STATES OF JERSEY

PROPOSED BUDGET (GOVERNMENT PLAN) 2026-2029 (P.70/2025): TWENTY-FIFTH AMENDMENT

FUNDING FOR MAINTENANCE OF PARISH CHURCHES

Lodged au Greffe on 24th November 2025
by the Connétable of St. Martin
Earliest date for debate: 8th December 2025

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSED BUDGET (GOVERNMENT PLAN) 2026-2029 (P.70/2025): TWENTY-FIFTH AMENDMENT

1 PAGE 3, PARAGRAPH (b)(xii) –

After the words "Appendix to the accompanying Report", insert the words –

", except that on page 47, after the words "pay and non-pay" there should be inserted a new paragraph as follows –

"During 2026 the Minister for Treasury and Resources will develop and establish a funding model allocating £50,000 per annum to each of Jersey's twelve Parish Churches until 2031, to exclusively support their structural integrity and maintenance. The model will be developed under the arts, culture and heritage budget to support the unique structures and heritage of the Parish Churches." ".

CONNÉTABLE OF ST. MARTIN

Note: After this amendment, the proposition would read as follows –

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion −

(a) In accordance with Article 16 of the Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2019 (the Law) to approve an amendment to the Government Plan 2025 – 2028 (entitled "Budget 2025 – 2028") to a reduction in the 2025 head of expenditure "Grants to States Funds" as included in Table 5(i) Revenue Heads of Expenditure of that Government Plan from £119,821,000 to £69,821,000.

(b) To receive the Government Plan 2026 – 2029 (entitled "Budget 2026-2029") specified in Article 9(1) of the Law and specifically –

i. to approve the estimate of total States income to be paid into the Consolidated Fund in 2026 as set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 1 to the Report, which is inclusive of the proposed taxation and impôts duties changes outlined in the Government Plan, in line with Article 9(2)(a) of the Law.

ii. to refer to their Act dated 24th June 2003 in which they approved that no new 'user pays' charges be introduced without any such charge receiving prior in principle approval by the States Assembly and accordingly to approve the introduction of two new charges, to be levied by Health and Care Jersey to promote appropriate use of the Emergency Department and for repeated non-attendance of outpatient appointments, detailed in the section entitled "Departmental Income Sources" as set out in the Appendix to the accompanying Report.

iii. to approve the proposed Changes to Approval for financing/borrowing for 2026, as shown in Appendix 2 – Summary

Table 2 to the Report, which may be obtained by the Minister for Treasury and Resources, as and when required, in line with Article 9 (2)(c) of the Law, of up to those revised approval amounts.

iv. to approve the transfers from one States fund to another for 2026 of up to and including the amounts set in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 3 in line with Article 9(2)(b) of the Law.

v. to approve a transfer from the Consolidated Fund to the Stabilisation Fund in 2026 of up to £50 million, subject to a decision of the Minister for Treasury and Resources based on the availability of funds in the Consolidated Fund as at 31st December 2025 in excess of the estimates provided in this plan, or from budgeted underspends identified before 31st December 2026.

vi. to approve a transfer from the Consolidated Fund to the Agricultural Loans Fund in 2026 of up to £5 million, subject to a decision of the Minister for Treasury and Resources based on availability of funds in the Consolidated Fund as at 31st December 2025 in excess of estimates provided in this plan, or from budgeted underspends identified before 31st December 2026;

vii. to approve each major project that is to be started or continued in 2026 and the total cost of each such project and any amendments to the proposed total cost of a major project under a previously approved Government Plan, in line with Article 9(2)(d), (e) and (f) of the Law and as set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 4 to the Report.

viii. to approve the proposed amount to be appropriated from the Consolidated Fund for 2026, for each head of expenditure, being gross expenditure less estimated income (if any), in line with Articles 9(2)(g), 10(1) and 10(2) of the Law, and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Tables 5(i) and (ii) of the Report.

ix. to approve the estimated income, being estimated gross income less expenditure, that each States trading operation will pay into its trading fund in 2026 in line with Article 9(2)(h) of the Law and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 6 to the Report.

x. to approve the proposed amount to be appropriated from each States trading operation's trading fund for 2026 for each head of expenditure in line with Article 9(2)(i) of the Law and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 7 to the Report.

xi. to approve the estimated income and expenditure proposals for the Climate Emergency Fund for 2026 as set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 8 to the Report.

xii. to approve, in accordance with Article 9(1) of the Law, the Government Plan 2026-2029, as set in the Appendix to the accompanying Report, except that on page 47, after the words "pay and non-pay" there should be inserted a new paragraph as follows –

"During 2026 the Minister for Treasury and Resources will develop and establish a funding model allocating £50,000 per annum to each of Jersey's twelve Parish Churches until 2031, to exclusively support their structural integrity and maintenance. The model will be developed under the arts, culture and heritage budget to support the unique structures and heritage of the Parish Churches.".

REPORT

We all focus on the castles and their preservation but undoubtedly the most important historic community buildings are our twelve parish churches.

Jersey’s iconic castles and fortifications, including Mont Orgueil, Elizabeth Castle, St. Aubin’s Fort, Archirondel and Grosnez, are as essential to the fabric of our Island as our dolmens. However, it is our twelve Parish Churches that are our most essential community buildings, despite their maintenance being left to the Parishes.

The history of these churches dates back a millennium, with the first references being made in the early 11th century. From their very foundation, these churches have been the centre of community life in Jersey, playing a significant role in the administration of the parishes and wider Island governance, and with the emergence of the Constables they became the origins of our Island’s democratic life. They were the beginning of our perquages and a place to take shelter and to hold meetings.

The churches are essential signifiers of the Island’s historic relationship with its neighbours. St Helier’s is the former Rectorate of the Archbishop of Canterbury Roger Walden; and St Brelade’s Fishermen’s Chapel is one of only a few of its kind to survive the Reformation.

They have thereby become living patchworks of our history, subject to numerous renovations over the following centuries. St Martin’s, for example, expanded rapidly to include a 12th century nave, a 14th century south chapel, and a 15th century tower.

However, the fabric of these parish churches suffered badly in the Victorian era, with ill-conceived restoration practices creating significant, long-term problems, including overzealous plastering that does not allow the churches to breathe and creates extremely costly problems with damp.

The entire church of St. Martin is pointed externally in hard cement mortar. Moisture is consequently trapped in the thickness of the wall and evaporates slowly causing the walls to cool and salt crystals to form on the wall surfaces. Repointing in lime is expensive but would improve the vapour permeability of the structure. Without this pointing the church will continue to deteriorate.

This amendment seeks funding from the Government of Jersey to be able to maintain these iconic buildings of our national heritage. My preference is for a sum of £50,000 to be available per year for each church, with unspent sums to be made available for the maintenance of other ecclesiastical buildings in the Island facing similar maintenance issues; with these to be used exclusively for building maintenance. This project will allow parish administrations to carry out much needed restoration work, and they should each contribute to a review at the end of these five years to determine the long-term viability of these buildings.

This funding will allow for repointed exteriors, more efficient heating, new lighting, gutters and downpipes, as well as windows, gates and railings, and other essential, expensive and vital support these buildings need. Acting now will ensure that the long-term viability of these buildings is secured for years to come and minimise future costs that would much more significantly impact the budgets of future Assemblies than what is proposed through this amendment.

We live in a secular society, and these historic churches are now being used not only for worship but for meetings, for exhibitions and other community events. This amendment is not so much a question of what happens within these walls as it is a plea to preserve the walls themselves.

If we do not act now and solve these problems, then the costs they will incur in the future will be prohibitive, perhaps even ruinous to both church and States. For the long-term benefit of our Island, it is essential that we guarantee the survival of our historic and iconic buildings.

Financial and staffing implications

The financial impact would be a maximum of £600,000 per annum until 2031. The current budget allocation for 2026 is £14,977,000. This allocation would therefore mean that controlled and targeted funding is made available to maintain the Parish Churches, avoiding more costly funding allocations in the longer term. We will be safeguarding the structure of our iconic historic buildings and therefore preserving our heritage.

Children's Rights Impact Assessment

I consider that this amendment has no direct or indirect impact on children and that the duty to have due regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child does not arise. Accordingly, a Children's Rights Impact Assessment is not required under the Children (Conventions Rights) (Jersey) Law 2022