.
- 2) Receive and if deemed advisable adopt the audited accounts of the Connétable for the financial year ended 30 April 2023. The said accounts having been examined and unanimously approved by the Committee named for that purpose.
- 3) Approve the transfer of £70K from the General Account to the Building Reserve account.
- 4) Vote a sum of money for the upkeep of the by-roads of the Parish for the financial year ending 30 April 2024.
- 5) Approve the estimates of the funds required by the Parish for the financial year ending 30 April 2024.
- 6) Approve a rate of an amount that will produce for the Parish, income that is at least sufficient to satisfy the requirements as set out in the approved estimates and that the said rate be levied.
- 7) Name a committee to examine the accounts of the Connétable for the year ending 30 April 2024.
- 8) Appoint auditors to prepare the Connétable accounts for the Parish for the year ending 30 April 2024.

Copies of the accounts will be available at the Parish Hall from Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> July or on [www.stjohn.je](http://www.stjohn.je)

The Connétable then confirmed that the notice had been displayed in the Church Box for the required period and had been duly signed by Reverend Beverley Sproats.

1. The minutes of the Parish Assembly held on the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023, having been circulated, were:

Proposed by: Julian Guegan  
Seconded by Martin Fricker  
Approved unanimously by the Assembly.

2. Don Connolly of Alex Picot went through the Accounts and gave details and explanations on specific lines where needed.

Rates Income was as expected. Rents and Hire of Hall was in line with estimates and Sundry Income was up slightly on estimates. Noticeable increase in bank interest received due to increasing interest rates and good management.

Roads – Income has been steady. The increase in Computer Expenses relates to the purchase of an Island wide supply of Driving Licence Cards pro-rata across all Parishes.

Honorary Police – Income has increased mainly due to increased policing of 20 MPH zone at Sion. Expenditure includes additional ‘Smiley Face’ signs purchased.

Parish Hall – There is a general increase in cost of utilities, insurance, and other materials.

Church/Rectory – The Church Clock is now working after a number of years – at a cost of approximately £8,000.00. There has also been some refurbishment and redecoration to gates/railings in Church and Cemetery and Church doors.

Administration – As in other areas the utility costs have increased. DPO costs have gone down following the initial introduction of an Officer.

Refuse – the estimated increase was slightly lower than expected as AJ and Procureurs negotiated a three-month delay in the overall increase. It is expected that this cost will continue to rise and is likely to be the Parishes highest risk. Insurance, fuel, labour and operational costs are all having an impact on Contractors.

Youth Project – At the 2021 Rates Assembly it was agreed to increase the contribution to the Youth Project in return for an increase in hours provided. To date, the hours haven’t been increased so we are still paying the lower amount. Until this is resolved we will continue as we are.

Bank charges – These are slightly lower than estimated and the Parish Hall is now fully online with banking facilities and payments.

Don Connolly then gave details of assets and how they are divided to cover the financial year. Once the rate is set and the demands are sent out, we are generally approximately 16 weeks into the financial year. We retain enough to cover the period from May to August.

When the final accounts were complete last year the balance in the General Account was too high. The Assembly agreed to transfer £200,000.00 from the account and distribute £100,000.00 each to the Roads Account and the Building Reserve.

This year there is a balance of £271,000 – which equates to 27 weeks. This is still too high and the Assembly will be asked, later in the Agenda, to transfer an amount to the Building Reserve.

DC also referred to Note 13 relating to the Special Reserve. An Assembly held in August 2022 agreed that £35,000.00 would be set aside to assist with costs relating to the development of Field J371 – Memorial Garden. So far, £15,264.00 of this money has been used.

The Assembly were asked for any questions:

David Morris suggested that the Debtors and Prepayments line was quite high. DC confirmed that it was what he would expect to see in the accounts and advised that this amount does not relate to Rates Income. Most was made up from GST which is recoverable for the Parish.

Joe Foott asked about the sale of the Old Rectory and his belief that the funds from the sale were to be used for works on the church properties, however funds had come from Parish Accounts? AJ confirmed that this was correct however the funds had been kept aside for Capital Projects and that the smaller maintenance amounts had been funded from revenue.

Joe Foott asked about the Refuse Contract. In the Connétable's notes he mentioned a 12.7% increase but this had not been incurred. AJ confirmed that this was due to the delayed increase which was negotiated last year but also advised that we wouldn't have the benefit of that this year. AJ said that the Refuse/Recycling Contract is our biggest risk. DC visits numerous other Parishes and the situation is similar in all of them. AJ and the Procureurs have met with the Contractor on several occasions. They are confident that he will continue until the end of his contract in 2025, but they will continue to look for alternatives. The costs are only going to go up – St Mary, the smallest Parish have recently had a quote which came in at over £200,000.00.

JF asked if the Parish would consider other options for example less collections? AJ confirmed that when negotiations take place all options will be looked at. Reducing collections would not half the cost but would definitely make a difference and will be considered. At next year's Parish Assembly, the Assembly may be asked to approve a sum of money to seek legal and professional guidance to assist with negotiations. He assured the Hall that they will continue to manage the relationship between the Parish and the Contractor and would like to reiterate that the service we receive is excellent and we rarely have any complaints.

JF confirmed that 15 years ago the annual cost of the contract was £38,000.00. this has now increased to nearly £200,000.00 – we should be questioning if it is worth it.

There being no further questions the Connétable asked for a proposer and seconder for the accounts:

Proposed by: Philip Rondel

Seconded by: Michel Larose

Unanimously approved by the Assembly

3. Le Connétable ask the Assembly to approve the transfer for £70K from the General Reserve to the Building Reserve. We have a number of projects that need to be undertaken in the coming year. The Bus Shelter in the Precinct needs major repairs and refurbishment which will cost in the region of £30,000.00 and the Parish Hall roof is in need of repair. A survey will be carried out costing in the region of £2,500.00 to ascertain the full extent of the work required. It has proved difficult to obtain quotes for any work to be done but contractors will be removing part of the Bus Shelter on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> July to commence repairs and renovation.

Proposed by: David Morris  
Seconded by: Andy Bisson  
Unanimously approved by the Assembly

4. Le Connétable thanked the Roads Committee and Roads Inspectors for the time they had put in so far this year. The Roads Inspectors now join the Roads Committee at meetings, if available. The weather causes ongoing problems with the roads and the committee are working on putting together a 'tracker' to enable us to keep a close eye on all the Parish Roads and repairs that might be required. We are also very fortunate that we can still call on the knowledge and expertise of Ron Le Herrissier, who is always happy to help where needed. A sum of £10,500.00 has been allocated for the Roads Expenses this year.

Proposed by: Ian Averty  
Seconded by: Kevin Armstrong  
Unanimously approved by the Assembly

5. The Assembly were asked to review the proposed estimates for the coming year.

AJ advised the Assembly that DC had asked that the terminology on our accounts was amended to reflect the Rates Jersey (2005) Law. The law states that estimates will be provided for the financial year rather than budgets. He then gave details of any estimates which have increased for the coming year.

Honorary Police – Estimate has been increased by £9,000.00 for this year to cover increase costs and also the Centeniers Quarterly which the Parish are hosting in January 2024. This comes around once every three years. Our Honorary Police have been active in supporting both Parish events and Island events, including Haut du Mont. Le Connétable thanked the team for all their efforts.

Refuse – As previously discussed the estimate for the Refuse/Recycling collection has increased by 12.7%.

Parish Hall - remains the same.

Church and Rectory, Cemeteries and Gardening and Administration have all incurred a small increase to cover increasing costs in running – particularly utilities.

Rates – This amount is to account for the Island Wide Rate to be paid on Parish properties which in previous years has not been done.

Legal and Professional – These have been increased to assist whenever advice or assistance may be required.

In summary the estimated expenses for the coming year amount to £539,000.00. The proposal is to increase the rate by 5.7% which equates to an increase from 1.05p per quarter to 1.11p per quarter. The expenditure has increased by 12.8% but with good management we have been able to keep the increase to a minimum.

Le Connétable asked the Assembly for any questions relating to the budgets There were no questions from the floor.

Estimates proposed by: David Morris  
Seconded by: Philip Rondel  
Unanimously approved by the Assembly

6. Le Connétable asked the Assembly to approve an increase in the Parish rate from 1.05p per quarter to 1.11p per quarter to satisfy the requirements of the agreed estimates and for the said rate to be levied.

Proposed by: Julian Guegan  
Seconded by: Richard Dupre  
Unanimously approved by the Assembly

7. The Connétable thanked the Constables Accounts Committee for the work they had done with this year's accounts. This Committee was made up of representatives from the Roads, Rates, Church and Honorary Police along with three independents. The Assembly agreed that the same Committee could go forward for next year. The three independents, Philip Rondel, Richard Dupre and Ian Touzel agreed that they were willing to stand again.

Proposed by: Michel Larose  
Seconded by: Andy Bisson  
Unanimously approved by the Assembly

8. Le Connétable thanked Don Connolly from Alex Picot for the work he has done for the Parish so far this year. He asked for a proposer for the next financial year to continue with Alex Picot.

Proposed by: Michel Larose  
Seconded by: Philip Rondel  
Unanimously approved by the Assembly

Le Connétable ended the meeting by thanking everyone who works hard for the Parish whether this is by volunteering, attending meetings or being part of the Municipality.

He confirmed that he was delighted to be able to present Maxine Fergusson and Chris Rudd with Queens Platinum Jubilee Medals for their service to the Honorary Police.

He also asked Steve Hewlett to accept a gift from the Parish to commemorate the forty years that he had served.

Finally, Le Connetable said a few words about Sue Baudin. Sue has been Caretaker at the Parish Hall for the last thirteen years. Unfortunately, her health has meant that she has had to relinquish this role. Sue is still a member of the Honorary Police, on the Committee for Golden Age Club and volunteers for many Parish events. AJ was delighted to present Sue with a token of the Parishes appreciation for her years of service. He then invited members of the Assembly to join him in refreshments following the closure of the meeting.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.25pm.

Le Connétable.....