



MINUTES OF AN ASSEMBLY OF PRINCIPALS AND ELECTORS

An Assembly of Principals, Officers and Electors of the Parish of St Martin was duly convened and held in the Public Hall on Thursday 23rd July 2020 at 7.00pm.

The Connétable Karen Shenton Stone welcomed all present and reminded the Assembly that they could sign the Attendance Book at the end of the meeting if they so wished. It was noted that 31 parishioners attended the Assembly.

Apologies were received from Michael Jehan. The Convening Notice was read by the Parish Executive Officer.

Item 1

Receive and if deemed advisable, approve the Minutes of the Parish Assembly held on 9th July 2020

The Connétable reminded those assembled that the Minutes had been available from the Public Hall and copies are on the seats. After due consideration, Mr William Sutton proposed the Minutes of the meeting held on 9th July 2020 be approved and Deputy Stephen Luce seconded the proposal.

A show of hands was in favour of the proposal, none were against.

Item 2

Receive and if deemed advisable, adopt the audited accounts of the Connétable for the financial year ended 30 April 2020. The said accounts having been previously verified by a firm of Chartered Accountants and examined and approved by the Committee appointed for that purpose. -

The Connétable presented an overview of the expenditure in the last financial year:

- The Parish Depot has had a major renovation – the first in 9 years - which should be completed on 7 August 2020.
- The Village Tea Rooms required an emergency extension to be completed which was ordered following a Health & Safety inspection.
- La Vielle École is now operational but the Surgery and Chemist leases were delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. These should be signed in August 2020.

The Connétable thanked members of the Municipality – office staff and Rates Committee included - for continuing their roles during these extraordinary times, along with the Roads Committee and Inspectors, the Community volunteers and Kay Lavery for her dedicated work in keeping the Parish in bloom during these past months of lockdown. The Connétable explained that despite there being a favourable majority to introduce kerbside recycling collection at last year's Parish Rates Assembly it was not possible to implement due to the unexpected expenses for-mentioned.

The Connétable stated she had requested the Accounts Committee to maintain the same Parish Rate for this year which was approved at their meeting and that the Comité des Connétables requested the Attorney General that the Island Wide Rate also remain the same this year and this was also approved.

The Connétable then introduced Mr Don Connolly of Alex Picot to the meeting who proceeded to run through the accounts ended 30 April 2020 for the benefit of the attendees. In particular, the following was mentioned: -

- The overall income increased by 4% due to a higher Parish Rate being charged and the 10% surcharge on Rates Demands brought in additional income.
- The road works permit fees are now paid into the General Account as opposed to the Roads Account due to new legislation.
- Salaries were higher than budgeted due to staff changes. This should come down in 2020/21.
- Professional fees totalled £27,712 - this covers the costs (such as legal fees, HR consultancy, accountancy fees, etc.) of project managers (HLG) employed by the Parish to administrate Parish properties along with GDPR and Parish Strategy costs. This figure was initially higher and was highlighted by the Accounts Committee. After reviewing the figure, it was discovered that £20,750 was incorrectly posted and should have been invoiced to La Vielle École account.
- Rector's Accommodation Entitlement showed a zero balance as this allowance was no longer required with the new Rector's post for the Parish.
- The Roads Account total spend was a lot lower than budgeted due to Covid-19 restrictions.
- Maintenance of properties - an increase is shown in 'other properties' this includes the emergency spend on the Village Tea Rooms in the sum of £10,000.
- The General Account showed an excess of income totalling £47,292 this is due to the Roads Account underspend during the year. The overall balance in hand totalled £307,542 which represents 22 weeks in hand before the new Parish Rates begin to get paid into Parish Accounts.
- The Reserve Funds expenditure covered ad hoc items:
 - o Parish Depot & Barn - £28,000 to refurbish Depot & professional fees for the Barn
 - o Church Projects - £2,600 to cover the cost of boiler work
- The activity in the former St Martin's School Project Reserve Fund was explained, noting that the rental income was lower than 2019 due to a reduction of rental income from the tenants of Maison Scolaithe for a short period due to inconvenience whilst work was completed on Le Vielle École project. It was also noted that the new tenants of La Vielle École are given 6 months' rent free period as stated in the normal commercial terms and conditions. This will be reflected in the 2020/2021 accounts.

Questions were then received from the Assembly:

- Mr Assman queried the high cost of HLG's fees and suggested the Parish terminate their contract with them now. This was not agreed as the Parish is near the end of the contract.
- Deputy Stephen Luce expressed grave dissatisfaction with the billing error made by HLG on such a small project. The Procureurs agreed and stated they would be taking this up with HLG. Mr Assman also queried why this was not noticed prior to the preparation of the accounts.

- Speeding fines income was queried (£780 in 2019 down to £75 in 2020). Centenier Peter Searle stated that not so many patrols took place during the pandemic and this effected income.
- Loan Payable – it was confirmed that the repayment period of the States loan is 20 years and 90-95% of total income from rents received will go towards the capital and interest payments. Mr Assman queried this stating that Parishioners should be benefiting from this income now as the Parishioners contributed for the initial cost of the project prior to the States loan. Mr Le Cocq responded stating this is a long-term investment agreed by Parishioners and a large income will be received in 20 years' time. It was confirmed that 5-10% of rental will be retained by the Parish for any expenditures that may occur.

There being no further questions, Mr William Sutton proposed the accounts be adopted and Mr Scott Wickenden seconded the proposal. A show of hands showed 27 in favour of the proposal and 1 against.

Item 3

Place at the disposal of the Roads Committee an amount required for the upkeep of the by-roads during the financial year ending 30 April 2021.

The Connétable stated that a substantial amount of road works were unable to be completed last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic and work only re-commenced after the end of the financial year. It was therefore agreed that £35,000 (half of the 2019/2020 underspend) would be added to the 2020/21 estimates so this spend would not impact on the intended work for 2020/21. The Roads Committee have therefore requested the same figure of £120,000 and the £35,000 underspend, for work to be undertaken during the year 2020/21.

There being no questions, the Roads Committee budget for the financial year 2020/21 of £155,000 was proposed by Deputy Stephen Luce and seconded by Mr Robin Perchard. A show of hands resulted in a unanimous approval.

Item 4

Consider the estimates for the presumed requirements for the financial year ending 30 April 2021 and tax the rate accordingly. Special Votes and Reserve Fund votes for consideration include expenditure in support of the Youth Centre Worker, Parish in Bloom and the Senior Citizens Christmas Fund

The Executive Officer explained the approach taken for calculating the estimated budgeted figures for the forthcoming year highlighting any key changes. Particular mention was made of the following: -

- Salaries reflected the RPI and considered the requirement for effective and efficient staffing levels.
- Expenditure for the Honorary Police similarly reflected an increase for RPI.
- Trésor – apologies were made to Rev Jonny Scott in omitting to prior consultation with the estimate of £50,000. This sum was to include, for example, the provision of a church cleaner.
- Maintenance of Properties – £69,000 for 'other properties and equipment' included £60,000 for the Village Tea Room extension.
- Depot and Barn Reserve Fund - £75,000 to be complete the refurbishment of the Depot.

The Parish Executive Officer then explained that the estimated sundry income for the year is £58,000. If the Parish Rate was to remain at 1.28p providing a notional deficit of £98,000, which the Parish could afford, it would mean that the Parish could be more flexible with the rate in a year's time to match expenditure.

Questions were then received from the Assembly:

- Deputy Stephen Luce requested why there was a need to maintain the higher estimate of £27,000 for 'Professional and legal fees' (£12,000 higher in 2020 from the estimated £15,000). The Parish Executive Officer responded with a breakdown as follows:
 - £15,000 HLG fees (which will fall away in 2021)
 - £6,000 Data Protection officer fees
 - £3,000 Rue de la Solitude fees
 - £3,000 general provision
- Mr Scott Wickenden proposed that the 'Charitable Grants' allocation be doubled from £7,000 to £14,000 this year due to a number of charities being hit hard, financially. The Procureurs responded stating many Parishioners prefer to give individually. This proposition was seconded by Mr Assman. A show of hands was then given with a result of 12 in favour and 13 against. The proposition was not carried.
- Mr Peter Germain added that Marks and Spencer distribute a large amount of food three times a week to needy Parishioners along with also assisting the Primary School with the funding of uniform for pupils.

The acceptance of the estimates were proposed by Mr Robin Perchard and seconded by Mr Denis Lawrence. A show of hands showed all were in favour.

The Parish Rate of 1.28p was then proposed by Mr Paul Gaudin and seconded by Mr Scott Wickenden. A show of hands resulted in a unanimous vote of acceptance.

Item 5

Elect a Committee to examine the Connétable's accounts for the year ending 30 April 2021

The Connétable read out the names of the current Connétable's Accounts Committee being:

Ex-Officio members:

The Connétable, Karen Shenton Stone

The Procureurs, Peter Germain and Lester Richardson

The Rector, Rev. Jonny Scott

Deputy Stephen Luce

Church Warden, Thelma Emberson

Centeniers, Peter Searle, Gordon Jones, Alan Phillips and David Birmingham

Parish Executive Officer, Peter Canham

Members voted in:

Mr Terry Jehan
Mr Denis Lawrence
Mr John M Germain
Mr Chris McFadyen
Mr William Sutton
Mr Danny Wherry
Mrs Vicky Corson

It being customary to vote the members en bloc, Mr William Sutton proposed and Mrs Vicky Corson seconded that the current members remain in office. By a show of hands, all were voted in for a further year.

The Connétable then asked if there were any other parishioners who wanted to put themselves forward for the Committee.

Mr Robin Perchard was proposed by Mrs Kay Laverty and seconded by Mr Chris McFadyen and by a show of hands Mr Robin Perchard was voted onto the Committee.

Mr Paul Gaudin was proposed by Mr William Sutton and seconded by Mrs Vicky Corson. By a show of hands, Mr Paul Gaudin was voted to the Committee.

Item 6

Appoint a firm of Chartered Accountants to audit the Connétable's accounts for the year ending 30 April 2021.

The Connétable asked Mr Don Connolly if Alex Picot would be prepared to continue the role of auditors to the Parish for the forthcoming year and after confirming the firm would be pleased to, Mr Paul Gaudin proposed to re-elect Alex Picot Chartered Accountants and Mr Denis Lawrence seconded the proposal. All were in favour.

Presentation for Maufant Youth Centre by Mrs Vicky Corson

Mrs Vicky Corson explained to the Assembly that a year ago Jackie Almeida gave an inspiring presentation for the Youth Club resulting in William Sutton becoming the Treasurer and herself becoming Chair for the Club in 2019 and HLG donating £500 for a billiard table. The Club is now a registered charity and so eligible for charitable grants. Mrs Carson went on to give many facts and figures for the Club:

- It caters for 397 engaged young people
- Many activities are arranged for all members throughout the year
- A number of vulnerable youngsters are on welfare checks
- New volunteer leader recruits come through the membership of the Club
- The Club provides a nurtures team which is updated regularly

The Parish were thanked for their continued support in funding a Youth Leader and a huge welcome would be given to any Parishioner who would wish to volunteer help or financial support to the Club.

Special Votes

The following Special Votes for the Reserve Fund were taken:

- Youth Centre Worker (£13,000) – proposed by Rev Jonny Scott and seconded by Mr William Sutton. A unanimous show of hands approved this vote.
- Parish in Bloom (£500) – the Connétable gave special thanks to Mrs Kay Laverty and Mrs Paulette De La Haye and this was followed by a round of applause for all their hard work with the floral displays in the Parish. The vote was proposed by Mr Danny Wherry and seconded by Mr Bob Pallot. A unanimous show of hands approved this vote.
- Senior Citizens Christmas Fund (£4,000) – the Connétable explained that due to the popularity of this event this gifted fund was drying up. It was agreed that 3 meals per year would be provided by the Parish as opposed to 2 meals in previous years. The vote was proposed by Mrs Vicky Corson and seconded by Rev Jonny Scott. A unanimous show of hands approved the vote.

The Connétable thanked the Procureurs du Bien Public and the Accounts Committee for all their support and commitment during what has proved to be a very difficult financial year.

The meeting closed at 20.30.



Karen Shenton Stone
Connétable

Date 6 October 2020