



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 Thursday 17th July 2025 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 26 attendees.

Apologies were received from Peter Germain, Martin Hougue, Terry Jehan, Alan Phillips, Revd. Peter Stone, and Danny Wherry. The Convening Notice was read by the Parish Secretary.

Item 1

Receive and if deemed advisable, approve the Minutes of the Parish Assembly and the Nomination Meeting held on 1st May 2025.

The Connétable reminded those assembled that the Minutes for the Parish Assembly and Nomination Meeting had been available from the Public Hall and copies were on the seats. After due consideration, Mr Lester Richardson proposed the Minutes of the meetings held on 1st May 2025 be approved and Mrs Paulette De La Haye 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 2025. 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 last 12 months had remained extremely busy with the Public Hall and Municipality continuing to deal with a varied workload including rates, policing, property management, dog licences, driving licences, firearms licences, project management, fund raising, potholes, speeding, branchage, noise complaints, car parking, refuse and drains. It was an inexhaustible list.
- Property maintenance and refurbishment continued to be a key task with the following projects having been undertaken:
 - A programme of replacing the out-dated boilers in the sheltered housing at Le Court Clos with new energy efficient models was nearing completion with only one property still outstanding.
 - Roof insulation had been significantly enhanced at Nos 1-6 Le Court Clos.
 - The roof of the Depot had also been replaced following damage suffered during Storm Ciaran.
 - New garage doors had been installed at La Retraite à L'Ouest and La Retraite à L'Est.
 - The refurbishment of Maison Scolaithe had been completed with the fitting of a new bathroom and kitchen. New tenants had moved in soon

thereafter and the rental income was now helping to offset the loan repayments for the La Vielle Ecole project.

- The main office and entrance hallway of the Public Hall had been redecorated and new flooring had been fitted.
- Planning consent had been secured for the repair and conversion of the Rectory Barn and a fundraising drive would take place once the project costs had been clarified.
- A repair schedule had been drafted for the Church so that the Parish could identify both short term and long term projects. These including replacing the existing heating system and undertake works to improve the ventilation and breathability of the Church fabric.
- The Village Playground continues to be huge success and further fund raising has enabled the installation of a Viking Swing which appeals to older children and adults young at heart. Conservation grazing has also been introduced for the wetland area to enhance biodiversity as well as generate interest from visitors.
- New plans had been drafted for an extension to the Cemetery with an entrance via the exiting Church car park. Plans would be put on display in the Public Hall with the opportunity for a Parish Assembly thereafter.
- A Community Support Group had recently been established with 13 volunteers kindly agreeing to support Parishioners in their time of need. To date a range of tasks had been fulfilled including completion of forms, collection of prescriptions, hospital appointments and gardening.
- Plans for a combined sub-station and bin store at Gorey had not found favour with local residents and the Planning Department. As a result both the Parish and the JEC were now actively looking at alternative options.
- The celebrations to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the Liberation had proved very successful with a delicious Afternoon Tea for those who lived through the Occupation and a BBQ with live music in the evening for Parishioners. The Connétable expressed her gratitude to everyone who helped with the event including the PTA who had kindly organised family fun activities and entertainment on the Village Green.
- The Connétable expressed her thanks to the Parish administration team including Charles Alluto (Parish Secretary), Janine Milner (Assistant Parish Secretary), Caroline Troy (Assistant Parish Secretary), Emily Vautier (Accounts Manager), Mr John Critchley (Senior Grounds Person), Mr Alan Le Corre (Assistant Grounds Person), Mrs Jacqui Phipps (Honorary Police Secretary) and Mrs Sharon Williams (Parking Control Officer). She also extended her gratitude to the two Procureurs, Mr Lester Richardson and Mr William Sutton for their help and support, the Rector Pete Stone for ensuring that both Parish and Church work well together, the Roads Committee and Roads Inspectors who ensure that the Parish has some of the best maintained roads in the Island, the Rates Assessors and Accounts Committee whose respective roles help deliver the Parish income and ensure it is spent prudently, Kay Lavery and her small team who plant and care for the flowers that enable the Parish to look resplendent at this time of year and finally the Honorary Police who work voluntarily 24/7 to safeguard and engage with the Parish community. In particular the Connétable was extremely grateful to the former Chef de Police, Gordon Jones, whose dedication would shortly be recognised at Government House, with an Honorary Police Medal for long and Meritorious Service. Likewise his successor, Alan Phillips, had stepped into the role without hesitation and with much commitment. The Connétable thanked Mr Don Connolly, Mr Sam Luce and the team at Alex Picot for their audit services and support in finalising the annual accounts.

Finally the Connétable thanked all of the Parishioners for their support, comments and the odd complaint or two! As ever she felt the Rates Assembly remained a prime example of grassroots democracy in action.

The Connétable then introduced the Parish Procureur, Mr William Sutton, to the Assembly and he proceeded to run through the accounts ended 30 April 2025 for the benefit of the attendees. In particular, the following points were highlighted:

Procedures:

Following the appointment of Ms Emily Vautier ACCA, as the Parish Accounts Manager, Alex Picot had not been involved in the overall preparation of the accounts and had solely focused on their audit role.

Income:

The rates income had increased by 10.5% due to a small increase in the number of quarters and an increase in the Parish rate from 1.38p to 1.51p.

In addition there had been a significant increase in the recovery of rates arrears for the years up to 2023 and it was hoped to continue in this vein for 2024. Rental income had also increased as a result of the new tenancy for the Village Green Pavilion. Together with income from deposit interest, hire charges, property investigations, trading permits and administration fees the total income for the Parish had increased by 13.6% to £1,004,908.

Expenditure:

It was noted that administration costs had increased by 11.9% since 2024 but they still were below the estimate for the year. The main increase could be attributed to computer expenses and in particular the installation of the new till. Also sundry expenses were below budget by £6,000 due to the provision for the Liberation 80 event not being expended until May 2025 and the new bin store at Gorey having been effectively deferred as a result of the refusal from Planning.

Salaries and pensions were below budget whilst professional and legal fees were significantly over budget due to the work undertaken to prepare a planning application for the Rectory Barn. It was noted that planning consent had now been granted for this project.

The Roads Account was under budget due to certain works having been delayed until after year end.

Properties maintenance was significantly lower than 2024 but over budget for 2025. This was due to expenditure on equipment, repairs to the Parish lorry, repairs and maintenance works for the La Retraite properties, tree surgery works and the installation of a new handrail at the La Garenne steps.

Reserve Funds:

It was noted that the Reserve Funds were a valuable means of avoiding spikes in expenditure and enabled the Parish to forward plan. The transfers to Reserves over the year were exactly as estimated.

Balance In Hand:

Total expenditure for the year amounted to £968,800 which was 0.7% above the total for 2024 but also 1.1% below budget. The overall result for the year was that the total income exceeded total expenditure by £36,108 enabling the Parish to add this sum to its General Account. The importance of the General Account was that it provided the Parish with adequate funds to cover expenditure from the beginning of May until the receipt of rates income.

La Vielle Ecole Project:

It was noted that there was quite a lot of cash due to the Parish having opened a separate bank account for the receipt of rental income as well as for the quarterly loan repayments to the States of Jersey. In addition the Parish had paid for the refurbishment of Maison Scholaithe and so would need to be refunded as and when sufficient funds become available.

Rental income had increased to reflect that Maison Scholaithe had now been let on a 2 year lease.

Service charge income and expenditure appeared out of sync and this was due to the service charge year running from 25th December and expenditure not being spread evenly throughout the year resulting in timing differences. For the sake of clarity the annual service charges paid by the tenants covered all the expenses as per their leases including the external redecoration which was carried out in 2024.

The Parish's current investment in La Vielle Ecole Project amounted to £147,609 which was up by £106,000 from 2024. Members of the Assembly were referred to Note 6 which clarified the history and purposes of the loans from the States of Jersey and HSBC.

Village Green Playground:

The installation of the Viking Swing had been funded by donations upon which the Parish was able to recover tax. As a result the total donations had exceeded expenditure by £3,180. This sum was currently being held as a creditor whilst confirmation was being sought from the donor as to whether these funds could be utilised for future maintenance.

Summary of Balances:

The total balance for the Parish at year end amounted to £528,185 and these are matched by the General Account and Reserves totalling this sum. It was noted that £23,346 had been withdrawn from the Parish Vehicle Reserve Fund to cover the cost of a new tractor and mower. In addition the sum of £3,844 had been withdrawn from the Public Hall Interior Refurbishment Fund to cover the cost of painting the entrance hallway and main office.

Mr Sutton thanked Emily Vautier for preparing the accounts and the Accounts Committee for kindly reviewing the draft accounts and providing constructive feedback.

There being no comments or questions from members of the Assembly, Mr Chris McFadyen proposed the accounts be adopted and Mr Dennis Lawrence 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 2026.

The Connétable stated that the proposed sum for the Roads Account for the forthcoming year was set at £154,000. This excluded additional income from driving licences, parking fines and firearms certification which was estimated to be in the region of £32,000, as well as the time expended by the Grounds Team on drain maintenance, signage and temporary road repairs. As a result the total budgeted expenditure was in the region of £186,000.

There being no comments or questions from members of the Assembly, this amount was proposed by Mr Mick Jehan and seconded by Mrs Tracy Jehan. 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 2026 and tax the rate accordingly.

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

- Administration costs had increased overall due to the need to purchase 3 laptops for the Rates Assessors and replace 5 out of date PCs in the Parish offices. However, advertising costs had been reduced to reflect the increasing reliance on the online Gazette as opposed to the JEP.
- 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.
- The estimate for Sundry expenses included £3,000 for the Liberation 80 event, £5,000 towards a new bin store at Gorey, a £1,000 for presentations and flowers, and a £1,000 for other general Public Hall expenses.
- The estimate for salaries and pensions included an increase in line with estimated RPI.
- The Tresor budget had been slightly increased to enable the refurbishment and repair of the Parish Churchyard railings phased over a 3 year period and also to improve the L'Union Cemetery central pathway and railings.
- Refuse collection costs comprise 3 months at the existing charge and 9 months at the new charge which is based on a 5% uplift in line with the current contractual agreement. The contract is for an estimated 1,923 households amounting to £2.41 per household per week.
- A cost of £31,500 had been included for the introduction of Kerbside recycling. This followed a Parish Assembly on 30th September 2021 which overwhelmingly voted for the introduction of the service. Regrettably it has taken a number of years to find 2 suitable contractors to tender for the contract. The estimate of £31,500 has been based on the scheme starting in November 2025 and therefore the annual charge will be £61,000 which may necessitate a further uplift in the rates for 2026/2027. The estimated cost amounts to £2.73 per household per month.
- The estimate for Maintenance of properties was similar to 2024/2025 comprising £30,000 for the upkeep of the Public Hall including various sums for cleaning, heating, new display boards, fire alarm system, and insurance. In addition £5,000 had been allocated for the general maintenance of the interior and exterior of the Public Hall. The estimate for Other properties and equipment included £1,500 for the Depot, £1,500 for each of the La Retraite properties, £2,000 for the insurance of the La Retraite properties, £1,000 for the repair of the Bus Shelter, £4,000 for tree surgery works and £5,000 for the Lands Team to cover equipment and training.
- Reserve fund estimates had been maintained as previously other than the sum of £2,000 for the Cemetery Extension Fund to cover the costs of a planning application for the proposed new extension.
- The estimated expenditure for the year amounted to £1,053,240 which was a 7.5% increase over the estimate for 2024/2025 and a 8.7% increase over actual expenditure for 2024/2025.

Questions were then received from the Assembly:

Salary Increases:

Deputy Luce enquired whether the salaries were increasing by 3% or 7%. Mr William Sutton responded that the salaries would be increasing by inflation which was being estimated at 3% from the beginning of January. There were also some minor adjustments to make relating to the remainder of 2025.

Kerbside Recycling:

Deputy Luce enquired what would happen to the Bring Bank in the Village Green Car Park once kerbside recycling had been introduced. The Connétable advised that Infrastructure & Environment had indicated that they were keen to close the Bring Bank in order to reduce costs but nothing had been confirmed to date.

Questions were raised as to whether the earlier Parish Assembly decision on kerbside recycling was binding. The Connétable advised that the vote had been overwhelmingly in favour with 36 for, 4 against and 2 abstentions. The Assembly had clearly elected for the Parish to introduce kerbside recycling albeit no costs had been clarified at that time.

The Connétable was asked if the costs were likely to go up after the initial 6 month period. The Connétable responded that this would form part of the ongoing negotiations with the chosen contractor once the principle had been agreed and the rates set.

Mr Colin Renouf enquired whether the costs related to the weight of waste being collected. It was confirmed that it was a fixed price per household.

Mrs Molly Gladwin questioned whether the earlier decision should be considered binding given that no costs had been clarified at that time and the economic landscape had changed dramatically during the intervening years. The Connétable and Procureurs considered the decision was binding as it was not taken subject to further clarification on costs but was a firm instruction for the Parish to proceed with the introduction of kerbside recycling.

There being no further questions on estimates for expenditure Mr William Sutton referred the Assembly to the Special Vote Funds. It was noted that these remained as per last year other than a £500 reduction in expenditure for the Senior Citizens Christmas Fund.

There being no comments or questions from members of the Assembly, the Special Vote Funds were proposed by Mr Dennis Lawrence and seconded by Mr Gerald Le Cocq. A show of hands resulted in a unanimous approval.

Mr William Sutton now addressed the Assembly regarding the setting of the Rate. It was noted that the estimate for sundry income amounted to £111,948. This would be supplemented by a further £3,000 for surcharges on rates not paid on time. Therefore the net expenditure that the 2025/2026 Parish Rate needed to cover was £938,292.

It was noted that the quarters assessed as at 30th April 2025 amounted to 57,246,700 and so if the Parish was to elect for a rate the same as last year the Parish would incur a notional deficit for the year of £73,867. This would mean that the notional balance at 30th April 2026 would only be sufficient to cover 10 weeks of expenditure after 1st May 2026.

Mr Sutton advised that Parish Rates of 1.59p, 1.63p and 1.64p would incur notional deficits of £28,069 and £5,171 respectively and a notional surplus of £554. It was noted that 1.64p would not be acceptable as Parishes were not allowed to vote for a rate which produced a notional surplus. A Parish rate of 1.63p would be an increase of 7.95% compared to last year but would produce the least possible notional deficit for the year. At this rate the notional balance at 30th April 2026 would be sufficient to cover 14 weeks expenditure after 1st May 2026.

The Island Wide Rate for domestic properties would be increasing from 0.92p to 0.94p giving a total rate of 2.57p if the proposed rate of 1.63p was accepted. Compared to last year's total rate of 2.43p this would equate to 5.76% increase in the total rate. Accordingly the Connétable, Procureurs and Accounts Committee were recommending a rate of 1.63p.

Questions were then received from the Assembly:

Mr Chris Garbutt enquired how the quarters were assessed. Mr Sutton advised that these were assessed by the Parish Rates Assessors and input into the Rates Management System. Quarters fluctuated on an annual basis to reflect changes in properties such as extensions or new builds.

Mr Gerald Le Cocq advised that the Parish had no option but to accept the recommended Rate as these funds were required to facilitate kerbside recycling as agreed by a previous Parish Assembly. It was noted that for a typical house on Maufant estate the increase would amount to £514 as compared to £486 for last year.

Deputy Steve Luce complimented the accounts but remained concerned that Parishioners had suffered a 9% increase last year and were facing an increase of just under 8% this year. He was of the view that the rate should be in the range of 1.51p to 1.59p. It was noted that a Rate of 1.56p would produce an estimated notional deficit of approximately £40,000.

Mr Don Connolly of Alex Picot advised that such a deficit would potentially mean the Parish running out of money as it would not have adequate reserves to cover its projected shortfall in income from 1st May onwards. Mr Connolly recommended that the Assembly should not consider a Rate below 1.59p.

Deputy Steve Luce was of the view that the Parish should have considered a maximum increase in expenditure of 3% and budgeted accordingly.

The Connétable advised that the Parish remained prudent in terms of its overall expenditure and that the Parish delivered a considerable amount for the benefit of Parishioners. If the Assembly was minded to reduce the amount of income then inevitably some services would need to be cut.

Mr Perry Stone suggested that reducing services would necessitate cuts to the larger budgets such as the Roads Committee.

Mrs Molly Gladwin remained concerned that the financial impact of kerbside recycling had not been fully considered by Parishioners. It was noted that if kerbside recycling was omitted then a Rate nearer to 1.58p would be workable.

A number of alternative rates were now tabled:

Deputy Steve Luce proposed a Rate of 1.56p and this was seconded by Mr Colin Renouf.

Sue De Gruchy proposed a Rate of 1.59p and this was seconded by Mr Colin De La Haye.

The Assembly was requested to vote on the proposed Rates as follows:

The Rate of 1.59p received 6 votes in favour and 16 against.

The Rate of 1.56p received 5 votes in favour and 14 against.

The Rate of 1.63p received 14 votes in favour and 8 against.

The Parish Rate of 1.63p was duly set and approved by the Assembly.

The Connétable thanked everyone for their thoughtful consideration and advised that every effort would be made to ensure that the rates did not increase excessively in 2026.

Item 5

Elect a committee to examine the Connétable's accounts for the year ending 30 April 2026

The Connétable thanked the Committee for all their work and support they give to the Parish and stated she was delighted that such a large number remained 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)

Church Wardens, Thelma Emberson and Jackie Edwards

Centeniers, Alan Phillips, David Burmingham, Chris Garbutt and Teresa Roland

Parish Secretary, Charles Alluto

Other Members:

Mr Terry Jehan

Mr Denis Lawrence

Mr John Le Masurier Germain

Mr Chris McFadyen

Mr Danny Wherry

Mr Paul Gaudin

Mr Robin Perchard

All members were voted en bloc to remain in office, Mr Lester Richardson proposed and Mr Colin Renouf seconded. By a show of hands, all were voted in for a further year.

Item 6

Appoint a firm of Chartered Accountants to audit the Connétable's accounts for the year ending 30 April 2026.

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 William Sutton proposed to re-elect Alex Picot Chartered Accountants and Mr Gerald Le Codq seconded the proposal. All were in favour.

There being no further business the Connétable thanked everyone for attending and closed the Assembly at 20.25



Karen Shenton Stone
Connétable

Date 28 August 2025