



STATES OF ALDERNEY

States Office, PO Box 1001, Alderney, Channel Islands, GY9 3AA

From the President's Office

5th January 2016

Dear Reader

In December I was asked if I would write a letter to coincide with the 200th edition of 'The Alderney Press', referring to my hopes for 2016.

It is no small matter to successfully run a local magazine of this nature, and I congratulate the Alderney Press on reaching its 200th edition. It is important that residents have a ready reference for topical matters reported in an accurate and unbiased manner. Long may it continue.

We have problems to overcome. Identifying them is the easy bit, solutions not so easy. Everyone will have their own view as to what they may be. What is a fact is that your current States Members have been working diligently on your behalf to define and enact what they see as possible resolutions to those problems. Despite what one might hear there are no quick fixes or easy answers, if there were they would have happened. A great deal of work has been put into 'The Economic Development Plan' (EDP) which is a comprehensive attempt by the States to tackle many of the issues which require resolving. For it to be most effective the States members and the People of Alderney will need to embrace it and work together. This does not mean it should be exempt from constructive criticism, which may well help to improve it, it is a malleable blueprint. On this note it has been heartening to see the Chamber of Commerce engaging positively with The States, I would like to see this strengthen in 2016.

Much of this is work in progress. Results such as PWC's Centre of Excellence are already evident. I would hope that some of the following work streams will come to fruition this year.

Alderney in 2016

This year will be an important year for Alderney, as it progresses several very significant initiatives in its EDP. This EDP has been developed and approved by the States of Alderney, and forms the backbone for stimulating economic activity in the island and achieving some necessary population growth to set the island onto a more sustainable course for the future.

Set out below are brief summaries of some of the current work streams included in the Plan, which are expected to deliver results this year. They are not necessarily in any order of priority.

- **Airport and Air Route Matters**

Given the difficult transition over the past 18 months or so from the Trislander to Dornier aircraft fleets serving Alderney, it is absolutely imperative that the Alderney-Guernsey and Alderney-Southampton routes return to their former reliable and robust natures. Now that Aurigny has secured three Dornier aircraft (one new and two used) it is very close to the point where the aged Trislanders will be retired, and the Island can expect "normal service" to be resumed. Indeed the introduction of the Dornier makes the flights both faster and more comfortable, which is of benefit particularly on the longer Southampton route.

With the air services having suffered disruptions over much of the past two years, the States are very keen to grow the routes back to the levels experienced in 2013, and to this effect it is using

a part of its Economic Development Fund to underwrite the costs of additional capacity on both the Guernsey and Southampton routes (in excess of 2,000 additional seats).

The States are also investigating whether it will be able to work with an operator to introduce at least a seasonal service involving Jersey too, although it is too early to confirm whether this may be possible for the coming season.

Equally vital to Alderney as a viable community is having an airfield which is fit for purpose and future-proofed. Alderney airfield is still operating with a temporary restriction (effected in 2014) reducing the width of its main runway by five metres, which causes significant issues with flights being delayed/cancelled or operating with reduced payloads in certain weather conditions. The States are working hard with the relevant authorities in Guernsey both to rehabilitate Alderney's main runway, and to future-proof the airport for the next 25 years thus providing the community with a more secure and sustainable future.

- **Digital Connectivity**

Given that Alderney, by the very nature of its geographical location, can be challenging for physical connectivity (be that surface or to a less extent air), the States believe that it is important to make it as easy as possible for people to operate businesses or communicate effectively with family and friends through the use of modern fit-for-purpose digital connectivity. To this end it is researching how the whole island (or as much as is economically viable) could be digitally enabled with robust and reliable digital services of sufficient capacity. This work is being co-ordinated so that it fits in with Guernsey's work on a strategic digital strategy for the Bailiwick.

- **Reviewing the Financial Relationship with Guernsey**

Policy letters will be debated in February in both the States of Guernsey and the States of Alderney reviewing the results of the research undertaken jointly throughout 2015 on the present financial relationship between the two islands, and how it may be enhanced/improved. This special relationship has been in operation for nearly 70 years, and while being reviewed several times over that period, its fundamental principles remain in place. Notwithstanding this, there will be a lot of work in 2016 to take forward any decisions that either States may make on the future of the relationship, and how the finances are handled to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the public services being provided. While being challenging for Alderney, this work is expected to result in Alderney having some enhanced levels of autonomy in certain fiscal matters, which should very much help with long-term planning on the island.

- **Maximise Benefits from the Sustainable Management of Alderney's Territorial Waters**

There are a number of threats and/or competing demands for Alderney's very valuable marine resources. With an increasing focus being paid by small island states on their primary resources and industries (given the continuing shocks and changes in finance-based industries), Alderney is very conscious that its marine environment will be of increasing importance in the years and decades ahead. The States are determined to work with existing marine industries to make them sustainable and profitable in the long-term, through appropriate legislation and management which will bring benefits to the industries, to their long-term futures, to conservation and wise use of the resources for visitors and locals alike.

- **Encouraging People to Come and Live in Alderney**

In 2015 provision was made in the Guernsey Budget to enable a £50,000 tax capping concession to be developed in Alderney to encourage economic activity and settlement on island. It is hoped to build on this useful starting point in 2016 with the Treasury & Resources Department in Guernsey liaising with the Policy & Finance Committee in Alderney to research any other targeted tax, or other financial, incentives that could play a useful role in stimulating economic activity and/or encouraging population growth in Alderney.

- **Financial Services Opportunities**

Historically Alderney has been effective in attracting and developing new and emerging financial sector opportunities on island. Recently Pricewaterhouse Coopers have established a new pilot

project in the field of digital regulation which is an excellent example of the opportunities that the States of Alderney will continue to explore and encourage throughout 2016.

- **The Continuing Importance of Tourism**

Tourism contributes to Alderney's economy and well-being in a number of ways. Having worked in partnership with UK Wildlife Trusts in 2014 and 2015, the States will continue to take opportunities in 2016 to develop further its unique wildlife and heritage tourism offerings, while at the same time improving the Island for local residents.

- **Modern Fit for Purpose Legislation**

Work, which began in 2015, will continue in 2016 to modernise and update Company Law (and other legislation) to make Alderney an easy and welcoming place for entrepreneurial initiative and commerce generally.

- **Review of the Planning Legislation (including a review of Housing Strategy)**

Aspects of the Island's current planning legislation and housing strategy act as potential blockers to economic development and population growth. Work is progressing both to review the current Land Use Plan and the Housing Strategy to modernise both and make them more relevant to Alderney's present circumstances. Alderney is in the fortunate position that much can be done with both planning and housing strategy without impacting detrimentally on the Island's Protected Areas. The planning and housing strategy reviews are important economic enablers for the Island.

- **Conclusion**

The Economic Development Plan contains a number of other important work areas, where progress will be made in 2016, but which are not expected to reach fruition this year. The EDP is a living, breathing document which is regularly reviewed by the Policy & Finance Committee so that advantage can be taken swiftly with any new opportunities that may arise or to shut down a work stream which is unlikely to produce results before it has consumed too much of the Island's very scarce resources.

The EDP sits on the States of Alderney website, and progress updates are posted to it regularly. States Members also take other opportunities to communicate the Plan and its progress and development throughout the year.

Towards the end of this year there will be elections for positions becoming vacant. I know that many of you feel strongly about the issues affecting the Island, and I would urge those that do to get more involved by considering standing. Public service can be a thankless task, but when successful can be rewarding. For those who don't consider standing please exercise your right to vote, it is how you all have a chance to participate in the future of our Island, and help continue in the tradition of those home-comers who came back to start the rebuilding process seventy years ago. I would hope that we can learn from their example about taking the Island forward.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to wish you all a healthy, happy, and prosperous 2016.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. S. Trought', with a stylized flourish at the end.

W S TROUGHT
PRESIDENT, SOA