

PARISH OF ST LAWRENCE



Minutes of the Parish Assembly

Held on Monday 22nd July 2024 at 7.00p.m.

Assembly Room, St Lawrence

Present: 36 Principals and Electors

Welcome:

The Connétable welcomed all present. She acknowledged that there were some first time attendees and as such took the opportunity to explain the framework of the Rates (Jersey) Law 2005, in particular Article 21 'Approval of Parish Rate'. She explained that the Assembly is held when the accounts for the previous financial year have been prepared and audited, and the estimates finalised for the next financial year. As the year end is 30th April, the rates Assembly is therefore held towards the end of July.

Apologies:

Deputy Andy Howell, Deputy Elaine Millar, Centenier Mike Haden, Mr Philippe Huelin, Mrs Marion Hibbeard, Mrs Vicky Quinn, Mr Michael Orpin

Deputies in Attendance:

None

Minutes taken by Parish Secretary Mrs Leasa Nozedar.

Convening Notice:

An Assembly of the Principals and Electors of the Parish will be held at the Parish Hall on **Monday 22nd July at 7.00pm** for the following business:

1. To receive and, if agreed, to approve the Minutes of the Parish Assembly held on 29th May 2024.
2. To receive and, if agreed, to adopt the accounts of the Connétable for the year ending 30th April 2024, the said accounts having been audited by Alex Picot Chartered Accountants and examined by the Comité Paroissiale named for that purpose.
3. To consider and, if agreed, to approve a sum of £35,000 to be transferred from the Parish Property Capital Expenditure Fund to the Parish Vehicle Fund in order to assist with the purchase of a police vehicle in the year ended 30 April 2025.
4. To approve the estimates of the funds required by the Parish for the financial year ending 30th April 2025 to include a sum of money for the upkeep and maintenance of the by-roads.
5. To approve a Rate for the financial year 2024/25 in accordance with Article 21 of the Rates (Jersey) Law 2005.
6. To name the Comité Paroissiale to examine the accounts of the Connétable for the year ending 30th April 2025.
7. To appoint auditors to audit the Connétable's accounts for the year ending 30th April 2025.
8. To elect three parishioners to the St Lawrence Sports & Community Centre Management Committee.

Copies of the audited accounts will be available at the Parish Hall and on our website from Friday 19th July 2024.

1. To receive and, if agreed, to approve the Minutes of the Parish Assembly held on 29th May 2024.

The Connétable asked for a proposer and seconder for the two sets of minutes. They were both proposed by Procureur Bruce Harrison and seconded by Miss Pam Staley.
On a show of hands, all were in favour with none against; both sets of Minutes having been approved were signed by the Connétable as President of the Assembly.

2. To receive and, if agreed, to adopt the accounts of the Connétable for the year ending 30th April 2024, the said accounts having been audited by Alex Picot Chartered Accountants and examined by the Comité Paroissiale named for that purpose.

The Connétable invited Mr Don Connolly from Alex Picot Chartered Accountants, to address the Assembly. Mr Connolly explained that he would go through the accounts welcoming any questions at the end, and focusing on where there were significant differences between the actual and the estimated figures.

Administration

Page 7 Expenditure:

Comité des Connétable:

Mr Connolly explained that the Secretary of the Comité sends each Parish a budget for the financial year for the use and administration of the Parish systems including Licar, Rates Management System, Electoral system and the new dog licence system 'POODL' together with the office running costs. Actual of £20,434 against estimate of £21,000.

Honorary Police:

He informed the Assembly that there had been a saving from the estimate, this was due in part to the Honorary Police being under required officer level (seen island wide) and the estimate should always include the cost of potential new recruits. He told the Assembly that the 'smiley face' had been refurbished rather than purchasing a new one. Actual of £30,789 against estimate of £42,000.

Salaries, Social Security and Pension Contributions:

The Assembly was informed that there had been some staff changes within the year. Actual £192,424 against estimate of £197,500.

Les Laurentins:

MediaMasters can no longer cover the costs of printing the magazine due to decreased advertising revenue, Mr Connolly explained that funds held for the publication have now diminished and that it was now necessary to include expenses in the accounts.

Establishment

Maintenance of Parish Property:

The biggest expenses were the purchase of the new mower and garden waste shredder, the cost was shared between the Parish, Church and Clos du Sommier. Actual £19,436 against estimate of £15,000.

Salaries:

Salary figures were as expected. Actual £84,008 against estimate of £84,000.

Refuse Collection:

The Assembly was advised that all Parishes are dealing with increases in refuse collection costs and confirmed that the Parish has a five year contract and has annual negotiations with the contractor. Actual £248,123 against estimate of £248,426.

Page 9 Roads Account:

This shows the income used to maintain the Parish by-roads, which includes a substantial increase in Honorary Police fines. The Parish spent £47,000 on patching and pot hole repairs as well as road and drain cleaning of £31,000. In total £87,663 was spent showing an underspend of £24,000, the surplus has been transferred to the Roads Reserve Fund as agreed at a previous Assembly.

Page 8 Grants and Special Votes:

Mr Connolly informed the Assembly that St Lawrence Parish Church had been given a grant of £20,000 in relation to the new heating system. £11,000 had been placed in the Parish Vehicle Fund and the Green Canopy grant had not been fully spent as Planning Permission had not been finalised during the financial year.

Page 10 Income:

Mr Connolly informed the Assembly that although there had been a negligible increase in quarters, the Rate had been increased to 1.04p in the previous year, He continued that the 'big win' for the Parish was the increase in deposit interest from £10,354 in 2023 to £20,578.

Mr Connolly informed the Assembly that the Parish team manage Sheltered Housing and that the increased income figure of £35,177 reflects time spent on administration.

Total income of £839,883 against expenditure £821,980 gave a surplus of £18,000. The estimate had been for a deficit of £1,200. The Parish should hold 16 weeks of potential expenditure to allow for the Rates income to be received after the Rates Assembly, and there is sufficient for that need.

Page 14 Fund Accounts:

Mr Connolly advised that the Parish Property Capital Expenditure Fund had interest of £30,755 and expenditure of £17,501 spent at the Community Centre for new boilers and fire doors.

Parish Vehicle Fund:

This stands at £20,000. It is proposed that this amount will be put towards the new Honorary Police vehicle.

Rectory Improvements and Maintenance Fund:

Work had been undertaken on the Rectory and an insurance claim had been made for storm damage incurred with further expenses to be included in next year's accounts.

Roads Reserve Fund:

Expenditure of £55,000 was incurred on works undertaken on La Rue de la Ville Emphrie and the new historic built village street lighting. A surplus of £24,000 was included from the Roads Account underspend.

Mr Connolly having completed his presentation, the Connétable asked the Assembly if they had any questions?

Centenier Stuart Lusby raised a question about the debtor's figure on Page 13 asking why the debtors, prepayments and accrued income had tripled during the year. Mr Connolly explained that this was a timing difference with the GST reclaim not yet received and monies owed, but not yet paid, from Sheltered Housing.

There being no further questions the Connétable asked for a proposer and seconder to approve the accounts for the Connétable for the year ending 30th April 2024.

Proposed: Centenier James Gray

Seconded: Mr Norman Laverack

On a show of hands, all were in favour with none against.

3. To consider and, if agreed, to approve a sum of £35,000 to be transferred from the Parish Property Capital Expenditure Fund to the Parish Vehicle Fund in order to assist with the purchase of a police vehicle in the year ended 30 April 2025.

The Connétable invited Centenier Stuart Lusby, Chef de Police, to address the Assembly.

Centenier Lusby explained that the Police van [a VW] and Police car [a Skoda] were long standing vehicles and that the van would need considerable funds spent moving forward as the injectors, of which there are 4, would all need to be replaced at a cost of £2,000 each. The new vehicle that they wish to purchase was a Volvo from Jacksons, it would cost approximately £35,000 and would need to be fitted out as a Police vehicle with radios, Police colours, sirens etc which would cost approximately £12,000. He estimated it would cost a total of between £52,000 and £53,000.

Mr Jason Cronin asked if the vehicle was hybrid or electric? Centenier Lusby confirmed it would be a hybrid vehicle as the electric vehicle would cost an extra £10,000 to purchase.

Mr Steve Carter asked Centenier Lusby what the average weekly mileage was? Centenier Lusby replied that it could be as little as 4 or 5 miles, however, with some weeks being as much as 50 or 60 miles.

Mr David Pittom asked if the proposed vehicle would be a 5 seated car or a van? Centenier Lusby confirmed it was intended that the vehicle would be a 5 seater car with a boot big enough to hold the Police equipment. He added that the vehicle had been recommended by the driver training officer who had taken into account the low mileage use of the vehicle.

Procureur Bruce Harrison underlined the fact that we were asking for funds to be taken from the Parish Property Capital Expenditure Fund to cover the cost of the proposed new vehicle and explained that the other option would be to include £35,000 in the Estimates which would then potentially increase the rate.

The Connétable explained that the £570,000 held in the Parish Property Capital Expenditure Fund was not for any particular project but was an accumulation of funds from over the years. There were no expected substantial expenses due on Parish buildings for the next financial year, or foreseeable future, as repairs and maintenance had been undertaken on the Parish Hall in 2020.

There being no further questions the Connétable asked for a proposer and seconder to approve a sum of £35,000 to be transferred from the Parish Property Capital Expenditure Fund to the Parish Vehicle Fund in order to assist with the purchase of a police vehicle in the year ended 30 April 2025.

Proposed: Mr Adrian Renouf

Seconded: Mr David Pittom

On a show of hands, all were in favour with none against.

4. To approve the estimates of the funds required by the Parish for the financial year ending 30th April 2025 to include a sum of money for the upkeep and maintenance of the by-roads.

The Connétable went through the draft estimates for the financial year ending 30th April 2025 as set out on Page 21.

Bank and Credit Card Charges:

The Connétable explained that the Parish is receiving a lot more card and online payments and that the Honorary Police now have a card machine to take fines. Estimate £8,000.

Comité des Connétables:

The Connétable gave the Assembly a breakdown of charges the Parish will incur. This includes all Government of Jersey websites, Licar, RMS, Electoral system and POODL. Estimate of £22,000.

Salaries, Social Security and Pensions:

The Connétable informed the Assembly that this figure includes Social Security and Pension contributions. Estimate £202,000.

Special Functions:

The Connétable gave a breakdown of expenses to include Poppy Wreaths, Liberation Day Lunch and the Staff Christmas Lunch, amongst other expenditure. Estimate £5,000.

Les Laurentins:

As previously mentioned by Mr Connolly, the Connétable explained that the Parish now needed to contribute towards the expense of publication, due to a decrease in advertising. She took the opportunity to thank the volunteers who deliver the magazine at no cost to the Parish. Estimate £5,800.

Tresor:

The Connétable invited the Rector to speak. The Rector explained that the Church building was now being used more regularly by various community groups since the toilet extension had been built and this now incurred more everyday costs and therefore the Church was asking for an increase to £15,000.

Refuse Collection:

The Connétable explained that there was a slight increase to include the contracted annual review, which is to be considered by both parties when they meet in February 2025. Estimate £271,000.

Roads Account:

The Connétable explained that the condition of the roads had deteriorated over the winter period and in particular Sandybrook Lane would require some improvements. The Connétable took the opportunity to read a list of potholes that had been repaired on Parish roads during the previous financial year. She also reminded the Assembly of the Roads Committees policy of full width reinstatement and was pleased to confirm that the reinstatement of La Rue de la Golarde was covered by the utility companies on behalf of Northern Leaf. Estimate £75,000.

The Connétable took the opportunity to thank the Roads Committee, particularly Mrs Jenny Cartwright.

Page 22 Grants to Parish Associations:

The Connétable invited the Rector to address the Assembly. The Rector confirmed that although the Church had wished to switch to electric heating, this was untenable as this would cost hundreds of thousands of pounds. As such they were now looking to purchase a more efficient oil boiler together with new radiators. Estimate £15,000 [down from previous financial year].

The Connétable advised the Assembly that the Parish would be looking to celebrate Liberation 80 and as such a sum of £2,000 had been put in to cover any initial costs.

Estimated total expenditure for the year was **£901,829**.

The Connétable opened the floor to questions.

Mr Carter asked Centenier Lusby how many Honorary Police are currently serving in St Lawrence? Centenier Lusby replied that currently there are 9 officers but this will reduce to 8 when Centenier Haden retires in September.

Mr Carter asked why Centenier Lusby was asking for £40,000 when the number of officers was so low? Centenier Lusby confirmed that £5,000 was required to replace IT equipment, 7 new radios at £900 each and that the Centeniers Quartely dinner, which they had to host this year, would be approximately £2,500. Centenier Lusby also confirmed that they were awaiting an invoice for the

last 18 months training.

Mr Pittom stated that the last Police vehicle was purchased more than 12 years ago, and the Assembly should consider the cost per year rather than the initial outlay.

There being no further questions the Connétable asked for a proposer and seconder to approve the estimates of the funds required by the Parish for the financial year ending 30th April 2025 to include a sum of money for the upkeep and maintenance of the by-roads.

Proposed: Mr Norman Laverack

Seconded: Mr James Le Feuvre

On a show of hands, all were in favour with none against.

5. To approve a Rate for the financial year 2024/25 in accordance with Article 21 of the Rates (Jersey) Law 2005.

The Connétable read a list of 2024 rates which had already been set, to include Parish of St Mary at 1.90p and the Parish of St John at 1.19p per quarter as a comparison. The Connétable then invited Procureur Steve Linney to address the Assembly and, referring to Page 23 of the Accounts, he informed the Assembly that looking back over the last 3 years he had calculated that the Parish rate had increased by 24% whereas the Jersey RPI had increased by 26.2%. Referring to Page 23 of the Accounts, he continued that having carefully considered the possibilities, the recommendation was to increase the rate to 1.12p per quarter. He explained that this would leave a notional surplus of £5,069 for the year. The Parish rate would be increasing by 8% and the Island Wide rate by 4% which would give a combined total of a 6% increase based on the previous year. He then confirmed that in real terms a 3 bedroom semi could see an approximate increase of £23 for the year, a 4 bedroom, 3 bathroom would see an increase of approximately £38 and a 2 bedroom flat at Perquage Court would see an increase of approximately £7 per year.

The Connétable asked for a proposer and seconder for the rate of 1.12p.

Proposed: Procureur Steve Linney

Seconded: Centenier Stuart Lusby

The Connétable then asked if there were any other proposals for the rate?

Mr Steve Carter proposed a rate of 1.11p, which was seconded by Mrs Sally-Ann Carter.

Following a discussion regarding the continued increase and impact of the cost of living, the Connétable asked for a show of hands to approve a rate of 1.11p per quarter for the next financial year.

On a show of hands 4 were in favour and 22 against.

The rate of 1.11p per quarter having been proposed but rejected by the Assembly, the Connétable then asked for a show of hands for the proposed rate of 1.12p.

On a show of hands 24 were in favour and 3 against.

The Connétable declared the rate set at 1.12p per quarter.

6. To name the Comité Paroissiale to examine the accounts of the Connétable for the year ending 30th April 2025.

The Connétable proposed the following as members of the Comité Paroissiale and explained that they meet a week before the Rates Assembly to receive a presentation of the Accounts from the auditors and to ask any questions they may have to satisfy themselves on the transparency and management of the annual Parish expenditure.

The Connétable

The two Procurers
The Rector
Deputies who reside in the Parish
The two Churchwardens
A member of the Roads Committee
Chairman of the Rates Assessors
The four Centeniers

Proposed: Mr Norman Laverack
Seconded: Mrs Toni Pittom

On a show of hands, all were in favour with none against.

Although this item had been approved by the Assembly, Procureur Bruce Harrison subsequently asked Mr Steve Carter if he had a question? Mr Carter asked how one could receive an invitation to join the Comité Paroissiale?

The Connétable advised the Assembly that this was not a statutory body, rather, it was through custom that those members of the Municipality [just named and approved by the Assembly for the next financial year] met as the Comité Paroissiale.

She advised that she considered it to be within her remit to invite others to attend and would consider the matter before the next meeting.

7. To appoint auditors to audit the Connétable's accounts for the year ending 30th April 2025.

The Connétable advised that she and the Procureurs recommended the re-appointment of Alex Picot, Chartered Accountants, as auditors to audit the Connétable's accounts for the year ending 30th April 2025. She then invited Mr Don Connolly to explain their role, at which time he highlighted the separation of roles and responsibilities between their role as Accountant and Auditor; he confirmed that Alex Picot would be willing to be re-elected should the Assembly choose. The Connétable then called for a proposer and seconder.

Proposed: Miss Pam Staley
Seconded: Centenier James Gray

On a show of hands, all were in favour with none against.

8. To elect three parishioners to the St Lawrence Sports & Community Centre Management Committee.

The Connétable thanked Norman Laverack, Marion Hibbeard and Pat Sabey for their continued service to the St Lawrence Sports & Community Centre Management Committee. She then asked for nominations for Parishioners to serve on the St Lawrence Sports and Community Centre Management Committee.

Mr Norman Laverack was proposed by Mrs Sue Hardy and seconded by Mrs Lucy Layton.

Mrs Marion Hibbeard was proposed by Miss Pam Staley and seconded by Mr James Le Feuvre.

Mrs Pat Sabey was proposed by Mrs Dawn Emmanuel and seconded by Mr John Emmanuel.

As there were no further nominations the Connétable thanked them for standing and declared them to have been duly elected for a one-year term.

9. The Connétable thanked everyone for attending and participating at the Assembly.

Meeting Closed:

10. There being no further business the Connétable declared the meeting closed at 8.58pm.

Signed:

Date

Deidre Mezbourian, Connétable

President of the Assembly