



OFFICIAL REPORT

OF THE

STATES OF THE

ISLAND OF ALDERNEY

HANSARD

The Court House, Alderney, Wednesday, 18th October 2017

*All published Official Reports can be found on the
official States of Alderney website www.alderney.gov.gg*

Volume 5, No. 8

Present:

Mr Stuart Trought, President

Members

Mr Tony Barnes
Mr Matthew Birmingham
Mr Mike Dean
Mr James Dent
Mr Louis Jean
Mr Graham McKinley
Mrs Norma Paris
Mr Steve Roberts
Mr Alex Snowdon
Mr Ian Tugby

The Greffier of the Court

Mr Jonathan Anderson

Business transacted

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States of Alderney

*The States met at 5.30 p.m. in the presence of
Mr Geoffrey Workman, a representative of His Excellency Vice Admiral Sir Ian Corder KBE, CB,
Lieutenant-Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Bailiwick of Guernsey*

[THE PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

PRAYERS

The Greffier

ROLL CALL

The Greffier

Convener's Report of the People's Meeting held on 11th October 2017

The President: Thank you very much indeed.

Mr Dean, as Convener, would you give us the Convener's Report, please.

5

Mr Dean: Mr President, fellow States' Members, I was assisted by the Treasurer, Chief Executive, there were six States Members present, the President, the Minutes Secretary, 35 members of the public and three press.

10 **The President:** And the President?

Mr Dean: I did say the President.

The President: Thank you.

Billet d'État for Wednesday, 18th October 2017

I. The Beneficial Ownership (Alderney) (Definition) (Amendment) Regulations, 2017 – Item approved

Item I.

The States is asked:

Not to annul the Beneficial Ownership (Alderney) (Definition) (Amendment) Regulations, 2017.

15 **The President:** Mr Dean, as Convener, could you give us the comments on Item I, please.

Mr Dean: There were no comments on Item I.

20 **The President:** Thank you very much indeed.
Monsieur Greffier, could you introduce Item I, please.

The Greffier: Thank you, sir.
Item I this evening is The Beneficial Ownership (Alderney) (Definition) (Amendment) Regulations, 2017. A letter has been received from Mr Dent in his capacity as Chairman of the
25 Policy & Finance Committee, and the States of Alderney are asked not to annul the Beneficial Ownership (Alderney) (Definition) (Amendment) Regulations, 2017.

The President: Thank you very much indeed.
Mr Dent, I believe you wish to propose this.

30 **Mr Dent:** Yes, Mr President.
I do wish to propose it. I believe it is a fairly self-evident piece and I think that is all I need to say.
Thank you.

35 **The President:** Thank you very much, Mr Dent.
Mr Barnes I believe you wish to second this.

40 **Mr Barnes:** Yes, Mr President, colleagues. I totally endorse what Mr Dent has said.

The President: Thank you, Mr Barnes.
Does any Member wish to comment on Item I, Beneficial Ownership? No comments on Item I, you can take that as approved please, Monsieur Greffier.

45 **The Greffier:** Thank you Sir.

II. The Electronic Transactions (Cheque Imaging) (Alderney) Ordinance, 2017 – Item approved

Item II.

The States is asked:

To approve the Electronic Transactions (Cheque Imaging) (Alderney) Ordinance, 2017.

The President: We move to Item II, please.

The Greffier: Thank you, sir.
Item II this evening is the Electronic Transactions (Check Imaging) (Alderney) Ordinance, 2017.
50 Again, a letter has been received from Mr Dent in his capacity as Chairman of the Policy and Finance Committee and the States of Alderney are asked to approve the Electronic Transactions (Check Imaging) (Alderney) Ordinance, 2017.

55 **The President:** Mr Dean, as Convener, would you give us the comments from the People's Meeting, please.

Mr Dean: There were no comments on this Item.

60 **The President:** Thank you, Mr Dean.
Mr Dent, I believe you wish to propose Item II.

Mr Dent: Mr President, colleagues, this is actually a rather important Ordinance. Electronic cheque clearing would allow the Alderney banking sector to participate in the wider application of new technology now being introduced in the UK. Indeed, I believe this very month should see the beginning of electronic cheque clearing in the United Kingdom. I hope this Ordinance is as uncontroversial as was the last Item.
Thank you very much.

70 **The President:** Thank you Mr Dent.
Mr Dean, would you second this?

Mr Dean: I fully endorse what Mr Dent has just said.

75 **The President:** Thank you very much.
Does any Member wish to comment on Item II? Nobody wishes to comment on that. Very well, Monsieur Greffier, if you would record that as approved, please.

The Greffier: Thank you, sir.

III. The Same-Sex Marriage (Alderney) Law, 2017 – Item approved

Item III.

The States is asked:

To approve the Same-Sex Marriage (Alderney) Law, 2017 and to request the President to seek the Sanction of Her Most Excellent Majesty in Council for it to have force of law in the Island of Alderney.

80 **The President:** We move to Item III please, Monsieur Greffier.

The Greffier: Item III this evening is the Same-Sex Marriage (Alderney) Law 2017. A letter has been again received from Mr Dent in his capacity as Chairman of the Policy & Finance Committee and the States of Alderney are asked to approve the Same-Sex Marriage (Alderney) Law 2017, and to request the President to seek the sanction of Her Most Excellent Majesty in Council for it to have force of law in the Island of Alderney.

The President: Thank you, Monsieur Greffier.
Mr Dean, if you would be kind enough to give us the comments from the People's Meeting.

90 **Mr Dean:** There were no comments on this Item.

The President: Thank you very much, Mr Dean.
Mr McKinley, I believe you wish to propose this.

95 **Mr McKinley:** Yes indeed, sir, if I may.

Mr President, fellow States Members, on 22nd September 2016 the States of Guernsey voted by 33 to 5 to approve legislation introducing same-sex marriage, thereby implementing the States resolution of December 2015.

100 Having received Royal Sanction, the Same-Sex Marriage (Guernsey) Law came into force on 2nd May this year and for the first time same-sex marriage is now formally permitted in Guernsey. As a matter of interest, the Dean of Guernsey has also, in many ways, supported same-sex marriage, although he has gone on to say that he would not allow it to happen in a church.

105 As it stands now, the Law applies only to Guernsey and not to the rest of the Bailiwick. With the exception of Northern Ireland, same-sex marriage will now be legal in the United Kingdom and in most of the Crown Dependencies. Tonight I hope to be able to start the process of legalising same-sex marriage in Alderney.

110 So why should we legalise same-sex marriage? Let's start out with the facts. Allegedly one out of 10 people is either gay or lesbian, bisexual or transgender. I got that information on the internet, by trawling various sites, and I do find it quite surprising that it is that many, but all the same, that is what it allegedly is.

115 And the choice is not always the choice of the person concerned. In this case, I can give you a personal example, a family example. My brother's daughter has two lovely sons, one of whom, since the age of about five, has believed that he is a girl. He spent a lot of time in his early school days with girls, he refused to have his hair cut and he eventually had to undergo some sort of medical treatment and psychiatrist's advice and specialist advice. It turned out that actually his genes, although physically a boy, his genes were more female, and he was therefore both. I am not quite sure, but he believes ... and he has visited Alderney on a number of occasions and actually has had some fairly unpleasant treatment among some of his friends of the same age here, but he still loves coming back. And I should not say 'he', I should now say 'she', because they are going to start, next year, changing the physical aspect of it and turning him into a her. At five, I do not think you could really say that is the child's choice. That is reality and that has happened in many other places.

125 So if you realise that your friend or relative is gay, would you hate them for it? Would you turn round to be the face of injustice and all that is unfair? Would you be the person translating hate to your friend or relative because he or she is homosexual? Would you be the so-called friend that is the image of degrading human rights? A heterosexual man or woman can be married several times in their life, and there is no change at all, no charge, no problem. Yet when two same-sex lovers cannot even get one marriage, how does that work?

130 Oh, religion. Yes, the Bible says that gay marriage is a sin; yet the Bible also says that God loves everyone. Yes, it is alright to discriminate someone because he or she likes the same sex. In some cases religious people stroll around the streets of England with signs saying, 'God hates fags'. Is that fair? As Russell Howard once said, 'Jesus is not gay, or straight; he is bisexual because he is in everyone'.

135 Imagine a young boy, and there have been many occasions when young, good looking teenage boys have been beaten up and indeed murdered by their male friends for being homosexual; the same for women. Some of you, I am sure, will have read the story about the codebreaker at Bletchley Park, who actually, through his fantastic work, probably shortened the period of the Second World War. It could have gone on for another year or more. He saved an enormous numbers of deaths by his work, codebreaking at Bletchley Park. Yet it turned out that he was homosexual, and instead of getting a knighthood or some other sort of praise, he was charged and imprisoned for it. Would that happen today? Goodness, I hope not!

145 I envisage a world where people can openly admit they are gay without feeling oppressed or scared of the reaction. I envisage a world where homophobia ceases to exist. I envisage a world where same-sex marriage occurs without any fuss from religion and/or politics. This is why we should legalise gay marriage. By doing this we are bringing more equality to the world, and smiles to the faces of those who can now marry their dearly beloved. By accepting homosexuality instead

of denying it, we are creating a healthy atmosphere for all. I want to go home tonight knowing that we have made changes to lesbian, bisexual, gay and transsexual communities for all.

150 One of the arguments against is that same-sex partnerships are short lived and non-
monogamous, therefore gays and lesbians should not be allowed to marry. This argument is so
outdated it is almost laughable; it may have had some credibility, say 50 years ago, when divorce
was a rare occasion, and adultery was a crime. Statistically, nowadays, 57% of men and 54% of
155 women have admitted to cheating on their spouses. Marriage is no longer what it was 50 years
ago. There are many other arguments against gay marriage, each of which as refutable as the rest.
If no convincing arguments can be made and all that it is stopping two people from legally
160 spending the rest of their lives together is the prejudice and ignorance of people who refuse to
listen to the facts, why are people who love each other not allowed to be married? Discrimination
and hatred are wrong. Love knows no boundaries. Love does not care if the two people are
different races, love does not care if the two people are the same gender. Love does not care how
different people's social background is. Love is blind to differences and similarities. There is only
one truth that people should never forget: love is love.

Thank you for listening.

A Member: Hear, hear.

165

The President: Thank you, Mr McKinley.

Mr Dent, I believe that you wish to second this motion.

Mr Dent: Mr President, colleagues. I am truly honoured to second this motion.

170

I have long abhorred discrimination of any kind – be it based on colour, sexual orientation or
on faith. It really does give me great pleasure to second this.

I understand that there are persons who wish to take immediate advantage of this new
legislation, and I want to wish them the very best for their future, and I would like to note that
they will be making a small piece of history, and I think that is quite something.

175

The President: Thank you very much, Mr Dent.

Does any Member wish to speak on this? Please go ahead, Mr Jean.

Mr Jean: By the way, I would like to say I admired my colleague Mr McKinley's speech – very
180 good. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

I have not got a great deal to add to it, just to say, I am upset by the letter that we all received
from the ecumenical churches. It is quite clear that they do not have to take part in any of this if
they do not wish to. From my point of view, I have no prejudice towards this, I wish the people
well. But I am disturbed by receiving such a letter so late in the day.

185

We all know people around us of same-sex, or are close to us or that we are friendly with and
we should never be prejudiced. In law this provides other advantages, like making it easier for
people to leave possessions, houses and various things. It is only right that this happens now, and
it would be ridiculous for Alderney to be an outpost, not being inclusive of such a piece of
legislation. It has my full support.

190

Thank you Mr President.

The President: Thank you, Mr Jean.

Does any other Member wish to speak on this, Mrs Paris?

195

Mrs Paris: Thank you, sir.

Mr President, fellow colleagues, I do understand that this piece of legislation is an enormous
issue for those of us who hold religious beliefs and think that marriage should only be between a

man and a woman. I am glad to see that the legislation covers these views in a sensitive manner, and allows for the desire of religious bodies not to participate in this law.

200 I personally think marriage is an excellent institution – although it did take me two attempts to get it right. However, I cannot see any reason why any two people who want to enter publicly into a marriage, with loving care and commitment, should not be able to do so. There is little enough love in the world at this current time and I have no wish to stand in judgment about how and to whom that love should be parcelled out. I will vote in favour of this Law, in a delighted manner.

205 Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Mrs Paris.

Does any other Member wish to speak on Item III? Mr Barnes.

210 **Mr Barnes:** Mr President, fellow States Members.

I have thought and listened long and hard over this matter, though I would like to state a view which probably shows great confusion in my mind. As a member of the Church of England, where there is a complete lock-out of this event ever happening, I am comfortable. As the proposer mentioned, we also as a Christian ... and the Dean has very clearly stated that to me, that we naturally accept that there can be loving relationships, but technically within the eyes of the Church it cannot be called a marriage.

215 The word 'marriage' goes a long way back, and I believe that the actual wording is perhaps not correct. I came to this meeting thinking that I would be abstaining on this one, but I have changed my mind over what I have heard in the last quarter of an hour.

220 I would add one very little caveat. It is also highlighted within the potential Law that for the grounds of divorce, you cannot divorce on the grounds of adultery, unless you have had sex with somebody from the opposite sex – strange but true, but in today's standards I would like to know what the opposite sex is.

So on those grounds, I was confused, I am less confused now and I will be supporting this Item.

225

The President: Thank you, Mr Barnes.

Does any other Member wish to speak on Item III? Mr Tugby.

230 **Mr Tugby:** Sir, I have thought long and hard on this one and over the last few days a few people have commented on it. Personally, I have no problems what adults do or whatever, if they get married or not. What is concerning me, in general, is in the world have human rights gone too far?

235 The reason I say that is because, talking to some parents, and other ones around, there is great concern that their children are so confused with what is going on and what is right and what is wrong. Yesterday somebody said their child in England saw two men kissing – so what? To that child it was amazing and he said to his father, 'What on earth are they doing that for daddy? He is supposed to be kissing a woman!' It is things like that which are concerning me. Children nowadays do not seem to be getting any guidelines and they are totally confused. They see what is going on on social media and that, I think, is why there is an awful lot of mental problems with some of them, because they do not really know and it is being thrust on them, to a certain extent, to make a decision when they are far too young to even know their own mind.

240 The other day in the paper, one gentleman had said that he had a sex change to become a woman and now it is the biggest mistake he has ever made because he has fallen in love with a woman and it has messed everything up, basically, because he is a woman as well.

245 There is so much confusion. Personally, I do not mind what adults do but we are going to have to watch what is happening to the children because there are a lot of confused children out there –and adults basically, when you read different things and reports about it and you see all the reports in social media and everything else.

But I just do not know which way to go on it now, so I think I could well abstain on this one. Even though I have been out with people who are in love with other men and other women, and

250 I have never had any problem being with them or anything. So I do not have a problem with it, or
even with them loving each other. It is just that I am concerned what we are doing to our children
and we are going to end up with a lot of children in future years totally confused at far too early
an age. I hope it does not happen, and all the best to people who do want to get married, but they
are my views.

255

The President: Thank you, Mr Tugby.

Does any other Member wish to speak on Item III? Mr Birmingham.

Mr Birmingham: Thank you, Mr President and fellow Members.

260 Firstly, I would like to thank Mr McKinley for his very passionate speech in proposing. I think
all of us have a gay friend or relation. In my particular case one of my oldest friends from school
is gay, a man who I shared a table with at school from the age of five to the age of 16. I know how
difficult it was for him growing up in Alderney, how isolated he felt, and I am very pleased over
the years how the attitude to gay and lesbian rights has changed from that time. Of course, that
265 was not as long ago as the 1980s, and I am delighted to see that things are changing.

Moving on to marriage, however: some scientists are of the opinion that love is nothing more
than the results of chemical imbalances in the brain, there are many similarities to the symptoms
of mental illness, therefore, as I see, it there is no surprise marriage is often described as an
institution, because in my view, and this is speaking purely as a bachelor, you have to be totally
270 crazy to be in one. *(Laughter)* However, for those that are lucky enough to find a partner to share
their lives with and are mad enough to commit themselves to married life, I say good luck to them.
I would also say I am a strong supporter of the traditional French concepts of equality, liberty and
fraternity and therefore fully support equal rights for gay and lesbian couples.

So I simply say this: I think it is only right that gay and lesbian couples should be treated equally
275 under the law. They should be able to marry and have the same rights as other couples which, of
course, includes the right to be equally as miserable as everybody else. *(Laughter)*

The President: Thank you, Mr Birmingham.

Does any other Member wish to speak on Item III?

280

Mr Roberts: I would just like to compliment Mr McKinley on his speech. **(Mr McKinley:** Thank
you, sir.) It was quite moving and to the point, his speech – very good, congratulations.

We all live in an ever changing world. As the world gets smaller we have to learn and respect
285 other creeds, customs and beliefs – not just from foreign countries but from within our own
people. How times have changed! What would our grandparents have thought of the decision we
make tonight? They lived in a very different world, a million miles from the ways we see our fellow
man today.

And today is about tolerance, a different type of respect be it religion, race or the very right to
choose and be equal with each other. The world has turned many times and we strive to improve
290 who we are, although we all hold our own personal views. In my own family, also, I learned this.
My own brother-in-law is really my sister-in-law. She had a civil partnership wedding six years ago,
and they had the right, which I see no difference, that should be passed tonight. Not to adopt this,
Alderney would be seen as draconian. So if I want to be let in the front door tonight, I support this
long overdue legislation.

295 Thank you.

The President: Thank you very much, Mr Roberts.

Does either Mr Dean or Mr Snowden wish to speak on this manner? In that case, Mr McKinley,
would you like to exercise your right to reply?

300

Mr McKinley: Thank you very much, Mr President.

Thank you, fellow States Members, for your very kind words and your words of support.

I am just taking up one or two issues which Mr Tugby said. I quite understand his concerns, but when he says, 'I do not mind what adults do', I think one of the things that adults need to do these days is actually ... It is very difficult to be a parent, for sure. I have been a parent, as well, and it was not that easy. But things have changed these days, particularly when it comes to social media: children spend a phenomenal amount of time browsing websites, some of which are terribly inappropriate, not talking to each other in the way that we used to talk to each other because we never had the privilege of having these things that we could play with all day. We had to talk to each other or we didn't have friends. And I think that communication in that way, parents really ought to try and limit the amount of time that their children spend on social media watching inappropriate programmes such as child pornography, occasionally, and discussing things.

I hear what you say, Mr Tugby, but I think that children these days do understand that there are differences and that things have changed from as they were fifty-odd years ago. I think parents actually ought to educate children their children in that way to some extent.

Otherwise, thank you very much everybody for your support and I am sure this is now going through.

Thank you, sir.

The President: Thank you very much, Mr McKinley.
Monsieur Greffier, would you please put this Item to the vote.

The Greffier: Thank you sir.

The States of Alderney are asked to approve the Same-Sex Marriage (Alderney) Law 2017 and to request the President to seek the sanction of Her Most Excellent Majesty in Council for it to have force of law in the Island of Alderney.

A vote was taken and the results were as follows:

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED
Mr Birmingham	None	Mr Tugby
Mr Jean		
Mr Roberts		
Mrs Paris		
Mr McKinley		
Mr Dent		
Mr Snowdon		
Mr Dean		
Mr Barnes		

The Greffier: Sir, nine votes for and one abstention, that motion passes.

The President: Thank you very much indeed, Monsieur Greffier.

**IV. Budgets for 2018 and Revised Budgets 2017 –
Revenue and Capital Budgets 2018; Water Board Revenue and Capital Budgets 2018;
The Occupier’s Rate (Level for 2018) Ordinance, 2017; The States Water Supply (Rates of
Charge) (Alderney) Ordinance, 2017 –
Item approved**

Item IV.

The States is asked, after consideration of the Budget Report:

- 1. To accept the States of Alderney Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2018*
- 2. To accept the States of Alderney Water Board Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2018*
- 3. To approve The Occupier’s Rate (Level for 2018) Ordinance, 2017*
- 4. To approve The States Water Supply (Rates of Charge) (Alderney) Ordinance, 2017*

The President: Could we move to Item IV, please.

The Greffier: Thank you, sir.

335 Item IV this evening is Budgets for 2018 and Revised Budgets of 2017. A letter has been
received from Mr Dent in his capacity as Chairman of the Policy & Finance Committee and the
States are asked, after consideration of the Budget Report to firstly, accept the States of Alderney
revenue and capital budgets for 2018, secondly to accept the States of Alderney Water Board
340 Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2018, thirdly to approve the Occupier’s Rate (Level for 2018)
Ordinance, 2017 and finally to approve the States Water Supply (Rates of Charge) Alderney
Ordinance, 2017.

The President: Thank you very much indeed.

Mr Dean, could you give us the Convener’s report on the Budget please.

345

Mr Dean: The comments received on this Item mainly related to the capital programme,
including a query on whether the funds had been spent on all the projects as listed previously.
The Treasurer clarified that there has been some slippage. However, this was due to staff
changeover as opposed to financial reasons, and a Technical Services Officer is now in place and
350 projects are moving forward.

350

There was a query on the Mouriaux to Platte Saline – it was noted that the funds are included
for 2018, however, the outfall at Fort Doyle is not included until 2019, the question was asked
whether it could be brought forward. It was also advised that the outfall is dependent on the
Platte Saline sewer. It was further queried that the land use plan report advised that no works
355 would be carried out in the area for five years. The Convener noted the comment and advised he
would discuss it with BDCC and General Services.

355

It was noted that the crane replacement has been included in the budget as part of a rolling
replacement programme, to ensure that the existing crane can be traded in whilst it still has some
value.

360

It was stated that the increase in visitor mooring fees is high for the facilities we have to offer.
They were advised that GSC has considered this and will be introducing a trial period, which offers
a free night for visitors who stay for two nights or more. This item will be appearing separately
before the full States prior to the end of the year.

365

It was noted that the Nunnery works has been included at £280, 000. It was clarified that this
was the amount as voted for by the States, including the contingency fund which took it up to
£280,000 for the extra work if it needed a roof. On further investigation, it does require a full roof
replacement. It was also clarified that this cost included project management.

370

The Treasurer clarified that the Asset Management & Financial Services included a programme
for maintenance of States properties assets and it was noted that the costs relating to the
swimming pool, included the £250,000 matched funding and the recently voted £35,000. The

Treasurer confirmed no further figure had been included as completion costs were currently unknown. However, there are funds available in the capital budget, should further expenditure be approved for this project.

375 The Treasurer also clarified that the Connaught Lift upgrade is at the request from the Connaught Board in order that the new lift can accommodate a full stretcher/bed. It was noted that the Connaught is now at full capacity, and therefore improving financially.

The President: Thank you very much, Mr Dean.

380 Mr Dent, I believe you wish to propose this Item.

Mr Dent: Thank you, Mr President.

385 In the UK, the Chancellor, Mr Gordon Brown's trademark budget opening was to make the Chamber aware that he would be aware that he would be presenting a prudent budget. He was not a spendthrift and he did not willingly increase the public tax burden. While I do not agree with all of Mr Brown's doings, I would like to think that this budget adheres to those sound principles and maybe it adheres rather better than Mr Brown was able. While forecasting a small surplus in 2018 we have therefore aimed to balance income and expenditure.

390 Before I start, I would like to remind everyone that annual budgets provide a framework; they do not bind the States to spend in any particular area, nor do they preclude the States from choosing to vary the levels and standards of services that it supplies.

395 As 2018 unfolds we will, most likely, overspend on some heads and underspend on others. We will have to be flexible. We cannot, however, afford to be profligate. In 2017 we had sought to reduce our expenditure in a number of areas where we thought that expenditure was unnecessary. We will continue with that principle throughout 2018 and we will always seek value for money with proper competitive tendering when that is appropriate.

400 We move to the revenue account: each year we receive an annual cash allocation for the revenue account from the States of Guernsey, which together with our income is used for our operations. For 2018 our budget and expenditure was £3.64 million and the 2018 revenue cash allocation from Guernsey has been set at £1.84 million. Although an additional allowance was granted from the Guernsey budget reserve towards the cost of cheap, effective recruitment a similar amount was deducted as efficiency savings across all Guernsey Departments. Our nominal grant therefore remains the same as it was in 2017. This is, of course, a reduction in real terms when the effects of inflation are taken into account. This real reduction in contribution from Guernsey means that we have either to find additional revenue from our own sources or cut down on our expenditure.

405 So, in 2018, while the cost of most of the things we do will rise, we should be spending much less with BDCC, the land use plan should, of course, be complete. So with some reduced expenditure elsewhere, and while spending more on States works, we can reduce our total expenditure by a modest £280,000. On the income side, despite the gloom and doom expressed by some, we are actually improving our philatelic and numismatic profits, and we expect those profits to continue on their upward trend.

415 We are also expecting higher property rental income. We have consequently been able to limit any rises in occupiers' rates and vehicle import licence fees. In the former case, we are cognisant of the need to encourage business so business rates will rise only by one penny. Rates on domestic and other properties will, however, rise between 5% and 9%. One of the important impacts of this is, however, that the need for extra revenue will be shared by both residents and our second home owners.

420 There are also some modest rises in the fees we charge for our services. Most notably the dues payable by visiting yachts. In this latter case we are, however, minded to encourage longer stays and to offer substantial discounts to those visiting for more than two nights. Encouraging visitors to spend longer in Alderney and therefore to spend more while they are here is part of our overall economic strategy.

425 Next, the capital budget: our capital programme is mainly funded by the Alderney Gambling Control Commission. Its surplus for 2018 is expected to be about £2 million, from which transfers to Alderney e-gambling, the economic development reserve fund and general revenue will be met. No capital allocation is received from Guernsey.

430 The GSC anticipates spending £3.1 million during 2018. The most important projects are: road resurfacing – the main programme envisaged for 2017 has been deferred due to ongoing AEL and Water Board projects; sewerage projects; improvements to the Connaught and Jubilee Homes; various recreation projects; vehicle and plant replacements; and a capital grant to the Water Board for continued infrastructure improvements.

435 P&F is proposing spending £420,000 on the final phases of the AEL distribution grid, as already approved by the States. IT upgrades and improvements, website upgrades, asset management and financial accounting and reporting. There may, of course, also be the requirement for an additional grant towards the swimming pool and sports centre. This has not been included at this stage because the final costs are unknown.

We have an ambitious programme for the year ahead. In the past, slippage has occurred, mainly due to engineering staff turnover and not financial constraints. The backlog is recognised and steps are being taken to overcome it.

440 Before I move on to the Water Board, I need to go back to the Economic Development Fund which will receive £300,000 from AGCC reserves. Much of the expenditure in 2018 is likely to centre on supporting our transport links and the tourism sector. While I am loathe to spend Alderney's own money on supporting transport links – I think it is Guernsey's responsibility – we would be shooting ourselves in the foot if we did not make this provision.

445 The Water Board: the budget has been framed so the Board can cover its operating costs. In 2018 a modest increase in expenditure is forecast. In respect of water rates, the hosepipe charge has finally been eliminated, with a small increase in overcharge to offset this. The intention is a modest 2018 surplus of £14,000. The capital programme is being funded from States of Alderney grants. The 2018 expenditure is £750,000: the normal £250,000 plus £500,000 for back-up filtration plant. This is a one-off expenditure and in 2019 we should revert to the normal £250,000.

450 In conclusion, I would like everyone to note that 2017 has been an unprecedented year, with significant unanticipated costs for the Land Use Plan and the FAB Link negotiations. As a result, the overspend is coming from the gambling reserve. At this point, I must emphasise that our priorities may differ from those that Guernsey would have us accept. When they do differ, we need to be clear and firm, defending our corner.

455 In 2018 the States of Alderney must clearly continue to look closely and harder at opportunities to create direct, home-grown revenue streams. Two that we are currently exploring are the benefits of a new Partnership Law, which would encourage a number of high net worth individuals to reside and do business in the Island, and the opportunities for bringing more high quality, Know Your Client businesses and, perhaps, offering a branded, world recognised regulatory regime. Presently, these businesses are largely unregulated and the qualities of service on offer vary.

460 Most recently, another opportunity, this time for holding and regulating the use of big data in an ethical manner, has been brought to my attention. It is my hope that with States and P&F approval, we can further explore this.

465 These last two initiatives that I have described would, of course, build on the reputation for clean regulation that we have already built up with the Alderney Gambling Control Commission. These are niche markets and likely to be well suited to a small, well planned jurisdiction.

Mr President, colleagues, I thank you and I commend the 2018 Budget to the Chamber.

470 **The President:** Thank you very much, Mr Dent.

Mr Barnes, I believe you wish to second this, sir.

Mr Barnes: Yes, Mr President.

Mr President, colleagues, firstly I thank we must thank the whole Treasury team, led by Kerry and supported by Stephen Taylor, the Financial Adviser to the States, in their assistance to
475 produce the information from which we can make our decisions on the Budget. It is a tremendous task. It is the first time I have seen it and it is unbelievable, the work that has to go into it.

As Mr Dent has stated, it is a budget, i.e. it is an accurate assessment of what should happen over the next 12 months, but we all know that events will occur which cannot be costed at the present time.

480 There have been some contentious items in the present time but, on reflection, we have this as a balance. Although in the balance there is not a great lot of room for manoeuvre or adjustments during the next period of time, we have to be careful in our spend and we have to be vigilant over our revenue and income streams.

I certainly second and commend this Budget to the States.

485 Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Mr Barnes.

Does any Member wish to speak on Item IV? Mr Jean.

490 **Mr Jean:** Thank you, sir.

In addressing the Budget for 2017 I have many concerns, but paramount amongst these is my own strongly held view, and it is most of the overspend relates to consultancy. I would like to draw your attention to a decision taken by last year's States to give special powers to our CEO over projects up to £50,000 and the ability to appoint consultants up to £25,000.

495 I would like to make it clear that the four new Members of our States of Alderney successfully elected last December took no part in that decision. I was the only Member of the P&F Committee to vote against these powers being granted on the two occasions that these powers were discussed at Policy & Finance level. Let me explain: the first attempt at getting the P&F Committee to agree involved considerably smaller sums of money for both appointment of consultants and
500 money for projects, new powers to be given to then CEO. Buoyed up by the tremendous success of the first attempt to get this through and with only myself vehemently protesting, which I believe they did not expect to get it through at that month's meeting, at the next month's meeting they came back for a larger sum on each. At the time I said the States should not allow this and we should retain control and that the States of Alderney were abrogating control over these matters
505 by delegation to the Civil Service. I see this as part of the reason – not all – but part of the reason our States is suffering from poor control problems. The new States, in my opinion, does have a duty to address this along with other problems. The States Budget, which is slightly out of control, is not good. Measures must be taken to get things back under the control of the States of Alderney itself.

510 My next concern is the money which we are at this early stage spending on Brexit. We have spent thousands on this, when we are covered by Guernsey's negotiating team, who work well for the whole of the Bailiwick, including Alderney. Jo Reeve and his team have been over on at least three occasions to brief us and are doing excellent work on our behalf. And we should have faith in our relationship with the Bailiwick.

515 Instead of accepting the advice offered, we kicked off a trail of unnecessary expenditure, starting with the report from UCL, which came back with a price tag of – wait for it – £47,000, so we were told. As many will remember, I asked for an inquiry, which I have to say, despite any concern I might have had, did not make the progress I would have expected – until I was joined
520 by Mr Dean who added to my own efforts and wrote to UCL asking pertinent questions. All I achieved was a statement saying that the figure was less than first thought and a reduced figure was published. Mr Dean is to be congratulated, for he achieved far more than I did –

The President: Mr Jean, while this is very interesting, you are talking historically here and we are here this evening to approve the Budget for next year.

525 So make your point, but please do not over labour it because we want to talk about the Budget.

Mr Jean: You will, sir, see where I am going.

530 Reduced from £35,000 to the second figure published that was, reduced to £12,000 but the cheque for the money back was nowhere to be found. I did pick up, after the cheque for the returned money had mysteriously reappeared, lost in a drawer and forgotten. I picked up from Mr Dean and tried to get an internal audit done, or a proper investigation done. No matter how I tried, and I was not alone, I just could not get this to go either.

535 The history of over expenditure on Brexit continues. Now not content with the efforts of our excellent Guernsey representation, backed up by the Law Officers at St James' Chamber, we now have two people, our own team, one at £30,000 – this is relevant to the Budget.

The President: This is very relevant, yes.

540 **Mr Jean:** One at £30,000. I cannot remember if the States was ever asked about this post and I do not know how much the second consultant is being paid, so there is more money on top of the £30,000 already to be paid.

545 I go back to the works audit: it is or has been an ongoing cost worth mentioning. The previous, previous CEO implemented all of the arrangements on that works audit in one go. The cost of this, we were not told at the time, was £500,000 per annum and I assume, although I stand to be corrected, for more than one year at that rate. This was not revealed to us.

I mention it because payments for that failure may still be current today. I understand we do need the advice on FAB from PWC which will total £260,000 in all, with £100,000 spent so far. We are told that they have managed to get a better deal, £700,000 a year instead of £70,000 per annum. The FAB issue is a subject this Government has not coped with well. I can understand why.

550 We are told there will be no switch station required and the better deal already mentioned through the good work of PWC. A note of caution, all this is yet to be confirmed in writing by FAB. The issue is, without doubt, one of the most difficult issues this Alderney States has faced since the Second World War and the 1948 Agreement. There will be a referendum and we do need to know more.

555 An Island now divided through the inability of this States to open clause 12, and this is something –

The President: Mr Jean, clause 12, I believe is to do with building. We are talking about the Budget.

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Mr Jean: It has to do with the Budget; you will see it coming back to the Budget in a minute. (**The President:** Good.) The B&DC Law – allowing the rumour mill to run out of control, wound up in a frenzy of Ove Arup, also in my opinion far too complicated for Alderney's needs and – and here we go back to the Budget – from a forecast £170,000 to a revised budget of £410,000. Wow! £240,000 over budget and eight or nine books of it Well, that about says it all when I said poor control.

565 Hosting the Overseas Territories Conference cost another £30,000. Nice thing to do, but under the circumstances, I ask the question should we have?

570 **The President:** Mr Jean, I have to remind you, we are approving next year's Budget, not talking about last year's.

Mr Jean: It relates.

575 **The President:** Well, please make your point. You have got plenty of time here, make your point as to how it relates to next year's Budget.

Mr Jean: Again, we are involved in considerable expenditure ... here we go, coming back. It is very difficult to do this work when I am to be continually interrupted.

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The President: Well, if you stick to the point of next year's Budget, I will not be interrupting you.

Mr Jean: I am sticking to the point, what I am talking about is relevant.

585

The President: Please continue.

Mr Jean: Again, we are involved in a considerable expenditure on the recruitment of a new CEO. I realise this cannot be helped but it will be my third CEO since my return to politics at the end of 2012. The Civil Service and the States need to inform each other in a more joined-up way to avoid such situations happening again.

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The Companies Law Review should receive a mention: very difficult and I think poorly handled, a lot of money metered out in stages, misleading the States into parting with large sums of money which had to be shelved as unsuitable. We must be more frank with each other. We must have better lines of communication between the States and the Civil Service, more straight talking. I am sure we could all achieve this so that we are better able to understand the implication and repercussions of the decision-making process that we are all involved in.

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A few words about the £450,000 overspend on our budget. It seems that my idea of spending directly on projects –

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The President: Mr Jean, again, I am going to have to remind you, we are speaking about next year's Budget. Now, if there is something relevant in the overspend, please relate it to next year's Budget.

Please continue.

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Mr Jean: I am not happy about this. I should be allowed to have my say.

The President: You are allowed to say when you are speaking about the matter on the Billet, which is next year's Budget.

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Mr Jean: You interrupted me prematurely, *again*, for the third time, and I am going to say this, and coming right back to the subject that you want.

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My idea of spending directly on projects of benefit to the public seems to be getting further and further away. I am not happy about having the Alderney Ambulance assistance from the States and although I have done my best to take away feelings that the reduction in assistance to the Alderney Ambulance Division would undermine staff morale, which is what I was told, I believe, as this is the first casualty of the Alderney budget deficit, those responsible should turn up to one of the meetings of the Alderney division to justify that decision.

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We have been rebuked by the Chairman of P&R, Gavin St Pier. Not a great deal I could say at the meeting as I and quite a few other Members of this States were (1) not aware of the extent of the overspend; and (2) were not asked for our consent for the letter sent by the Chairman of P&F asking the Guernsey States to bail us out with a loan. These States Members who were not consulted or asked for their votes so this letter could be sent – and you know who you are who were not asked – should be very concerned about this. Your rights as Members of the States of Alderney have been ignored; again, a similar situation to Government reform.

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The first time my colleague heard about –

The President: Mr Jean, I am going to have to interrupt you again.

630 **Mr Jean:** I am on the subject.

The President: Can you stick to the subject of next year's Budget. I fail to see how the things you are mentioning –

635 **Mr Jean:** I am going to stop soon –

The President: Let me finish –

640 **Mr Jean:** I am going to stop soon and I shall sit down, and I shall just take this out of the House and publish it.

The President: That is fine, you can publish anything you wish to, Mr Jean, but what we are discussing tonight is next year's Budget and if you are discussing stuff which is relevant to next year's Budget –

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Mr Jean: This is relevant.

The President: Please continue, but keep it relevant.

650 **Mr Jean:** Dear, oh dear, these interruptions! I will have to see where I was now.

The first time my colleague heard of both the deficit and the letter was at the meeting of the Guernsey States – amazing.

I am encouraged to see good support – back on track I hope, (**The President:** Good.) from your point of view – for Waves and Air Alderney. They are very important new developments at our airport and will provide a more varied menu for travel and perhaps help ease the difficult situation with Aurigny. I would publicly endorse my full support for the coming of Air Alderney and Waves and I am grateful and would encourage both new enterprises, wishing them all the best and every success for the future.

660 I am also encouraged to see a more genuine intent and enthusiasm to encourage a passenger ferry service for Alderney, and more commitment to it. Our inclusion in discussions in ferry tendering is very welcome and I would like to thank the Chairman of Economic Development and Members of his Committee for making sure that Alderney is included.

665 I do believe in our relationship with Guernsey, despite the ups and downs and problems, and these discussions are truly inclusive of the Bailiwick as a whole, working together to develop and strengthen the economies of the Bailiwick, which is just what Deputy Ferbrache's Committee is about: economic development.

670 I am truly delighted, and would like to express my gratitude before I leave the subject of a ferry for Alderney. As a second string to our bow, I would ask for the Alderney States to continue to show support and help me to continue to try to get Alderney written in to a new passenger carrying contract. It is my belief that if this was done it would guarantee a management overlay to a ferry service for Alderney. I am aware that no contract has been signed with the present operator, and I have written to Deputy Ferbrache asking for Alderney to be written in to the contract. I have explained that the contract is very valuable indeed, it is worth millions and millions of pounds per annum – so much so that I have explained to the Committee for Economic Development, it entitles Deputy Ferbrache and his Committee to shop a little and use this further opportunity to strengthen the economies of both Guernsey and Alderney by writing Alderney into the contract and, as I have explained, it would cost Guernsey nothing to write us in, thus further guaranteeing passenger ferry travel.

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680 With that, having had enough of the interruptions, I have a little more but I have had enough so, thank you.

The President: Thank you very much, Mr Jean.
Does any other Member wish to speak on Item IV? Mr Birmingham.

685 **Mr Birmingham:** Thank you, Mr President, fellow Members.

Well, it is that time of year again for me to have my usual rant about the financing of the Water Board. Initially I was delighted to see a proposed roughly 5% increase in the water rate and I hoped that this would see the start of the States addressing the differential in funding between Water Board income on the one hand and its capital expenditure, which is propped up by grants on the other. I have long advocated that the States need to take the long-term view of the Water Board and start laying the ground work towards treating it as an independent trading entity. However, instead almost £12,000 in additional revenue from the increase has been handed back in the abolition of hosepipe charges. Now, I have never supported this argument for the abolition, which seems to me to have been based on the very weak argument that all the customer has to do to get round the charge is to attach the hose to an internal supply. The point should be that customers with external supplies use significantly larger amounts of water than those that don't and whilst water metering still is not compulsory on the Island there needs to be a charge to represent that. That could simply have been done by referencing taps for external supply, such as taps in garages being charges at a premium. Instead, we now have smaller scale water users subsidising larger users and the increased income that was available should have been used to address the funding gap between the revenue and capital expenditure. Instead, it has been given away to those that probably least need it.

In my opinion, the only long-term solution to these issues is to remove the Water Board from States control because it does not seem the States are capable of making the hardnosed commercial decisions that are needed to take the Water Board forward. In my view, the best long-term approach would be looking towards the creation of an Island owned community interest company for the supply of water and power, combining the Water Board and AEL. That would strengthen the management of both bodies, particularly the financial management, and allow for cost savings in removing duplication of processes such as billing.

710 We need a radical rethink of utility supply in Alderney and giving away a tax cut to users who need it the least is not it.

The President: Thank you, Mr Birmingham.
Mr McKinley.

715 **Mr McKinley:** Thank you, Mr President.

Can I just ask two questions, really, one is to do with the gambling reserve. You mentioned that we had a gambling reserve, I understand that we get £2 million a year from the Alderney Gambling but that I do not think is the reserve, is it? I think there is more as well somewhere and if there is could we know how much it is. And on the future of the money that we get from gambling there are concerns that we may lose that in due course. If that is the case, could we look into that? I know we are trying to do so but I think it would put a lot of people's minds at rest if we were to be reassured that we will not be losing that.

725 The other issue is to do with the review of the financial relationship, which I think was probably started by Guernsey because Guernsey are slightly concerned about how much they are to give us every year. I think we spend about £18 million a year and I think £12 million of that actually comes from us so about £6 million comes from Guernsey in the form of transferred services and other such things but I know that they are looking at reviewing, for instance, TRP, they are doing certain things at the moment they cover and suggestions that we should cover them in the future. I think that we do not know enough about it really and I think actually the public, as this will come

into effect, I believe at the beginning of 2019, I think part of the plan for next year really ought to be to give a thorough briefing and let everybody be aware of what the change of financial relationship, how it might affect people in reality.

Thank you, sir.

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The President: Thank you, Mr McKinley.

Does any other Member wish to speak on Item 4? Mrs Paris.

Mrs Paris: Thank you, sir.

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As a member of the Finance Committee I would just like to explain the reasoning behind the reduction in the ambulance grant, because I feel that there is a lot of misinformation out there. So if I may, we do give the ambulance a fairly large grant every year. Last year it was £42,000 and we also bought them a new ambulance which I believe, off the top of my head, cost £52,000. On looking at their accounts when we were considering what to give them this year it is obvious that they have a very healthy balance sheet and a lot of funds available, we wish the States were in a similar position. The decision to reduce the grant – and it was a hefty reduction, it was to be reduced by half – was taken on the basis that should they for any reason need anything, which seemed unlikely given that they had just got a new ambulance and that they had reserves of cash they could always approach us again. I would like to emphasise that in no way reflected any feelings that we had that they were not doing an absolutely excellent job. I am sure we all feel they are doing an absolutely excellent job and it was no reflection upon the service that they are offering that we should reduce that sum of money. But, unfortunately, the economic hard facts of the situation are that to simply give them money to sit in their account would not be an economically prudent thing to do, although our door would always be open should they have some unexpected expenditure they had to make.

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Thank you, sir.

The President: Thank you, Mrs Paris.

Does any other Member wish to speak on Item 4? Mr Tugby.

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Mr Tugby: Every year, sir, I seem to do more or less the same speech, like a record, when I see the Budget.

There is no way ... I take it we are voting on these as separate issues or all in one?

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The President: The intention is initially to take them all as one and if it fails, we will take them individually.

Mr Tugby: Well, numbers 2, 3 and 4, I do not have any problems with; it is number 1. The way we seem to be spending money or looking to spend a lot, what is the point in putting it in the budget if later on you are going to take it out?

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What we should be doing, in my view, and I have said it many times, is instead of spending money, looking at ways of making money. Alright, you are putting money into the Economic Development Fund, but all that is giving subsidies to the ferry, by the looks of things, and the air transport and trying to encourage other businesses to come. What we should be doing is using the money we get to look at doing things for ourselves.

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When I suggest different items over the years, I have been told, 'Oh, we can't do this, we can't do that.' Why can't we do it? That is all I ask.

On a number of occasions we have turned down people who have come here wanting to invest – 'Oh no, we don't want that; we don't want something else.' It goes on and on, turning people down when we should be encouraging them – sorry, if I am getting off the Budget slightly, but I won't get off very far.

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One prime example was the Marina, 90% of the population say –

The President: Mr Tugby, I am going to have to pull you back. Keep it to next year's Budget please.
785 Carry on.

Mr Tugby: Instead of spending that money that they are proposing, it is to save it and put it to a project, that is what I am getting at and that is why I ...
790 You have thrown me off a bit there, sir, but never mind.

We *can* do things if we have got the will, but we seem to be a scared States. The previous States, we nearly got there and they go and say 'Oh we can't do this, we can't do that.' They want other people to do everything for us all the time and that is why I say, we have got the money and if need be, to do a major project, to borrow it. We have got assets which are going to waste, which
795 we could sell. Plus stop wasting some of the money that we are doing, on consultants and everything else, and actually do something positive to try and generate extra money.

Because at the end of the day, people say, 'Oh, we will never lose the gambling.' What happens if we do? We have got nothing else; a few stamps and things like that but nothing to replace what we are taking from the gambling.

800 Three years ago I was told so much was going to happen. That encouraged me to stand again for the States because I thought, oh, at last, we are going to move. Lo and behold –

I can see what you are looking at me for, sir, but maybe I can push you a little bit more, but not much! (*Laughter*)

805 We have got to try and do something to generate some money. Looking at this Budget, we are spending an awful lot of things that we definitely do not need and it is just a total waste. We should be looking at it totally in a different way of how we handle our money because in the end, if we do not generate some extra money, we will have to put up taxes. I know people say, 'Oh, we don't want money.' But the wages go up, everything is going up all the time, whatever you buy is going up. Inflation is running at 3% I believe, sir. So at the end of the day, when are we going to
810 start using our money to *make* money? That is what I am asking for and I do not know if we will ever get it. I have got another 13 months in the States and well, I hope by that time we will have got something else in place other than relying on the gambling money.

The President: Thank you very much, Mr Tugby.
815 Do any of the remaining three Members wish to speak on the Budget? Mr Dean? Mr Roberts?

Mr Roberts: No, thank you.

The President: Thank you very much.
820 Mr Dent, do you wish to exercise your right of reply?

Mr Dent: Mr President, yes. I would just like to say a few words. Maybe starting in reverse with Mr Tugby, I take the point about making money. I hope, in fact, I alluded to two or three initiatives that actually might make us some money. I think these are important things that we can do and they are very akin to the Gambling Commission.
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Mr McKinley, the Gambling Commission reserve: maybe with your technical question on numbers, you should submit in writing, I think it probably requires a bit of thought, but I would go back to the point about the future concerns. We will lose that or we may lose it, I think, because we have got competitors throughout the world but certainly from my reading of the 1948
830 Agreement, I made this point a few months ago, it cannot be taken off us; it is ours.

Mr Birmingham, I have always liked your concept of combining the Water Board and the Electricity Board into a single utility organisation and with cost recovery at its heart, it goes to my heart as an economist so I think maybe in future years we would like to explore this a bit further but for the present, I am afraid, we are where we are.

835 I would like to thank also, Mrs Paris for her comments on the Alderney Ambulance because these are exactly the points I would have made myself. We are open to any funding needs that they do have but while they have such an enormous, large balance and timings are not as good as they were once, I think we have to be real.

840 To Mr Jean, I could say many things. I will limit myself to one or two. In my view, it is absolutely proper that our civil servants should have individual spending limits. They cannot do their job without knowing that they have certain powers that they can do certain things. Yes, we have to keep a watch but we have to have confidence in their ability and if we don't like them, we sack them. That is the way we do it, not controlling them on a day-by-day basis.

845 Mr Jean has expressed great trust in Guernsey. Sadly, I do not share this trust in Guernsey looking after our interests. He mentioned Brexit. In fact, the Department of Justice have actually advised us that on certain issues we should be looking out for ourselves, and this is actually Jo Reeve's own point as well. On certain issues where we have differences, we need to be drumming our own drum.

850 I just find this absolute trust in Guernsey something in my year here, and indeed what I did last year with the States ... I have no reason to trust Guernsey. We have to work with them and we have to work positively with them at the same time.

So, with that I think, thank you very much indeed.

The President: Thank you very much.

855 Monsieur Greffier, as all these Items were debated together, in the first instance I would like you to take it as one vote, if that vote fails we will take the Items individually.

The Greffier: Thank you, sir.

860 In that case, The States is asked, after consideration of the Budget Report: to accept the States of Alderney Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2018; to accept the States of Alderney Water Board Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2018; to approve The Occupier's Rate (Level for 2018) Ordinance, 2018; and to approve The States Water Supply (Rates of Charge) (Alderney) Ordinance, 2017.

A vote was taken and the results were as follows:

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED
Mr Roberts	Mr Tugby	Mr Birmingham
Mrs Paris	Mr Jean	
Mr McKinley		
Mr Dent		
Mr Snowdon		
Mr Dean		
Mr Barnes		

The Greffier: Sir, with 7 votes in favour, 2 against and 1 abstention, that motion passes.

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The President: Thank you very much indeed.

**V. Traffic Survey –
General Services Committee Report debated without resolution**

Item V.

Report from the General Services Committee – Town Centre Traffic Survey, for debate without resolution.

The President: We will move to Item V, please.

870 **The Greffier:** Thank you, sir.

Item V this evening is Traffic Survey. A report has been received from Mrs Paris in her capacity as Chairman of the General Services Committee, for debate without resolution.

The President: Thank you very much.

875 Mr Dean, as Convener, were there any comments on this at the People's Meeting?

Mr Dean: Yes, there was one comment that came up: what was the cost to the public for doing the traffic survey? They were informed the cost was minimal, the survey was taken on board in house by the General Services Committee and the survey went out with the Water Board bills.

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The President: Thank you very much.

Just to remind people this is a debate without resolution so the normal rules of debate will apply, but there will be no resolution at the end.

Mrs Paris, would you like to put forward your motion for debate.

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Mrs Paris: Yes, thank you, sir.

I will not read the Report because I would assume everyone has. The traffic is becoming an increasing issue; it is becoming an issue all over the world. The sheer volume of traffic especially in town and city centres, the congestion, the recognition of the health implications in inhaling diesel particulates, the dangers inherent in mixing vehicles and pedestrians in small areas are all leading to actions being taken everywhere. London already has a congestion charge and it is introducing an ultra-low emission charge on 23rd October, next week. Oxford has recently announced that it hopes to be the first city to ban all polluting vehicles. From 2020 only electric vehicles will be permitted on a steadily growing number of streets.

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By comparison, our issues here are on a very small scale but there have been enough comments and incidents and indeed a recent petition to make it very clear to the General Services Committee that these problems are already here in Alderney or they are looming on the horizon. One of the wake-up calls, I think, has been the realisation that in 2016 we imported 80 more vehicles than we exported. Now, if everyone with one of those extra cars decided to come into town at the same time, we would need another car park twice the size of the one at Butes to accommodate them, and that is only one year. This is obviously not a sustainable situation in a place the size of Alderney.

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The survey was done to try and help General Services to gauge the public's views on how to improve the current situation in town and the response was very high, nearly 500 questionnaires were returned. I would like to thank everybody who took the time to take part. I was going to emphasise how cheap it was to do but Mr Dean has already said that this was brought up at the People's Meeting.

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Whilst the survey makes it clear that currently there is no appetite for banning vehicles from the town centre, except perhaps during Alderney Week, there was a clear demand for the availability of more parking. As we are aware, Victoria Street is narrow and it is often crowded with vehicles and it is a very fine balance to ensure that as one of our main shopping areas it is easily accessible, but also remains a safe and pleasant environment in which to shop and conduct

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business; 86% of the respondents would like to see parking on the pavement discouraged. I have given the number of elderly that we have in the population and our current baby boom, it is quite understandable that many pedestrians would prefer not to share our narrow pavements with vehicular traffic.

So, General Services are looking at the possibility of finding more spaces close to Victoria Street, but it was also apparent that the majority of respondents – 68% felt that our current parking regulations required better enforcement. This would free up an availability of spaces in Victoria Street, those cars would obviously have to move on more frequently.

The enforcement of speed limits and weight limits Island-wide also came up in the comments on the survey quite a lot. These matters of enforcement of our current laws not to change anything, simply to enforce our current laws are not something that General Services can tackle on its own, so we are in dialogue with the Police and whilst acknowledge how busy they are, the amount of public engagement received by this survey must surely be a spur to action. We want to discuss with them methods of education and enforcement to go hand in hand to assist us finding a better balance between pedestrians and vehicle needs in the town centre, as the traffic survey has been very clear the majority of people want.

Thank you, sir.

The President: Thank you, Mrs Paris.

Mr Dean, I believe you wish to second this motion for debate.

Mr Dean: I would like to second this motion.

Mrs Paris has stolen my thunder also, I would have liked to have thanked the people for the response to the survey, I thought it was very good. Also, I would like to appeal to the people, actually to use a little bit more common sense before we start getting too heavy handed.

The President: Thank you very much, Mr Dean.

Does any other Member wish to speak on this Item? Mr Birmingham.

Mr Birmingham: Thank you, Mr President, fellow Members.

First I would like to applaud the attempts of the GSC to gain the views of the public regarding traffic flow and parking. I believe, though, that what is needed is a much more perhaps radical approach, but also we need to consider some of the longer-term issues of the town, which actually include the underground infrastructure, particularly electricity, water and sewerage and the effect that likely renovation and replacement work may have when that has to be done. That work is likely to be very disruptive and will need careful planning, but could provide the opportunity to deal with some of the other issues that have been raised, particularly parking and the requirements of better disability access.

The reality is that renovation of the town's cobbled streets is a major task and one that will require a rolling programme, because that is the only way that I can see that it will be possible to do. By that, I suggest that what we might have to do is lose one of the cobbled areas of town for a number of years in order for that work to be done. What I mean is that the cobbles in one area of town could be renovated and those can be used in another section of the town as you replace the subsurface infrastructure. That could create an opportunity as the obvious solution would be to use European-style pavements of the type that are already used for the pavements in some of the areas of town and it is used as a standard in many town centres in Europe.

One method of traffic control that is often used, particularly in Holland, is that you create a flat area with no differentiation between pavement and road, this effectively gives pedestrians the right of way at all times to traffic. In other words, the traffic has to slow down to walking pace to avoid the pedestrians and not the other way around. This could be a solution to lower Victoria Street, remove the distinction between road and pavement and give pedestrians the right of way by removing the pavements and cobbles levelling the entire surface with pavements. This could also

965 lead to helping with problems of disability access for the Island's ageing population, but removes
the need for total pedestrianisation. Those removed cobbles could then be renovated and used
to replace the cobbles in other areas of town as they have their subsurface infrastructure
upgraded. I think by thinking in this way the Committee may find better long-term solutions to all
these interrelated problems.

970 Another issue, of course, comes back down to our financial relationship and the renegotiation
with Guernsey. One of the taxes looking at being repatriated is, of course, fuel duty which, off the
top of my head, is roughly in the region of about £320,000 a year. The question would be, longer
term, already in the UK there is an aim to head towards electric vehicles. Currently, of course, they
do not pay any duty and I think we have to start talking about reintroducing a car tax to the Island
975 in the longer term. That may well help control the issue that has been suggested in terms of
burgeoning numbers of cars on the Island.

So I think there are larger issues that have to be considered by GSC particularly, and we really
do need to think about a long-term solution to the issues of cobbles in the town.

980 **The President:** Thank you, Mr Birmingham.
Does any other Member wish to speak on this debate? Mr Dent.

Mr Dent: Mr President, over the last 10 years I have noticed a significant increase in the
amount of traffic on our roads and a reduction in the number of pedestrians. Certainly a reduction
985 in the number of pedestrians walking past my house, I do not regard this as a good thing.
Speaking for myself I think some measures to discourage driving and encourage either walking or
cycling would be a good thing. I note the survey showed a more general desire for parking, so be
it, but providing more parking will only encourage more trips by car and less by foot and walking.

In September we discussed a disability strategy, so surely making Victoria Street safer, less
990 congested, more accessible to those with disabilities, prohibiting parking on the pavement and
reducing the allowable parking times would be sensible. 55% of those surveyed thought that some
reduction in allowed parking time would be sensible and almost all wanted more enforcement. I
support these comments. I am not, however, sure that this is enough. Parked vehicles do not
themselves obstruct the pavement and frequently force moving vehicles on to the pavement from
995 the opposite side of the road. May I suggest, therefore, that on narrow parts of Victoria Street,
where parking is now allowed, it is now prohibited.

Finally, and maybe I am getting older, but I am beginning to notice more aggressive driving
than before. I do not see any need to hurry in Alderney.

Thank you.

1000 **The President:** Thank you, Mr Dent.
Does anybody else wish to speak in this debate? Please.

Mr Barnes: Mr President, I have not really made any notes about this one but it has come to
1005 mind, of course, I am responsible for the roads, the railway, a unique position in the Channel
Islands and also the Police liaison. We have been talking with the Police quite strongly and there
are certain issues that we do have to address. One of the things the GSC is doing is we have invited
the Police to come and talk to us about what they call their 'Police Plan'. They do have problems,
there are problems that they have in terms of numbers and today, if you like, administration has
1010 to be done. We talked about speeding earlier, we are still waiting for the Superintendent or the
person responsible for liaising with them to come and train them on a new police speed gun that
they have got, which they cannot use by law. Another issue that they do also discuss with me is
the fact that the fines are far too low. I believe the fines that we have nowadays are way below
what is accepted as standard in other parts of the world, £20 for an overstay is not going to stop
1015 anybody overstaying. The other issue we have got is the street furniture. That, unfortunately,
comes back to a local issue where they can put signs to ensure that they can then if they have to

take somebody to court that everybody has got the information that is correct. So we have got a long way to go, but I do believe we are moving down that path.

Thank you.

1020

The President: Thank you, Mr Barnes.

Does anybody else wish to speak on this debate? Mr Jean.

1025

Mr Jean: I would just like to say a few words. It is very good to have a traffic survey but I think it should be very carefully handled. The reason I say that is the town is not easy to get to for some people, it is difficult, and sometimes they do need to park to shop.

1030

It occurs to me that if you want your town to continue to be used and thrive, particularly at a time when we know there is quite a recessionary element in Alderney, and the amount of people we know are frustrated in trying to actually get to us, that it might be very careful just to say 'carefully as you go' because you could, if you are too draconian, actually harm the premises in the town. I am sure that *nobody* on this States would actually want to do that. That is why I think you have to be very careful.

1035

If you go wiping yellow lines right the way up the top, only include a few disability areas, that is not going to work either and how much the survey has encouraged the support of public or have the actual retailers, the people involved in business in the town contributed themselves, I am not sure of the split between the two, but I do think we have to be very careful about what you do with cars parking in the town. If you do not let some flow up through the town and remain reasonable then you are actually, sadly, going to find yourself in a situation you could do harm.

Thank you, sir.

1040

The President: Thank you, Mr Jean.

Mr Roberts.

1045

Mr Roberts: Thank you.

I would just like to concur with Mr Jean. I think it is a very good angle to look at it, we do not want to mess up something that actually we are trying to fix and is not really broken, it just seems like it is broken.

1050

Alderney's roads are narrow and the traffic strategy cannot compare them with large cities and pollution, it is a different ball game. You cannot even compare it with other islands. You can cross the road quite easily here. You try crossing the road in Guernsey! Many people are against curb parking, to ban that practice would cause a problem in itself as parking spaces for instance in the High Street and on Little Street. How can you stop them actually having their wheels on the curb? I mean the roads are so narrow.

1055

The Police are a much diminished force here, thank goodness, and although that is a good thing, they have to cope, a smaller group with a higher workload. I for one favour a part-time traffic warden, just somebody part-time, perhaps retired – the States could take them on to police those cars that are illegally parked. Not a little Hitler; somebody with compassion, somebody that can do it Alderney's way.

1060

I know I have support on the GSC with this and I know I have the support of the House. It has not come forward, it is not in the Report, I am very disappointed it is not in the Report. I favour that, having somebody in a uniform to come up and police Victoria Street and High Street.

I mean High Street, if you took away the curb parking, you are going to have to have another car park because they are all up on the car park anyway. If you put them on the road, you will not get by.

1065

So, we are lucky to live here and I think a lot of our problems are quite minimal compared to the other islands.

Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Mr Roberts.

1070 Does anybody else wish to speak on this? No.
Would you like to exercise your right of reply, Mrs Paris?

Mrs Paris: I would, sir.

1075 I think I made the point that currently our problems are relatively small. I think also they are
not going to go away and they will only get worse. I think Mr Dent made that quite clear in terms
of the number of cars with fewer pedestrians etc. I very much agree with Mr Birmingham that this
needs to be part of a much more radical approach and the entire roads and traffic strategy which
the General Services are trying to thrash out is a more radical document than this. This came about
1080 as a result of a great many requests, comments for petition that nobody is happy with how Victoria
Street works at the moment. And, yes, perhaps one would not start from here if one had the
option, but we do not have the option and there are all sorts of arguments and I think I did try and
make it very clear that it is a very fine balance between keeping everybody happy and effectively
not getting anybody run over. We are trying our best to do some probably quite short-term things
to improve the situation as it stands. I think Mr Birmingham's suggestion of pavements from side to
1085 side is very interesting. I think there would be some brave pedestrians, I have to say, and I know
for certain that our Technical Services Officer will not be very pleased because he spends half of
his life mending the pavements on the pavement where people have driven over them, because they
are not actually suitable for vehicular traffic.

1090 One of the problems of trying to reduce car ownership or car use here is that we have no
alternatives, really. We have no public transport. Yes, we can all walk, and we probably should
because walking for health would keep us out of the hands of the health service and that has got
to be a good idea as well, in terms of cost and quality of life. But, yes, could we get everybody on
a bike perhaps? But these are all part of a longer-term strategy and we very much felt, as General
Services, that we must look at the issues which are currently perplexing a lot of people who use
1095 the town a lot.

Sometimes it is not very pleasant. You cannot stay on the pavement, especially if you have got
a pram, to try and walk past vehicles which are parked. It is not a very safe feeling and a few
people have complained that they have been knocked by traffic that goes past. I take the point
about the High Street and various other places. We are not in this talking about the High Street;
1100 we are talking here about shopping areas effectively, and trying to use what facilities we have in
a better way and then hoping to bring forward some more radical proposals which will cover
everything: import duty on cars, electric vehicles, lots of things which if we are going to keep up
with the world we are going to have to do.

1105 The evidence that is coming in on the inhalation of the particulates from diesel engines is
frightening, about the damage it does to people's health, and it is insidious as well. It will maybe
knock a couple of years or more off your life, you will never particularly have any symptoms to do
with it, but they will not do you any good. So, I hope that we can all get together and try and make
some improvements. I think we all need to set an example – not to park on the yellow lines, not
to park on the pavement, and try and persuade everybody that we all need to be, perhaps a little
1110 more caring towards each other.

Thank you.

The President: Thank you very much, Mrs Paris.
That concludes the debate on the traffic survey.

**VI. Questions and Reports –
Policy & Finance Committee Reports –
Royal Connaught Residential Home Limited – Financial Statements 2016;
Alderney Commission for Renewable Energy – Financial Statements 2016**

1115

The President: Monsieur Greffier, if you would take us to Item VI, please.

The Greffier: Thank you, sir.

1120

Item VI this evening is Questions and Reports. Two reports have been received from Mr Dent in his capacity as Chairman of the Policy & Finance Committee, those reports being the Royal Connaught Residential Home Limited – Financial Statements 2016 and the Alderney Commission for Renewable Energy – Financial Statements 2016.

The President: Thank you very much.

1125

We will take these one at a time. Mr Dean, could you give us the comments from the People's Report with regard to the Royal Connaught Residential Home.

Mr Dent: There were no comments on the Royal Connaught Residential Home.

1130

The President: Thank you very much indeed.

Mr Dent, do you wish to introduce your Report?

1135

Mr Dent: The Report is in the Billet. The Chairman of the Royal Connaught Board has included a statement with his accounts. I simply wish to add that the States continues for the good work and relationship with the Connaught Board and I would like to thank that Board and the staff at the care homes for their continued provision of care for the Island's elderly residents.

Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Mr Dent.

1140

Does any Member have any questions for Mr Dean on the Report relating to the Royal Connaught?

A Member: Mr Dent, sir.

1145

The President: Sorry, Mr Dent – apologies to both of you.

Does anybody have any questions for Mr Dent with regard to that particular Report?

Very well, we will move on to the second report. Mr Dean, were there any comments from the People's Meeting in your capacity as Convener?

1150

Mr Dean: There were. People were concerned about the fees that are owed by ARE to ACRE, now that the contract has been terminated, and should the States institute a winding up procedure. They were informed that it was ACRE not the States and it was also mooted that ARE has continually misled the States all the way through. We have an up to date report from ACRE and the public were informed that by 31st of the tenth 2017 ARE will owe to ACRE just under £1.3 million. The Chief Executive advised that the issue was with the Law Officers in Guernsey and that is ongoing.

1155

The President: Thank you very much, Mr Dean.

1160

Does anybody have any questions for Mr Dent with regard to the Alderney Commission for Renewable Energy?

Mr Dent: May I make a small statement?

The President: Yes, please do.

1165 **Mr Dent:** I just wanted to say that due to the present lack of income it has been necessary for the States to subsidise the Commission until such time as the outstanding monies owed have been recovered and/or until such time as further blocks are rented out.

1170 In the meantime, ACRE have, however, taken significant measures to reduce their costs, including the Commissioners taking a reduction in their fees and the negotiating of a reduced rental on their office premises. I think in regard to the point that was made in the People's Meeting that a court hearing is expected shortly.

The President: Thank you very much, Mr Dent.

1175 Does anybody have any questions for Mr Dent with regard to his Report and his update with regard to Alderney Commission for Renewable Energy? No questions.

In that case, thank you all very much. Monsieur Greffier, will you please bring the meeting to a close.

PRAYERS

The Greffier

The Assembly adjourned at 7.13 p.m.