



## Parish of St Saviour

### Parish Assembly

Thursday 16 January 2025 at 6.30pm

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Kevin C Lewis - Connétable Richard Le Quesne - Procureur du Bien Public Martin Roberts – Procureur du Bien Public Rev Martin Evans - Rector
<b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b>	Marco Vieira – Executive Officer Paula Jespersen – Executive Assistant & minute taker
<b>APOLOGIES RECEIVED:</b>	Peter Maurant, Graeme Witts, Deputy Doublet, Duncan Maguire, Steven Laffoley-Edwards, Barry de la Mare, Deputy Binet, Karen Wilson and Katrina Wyatt.
	Connétable Lewis presided over the Assembly which numbered 37 people.
<b>CONVENING NOTICE:</b>	<p><b>AN ASSEMBLY of the Principals and Electors of the Parish of St. Saviour will be held at the Parish Hall, St. Saviour on Thursday 16 January 2025 at 6:30pm for the following business:-</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>To receive and, if deemed advisable, approve the minutes of the Parish Assembly held on 4 November 2024.</i></li> <li><i>To consider and approve the allocation of up to £560,000, including professional fees, for the acquisition of a property in Le Clos Le Geyt. This purchase is consistent with the Parish's strategy to expand its property portfolio, specifically to offer rental opportunities at below-market rates to individuals with strong ties to the Parish. The necessary funds for this acquisition will be drawn from the MCO fund.</i></li> </ol> <p><i>Should this be approved, to authorise the Connétable and Procureurs du Bien Public to act on behalf of the Parish in executing the necessary contract before the Royal Court of Jersey.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>In conformity with Article 32 of the Rates (Jersey) Law 2005, elect two people to act as members of the Rate Assessment Committee.</i></li> </ol> <p>Parish Hall St Saviour 9 January 2025</p> <p style="text-align: right;">..... <b>Kevin C Lewis</b> <b>Connétable</b></p> <p><i>I hereby certify that the above notice was affixed in the official Notice Box (boîte grillée), posted online and the Gazette, during the period from 9 January 2025 to the morning of 16 January 2025, inclusive and in conformity with the Law and Custom.</i></p> <p>Parish Church St. Saviour 16 January 2025</p> <p style="text-align: right;">..... <b>Reverend Martin Evans</b> <b>Rector of St Saviour</b></p>
<b>ITEM 1</b>	The minutes of the Parish Assembly held on 4 November 2024 were proposed by Deputy Ferey and seconded by Deputy Ozouf. Following a brief discussion the term "operating" within item c) of the Proposition was queried. After further discussion and clarification, the minutes were approved with 21 votes in favour and none against.



**ITEM 2**

To consider and approve the allocation of up to £560,000, including professional fees, for the acquisition of a property in Le Clos Le Geyt. This purchase is consistent with the Parish's strategy to expand its property portfolio, specifically to offer rental opportunities at below-market rates to individuals with strong ties to the Parish. The necessary funds for this acquisition will be drawn from the MCO fund.

The Connétable proposed the proposition and asked for a seconder to allow for discussion. Deputy Ozouf seconded the proposition, and the floor was opened for questions:-

**Question:** Deputy Kovacs, on behalf of the deputies, asked whether any other properties had been considered.

**Response:** Connétable Lewis explained that the property was well-suited to the Parish portfolio, as other properties in the same estate are owned by a Trust administered by the Parish Church. He noted that there are very few properties available at a reasonable price, making this a particularly good opportunity for the Parish. He further emphasized that it has always been the Parish's intention to expand its property portfolio.

**Question:** Deputy Ferey raised concerns about using £560,000 to benefit one family and asked if the funds could benefit the wider community.

**Response:** The Connétable stated that while future building programmes are planned, this property acquisition fits the Parish's immediate objectives and addresses housing needs.

**Question:** Mary O'Keefe asked about the criteria for selecting tenants and referenced past applications by a former Centenier.

**Response:** The Connétable explained the Gateway system, linked with Andium, ensures fair and transparent tenant selection, emphasizing that no favouritism occurs and the incident she was referring to was before his time. Those with strong links to the Parish would also be considered, including individuals serving the Parish as elected members or volunteers.

**Question:** Leslie Bechelet asked about final tenant approval and any additional costs for the property.

**Response:** The Connétable confirmed there were no additional costs and that tenants are selected through the Gateway system, with the Parish making the final decision.

**Question:** A Parishioner asked if MCO funds are strictly for housing purposes.

**Response:** The Connétable confirmed that MCO funds are exclusively for housing under the MCO Fund framework

**Question:** Ian Forde asked if the Connétable was familiar with the criteria for the Gateway system and whether parishioners were being asked to approve something without fully understanding its details. He went on to highlight a potential concern regarding affordability. Specifically, if the parish were to adhere strictly to the Eligibility Criteria for Renting Social Housing and set rents at 80% for a single applicant, they might struggle to afford the property while maintaining a sustainable standard of living. He went on to read from the Housing Gateway criteria and questioned whether the Parish had sufficiently calculated the financial implications.

**Response:** Deputy Ferey explained that the Gateway system was established to protect and support financially vulnerable islanders.

**Response:** The Executive Officer acknowledged that the rental calculation required further clarification. He explained that rents for the property would be set 'up to' rather than 'set at' 80% of market rates, with any shortfall potentially covered by Income Support (IS). Applicants seeking to rent the property would need to meet the established eligibility criteria. This means that social housing rents for this property would be capped at a maximum of 80% of the market equivalent for each property. If an applicant could not afford the rent set, they would need to apply for financial assistance through Income Support/Gateway at Customer and Local Services to determine whether they could access support for the size and type of property for which they are registered. Irrespective of above, the Housing gateway would work with the parish to shortlist applicants who could afford the property also.



**Comment:** Deputy Ferey emphasized that the Gateway system is means-tested and tailored to individual needs, factoring in income support and other relevant considerations.

**Question:** A parishioner suggested that the funds could be better used to benefit the youth, noting the Parish's limited facilities for younger residents compared to those for the older generation. She questioned the need to build on additional land and proposed exploring initiatives that would benefit a broader range of parishioners instead of focusing on a single property for one family.

**Answer:** Deputy Ferey noted that the Parish had other parcels of land that could be used for parks and similar facilities.

Connétable Lewis clarified that he was not suggesting building on the parcels of land but rather utilizing them for community facilities. He mentioned that this was included in the proposition for such purposes. The Connétable highlighted that the Parish contributes £25,000 annually to the Grands Vaux Youth Project. Additionally, he shared that he has consulted with the designer of the playground at St. Martin and is exploring fields within the Parish that could be repurposed for a park. He further outlined ideas for developing community facilities, including a community centre. He envisions the Parish Hall as a central hub for activities, which currently offers fitness classes but has had to stop hosting children's parties. He emphasized the need for an additional venue to accommodate such activities and plans would be made available soon.

**Question:** Ian Blandin emphasized the need for greater transparency within the Parish and called for the establishment of a group to discuss future schemes. He expressed concern that funds should benefit the wider community rather than being allocated to support a single family. He further highlighted the lack of facilities for 6 to 16-year-olds in St. Saviour, contrasting this with other Parishes, and reiterated the importance of inviting parishioners to participate in decision-making processes.

**Answer:** Deputy Ferey acknowledged the concerns and noted that a survey had identified St. Saviour and St. Helier as the least favourable places to live. He expressed his commitment to improving this perception.

**Answer:** The Connétable assured that efforts were underway to enhance transparency "more than it's ever had in place previously" following failed promises in the past, about providing update on new facilities provisions within the Parish. He stated that plans are underway, with the view to share them in near future. It was also noted this was not the first time parishioners had connected with the Connétable about having new open spaces, as previous constables of St Saviour have received similar requests but nothing was followed up.

**Comment:** Procureur Le Quesne expressed scepticism about purchasing a single property, suggesting that a shared equity scheme would be a more effective use of Parish funds.

**Comment:** Deputy Ozouf referred to the fields behind the Parish Hall, now known as Langtry Gardens, where the 32 Parish bungalows are situated. He noted that during his father's tenure as Connétable, parishioners had expressed a preference for these fields to be developed for housing rather than retained as green fields, highlighting the need for housing within the Parish. He also mentioned that Le Clos Le Geyt was developed for housing, with the developer retaining half of the properties and the other half being allocated to the Church Trust, Le Geyt Trust. He affirmed his and his fellow deputies' commitment to working with the Connétable on housing initiatives. Regarding the proposed purchase, Deputy Ozouf asked whether the Parish had consulted with Treasury to confirm if it was exempt from stamp duty, given its status as a social housing provider. He noted that since Andium, as a social housing provider, is exempt from stamp duty, the Parish should similarly qualify for this exemption. Additionally, he enquired about the current balance of the MCO Fund.

**Comment:** The Executive Officer confirmed that the MCO Fund currently holds £2.4 million, this would reduce should proposition to buy the home be successful.



**Comment:** Deputy Ozouf supported the Connétable's proposal, emphasizing the importance of building or acquiring properties for community benefit, calling the purchase a one-off opportunity rather than a precedent.

**Comment:** The Connétable emphasized his strong commitment to ensuring that the Parish is exempt from paying stamp duty, recognizing the significance of this matter for Parish finances.

**Comment:** The Executive Officer reported that initial discussions between the Parish's legal representative and the Judicial Greffe indicated that the Parish may be required to pay stamp duty equivalent to the value of the property, in addition to up to 3% second home tax, due to its ownership of multiple properties. He expressed the view that this charge was unnecessary but reassured parishioners that he would actively pursue potential exemptions or reductions if possible. Given the Parish's role as a housing provider, working in partnership with Andium Homes, he emphasized that the Parish should not be classified as a commercial enterprise, and second home tax would be exempt.

He and the Connétable further noted that any support from the Parish Deputies in advocating for this effort would be greatly appreciated.

**Comment:** Deputy Ferey suggested to Connétable Lewis that the proposition could be withdrawn until further information is available, avoiding the need for an immediate vote.

**Comment:** Connétable Lewis acknowledged the need for community facilities to benefit both the youth and seniors of the Parish, providing opportunities for engagement and activities.

The question was raised again as to whether the Parish should withdraw or defer the proposition until all answers and clarifications are obtained.

**Comment:** Leslie Bechelet while acknowledging potential challenges, he emphasized that funds should be utilized effectively rather than sitting in the bank and depreciating in value. He expressed his support for the proposed proposition as it aligns with some of these objectives.

**Comment:** Alison Roberts stated that she had heard criticism of the Parish for not taking action and emphasized the importance of debating the proposition democratically. She expressed her view that the matter should not be withdrawn or deferred, as parishioners should have the opportunity to discuss and debate it openly.

After a brief pause in proceedings to allow the Connétable to consult with the Procureurs and Executive Officer, Connétable Lewis announced that the general consensus was to proceed to a vote. **The proposition was then put to the Assembly and carried with 18 votes in favour and 13 against.**

**ITEM 3** On a proposition by Deputy Ferey, seconded by Ian Blandin, **Suzie Webb** was elected as a Rates Assessor.

On a proposition by Tom Gales, seconded by Leslie Bechelet, **Lesley Norton** was re-elected for a further term as Rates Assessor.

Connétable Lewis thanked both candidates for putting themselves forward for these important roles and advised them to appear before the Royal Court on **Friday, 24 January 2025, at 10 a.m.** to swear the customary Oath of Office.

Tom Gales, Chair of the Rates Assessors and Connétable Lewis extended their gratitude to retiring Rates Assessor **Margaret Forde** for her many years of dedicated service to the Parish. It was noted that Margaret had to step down due to moving out of the Parish. Tom Gales remarked that Margaret had been an invaluable asset to the team and would be greatly missed.



Connétable Lewis thanked everyone for their attendance.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 7.35 p.m.

.....  
Chairperson

DRAFT

