



AMENDED MINUTES OF AN ASSEMBLY OF PRINCIPALS, OFFICERS 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 Tuesday 18th July 2023 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 there were 37 attendees.

Apologies were received from Deputy Rosemary Binet, Reverend Peter Stone, Vickie Corson and Michael and Tracy Jehan. The Convening Notice was read by the Parish Secretary. The legality of the Convening Notice was queried by a Parishioner. The Connétable assured the Assembly that the Church Box Notice was published according to the regulations *Loi (1842) Sur Les Publications Dans Les Églises* and that all aspects of the Convening Notice were in order.

Item 1

Receive and if deemed advisable, approve the Minutes of the Parish Assembly held on 6th July 2023.

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 Gerald Le Cocq proposed the Minutes of the meeting held on 6th July 2023 be approved and Mr Robin Perchard 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 2023. 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 made a short speech to the Assembly covering the following points:

- The gifting of land on Rue de la Solitude was finally completed – a longstanding process of 40 years. This work along with the retarmacking of the road was made within budget of £90,000.
- Despite increasing costs, the Parish has managed the budget this last year with the rate remaining the same for the last 3 years. This was achieved by prudent ‘housekeeping’. Rising costs have, however, impacted on the cost of our refuse collections, all Parishes having been affected. Calculations have been made that the refuse collection costs each household approximately £85 per year which is only £1.65 per week for a very good service.
- This year the Parish has been presented with several projects:
 - Maison Scolaithe’s long term tenancy is ending and refurbishment is required before the property can be put on the market again.
 - The Village Tea Room lease is ending in January 2024 and refurbishment will be required prior to a new lease being issued.

- The exterior of the Public Hall has deteriorated badly over the last year causing damage to the interior also. An amount has been estimated in this year's budget to rectify these issues.

With these costs in mind the Parish has no choice but to ask for an increase in the rates. Every Parish that has already held its 2023 Rates Assembly have raised their rates.

- The Village Playground will soon be built. Planning permission has been granted. A parishioner has agreed to make a substantial donation and two smaller, very welcome donations have also been received. Parish funds of £20,000 will be transferred to the Village Green Reserve Fund for this project.

The Connétable gave special thanks to the Public Hall staff, the two Procureurs, Lester Richardson and William Sutton who continue to question all spending. The recently retired Procureur, Peter Germain was also thanked. The Connétable also thanked the Roads Committee, Roads Inspectors and Rates Assessors for all the work they do. The Parish Honorary Police were thanked for their voluntary role working 24/7. Thanks were also given to Don Connolly and his team at Alex Picot and also to all the Parishioners for the support given to the Connétable over the year.

The Connétable then introduced Mr Don Connolly of Alex Picot to the Assembly and he proceeded to run through the accounts ended 30 April 2023 for the benefit of the attendees. In particular, the following points were mentioned:

- The rates income showed an increase due to a rise in the number of quarters as a consequence of new builds in the Parish. The number of unpaid balances had also increased however these funds continue to be recouped. The final income from rates increased by £11,582.
- The total income for the year including the sundry income increased by £25,207.
- The general account expenditure showed major changes in postage, Comité des Connetables and the Parish Magazine cost. The Tresor budget reflected the running costs of the church, no other expenditure was made.
- The roads budget biggest spends were on Rue de la Solitude, Rue Cabarettes and Rue de la Fosse a Gres. The legal fees for the land transfer of Rue de la Solitude were also included in this budget.
- The refuse collection costs did not include recycling although this was budgeted for. The additional costs for refuse were due to inbuilt costs from the contractor.
- The balance in hand showed a 17 week spend in hand for the period May- August (3 weeks over the required 14 week spend).
- La Vielle Ecole Project Reserve Fund – it was noted that 95% of the rental income is used to repay the loan for this build. The rental income also includes Maison Scolaithe.

Questions were then received from the Assembly:

- The question was asked if repayments of the loan to the States of Jersey for La Vielle Ecole could be reduced in order to give the Parish more income now when some parishioners may be in financial difficulty. It was confirmed that this would not be beneficial to the Parish at this time but might be possible in 5 years-time, depending on the interest rates.

There being no further questions, Deputy Stephen Luce proposed the accounts be adopted and Mr Terry Jehan seconded the proposal. A unanimous show of hands showed in favour of the proposal.

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 2024.

The Connétable stated that the proposed sum for the Roads Account for the forthcoming year was set at £140,000.

There being no comments or questions, this amount was proposed by Procureur William Sutton and seconded by Deputy Stephen Luce. A show of hands resulted in a unanimous approval.

Item 4

Consider, and if advisable, approve the funding for future editions of the Parish Magazine (Les Nouvelles de St Martin) – a sum of £6400 per year.

The Connétable explained that due to a lack of advertisers for the publication of the Parish magazine, a cost is now incurred by the Parish for printing. It was also noted that the current editor would be retiring in the Autumn and so a new editor is required.

A question was asked if the Parish would now lose its independence. The Connétable replied that this would not be the case as we do not have ownership of the magazine. It was confirmed that the Parish would have 4 pages of print in the magazine. It was agreed that this was a reasonable amount to pay. The funding was proposed by Mr Terry Jehan and seconded by Deputy Stephen Luce. A show of hands showed 16 in favour and one against. The approval was confirmed.

Item 5

Consider the estimates for the presumed requirements for the financial year ending 30 April 2024 and tax the rate accordingly.

Procureur William Sutton highlighted the following points on the forthcoming yearly Parish expenditure:

- The Comité des Connetables budget is pre-set by the office of the Comité and includes all island Parishes IT programme maintenance and staffing of the office prorated.
- Professional & legal fees remain high due to additional costs incurred property maintenance of the Village Green and the new cemetery extension project.
- Salaries show an increase to provide for one additional full time (already in post since January 2023) and one part time member of staff. These costs will be offset by reduced contractors' fees.
- Trésor – this figure is lower than on 2022. The estimates are better managed this year with the appointment of a new Rector.
- Refuse & Recycling – no recycling budgeted in due to no available contractor on island. Refuse increase costs are determined by increased contractor costs. The average cost of this service per household per week amounts to £1.65
- Maintenance of Properties – The urgent work required for both exterior and interior work on the Public Hall amounts to £45,000. Other increases are budgeted for fuel, cleaning and new mower.
- Reserve Funds – additional transfer of funds for the Cemetery Extension Fund (£15,000)

Questions were then received from the Assembly:

- Village Green Playground: It was asked if the total allocated for this project is the total cost. The Connétable stated that this was not the case. A number of donors have come forward to cover all additional costs. The Parish is funding £20,000 only.

- Village Green Car Park – is money being put aside for the repair? It was confirmed that funds from the General Parish account would be used to fund this work.
- Le Court Clos Garden maintenance: It was asked should this work be completed by the Parish Foreman and his assistant and not now be given to the appointed Property Management company or alternatively the Parish be reimbursed for this work. The Connétable confirmed that reimbursement for this work is already in place.
- Maison Scolaithe – it was queried that should the maintenance costs including the renovation costs come out of La Vielle Ecole funds? Procureur Lester Richardson stated that this is being looked into and will hopefully be confirmed as so.
- Heating of Public Hall: With the purchase of a new oil tank, had the Connétable considered a new heating system be introduced? It was confirmed that research had been made but the cost would be too high at this time to make any changes.
- Administration Fees – Sheltered Housing & H Trust: It was asked if this figure should increase as it has been set for a number of years at this rate. It was confirmed that this would not be increased as the Property Manager will now charge the Trusts for this work.

The acceptance of the estimates was proposed by Deputy Stephen Luce and seconded by Mr Colin De La Haye. A show of hands showed all were in favour.

The Connétable advised the Assembly that the Parish rate had remained the same over the last 3 years however due to the cost of living increases this year's rate will need to be increased. Income estimates were given for four different rates – 1.28p, 1.33p, 1.38p and 1.47p.

The Parish Rate of 1.47p was proposed by Deputy Stephen Luce and seconded by Peter Germain. It was also noted that the Island Wide Rate will increase this year but the rate had not yet been confirmed.

A second proposition for the Parish Rate of 1.38p was made by Procureur Lester Richardson and seconded by Colin De La Haye.

The Connétable requested a show of hands for 1.38p. Result: 16

The Connétable then requested a show of hands for 1.47p. Result: 9

The Parish rate was therefore set at 1.38p.

Item 6

Elect a committee to examine the Connétable's accounts for the year ending 30 April 2024

The Connétable thanked the Committee for all the work and support they give to the Parish and stated she was delighted that such a large number are on the Committee.

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

Ex-Officio members:

The Connétable, Karen Shenton Stone

The Procureurs, William Sutton and Lester Richardson

The Rector (Reverend Peter Stone)

Deputies Stephen Luce, Carolyn Labey and Rosemary Binet

Church Wardens, Thelma Emberson and Jackie Edwards

Centeniers, Gordon Jones, Alan Phillips, David Birmingham and Teresa Roland

Parish Secretary, Janine Milner

Other Members:

Mr Terry Jehan

Mr Denis Lawrence

Mr John Le Masurier Germain

Mr Chris McFadyen
Mr William Sutton
Mr Danny Wherry
Mrs Vickie Corson
Mr Paul Gaudin
Mr Robin Perchard

The Connétable was reminded by a Parishioner that at the Rates Assembly in 2022 it was agreed that only the Parish Deputy be invited to sit on the Accounts Committee. Deputy Stephen Luce proposed that no Deputies sit on the Committee in the interest of fairness. This was agreed by the Assembly. The ex- officio members therefore include:

The Connétable, Karen Shenton Stone
The Procureurs, William Sutton and Lester Richardson
The Rector (Reverend Peter Stone)
Church Wardens, Thelma Emberson and Jackie Edwards
Centeniers, Gordon Jones, Alan Phillips, David Birmingham and Teresa Roland
Parish Secretary, Janine Milner.

All members were voted en bloc to remain in office, Mr Steven Rondel proposed and Mr Peter Germain seconded. By a show of hands, all were voted in for a further year.

Item 7

Appoint a firm of Chartered Accountants to audit the Connétable's accounts for the year ending 30 April 2024.

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, Procureur William Sutton proposed to re-elect Alex Picot Chartered Accountants and Mr Terry Jehan seconded the proposal. All were in favour.

The Connétable closed the Assembly at 20.10.


Karen Shenton Stone
Connétable

Date 12 December 20 23

