



OFFICIAL REPORT

OF THE

STATES OF THE

ISLAND OF ALDERNEY

HANSARD

The Court House, Alderney, Wednesday, 14th October 2020

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

Volume 8, No. 7

Present:

Mr William Tate, President

Members

Mr Bill Abel
Ms Annie Burgess
Mr James Dent
Mr Kevin Gentle
Mr Christian Harris
Mr Louis Jean
Mr Graham McKinley OBE
Mr Steve Roberts
Mr Alexander Snowdon

The Greffier of the Court

Ms Sarah Kelly

Business transacted

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States of Alderney

*The States met at 5.30 p.m. in the presence of
Lieutenant G T Workman RN (Rtd) representing
His Excellency The Lieutenant-Governor of the Bailiwick of Guernsey.*

[THE PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

Swearing-in of new Member of the States, Mr Willan (Bill) Abel

The Greffier: Mr Abel, I understand you wish to take the oath before the States this evening.

Mr Abel: That is correct.

5

The Greffier: I ask you to raise your right hand, please and read the Oath aloud to the States.

Mr Abel: I, Willan John Abel, do swear by Almighty God that I will be faithful and bear true
allegiance to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, Her Heirs and Successors, according to law, and that
10 I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office of Member of the States of Alderney.
So help me, God.

The President: Welcome!

15

Mr Abel: Thank you.

The President: I am no longer the new boy! Would you care please now to take your seat?

Mr Abel took his seat and photographs were taken.

The President: Would you all like to stand please for the opening prayer?

PRAYERS

The Greffier

The President: May we commence, Madam Greffier, please, with the roll call?

ROLL CALL

The Greffier

20

The Greffier: You are quorate, sir.

The President: Thank you.

**Convenor's Report of the People's Meeting
held on 7th October 2020**

The President: Mr Harris, you were the Convenor last Wednesday. Would you like to give us your report, please.

25

Mr Harris: Certainly, sir. I was assisted by the Temporary CEO and the Acting Head of Finance. There were seven States Members present, excluding the Convenor in attendance. Also in attendance were the President and the Minute Secretary. There were 22 members of the public and four members of the press and apologies were received from Mr Dean.

30

The President: Thank you.

Billet d'État for Wednesday, 14th October 2020

I. Duty on Share Transfers (Variation of Ratio) (Alderney) Ordinance, 2020; The Duty on Long Leases (Variation of Ratio) (Alderney) Ordinance, 2020 – Approved

Item I.

The States of Alderney is asked to:

- 1. approve the Duty on Share Transfers (Variation of Ratio) (Alderney) Ordinance, 2020;*
- and*
- 2. approve the Duty on Long Leases (Variation of Ratio) (Alderney) Ordinance, 2020.*

The President: May we move, Madam Greffier, to Item I on this evening's Billet.

The Greffier: Item I, sir, is the Duty on Share Transfers (Variation of Ratio) (Alderney) Ordinance, 2020; and the Duty on Long Leases (Variation of Ratio) (Alderney) Ordinance, 2020. The States is asked to approve both those Ordinances.

35

The President: Thank you.

Mr Harris, were there any comments from the people who attended the People's Meeting?

40

Mr Harris: Thank you, sir. There were no comments on this Item.

The President: Thank you very much indeed.

So now we can move on. Mr Dent, you are to propose this matter?

45

Mr Dent: Thank you, Mr President.

If you remember at our last meeting, we resolved, in addition to the changes on fuel and document duty, to instruct the Law Officers to make the necessary amendment to The Duty on Long Leases (Variation of Rate and Ratio) (Alderney) Ordinance, 2003 and The Duty on Share Transfers (Variation of Rate and Ratio) (Alderney) Ordinance, 2003.

50

If approved, these changes will mean that 100% of the revenue from these two other sources will now also be paid into the States of Alderney revenue account.

The current levels of duty are 4% for transactions of up to £150,000; 4.5% on transactions from £150,000 to £250,000; and 5% over £250,000.

55 We currently retain just 2% of these transaction values, the balance of 2%, 2.5% or 3% being payable to the States of Guernsey. I think this can only be a good thing, and therefore I commend the Ordinances to the Chamber.

Thank you.

60 **The President:** Thank you very much indeed.
Mr Harris, you are going to second this Proposition.

Mr Harris: Thank you, sir, fellow Members. I have nothing to add to Mr Dent's summary.
Thank you.

65 **The President:** Thank you very much indeed.
Would any Member like to speak on this matter? Then perhaps we can take that as read, and that can be passed.

70 **The Greffier:** Thank you.

The President: Item II, please.

**II. The Emergency Powers (Coronavirus) (General Provision) (Bailiwick of Guernsey)
(No.4) Regulations, 2020;
The Emergency Powers (Coronavirus) (General Provisions) (Bailiwick of Guernsey)
(No.4) (Amendment) Regulations, 2020 –
Not annulled**

Item II.

The States of Alderney is asked not to annul:

1. The Emergency Powers (Coronavirus) (General Provision) (Bailiwick of Guernsey) (No.4) Regulations, 2020

and

2. The Emergency Powers (Coronavirus) (General Provisions) (Bailiwick of Guernsey) (No.4) (Amendment) Regulations, 2020.

75 **The Greffier:** Item II, sir, is The Emergency Powers (Coronavirus) (General Provision) (Bailiwick of Guernsey) (No.4) Regulations, 2020; and The Emergency Powers (Coronavirus) (General Provisions) (Bailiwick of Guernsey) (No.4) (Amendment) Regulations, 2020. The States is asked not to annul those two Regulations.

The President: Thank you.

Were there any comments, Mr Harris, at the People's Meeting?

80 **Mr Harris:** Thank you, sir. There were no comments on this Item.

The President: Mr Dent, you are going to propose this.

85 **Mr Dent:** Thank you, Mr President.

At our last Meeting in September, I asked that this Item be withdrawn until our October Meeting. In September, the accompanying documents on the States website were in fact only for

Regulations No. 4A. The Regulations came into force on 10th July and have consequently long expired. The motion tonight not to annul should therefore have no material impact.

90 Nonetheless, it is incumbent that we should continue with the not annulling process, if only to give the force of law to the period for which they were applicable.

The two main areas currently in both these Regulations were a screening assessment and powers to detain and mental health and safety, and for those who are interested there were 41 pages.

95 The Regulations No. 4A were some amendments – just four pages – that came into effect on 23rd July. It was deemed necessary to strengthen the Police Powers and Criminal Evidence Regulations.

Thank you.

100 **The President:** Thank you.

Mr Snowdon, I think you are seconding this Proposition?

Mr Snowdon: I am, thank you, sir. Nothing to add, thank you.

105 **The President:** Would anybody like to speak on this Item?
Then that goes through.

The Greffier: Thank you, sir.

110 **The President:** Item III, please.

**III. The Emergency Powers (Coronavirus) (General Provision) (Bailiwick of Guernsey)
(No.6) Regulations, 2020;
The Emergency Powers (Coronavirus) (General Provision) (Bailiwick of Guernsey)
(No.6) (Amendment) Regulations, 2020 –
Not annulled**

Item III

The States of Alderney is asked not to annul:

1. The Emergency Powers (Coronavirus) (General Provision) (Bailiwick of Guernsey) (No.6) Regulations, 2020

and

2. The Emergency Powers (Coronavirus) (General Provision) (Bailiwick of Guernsey) (No.6) (Amendment) Regulations, 2020.

The Greffier: Item III – The Emergency Powers (Coronavirus) (General Provision) (Bailiwick of Guernsey) (No.6) Regulations, 2020; and The Emergency Powers (Coronavirus) (General Provision) (Bailiwick of Guernsey) (No.6) (Amendment) Regulations, 2020. The States is asked not to annul those provisions.

115 **The President:** Thank you.
Anything from the People's Meeting, Mr Harris?

120 **Mr Harris:** Yes, sir. It was noted that the No. 5 Regulations were passed in the September States.

The President: Thank you. Again, Mr Dent.

125 **Mr Dent:** Mr President, yes, sir. We skip now to the Regulations No. 6. We dealt with the Regulations No. 5 in our September Meeting, as Mr Harris has just noted. These Regulations No. 6 came into effect on 4th September and expired on 1st October.

The main themes were as normal, the successive regulations, screening assessment and powers to detain, mental health and safety. In this instance there were 50 pages.

130 These Regulations, however, impose a requirement on all persons arriving in the Bailiwick from anywhere in the world, with the exception of the Isle of Man, to self-isolate for 14 days on arrival until they are eligible for and opt into the test on Day 7 option if it is available.

Regulation 6A was a minor amendment relating to safety certificates, revoking regulations to disapply the need to fully examine certain matters relating to the interpretation of the clause on safety certificates. These Regulations came in on 25th September.

135 Thank you.

The President: Thank you very much.

Again, Mr Snowdon.

Mr Snowdon: Thank you. Nothing to add sir. I am happy to second.

140

The President: Thank you very much indeed.

Anybody wish to comment on this Item? Then we will take that as passed and we will move on, please, to Item IV.

IV. Budgets for 2021 and Revised Budgets 2020 – Items 1 & 3 to 6 approved; item 2 not approved

Item IV.

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

- 1. Accept the States of Alderney Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2021;*
- 2. Approve a 5% increase to the combined 2020 yield of Occupiers Rates and TRP to enable rates to be set for Alderney Property Tax rates of charge 2021;*
- 3. Approve that the rates of Fuel Duty will be kept consistent with the States of Guernsey for 2021;*
- 4. Approve that the rates of Document Duty will be kept consistent with the States of Guernsey for 2021;*
- 5. Accept the States of Alderney Water Board Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2021;*
- 6. Maintain the Water Rates of charge for 2021 at 2020 levels.*

145 **The Greffier:** Item IV is the Budgets for 2021 and Revised Budgets 2020. The States is asked, after consideration of the Budget Report, to: accept the States of Alderney Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2021; approve a 5% increase to the combined 2020 yield of Occupiers Rates and TRP to enable rates to be set for Alderney Property Tax rates of charge 2021; approve that the rates of Fuel Duty will be kept consistent with the States of Guernsey for 2021; approve that the rates of Document Duty will be kept consistent with the States of Guernsey for 2021; accept the States
150 of Alderney Water Board Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2021; and maintain the Water Rates of charge for 2021 at 2020 levels.

The President: Thank you.

Mr Harris – the People’s Meeting.

155

Mr Harris: Yes, sir. A few comments received on this Item.

160 It was advised that the Fire and Ambulance services had been kept separate at this stage, pending a final decision in regard to the future modelling of the service. However, it was anticipated that they would be merged in future years under a combined Emergency Services heading. The budget figures used for the Ambulance were as presented at P&F and the States earlier in the year.

The Convenor advised that the Harbour Deficit has also included Covid-19-related costs regarding Border Control cover, as well as maintenance costs, including the crane. The potential to recover some Covid-related costs from the States of Guernsey is being looked into.

165 It was noted that the 2020 capital budget incorporated the purchase of a new dustcart. In 2021, the Waste Disposal budget had been reduced due to fewer projects in this area.

It was noted that the Minor Road Works Budget for 2021 includes disabled access improvements, car parks, surfacing of minor roads, and a small allowance for any potential land purchases.

170

The President: Thank you very much indeed.
Mr Dent, you are going to propose this Item.

Mr Dent: Thank you, sir.

175 The Budget for 2021, shown in the Billet, has been prepared in line with the agreed budget process. The Budget was considered and approved for debate at this States Meeting at the September Policy and Finance Committee budget meeting.

The main points I would like you to note are as follows. Our annual budgets are 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 service it provides.

180 There remains continuing emphasis on value for money, challenging existing budgets and delivering efficiencies so that funding is allocated to areas of greatest priority. There has been additional emphasis on this in light of the Covid pandemic.

As reported, a revised arrangement has been agreed with the States of Guernsey, which amends the allocation from the States of Guernsey to a grant. This provides the opportunity for any unspent balances to be transferred to a reserve to provide a contingency. With effect from 2021, subject to the Alderney Property Tax legislation being approved by the UK Privy Council, the Alderney Property Tax, Fuel Duty and Document Duty incomes will be collected and retained by the State of Alderney. If the UK approval timetable slips – I hope it does not – alternative arrangements will, of course, be put in place.

190 The estimated yield from above three revenues has been assessed against the grant from the States of Guernsey that would have been received, had the financial relationship not changed. A transitional grant of £300,000 will be made in 2021, and no further non-emergency grants will be received by the State to support the revenue budgets from 2022 onwards.

195 The capital programme is mainly funded by Alderney Gambling Control Commission services, together with locally raised revenue from asset sales. The gross distributions for 2021 are expected to be in the region of £1.5 million, from which transfers to Alderney e-Gambling Ltd and the Economic Development Reserve Fund will be made.

200 It is important to note that there is now a cash allocation received from Guernsey in respect of capital funding.

The Water Board Revenue Account is expected to raise £727,000 from water rates and charges which in 2021 will cover its operating costs, with a surplus of £104,000 towards reserves. The Water Board capital programme continues successfully, funded by grants from the States of Alderney amounting to £2.86 million to date since 2008, with a further grant of up to £175,000 anticipated for 2021.

205 The Economic Development Reserve established in 2014 continues to be funded from AGCC reserves at £300,000 per annum, as indeed I just noted. This fund provides finance for specific research and development projects with a direct relevance for the enhancement of the Island's

210 economy. Any unspent balances each year are rolled forward. Each initiative is subject to Policy and Finance Committee approval.

Thank you, and I think my colleague will have some more material when he seconds this motion.

The President: Thank you for that, Mr Dent.

215 So Mr Harris – you are going to second it and tell us more.

Mr Harris: I am indeed.

Mr President, fellow Members, 2020 has proved to be an unprecedented year for Alderney and for the whole world. However, we are, thankfully, able today to report some fairly good news. 220 The Covid-19 impact on Alderney's finances have much less than the impact on other jurisdictions. We have been shielded by our fiscal union and the wider financial relationship we have with Guernsey. It is the wider Bailiwick fiscal union finances that have in fact suffered, and it is these other finances which have provided the majority of mechanisms for Alderney's own financial support through the pandemic.

225 To date, Alderney's own finances have survived and continue to survive relatively unscathed. So the States of Alderney have managed to budget for 2021 in a manner that largely preserves the important features of our earlier spending plans – though, as you will have noted, we have reprioritised some of the capital projects and reallocated those funds which, as a result of the Covid crisis, we have not spent nor have been able to spend and also are seeking to operate more 230 efficiently; no mean feat in these difficult times.

We do, however, recognise that the challenges are ongoing and we are facing many uncertainties. It would therefore be rash to suggest that when we look back next year that the outturn for this 2021 Budget will have been as predicted. We need to recognise that our revenue account expenditures are largely committed to delivering existing services and where possible, 235 we must continue to look for efficiency savings; and our revenue account income, although a best estimate, may fluctuate. There are matters here that are beyond our control, unfortunately.

So with regard to the coming year, the new Alderney Property Tax, which Mr Dent also said, is subject to the relevant law being approved by the UK Privy Council. Together with the Document and Fuel Duty changes, that can only be a good thing for Alderney. The changes give us flexibility 240 for the future and make us much more than before the masters of our own destiny.

Nothing, however, comes for free, and with these new powers comes a responsibility for fiscal propriety. We have therefore decided to increase the rate of this tax by 5%. This will give us the flexibility to meet our current spending requirements, as well as providing a modest sum to set aside in the reserve. This is an essential mechanism to start providing a contingency to manage 245 future budget fluctuations when we are no longer rely on the States of Guernsey for 50% of our own budget.

At this point in time we have no knowledge of the Guernsey Budget intentions. However, we recognise that were we to deviate significantly from any increases applied to TRP and duty levels in Guernsey for 2021, we would have great difficulty in persuading Guernsey to apply any 250 emergency funding measures, should they be needed, and which we believe are particularly important while the Covid 19 crisis continues.

We are, however, very pleased to be able to maintain water rates at 2020 levels – a great result considering the challenges presented in 2020. I would like to take this opportunity to offer the greatest of thanks to departing Water Board manager, Paul Rose, who has served the Island with 255 dedication and hard work for 44 years, and wish him the very best in his well-deserved retirement.

As we move to our new financial arrangements for 2021, we will receive a final draft from Guernsey to help us manage the transition. Except for emergencies that are outside our control, we no longer have the opportunity to go back for support because we have exceeded our budget.

260 In 2016, we asked to take responsibility for our finances, rather than being dependent on the annual grant from Guernsey. Now we have financial independence, our challenge is to provide

high standards of financial governance throughout the States, budget responsibly within our means and demonstrate value for money in how we use public money.

265 The obvious elephant in the room in this Budget is, of course, the Harbour Deficit. This has come about as a result of both reduced income and increased maintenance costs – the crane being a particularly good example. In 2020, £70,000 of the harbour losses were due to the offers of free moorings and water-taxi waivers to our Bailiwick friends. We do, however, believe that the increased injections of cash into the economy as a whole from our staycation visitors was well worth the free offers, and we would also note that we are not planning to repeat those offers next year.

270 It has been a very long time since we have had such a close relationship with Guernsey, and this new-found relationship of positivity and mutual respect is one I hope thrives. Our solution to the losses is not to increase harbour charges, but instead to conduct a full review of harbour activities to identify inefficiencies and make recommendations for cutting costs, where these do not compromise quality and safety. As an Island, our harbour is of paramount importance. I hope
275 to close the deficit over the coming years without rate hikes to the detriment of our seafaring Islanders and visitors.

Finally, I would like to thank the tireless work of our dedicated Treasury team and our strategic financial adviser, Steven Taylor. Head of Finance, Liz Morris and her team have had their world turned upside down more than once during the last year. Next year may be no different, but their
280 advice and assistance at every turn throughout the year has been invaluable. I cannot give enough thanks for everyone’s work in preparing this Budget. Just a few months ago, everyone thought it might make much bleaker reading.

So here’s to 2021 – a year which I hope is as exceptional as 2020 but in an entirely different way.

285 Thank you.

The President: Thank you very much indeed, Mr Harris.

When Members want to speak, could you make it very clear to me, because I would hate to miss Mr Jean, as I occasionally do.

290 Mr Gentle, I think you would like to kick off.

Mr Gentle: Thank you, sir.

Sir, colleagues, I thank Mr Harris for rebutting my comments before I am about to make them!

I thank the Treasury staff and everyone else involved, for the obvious hard work over the
295 period of time they have taken in preparing this Budget.

Covid-19 has affected us all. The proposed ramping up of 5% on the Alderney Property Tax, just as employers and employees alike start to get back on their feet, takes no account of an individual’s ability to pay. It has already been stated that responsible budgeting and prudent financial management are called for and are to be applauded; and that we have to plan for the
300 future in very uncertain times, as there is no such thing as a free lunch.

But while people have been furloughed on a low income, spending has collapsed and the local economy, prior to the staycation initiative, was impacted. Whilst the Government are in a battle to limit economic damage, I disagree with austerity measures taken to help get us out of this. The immediate priority for Government must be the local economy. Government should finance itself,
305 and it is important that it finances its operating costs from year-on-year revenues. It would be nice to do so by not hitting people in the pocket year on year.

As we go forward, we surely cannot hope to keep funding from current revenues from the currently known as TRP payers. However, I must vote for this. I am disappointed that the whole raft of points are grouped together and we are not voting on each one individually, but being in
310 support of all the other five points and not being able to cherry-pick ...

Thank you.

The President: Who would like to speak next, if anybody?

Mr Roberts.

315

Mr Roberts: Thank you, sir.

Also, I am for most of this and well done by the Treasury and Civil Service in working hard towards budgets and revised budgets for 2020 and 2021.

I agree with 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6, while not agreeing with 2.

320

I would just like to add my thanks to the way the Water Board is run. It is from the bottom to the top. It is a shining example of what can be achieved and an example that other utilities could aspire to.

325

Last year TRP was increased by a huge amount, some, myself included, paying hundreds more a year and on a par with Guernsey and the services they receive over and above Alderney. There is not much good news there.

Then we elected to place the ambulance costs into the rates, at a cost of some £40 average charge per house, at a total cost combined tax charge, plus adding an ambulance charge of 4%. Add to that a proposed further 5% makes a 9% increase to every household on a tax before it has even started. It is a stealth tax.

330

The average charges will amount to about £800 per annum per household; plus your water rates at about £500 per annum. Coming straight after Guernsey's 'pump up the volume' TRP tax show, I question this crushing of people's standards living here.

335

Combine that with rising kerosene and electric charges, doctor's bills, blood tests, deterring some people from even visiting the surgery, it should be concerning that the States are even placing an extra burden on the shoulders of young and old alike at this time. Where do you place priority – on warmth, health or the bailiffs banging on your door for unpaid utility bills? Are food banks really a reality in Alderney? Do they really exist? I do not know.

340

This is not an exaggeration, but it is a cold fact that the States should now be accepting. Some people may live here in an owned house, retired good folks, but time has diminished their funds to a stage where they are genuinely struggling and their ability to do part-time work or anything, and to live, fades.

345

Mr and Mrs A have to make some stark choices, as many of us now have to. They may put health last of all – too proud to ask for help, as they never have all their lives. They have never asked for help. Help is available, you may say, but many people are too proud to ask for help or to ask for something for nothing. Perhaps they cannot afford to meet with friends for lunch as they always used to once a week.

350

A young family living week to week may struggle and leave. We then lose the lifeblood of the Island already depleted and one-sided age-wise. Please do not come out with the old chestnut, the community charge in England. We forget we do not live on the mainland, with a town council, but we live on our most expensive and beautiful island with a caring community who elected you and trusted you to be fair. This is not fair.

355

Many of these services are different and come out of the community charge on the mainland and cannot be compared. It is complete idiocy to compare Alderney and its costs of living with mainland Britain. It is an imported political view.

The coming year 2021 will be a challenging one. A general service tax - in other words, VAT – may be on the near horizon. Jersey are going to 8% soon. This is to pay for Covid pandemic borrowing. A rise in basic tax may come alongside that. We may not be able to stop that tide.

360

So add that nightmare to the proposed charges now and you could empty the Island – if they can afford the air fares out. This rise is suggested by people who are mostly fiscally comfortable; but not all of us are. Some will bill the time and just nod. 'Better pick a pocket or two'.

Please consider turning this down for the sake of Alderney and for what Alderney can really afford at this time, because we have all this lining up for next year. Next year will see them reeling. We do not have Guernsey or Jersey's wealth here. Many of our residents are now fiscally vulnerable. I fear much harder times may be just around the corner.

365 Economy-wise, the Chamber of Commerce feel that this is counterproductive, resulting from
consultation within that organisation and their very knowledgeable but possible economic
reaction. They should be listened to.

Money has to come from somewhere. We all agree on that, I am sure. Look – we need to look
370 closer to home to save money. We need to tighten our own Government’s waistbands. Some
waistbands are like Father Christmas’s. Our public utilities lose more than they ever had – not just
because of Covid-19 but from unfettered overspend that seems to run unquestioned.

How much do we spend on public services? How much are we spending on the Civil Service
compared to six years ago? However, before you slam the easy targets, the people of Alderney,
375 look closer to home and the States’ management of public funds. This is where you need to do
the heavy lifting and it is long overdue. The tax we decided to repatriate, quite rightly, also came
with a promise from the Chairman of P&F. That promise was that the rates would not rise in the
first year of 2021.

So I have two questions. Is the plan to put the ambulance charge on *as well as* the 5%? A total
of this would amount to 9% on a combined rate that we were promised would not go up in 2021.
380 Why was the promise not to raise the rate reneged on, with no explanation of why it was reneged
on?

Please consider a move to review our spending. Please consider the possible tax rises in 2021
before we vote for this.

385 Consider the possible general service tax that might arise in 2021, which we would have no
control of, and consider changing your mind, after my points. It is a strong argument, and it is the
wrong time.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Thank you very much indeed.

390 Would anybody else like to make a contribution? Mr Snowdon.

Mr Snowdon: Thank you, sir.

I think I just need to declare that I do have a property on the Island.

395 I just want to say thank you to the Finance Committee and thank you to the Treasury for
spending an afternoon with me, going through quite a lot of the Treasury stuff. I think, as Mr Dent
highlighted in his opening speech, they are framework budgets. So I would like to make some
comments.

I am concerned, looking back a little bit in the history with regard to the financial situation,
when we go back to January 2019, we had nearly £7 million cash. Now, on this piece of paper that
400 I have in front of me, September 2020, we have got £3.4 million cash. That is nearly half the
amount gone. I understand, General Services are working very hard to improve the Island, but if I
can just give you some examples; the harbour crane, £850,000; Fort Doyle sewage screening
system, £130,000; sewer tanker replacement, £115,000; refuse collection vehicle replacement,
£93,000, Connaught extension phase 2, £400,000, phase 3, £1.29 million.

405 What I am just trying to highlight those important aspects that obviously need to be done, and
I thank General Services for doing it, is that I am concerned that the money will start running out
if we keep going through the money at this rate. So I would like to touch on the gambling money,
what we are receiving from the gambling and the fantastic work that the Gambling Commission
have done. However, we need to be conscious – and to be fair to Mr Earl, I think he actually did
410 try and make this point when he was a States’ Member to us – in 2018 we received £2.6 million;
in 2019 we received £1.4 million. I understand that we were meant to receive £1 million this year;
£912,000 next year.

If we look at the spending I just went through occasionally with the General Services
Committee, I cannot quite understand where the funding is going to come from as we move
415 forward unless we create new revenue streams. I know I keep saying this, but I think we really
desperately need to create new revenue streams, because I have got a strong fear that we will be

forced to use the new taxation, the single property tax, to increase to balance the books, unfortunately.

420 I know that Tourism and Economic Development are working on projects, and I look forward to hopefully hearing more, maybe – whether it be hemp regulation or the seaweed stuff that is still going on, but lots of other ideas. But I would really like to emphasise that the new States, whoever they be, need to look at those revenue streams' incomes for us. In other words, what is the replacement for the Alderney Gambling Commission? I am not hearing it. I think we really, together, with the community, need to get round the table and work out where that money is
425 going to come from.

I think Mr Roberts, regarding item 2 here, highlighted the issue already. With regard to the 5% increase, I think we have got to be conscious that with regard to TRP, we have seen a 10% increase and on bigger properties, some may have felt a 20% to 30% increase. We already agree to put occupied rates up by 5%.

430 So looking at the numbers, if I can find them in just a second – this is what we were told and I thank our financial adviser – for a three-bedroom house, it is now £1,137, which I think equates to 300 units. The 5% increase on that figure would be £56.85. It may not sound a lot, but when the numbers have already gone up considerably already, we keep adding and adding and adding. I think we have to be very conscious that Alderney has had a very good time with staycations –
435 and it is fantastic to see the Guernsey people coming up here – but unfortunately there will be a global recession on the way, and I think we have to be able to weather that storm.

As already was highlighted with the ambulance, I am still a bit concerned that we had a survey that recently went out, which I did not actually know was done by the States of Alderney, but *was* done by the States of Alderney – I thought it was independent of the States of Alderney – which I think went all over the world. I do worry that you have got people who are putting in to that survey who do not actually have an interest in Alderney with regard to that survey. We have not had the results from that survey back.
440

But we go back to the ambulance – and I think I may have highlighted this in a previous debate – for a pensioner, let's say she is living in a property, her husband has died, children may have moved
445 away but she has got a nice-size property, struggling to keep the maintenance up on the property but she wants to live in her home. She lives in that property – fixed income with a pension coming in.

Down the road, there is maybe a youngish couple or a middle-aged couple, two good jobs, two kids at school and everything – if we take the ambulance and we are using the single property tax to cover this new system, how is the pensioner actually getting a fair deal per head compared to the younger couple or middle-aged couple down the road, where you have four people in the house instead of one person?
450

I do understand why this has been done, but I feel this is a bit of an abuse of the system, because if you had social security under our control, you would have gone to the social security. Obviously we do not, but we are trying to make a system work which is not actually designed to work for this, so I am a bit concerned that we are jumping into this system, a single property tax. I am pretty sure, unless we do not make more revenue streams, we are going to be bolting quite a lot more onto this in the next few years, because we will have no other options.
455

The cost of living is high and I think I stood here before and actually went and broke down the cost of living on the Island. You may think your rates are cheap compared to England, but they are not. You have a lot of higher value stuff that you have to fork out for – higher grocery costs, higher electric, higher oil, a lot of different aspects.
460

I feel that we are just getting pushed into this at the moment. It is a tricky situation, because if we had more revenues coming in, I feel that we would not really have to go down to this stage, but – this is going to sound really harsh and I do not mean it to be harsh – for failed politicians, this is the only way that we can actually make the money. But we do not want to be the failed politicians; we want to be the politicians that are making the revenue streams.
465

So I think what I am trying to say is that top of the priority needs to focus on new income streams quite desperately before things get even worse.

470 Thank you.

The President: Thank you.

Mr Jean, I think you want to make a contribution.

475 **Mr Jean:** Thank you very much, sir.

We have heard about the increase on the combined taxes themselves, so I do not think I need to go over that any more, but I have to say I, too, am very concerned, and I am very pleased to see that others are as well – other Members of this States.

480 I wanted to point out the £104,000 going towards reserves for the Water Board. It is a very great deal of money, and I think we need to be very careful not to raise that in the future for quite a while. That is not somewhere we are going to be able to go to get extra money. Of course, one of the things that people talk about is the high the cost of our water rates.

485 Here we talk about the sea ferry links, which were again supported – the contributions are likely to be in the order of £120,000. However, supporting this particular service has proved to be a real success, generating both extra passenger movements to and from the Island and an extra visitor spend, which has been particularly vital during 2020 for the benefit of all sectors of the community. That is something. That is a cornerstone; that is something we should be building upon, trying to make proper arrangements, better arrangements than we have at the moment, of which there are many cancellations and many difficulties. We really do need to work on that.

490 Tourism: there have been comments recently, there are different ways that we can advertise now through video, so I was very interested to see the article. I, too, feel that more could be done virtually through the net itself, to advertise tourism in a much cheaper way and perhaps reduce the amount of pamphlets. I know that pamphlets have their place.

495 What are the future work streams? Well, that is the important thing. That is where we need to build, and where I feel we need to build is: staycation taught us something. I have said this before in committee, but I do not believe I have said it in the full States.

500 What it has taught us – and it could actually be a bit of a slogan and this too is something we need to build on – ‘give them something and they will come’. That is exactly what has happened this summer. We have given something and I know – I am disappointed to see – that it is written in here that we are *not* going to do it again next year. Yet I feel that the economies must be made in other areas in the harbour and we must continue to build on that, and staycation has proved how valuable a part of it that was. We do not have the same facilities as Guernsey. We do not have the same offer down at the harbour. Giving those moorings gives something extraordinary, and that is what we have to remember. That is what we need to build on.

505 The suggestion ... I remember saying some time back that we would be doing away with our ability to access the reserves through the Guernsey budget as we have done in the past. That is now proving to be true and coming to fruition, and we have been told the last date that we will receive. It is part of the reason why we are looking to hike up this combined tax in the first year. I am not happy about that. I am most unhappy.

510 I also do declare an interest – I think it is important I declare that interest. So I am not happy about that, but I have to say I did say that it was coming, and it is coming.

Also, I think you should be very careful about where and how many staff we employ. I think it is quite important to keep a close eye on that, because that could really run away with us, and certainly there are plans to employ quite a lot of people.

515 I am also interested in the fact here, where it says ‘Building and Development Control’, that expenditure staff costs are higher than anticipated in 2020, however reduced in 2021 pending the appointment of a permanent planning officer. I cannot see – unless I am a bit slow – what that has got to do with staff costs.

520 We are now talking, as well, about spending money on the Land Use Plans. That is something that concerns me as well. I believe the problem with the Land Use Plans, we have spent so much on them already – £500,000-odd – it is a very great deal of money. I do not believe, unfortunately, that the Land Use Plan has done enough, where some applications in the protected area of some particular properties have not received the attention that they should in preserving their heritage content as regards their status in this community, and some of them – one or two of them –
525 actually being listed buildings. That is something that concerns me greatly.

I have written a separate piece here on the harbour and its deficit. Some of my remarks I have already stated in this Chamber, but I want to add a little more detail, this time around the £84,000 in deficit, which I find seems to change as we go through the capital budget and the main budget. I am having a terrible job tallying up the figures.

530 I have found out recently, in answer to my questions, that £50,000 of this deficit is due to the unresolved issue of pilotage. On several occasions at P&F Committee meetings, I have made the suggestion that, as we were advertising for a new harbourmaster, could we please look to an applicant with a pilotage qualification. I am not criticising in any way the new harbourmaster, let me make that clear.

535 Previously, when I asked, ‘Could the other members of staff to be trained to become a pilot – or one of them to become a pilot?’, I was told they had refused. I found out that the issue of pilotage cost the harbour around £50,000 a year. I would now like to know why my request to look for a harbourmaster with a pilot’s ticket was not followed up. I would also like to know – I would be interested to know in the fullness of time – how many boats require a pilot aboard to
540 bring them in, including the names of the boats. I do not believe it is very many of them, so pilotage is a very expensive, serious issue.

I am asking the General Services Committee to look for someone, perhaps working in the Harbour area, who might be willing to obtain the necessary qualification if the States assists with the training. These are some of the kind of things that need doing, so we do not have to use our
545 combined tax as a budget lever to raise and cover problem areas. These problem areas want addressing.

It might also pay to advertise the need for a pilot in Alderney, to see if there is anyone here who could fill the post. The expenditure costs £84,000 above budget; £16,000 came from running the water taxi service. We all realised there was no choice – the water taxi could not be
550 abandoned, as no one else had expressed an interest and £16,000 was not unreasonable, so well done and thank you for stepping in.

In the Budget report, page 9, the harbour is mentioned as the elephant in the room, as we have heard from Mr Harris. With £70,000 deficit being attributed to three moorings and the provision of water taxis – possibly other items in there as well, I am not sure; the local fisherman and things
555 like this.

Mention of overtime due to Covid-19: I have suggested this, and I would like this followed up as well – I believe an app can be purchased for an iPhone with an alarm which is triggered automatically to monitor boats in the sea around Alderney. This would save a great deal of overtime and a great deal of money at the harbour, and this needs following up and looking at. As
560 I have not had time to look up the overtime figure – which I feel is questionable, because I do want this suggestion followed up – I only hope somebody will take notice of these suggestions and use them.

I, as is well known, never did agree with the information that came out about the ambulance. I still believe that the ambulance should remain private, run by the public. I do not believe it should
565 be brought in to the States and I certainly am not at all happy about the costs being added to the rates. Again, this is using the actual combined tax as a budget lever, just to pop anything in there just say, ‘Right, we will adjust here and the public will have to pay.’ That for me is not satisfactory, and I still see that this is due to its consultation, it is not yet decided and I would urge the public to make sure that their comments are to keep this out of States’ hands. I do not think it is a good
570 idea to be run by the States, and I never have.

I would like to finish by saying that what we have learned from staycation – and I would like to just go back to this point that if we give them something they will come – is something that I remember, we learned this lesson at the Airport, when a sale of fuel took place because it was getting near its expiry date. I would like to remind everyone of this, because I think it is really
575 important and these are things again that we can ... It is not that we learn from them; it is that we remember them, and if we remember and what we can do with them, we can build on tourism and we can do something good for the Island. What happened when that fuel sale took place was that there was a rush of large aircraft. It was well advertised to the mainland UK, Guernsey and Jersey, and it resulted in a very pleasant early flurry of light aviation as they felt they could come
580 for the same price as in Guernsey to get their fuel, and it meant a great deal for these people. They were coming backwards and forwards while the fuel was available.

Again that just teaches you something, that if you can build something and give something, they will come.

Those are my final remarks, and I thank you, sir.
585

The President: Thank you very much indeed. Much food for thought.
Would anybody else like to speak before I invite Mr Dent? Ms Burgess.

Ms Burgess: Thank you, Mr President, fellow States Members.

I was actually in two minds about speaking because I think a lot has already been said, and a lot that has been said has a lot of points. So I had written my own, but I think they have all been pretty much covered.
590

I did pick up on the comments being made, and I do understand Mr Snowden's concerns about spend in the general service area, but if you actually look right down to what we are talking about – we are talking about sewage, the harbour, provision for our elderly population – they are big
595 spends, but they are actually *necessary* spends. Once they are spent we do not have to keep revisiting these large budgeted spends. So I think in the future, that does have an impact.

Of course, I also wanted to get up because I wanted to thank Liz Morris and Stephen Taylor, our adviser, and the Treasury team for the work they did on this. You can see the hard work. You
600 can see the depth of the work and it is appreciated and noted.

As I said, I had written quite a bit, but I am going to spare everybody, because I think I am repeating; but I do want to pick up on this ... It is not really relevant to what we are talking about right now, as it has not yet been decided, but it has been mentioned about the ambulance and the fear of adding it on to TRP and then breaking it down, to thinking about the elderly lady at
605 home on her own then having to pay more than the subscription rate. But when you break it down, okay, couples and families will benefit because they will be paying less in the subscription fee, but a single household is actually £40 subscription now, and it is £50 if it was added annually on the TRP. So yes, it is a £10 raise annually, and nobody wants to see that. However, it is not as heinous as it has been suggested. I think the fact that that couples and families will actually benefit
610 with a reduced annual cost is something to consider.

But as I say, that is not really relevant because it has not yet been decided. I just wanted to make the points, because I am listening to the comments being made and I understand all the concerns and I echo some of them, but I just wanted to say thank you to Liz and Steve.

The President: Thank you very much indeed. Do we have any other takers? No?
Then, Mr Dent, I am sure that you will wish respond.
615

Mr Dent: Thank you, Mr President.

I will start with Mr Gentle. I take his points, but we are in a remarkably good financial position, and we must be seen to be responsible by Guernsey. If they find themselves having difficulties, they will not be kind to us if they think we have not been responsible. So I think we have a duty in
620 this respect to be seen to be doing absolutely the right thing, particularly at this moment.

625 As to the ambulance, well, it has not actually decided how we are going to fund it. I take everybody's points of different views, but that is something we will be deciding at some point later this year.

I will go now on to the Alderney Property Tax. I think what we said was that the rates would rise no more than the expected rise in Guernsey – i.e. it would be no more than would have occurred had we stayed with TRP and Guernsey's system.

630 Mr Snowden and Mr Jean made a number of very reasonable points regarding the economy, and I think this is something for the Committee for Tourism and Economic Development to run with. I understand that they will be, through the Revive and Thrive work that they are doing, so I am hoping that something will come of that.

635 With regard to the capital reserves, yes, they were very large a few years ago, but I think that was not how it was intended. We have always had difficulty actually spending it because of our inability and resources. It was actually a bad thing that we did not get on with some of the work that we always had intended to, and we were always moving it over to the next year. So the money in the capital reserves is there to be spent and there are some important things which we need to spend it on. By spending it now, we will not have to spend it later.

640 So those are my points. Thank you very much.

The President: Thank you very much, Mr Dent.

Now, we come to the vote and Mr Gentle expressed some concern that the States would not be able to vote on each individual Proposition. So let me read you Rule 15 of the Rules of Procedure:

Unless the States otherwise agree, the President shall direct that where there is more than one proposition put down for any matter, each such proposition or part thereof may be debated or voted upon separately, in which case Rules 10 to 14 shall apply to each such part.

645 So unless there is an agreed view amongst the Members that they should all be taken together, then they will be taken separately.

Does that accord with your understanding, Madam Greffier?

650 **The Greffier:** Yes, sir.

The President: Does anybody want to make the contrary case?

In that event we will take them separately. Thank you.

655 **The Greffier:** Thank you.

So the first item is to accept the States of Alderney Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2021.

Mr Jean: Sorry, could you say that again? I am trying to find the page.

660 **The Greffier:** You are being asked to accept the States of Alderney Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2021.

A vote was taken and the results were as follows:

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED
Ms Burgess	None	Mr Abel
Mr Dent		
Mr Gentle		
Mr Harris		
Mr Jean		
Mr McKinley		
Mr Roberts		
Mr Snowdon		

The Greffier: Thank you.

The second item is to approve a 5% increase to the combined 2020 yield of Occupiers Rates and TRP to enable rates to be set for Alderney Property Tax rates of charge 2021

A vote was taken and the results were as follows:

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED
Mr Dent	Mr Roberts	Mr Abel
Mr Harris	Mr Snowdon	
Mr Jean	Mr Gentle	
Mr McKinley	Ms Burgess	

665 **The Greffier:** That is 4 votes for and 4 votes against, sir, so it is whether you use your casting vote on that matter.

The President: Can I think about that, whilst you take the votes on the next one.

670 **The Greffier:** Sir.

Item 3, to approve that the rates of Fuel Duty will be kept consistent with the States of Guernsey for 2021.

A vote was taken and the results were as follows:

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED
Ms Burgess	None	Mr Abel
Mr Dent		
Mr Gentle		
Mr Harris		
Mr Jean		
Mr McKinley		
Mr Roberts		
Mr Snowdon		

The President: It seems to me that this is essentially a political decision, and I think in those circumstances it would be inappropriate for me to exercise my casting vote.

675 So as I understand it, Madam Greffier, the Proposition fails.

The Greffier: Yes, sir.

Mr McKinley: Which Proposition fails?

680

Several Members: Number 2.

The President: I complicated it, Mr McKinley, I am sorry. I needed a little time to think!

685 **Mr McKinley:** Thanks very much, sir.

The Greffier: Item 4, to approve that the rates of Document Duty will be kept consistent with the States of Guernsey for 2021.

A vote was taken and the results were as follows:

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED
Mr Abel	None	None
Ms Burgess		
Mr Dent		
Mr Gentle		
Mr Harris		
Mr Jean		
Mr McKinley		
Mr Roberts		
Mr Snowdon		

690 **The Greffier:** Item 5, to accept the States of Alderney Water Board Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2021.

A vote was taken and the results were as follows:

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED
Ms Burgess	None	Mr Abel
Mr Dent		
Mr Gentle		
Mr Harris		
Mr Jean		
Mr McKinley		
Mr Roberts		
Mr Snowdon		

The Greffier: Finally, to maintain the Water Rates of charge for 2021 at 2020 levels.

A vote was taken and the results were as follows:

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED
Ms Burgess	None	Mr Abel
Mr Dent		
Mr Gentle		
Mr Harris		
Mr Jean		
Mr McKinley		
Mr Roberts		
Mr Snowdon		

The Greffier: Thank you. All apart from number 2, sir, are carried.

Mr Jean: Sir, would you allow me to raise a point?

695

The President: Well, if you would like to stand up ...

700 **Mr Jean:** It is only very brief. It is just to say that I would have voted against item 2, but I was busy trying to find the page, through my own stupidity. That is what I would like to say: I would have voted against.

The President: Well, that being the case, it failed anyway. So I think that concludes that Item. Let's move on now, if we may, Madam Greffier, to Item V.

**V. Appointment of Temporary Chief Executive –
Mr Adrian Lewis appointed; and
Mr Abel appointed to Policy and Finance Committee**

Item V.

The States of Alderney is asked:

To approve the appointment of Mr Adrian Lewis as temporary Chief Executive of the States of Alderney.

The Greffier: Item V, sir, is the appointment of the temporary Chief Executive.

705 The States of Alderney is asked to approve the appointment of Mr Adrian Lewis as temporary chief executive of the States of Alderney.

Sir, you and I have received an amendment to that Proposition. The amendment asks to replace that Proposition with the following:

“To delete the proposition and replace it with:

The States of Alderney is asked to approve:

- 1. The appointment of Mr Adrian Lewis as temporary Chief Executive of the States of Alderney; and*
- 2. The appointment of Mr Willan (Bill) Abel as a Member of the Policy and Finance Committee”.*

710 **The President:** Thank you. Please bear with us on this one, because it is quite complicated. Mr Dent, you would have proposed the initial motion.

Mr Dent: That is correct, sir.

715 **The President:** Thank you. And Mr Gentle, you would have seconded the original motion.

Mr Gentle: Yes, sir.

The President: You now have an application for an amendment.

720 **Mr Dent:** Indeed I do, sir, and I believe I should ask you to abridge the notice period to allow an amendment as per Rule 7 of the Rules of Procedure. Is that correct?

The President: Oh, very well prepared Mr Dent. Yes, absolutely.

725 There should be four days' notice given of any amendments, but the Rules do provide that in certain circumstances, I can either abridge that period of notice or I can allow it without any notice at all.

I think that on the basis that the purpose of this is to allow Mr Abel to be voted onto the Policy and Finance Committee, in those circumstances, I have taken the view that I will exercise that.

730 In terms of the amendment itself, can I just make it very clear that this has stretched to the very limits of my discretion in allowing an amendment to a Proposition. But I have taken a pragmatic view, in that the desired outcome of all the States Members was that Mr Abel should be as quickly as possible elected onto the Policy and Finance Committee, so on that occasion, that being the case, I have come to the view that I can just allow it.

So if you would like now, please, to open the amendment.

735 **Mr Dent:** Mr President, yes, I should like to propose an amendment.
My amendment is that the present Proposition is deleted and that is replaced with as the
Greffier has read out:

The States of Alderney is asked to approve:

1. *The appointment of Mr Adrian Lewis as temporary Chief Executive of the States of Alderney;*
and
2. *The appointment of Mr Willan (Bill) Abel as a Member of the Policy and Finance Committee.*

Mr President, I have been advised that it is unclear whether the first of these appointments
needs to be ratified by the full States, but the advice of the Law Officers is that to do so would
740 remove any shadow of doubt.

In September, P&F resolved to agree to the appointment of Adrian Lewis to this position, and
I would therefore ask that the States now confirms this appointment.

The second appointment, which is the subject of the amendment, stems, of course, from the
recent by-election.

745 That is really all I need to say, I hope. Thank you.

The President: Thank you.

For what it is worth, I am with the Law Officers on this one, Mr Dent. I think this is the
appropriate way of dealing with it.

750 Mr Gentle, you are going to second the amendment.

Mr Gentle: Sir, colleagues, I am not going to say anything other than I support this.
Thank you.

755 **The President:** Thank you. Would any Member like to speak in opposition to the amendment?
So the amendment now passes, and that replaces the original Proposition. I think for safety's
sake, I should ask Mr Harris about comments at the People's Meeting on the appointment of the
temporary CEO.

760 **Mr Harris:** Yes, sir. It was queried if the full States were asked to approve Mr Muter as CEO –
the Convenor advised that he would seek clarity on this issue.

Other comments were: why has this process taken so long; how long is 'temporary'; and are
we actively looking for a replacement CEO?

No other comments received.

765

The President: Would anybody like to speak on the amended Proposition to appoint Mr Lewis
and to appoint Mr Abel?

In that even, I think, Madam Greffier, we can approve that.

770 **The Greffier:** Yes, sir.

The President: Item VI, please.

**VI. Requête –
Election of reduced Policy and Finance Committee –
Item withdrawn**

Item VI.

THESE PREMISES CONSIDERED, your Petitioners humbly pray that the States of Alderney maybe pleased to resolve, pursuant to section 49(4) and 50(1) of the Government of Alderney Law, 2004:

Whether, after consideration of the Requête dated 1st September 2020 they are of the opinion to direct that:

1. The States of Alderney to elect a new Policy and Finance Committee consisting of a Chairman and four Members.

775 **The Greffier:** Sir, Item VI is a requête received under section 45(4) of the Government of Alderney Law, 2004, in that four Members of the States signed a Petition to you, sir, in the terms that at their meeting on 14th January 2020 the States resolved under Item VI to appoint all 10 States Members to be members of the Policy and Finance Committee; and that your Petitioners no longer have confidence in a 10-person committee delivering good governance for the people of the Island.

780 That was signed on 1st September 2020 by Mr Gentle, Mr McKinley, Mr Harris and Ms Burgess.

The President: Thank you.

Mr Harris, any comments at the People's Meeting?

785 **Mr Harris:** Yes, sir. Mr Gentle advised that this Item has been withdrawn.

It was commented that five P&F members should not be making the big decisions for the Island, and that States Members should also declare worldwide interests.

The President: Thank you.

790 Mr Gentle, you made it clear at the People's Meeting last week that you proposed to withdraw this requête this evening, so would you like to please propose that it is withdrawn.

Mr Gentle: Sir, colleagues.

The front page of last Friday's *Alderney Press* stated and I quote:

If the tabling of a requête in the States of Alderney is a rare event, for the proposer to withdraw it from the Billet is surely without precedent.

795 But here we are. Politicians make decisions. That is why we are elected and sometimes they are unpopular, but we are here to make decisions on behalf of the people. This requête, whilst popular in the idea, is possibly missing something alongside it in tandem.

I believe that there are many pluses to reduce the number of members on P&F to five and removing this from the Billet seems wrong to contemplate, but I hope that those in favour of change will see that pulling this from debate at this point is the only option today.

800 In politics, perception is reality. It is not how things are but how they appear. It is also not personal, and to that end I thank those colleagues who, despite possibly being on the other side of the argument, gave their support and understanding, knowing that this requête was actually brought in the best faith.

805 We who signed it truly believe that it was brought for the right reasons, but we also believe that, as elected Members in a democratic society, we need to take any and all views of the public on board. Concerns were raised once this Billet was published and it might be that some, all or even none may need acting on; but until we check we will never know.

810 The overriding concern is that the P&F mandate needs tidying up. We do not want to be the people seeing something through to discover that we left a gaping hole open that could be exploited by those who have not necessarily got the best interests of the Island at heart of, by which time it will be too late. That scenario does not even bear thinking about.

In the spirit of total transparency and good governance practice, we felt that it was wholly wrong to enter into debate in the States with a Member absent. We have to involve all 10 elected Members.

815 The requête was lodged before we lost our Member, which is something that we could not mitigate for, but if it had been me absent, I might have thought it underhanded to bring this without a full House. Their voice is no less important than any other Member and has a right to be heard.

820 So let us take this off the table, go away and do the work necessary. Let us mend what is wrong. Let us have a firm, strong Government, inclusive of the people that we are listening to, because the consequence of poor governance is disaster.

825 Let us get – this is to borrow a word from Mr Snowden – the safeguards, checks and balances, if necessary in place and get everything right to the satisfaction of the people but, more importantly, for the good of the Island before we go any further. I urge my colleagues to vote to withdraw this.

Thank you.

830 **The President:** Now, Mr McKinley, you were going to second the requête and now I understand you want to second the application to withdraw.

Mr McKinley: I do, sir, and I reserve my right to speak, if I may.

The President: Thank you very much.

835 **Mr McKinley:** Thank you, sir.

Mr Roberts: Point of order, sir.

Should we be discussing the requête, as it has been withdrawn, sir?

840 **The President:** It has not been withdrawn. It will be withdrawn when there is a vote of this Assembly.

Mr Roberts: A vote to withdraw it?

845 **The President:** Yes. What I am now going to invite you to do is to treat this like any other Proposition and invite any Member who wants to talk about the requête to now speak.

Mr Dent, you wish to speak.

Mr Dent: I intend to abstain on this motion.

850 However, I want everyone to heed a warning – a warning given in 2016 by Andrew McDonald, the author of ‘Alderney’s Choices’.

If I can quote from the preface of his report, he said:

I write as one who has come to have a great affection for the island and its people. I write also as one who fears for Alderney’s future. I fear that unless it is willing to undertake radical reforms now, it will not prosper in the years to come.

That report, as you know, came to naught, but Andrew McDonald’s point was that economic prosperity was itself contingent on a Government that is able to make policy and then action it,

855 and that the possibly stochastic dystopian rhythms that occasionally seem to characterise our Government could be our downfall.

In 2017, the Macdonald report was followed by an attempt at more limited reforms within the framework of the 2004 Government of Alderney Law. A report was produced under the chairmanship of our then President, Mr Stuart Trought, public consultation on the reforms that
860 emerged seem to have general public support.

The individual recommendations were debated, first in P&F and then in this Chamber. There appear to be two camps: those who felt the reforms did not go far enough and those who wanted to retain the *status quo*. As a consequence, nothing happened.

In 2018, we had a Good Governance Group that took up the cause for a third time. The focus
865 became the role that citizens' juries and deliberative democracy might play in constructing a new governance model. The initiative fell apart, ironically, I think because P&F felt they were becoming too removed from process.

In 2019, we had another go, with a reconstituted Good Governance Group. This time we got as far as a resolution in this Chamber supporting a move to executive government, but then Covid
870 and the staffing problems within our Civil Service cut things short.

As an interim measure, Mr Gentle and the remnants of the Good Government Group were tonight proposing to try and get back to a five-person P&F Committee. They believed that transparency and scrutiny were suffering. I think they were also recognising that too much time was wasted on revisiting matters already discussed and they were recognising the need to have
875 more time for focused discussion on real issues. I commend them for their thinking.

This evening I should only speak for myself and as someone who has chaired P&F meetings for the last four years, I want to make it clear that Alderney needs a Government with a common vision. It needs a Government with policies on everything from connectivity through economic development and on to health, education and the environment. Most of all, I think Alderney needs
880 a Government that can make decisions.

When I say this, we do not need 10 people to decide how much hand cleanser we buy. In fact we do not need 10 people to decide many of the things that come before P&F. But we *should* have 10 people making important policy decisions. We need to recognise the different roles of P&F and the States. Recently it has become blurred and those who say that P&F is the States *in camera*, I
885 agree! I have said this many times.

I want to remind you that the first line of the P&F mandate is to formulate and make recommendations to the States are all policy matters. P&F only act in line with any remit it receives from the full States. Policy made solely within the confines of P&F simply is not policy.

Mr Snowdon, commenting on present procedures, said on Radio Guernsey yesterday that the
890 Committee could enter into option agreements, it could deliver exclusive rights for the Tourgis development or a marina project without any public scrutiny. He also said, Policy and Finance has these major deals and resolutions behind closed doors and then it is private and confidential and the public do not know anything about it.

Mr President, colleagues, P&F could only do these things if the full States granted it those
895 powers –

Mr Snowdon: Point of order.

The President: Mr Snowdon.
900

Mr Snowdon: Sir, that has happened with P&F in the past, and option agreements have been entered into behind closed doors, so I think your point is not correct, and I am happy to back that up at a later time.

Thank you.

The President: Thank you.
905

Mr Dent: Thank you. I still believe that P&F can only do these things if the full States grants it those powers. But what I remember is P&F urging *not* to ignore the consultations Mr Snowdon thinks so necessary.

910 Colleagues, P&F is the place for business that has some element of confidentiality and where Members should be able to express opinions and ideas in private. In many ways, it should be a think tank – our equivalent of Cabinet.

Before I sit down, a few possibly hard truths. We are far too often frightened to make decisions. We have to be prepared to compromise. We cannot scupper whole plans simply because there
915 are elements in the plan that we personally would have different. We have to learn to trust each other more, and we have to learn that sometimes we need to take baby steps before we run. The Chinese say that a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. I wish Mr Gentle well; I will support him in any way that I can. He wants to get it right, and that is good, but I am in many ways sad that this motion is going no further tonight.

920 I know that there are one or two of you here tonight who are openly against reform, and I respect you. It is clear where you stand. There are also one or two who sometimes appear to pay lip service to reform but argue repeatedly on all sorts of issues, not just this one, that it is not the right time or we need to know more, or that we have not consulted x or y. Sometimes I fear it will never be the right time – we will never know enough, and there will always be someone who has
925 not been consulted. If we are to survive, we are going to have to take that first step in the journey of a thousand miles.

Please let this be the last time we kick the can.

Thank you.

930 **The President:** Thank you very much indeed.
Now, Ms Burgess.

Ms Burgess: Thank you, Mr President, fellow States Members.

935 The reason why I want to get up and say something is because, of course, I was one of the people who signed this requête; but I am also going to say why I am in favour of having the requête pulled.

The reason why I signed the requête: I just wanted this conversation to start. Actually, reform is clearly needed. So when I was asked to sign the requête, I agreed in a way to start this process.

940 I do, however, recognise that it has to be done properly, and that is why I support it being pulled. Being new to the process, I had thought an amendment could also be attached to address much-needed safeguards and details. However, that was not really possible and it feels too rushed to be thorough enough, so I do think it has to be pulled.

Also, the time is not great, as Mr Gentle mentioned as well, because I think it has to have the full States Members present, and we have a Member absent.

945 In reality, I would like to see this come from the Good Governance Group. Seeing it reformed in early 2019 made me hopeful that we would come to see some things happening. Personally, I think working groups are an effective way to get the proper advice and support needed to bring items to committee to start the discussions. I have newly joined the Good Governance Group, and I look forward to moving forward with this.

950 I did raise concerns and tried to speak to some of my colleagues about needing more detail work, especially safeguards, as although change is needed, it has to be thoroughly considered for it to be totally effective, and it does have to have public consultation.

955 I appreciate that Mr Gentle listened to the concerns around him. We do need to see what the objectives are and how it would work and have clear direction. I just do not want this to fail in the long term.

Mr Dent has said that there has to be trust, but that trust must be built first. Making sure any reduction in Policy and Finance Committee is important but other States Members do have to have a strong feeling and strong purpose for it to actually work, and be able to question any

960 decisions that are felt to be wrong. It is all very well talking about scrutiny, but we need to know what can be done effectively. I do not want anybody to have a sense of sitting on the side-lines feeling powerless, because in the long run that is not going to work for this. I would hate to see any kind of reform being jeopardised because it has not had enough checks done.

This cannot come from just one person. It has to come from everybody, and everybody needs to have their input for this to work.

965 So for these reasons I have supported the requête, but I also support the decision for it to be pulled.

The President: Thank you.

Would anyone else like to speak? Mr Harris.

970

Mr Harris: Mr President, fellow States Members.

I do not want to repeat the words of Ms Burgess or Mr Gentle, so I am going to keep it a lot briefer than they have. I believe in change and reform. The public want change and reform. But we must do it properly and, even more importantly, with the input of the public.

975 Sir, thank you.

The President: Thank you.

Mr Snowdon.

980 **Mr Snowdon:** Thank you, President.

I think we should thank Mr Gentle, Mr Harris, Ms Burgess and Mr McKinley for actually having this debate, which I thought was pulled, but I think it is very good that we are having this debate about this Item. I think that Mr Gentle showed that he has listened to the public and concerns from States Members. I think that is actually a very good process, that it has not actually been pushed through without safeguards.

985

Going back to the points that Mr Dent was making, P&F have entered into option agreements. I am not saying the current P&F have, but there have been in the past option agreements signed. It has entered into talks over Tourgis developments, with ... I am not quite sure if we did send a letter of comfort. You know better than me, but with letters of comfort being requested from P&F.

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We just went into the marina project with exclusive rights for 18 months. I am not saying there is anything wrong with that, but I am just trying to say that a lot of this stuff happens at P&F behind closed doors. Then it is commercially sensitive, so it is then private and confidential. So I think, with regard to what the Members were doing with the requête, it is getting this item debated. I think you do need five States Members, or even fewer; however, you have got to move the power or you have to come up with some options here – and there needs to be a bit more professional advice about what we are actually doing with this.

995

You either remove the power from P&F, so you actually get a lot more in this Chamber debated, rather than probably 80% of stuff never actually coming into this Chamber; or you start up a Scrutiny Committee, which has some powers, so you do not want the Scrutiny Committee coming back in six months' time saying, 'P&F, you shouldn't have actually signed that or gone into that' – it needs to have some teeth; or you basically open the doors to P&F. But there is some sort of model that needs to be done.

1000

I am glad they have raised this Item tonight with the requête and in the public domain, but I think we have got to be very careful that the safeguards are in place and you take the public on the journey with you and you get the buy-in from States Members.

1005

I really have sympathy with Mr Gentle with this, because he has really been trying, but I think there needs to be a little bit of professional guidance from somewhere. I think that, unfortunately, because of issues with the States at the moment, there have not been the resources available, but

1010 hopefully, resources will be made available for a bit more professional guidance about how to deliver this, with the safeguards and what is needed.

1015 So hopefully we will see something coming back in the near future about reform and the way forward that we move. But it is not just about P&F. I know you all work very hard on the General Services Committee, but six Members on the General Services Committee ... I do not need to quote anyone, but in a debate some time ago there was mention, maybe before a debate, 'Well, don't worry Alex, we are going to win this one because we have six Members.' So then I think, if you think about the debate in the Chamber, that leaves four Members who are not on the General Services Committee that could basically try and say anything, but if you have got the other Members that know that they are going to vote a certain way because they have been involved in the process, then that is a breakdown for this Chamber as well, so I think there needs to be a review of the whole governance of Alderney. It is just unfortunate we have had so many Good Governance Groups, that I know myself and the President were on, with Mr Dent as well, and Mr Eggleston who has very much been on a lot of them and well done to him. But we need to start making some progress.

1025 I think we need to go back to buy-in with the public. I have a feeling that at the moment there is a bit of 'them and us', when we are members of the public that are elected to represent the public. So I think instead of the 'them and us' there need to be more working relationships with the public, more interactions with the public and stakeholders and people who may be specialists in different areas actually coming together. This is not about them and us. It is all about trying to get the best for the Island as we move forward.

1030 This good governance stuff is really important. It is not just about P&F. P&F does need to be sorted out, we have got to have those safeguards in place, but it is looking at the whole picture about how we engage with the public and come up with the right policies which are going to help this Island moving forward.

1035 I go back to the people who signed the requête and have withdrawn it after listening to the public. Well done. It is actually quite a hard task to get here. Well done on bringing it and well done on listening. I really do mean that.

I look forward to further engagement. You have started the conversation, which is good. Let us see where we can get to next.

1040 Thank you.

The President: Thank you.

Mr Jean.

1045 **Mr Jean:** From my point of view, you have done the right thing withdrawing the requête tonight. There are other ways of dealing with this. Once the power for a place was given on P&F to every Member of the States of Alderney, it becomes a much harder thing to suddenly decide you are going to disenfranchise five, possibly six of them. How do you keep them in the loop?

1050 Why worry about a 10-member P&F Committee, when what should really be happening is more stuff, more of the items that we deal with in P&F – which, let's face it, draw some pretty interesting debate and some pretty strong feeling. Kick them upstairs, put them on the Billet. Put those items on the Billet – more and more of them – and have your proper debates and your decisions made more up here, where the public can contribute at the People's Meeting.

Alex was quite right –

1055

The President: 'Mr Snowdon'.

Mr Jean: Mr Snowdon – I am very sorry, I do apologise. Mr Snowdon is quite right in what he said.

1060 My view is that having given that power, it is very difficult to disenfranchise possibly the five or six Members of the States. The way to deal with the problem is to bring more of the items upstairs onto the Billet, where they can be debated here.

1065 My problem with the situation is that one would always look at anybody signing a requête and say, 'Well, they're going to be the people who are going to be the new Members of P&F.' Those Members who have not signed the requête and have not even heard a word about the requête or been invited to sign it, suddenly realise that they are going to be out in the cold. Somehow you have got to get over that, and that is not easy.

Having given to the 10, you have got a problem.

1070 **The President:** Thank you, Mr Jean.
Mr McKinley.

Mr McKinley: Thank you, sir.

1075 I am not going to go into a long discussion on this, or long expression of interest in this, because a lot of what I want to say has already been said.

I congratulate Mr Dent on his statement and what he said – entirely right – and I fully support this requête. I also at the same time have to support its withdrawal for the moment.

1080 Mr Gentle has done a tremendous amount of work on this. He has worked hard since mid-August. Indeed, if you remember Mr David Earl as a States Member and a member of the Good Governance Group, I was a member of the Good Governance Group and still am. So was Mr Gentle at that time.

In mid-August, we had two Members missing – one of them Mr Earl and the other of course was Mr Muter. Since then we have not been able to make very much progress.

1085 I very much hope that in the New Year, the Good Governance Group will be reformed to its normal size and will start working once again in the interests of not just the States, but the interests of the Island and of the population. I do believe that Mr Gentle has done so much work and spent so many hours and sleepless nights on this – I know that for a fact. I know that he has sought legal advice on several occasions. It was only finally when he got legal advice that he brought this to the Sates, or proposed bringing this to the States today.

1090 Unfortunately, other legal advice and some of the things that have happened since then have forced him really to withdraw it, but he is not cancelling it completely. This requête will be raised again in the New Year under the new States, when all 10 States Members will have a chance to think about it and to talk about it. Why do we have 10 Members on what is in fact a cabinet? We have 10 Members of the full States and 10 members of the cabinet.

1095 If you look down the road at Guernsey, they have 40 Members for a population of about 65,000, which includes us, and of course two of those Members are our own people; and they have the Policy & Resources Committee which is, in effect, their cabinet. We have 10 Members for 2,000 of the population. Should we be reducing the size of the entire States from 10 to slightly lower?

1100 I think all of this needs to be looked at when the new Committee forms in the New Year. I hope very much that I will be on that Committee. I hope also that Mr Gentle will be on it and I hope that we will be able to move forward in the way that we had intended.

It is with great regret that I second this proposal to withdraw it, but I do so in the interests of more public consultation and another way ahead.

1105 Thank you very much, sir.

The President: Thank you. Would anybody else like to speak?
Would you like to exercise your right of reply, Mr Gentle?

1110 **Mr Gentle:** Sir, colleagues, thank you.

I have been making some notes as we have gone, so it will be a bit scattergun.

If the requête being lodged has no other result in the short term than to alert people to the fact that we are listening and we sincerely want change then – I cannot speak for the other people who signed, but I will take that as a small win for now.

1115 Mr Dent said in his closing remarks, ‘frightened to compromise’. I take this as a compromise, but at the same time I thank you because you are very good at making sure things end up in here from Policy & Finance.

Ms Burgess mentioned about a process starting: yes, thank you. That was the aim.

1120 The Good Governance Group, as we have heard, has suffered various problems which, when put together, basically put it in furlough for the last six months.

Just to pick up on something Mr Jean said, two of the four signatories were not going to be in the new gang – at least two of the four.

The President: Possibly.

1125

Mr Jean: On a point of correction, sir.

The President: Yes, please.

1130 **Mr Jean:** That absolutely *illuminates* the point that I was making: *already decided*. (Laughter)

The President: Thank you.

Mr Gentle: And the point I am making is that I *wouldn't* have been on there!

1135 Mr McKinley, this will not be raised as a requête again – I promise you. This will go through Policy & Finance or whatever it needs, but I am not going through this again. (**Mr McKinley:** No ...) And I am not taking you with me either. (**Mr McKinley:** Oh, thanks!) (Laughter) I will walk with you but that is it!

In closing, sir, I have said enough – I think we have all said enough. Thank you.

1140

The President: I would like to say something actually.

1145 Firstly, for people who do not know what a requête is, it is a way in which a matter can be brought before this Chamber for debate with a resolution which has not been through the Committee system. So there has been no debate had in the Committees. It is brought here; it is brought by four people, and the other six Members may not know anything about it until it has been issued. So that was the course that Mr Gentle chose to take and whilst he may regard this as a small success, I would just gently remind those Members who sought to bring this to reflect upon the amount of time and resource that this has taken up with the Civil Service, with the Law Officers and with my Office. It should not be thought that bringing a requête should simply be a way of engaging in a conversation. A requête is brought for a specific purpose with a specific resolution.

1150 So finally, I would just like to say that if this matter is going to come back before the States for debate with a resolution, then perhaps those matters which have caused it to be withdrawn, probably, this evening need to be addressed before it gets into this Chamber. So if I can use the words of Boris Johnson, please make sure that when it comes back it is ‘oven-ready’.

Could we now please, Madam Greffier, move to a vote.

1160 **The Greffier:** Just to be certain, sir, so there is no confusion, this is a vote to withdraw the requête?

The President: It is.

The Greffier: Thank you.

A vote was taken and the results were as follows:

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED
Ms Burgess	None	Mr Abel
Mr Gentle		Mr Dent
Mr Harris		
Mr Jean		
Mr McKinley		
Mr Roberts		
Mr Snowdon		

The Greffier: That has passed, sir.

1165

The President: Thank you. And finally to Item VII.

**VII. Questions and Reports –
AeGL, AGCC and RCRH Financial Statements 2019 noted**

Item VII

The following reports were received from Mr James Dent:

- 1. AeGL Financial Statements 2019*
- 2. AGCC Financial Statements 2019*
- 3. RCRH Financial Statements 2019*

No Questions had been received.

The Greffier: Sir, Item VII, the following reports were received from Mr Dent – and these are how they appear in the Billet – the AeGL Financial Statements 2019; the AGCC Financial Statements 2019; and the RCRH Financial Statements 2019.

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The President: Mr Dent, I think this is just a housekeeping matter, it is just to note.

Mr Dent: Indeed, Mr President. It is just to note.

1175

The President: Thank you very much indeed.
I think on that basis, Madam Greffier we can move to the closing prayer.

The Greffier: Thank you, sir.

PRAYERS
The Greffier

The Assembly adjourned at 7.09 p.m.