

Parish and Government Review Panel

Questions specific to the financial oversight of the Parish

1. **Can you provide a summary of the process for allocating funds within the parish, and who is involved in the decision-making process?**

The process for allocating funds within the parish is as follows:

Funds cannot be allocated within the Parish without the approval of a Parish Assembly. Parish rate payers electors are allowed to vote at a Parish Assembly. Following the approval of the Parish Assembly of a Budget at the Main Assembly held in July each year, the Parish's expenditure throughout its financial year will ordinarily be in accordance with that Budget.

The Constable produces a first draft of the Parish Budget, taking into account the prior financial year's income and expenditure, and the likely income and expenditure for the current financial year. It is then provided to the Procureurs for their input and amendment, and invariably the Constable and Procureurs meet at least once to discuss the draft Parish Budget. The revised draft is then examined, discussed and approved by the Special Committee (consisting of elected adjoints and ex officio officers) prior to being presented to the Parish Assembly for discussion and approval.

Should something unforeseen occur during a financial year, which may or will require unbudgeted Parish expenditure, then a Parish Assembly will be convened to discuss the matter, consider the options open to the Parish and approve or reject any additional expenditure required or anticipated out of Parish reserves.

2. **How are different spending needs prioritised within the parish when allocating funds?**

In the preparation of the draft Budget for review and approval by the Special Committee and then the Parish Assembly, the Constable and the Procureurs are mindful of all the spending needs of the Parish that currently exist and which may reasonably arise.

3. **Are there specific criteria or guidelines used to assess which projects or initiatives receive funding?**

The overriding criterium for **any** Parish expenditure is whether it is for the benefit of the Parish. In applying this, the Connétable and Procureurs are mindful not only of the parishioners but of all of the stakeholders of the Parish and take into consideration where appropriate the short-term and/or the long-term benefits of any proposed expenditure.

4. **How does the parish ensure that funds are allocated in a way that benefits parishioners?**

By applying the criterium in the answer to 3 above.

5. **What role does the Parish Assembly play in the decision-making process for fund allocation?**

The role of the Parish Assembly is a crucial part of the decision-making process for fund allocation. Its approval of the year's Parish Rate and therefore the income generated by the Parish, together with its approval of the Parish Budget, enables the Parish to function.

6. Do the Procureurs consider government strategies when making decisions about fund allocation? If so, which strategies are taken into account?

The Procureurs ensure that they are conversant with and aware of the most recently published Common Strategic Policy and Government Plan from time to time, and these provide a backdrop against which they fulfil their role.

They believe that a significant proportion of the Parish's funds allocation have supported and continues to support at a macro level the government strategies identified as its key strategies in the Terms of Reference:

Putting children first

- The Parish led the refurbishment project of the Trinity Youth Centre in 2021/22. The Centre provides a home for the Parish's youth club which runs three evenings a week and has recently increased its membership to 120 individuals. The Youth Centre is also home to the 3rd Jersey Cubs group and acts as the venue for a number of children-centric activities.
- The Parish pays an annual contribution of £18,000 towards the cost of providing a Youth Service worker for the Youth Club.
- The Parish makes the Glebe Field available for children-centric events and activities.
- The Parish works closely with the Parish School on a regular basis. It recently provided support to the School in its attempt to ensure a safer crossing for its pupils and their carers across the main road, which has resulted in the creation of a "School Street" in Les Ruelles.

Carbon neutral roadmap

- One of the aims of the Trinity Village Improvement Scheme was to provide safer pedestrian and cycle routes around and through the centre of the Parish to encourage less car use.
- The Parish was one of the first Parishes to introduce recycling refuse collections for its parishioners. On a monthly basis, separate recycling collections of glass, metal, paper and cardboard, and plastic take place.
- Maintenance of the Parish roads is a priority of the Parish.
- The Parish is currently undertaking a trial project with Evie A2B Service

Community safety

- One of the aims of the Trinity Village Improvement Scheme was to provide safer pedestrian and cycle routes around and through the centre of the Parish.
- It recently provided support to the School in its attempt to ensure a safer crossing for its pupils and their carers across the main road, which has resulted in the creation of a "School Street" in Les Ruelles.

- The Parish does its best to ensure that it has a full Honorary Police Force, whose officers who are fully trained and resourced to deal with any questions of community safety that might arise.
- The Parish complies with all the relevant health and safety requirements when staging events e.g. its celebration of Liberation 80.
- On completion of the first time buyers estate, a safe access route was established for families to access the Parish Hall and Youth Centre. This has subsequently been extended to the Parish's retirement homes by a crossing on the main road.

Health prevention

- During the pandemic, the Parish coordinated the scheduling of vaccination appointments for elderly parishioners and also if required transport to and from the vaccination centre.
- The Parish has established a Community Support Team, consisting of volunteers, who assist predominantly elderly parishioners with assistance largely concerning their attendance at Hospital and GP appointments.

Reducing bureaucracy

The Parish team which consists of a caretaker, office staff and groundsmen is very small (there are a total of 6 individuals, only three of whom are employed fulltime) so there is no room at all for any unnecessary bureaucracy. The Constable operates an open door policy for all members of staff, which keeps communication at an optimum level.

Having said all this, what must be stressed is that ultimately, fund allocation is a matter for the Parish Assembly. Funds are allocated as per the budget set by the Parish Assembly, or as per a special vote by the Parish Assembly regarding specific unbudgeted expenditure. The Procureurs "carry out the lawful instructions/decisions of the Parish Assembly or officers in relation to the use and application of funds and resources, even if disagreeing with their wisdom ..." (see re Grouville (Procureurs du Bien Public) (1970) JJ 1451).

7. **How do the Procureurs ensure that parish funding is aligned with the broader objectives or goals of the government (e.g. putting children first, health prevention, carbon neutral roadmap, community safety)?**

The Procureurs have these objectives/goals in mind when considering parish funding.

Where the Parish has a duty under specific legislation to deliver then this is provided within the budget (e.g. scheduled public authority under FOI/DP legislation etc).

See also 6. above

8. **Have there been any instances when government priorities or policies have directly influenced how parish funds are allocated?**

In the absence of specific clearly articulated government policies, it would be incorrect to say that these have directly influenced how parish funds are allocated. However, as explained in more detail in the answer to 6. above, the allocation of Parish funds in the main supports the strategies identified by the Panel as key strategies, and it is assumed that the government priorities or policies referred to in this question will be in support of those strategies.

9. **How do the Procureurs coordinate with the government when their priorities or policies overlap with parish spending?**

The Procureurs have a close working relationship with the Constable, who is a conduit of any government priorities or policies that have been debated and approved by the Assembly.

Assuming that there are government priorities or policies that come into existence outside of the Assembly, the Procureurs would expect to be contacted directly by the relevant government officer of the relevant government department to discuss any potential overlap in respect of spending.

10. **Is there a formal or informal process for consulting with the government before making significant financial decisions or allocating funds for projects that could overlap with government policy?**

The Constable fulfils an active role in discussions regarding Parish finances and to the extent that the government policy referenced in the question has been before the States Assembly, the Constable brings it to the attention of the Procureurs.

In respect of any government policy that evolves outside of the States Assembly, the current Procureurs would expect to be contacted directly.

11. **Do the Procureurs assess the potential impact of funded projects on the local community?**

Yes, see the answer to 3. above.

12. **Do the Procureurs allocate funds based on the needs or demands of specific groups within the parish, such as youth services, the elderly, or businesses?**

The current Procureurs have never received any demand from businesses within the Parish for funds, nor have they had any occasion whereby they have identified a need for the allocation of Parish funds to businesses. It is therefore hard to imagine any scenario where the Procureurs would recommend to the Parish Assembly that it approves of funds being spent on or for the direct benefit of businesses. Indeed, it would set a very difficult precedent to be seen to be supporting any private business or individual trader.

As previously mentioned, the Procureurs allocate funds in accordance with the mandate given to them by the Parish Assembly. This includes the distribution of a specific amount each year to a number of charities. The charities who receive Parish funds are identified in the Parish accounts published each year. They are all registered charities who have applied to the Parish

for support, and who have provided their accounts to the Parish. The requests and accounts are scrutinised on a yearly basis by the Procureurs.

13. How do the Procureurs monitor and track the spending of allocated funds to ensure accountability and prevent overspending or misallocation?

The Procureurs have an express expectation of the Constable that the Budget is adhered to and allocated funds are used for their designated purpose. The corollary of this is that they expect and receive immediate notification from the Constable of any potential significant future expenditure outside of the Budget. If appropriate, there will subsequently be the holding of a Parish Assembly to consider extra-Budget spending in advance and, if necessary or desirable, a special vote approving the expenditure in question.

The Procureurs are able to access on request any financial information at any time relating to the Parish.

The Procureurs receive a monthly report from the Parish's Finance Officer which deals primarily with reconciled current bank accounts, cashflow and deposit accounts.

Management accounts are produced by the Parish's accountant on a quarterly basis for the scrutiny of the Procureurs. These are produced in advance to a meeting of the Constable and Procureurs to discuss the accounts and deal with any concerns.

The Procureurs require the operation of a 6 eyes process regarding payments. Invoices are checked on receipt, then passed to the Constable for payment approval. Once that approval has been expressly received, one person inputs the payment, and that payment is then checked and approved by two other members of the office.

14. Are there any external audits or reviews of the parish's finances to ensure transparency and responsible management of public funds?

Audited yearly accounts are produced. Article 21 of the Rates (Jersey) 2005, as amended, expressly requires audited accounts to have been presented to the Parish Assembly and approved by it prior to the fixing of the Parish rate for that year. These accounts are then published on the Parish's website.

Even if there was no statutory requirement for an audit, the Procureurs would still require such a process to occur on an annual basis to demonstrate good corporate governance, ensure transparency and the responsible management of Parish funds.

15. How do the Procureurs/parishes manage any surplus or deficit funds?

Article 21 (3) of the Rates (Jersey) Law 2005, as amended, provides that 'The Parish Assembly shall then approve a parish rate of an amount that will produce for the parish income that is at least sufficient to satisfy the requirements set out in the approved estimates, taking into account any surplus of funds as mentioned in Article 15(2) that are to be used to offset the general expenses of the parish during that financial year.'

16. What types of projects or initiatives typically receive the most funding?

Maintaining the Parish roads in good order and ensuring that there is a regular weekly collection of refuse and monthly collection of recycling takes a large amount of the Parish funds.

17. How does the parish handle requests for funding from local organisations or groups, and what criteria are used to assess these requests?

See the answer to 12. above.

18. How do the parishes ensure transparency in the fund allocation process? Is there a public-facing report or summary of how funds have been allocated and spent?

See the answer to 14. above.

19. How are decisions communicated to parishioners of how their contributions are being used?

See the answer to 14. above.

20. Is there a mechanism for parishioners to raise concerns or questions about fund allocation decisions?

There are several ways that parishioners can and do raise concerns about fund allocation:

- At the Parish Assembly at which the fund allocation is being proposed.
- Directly with the Constable or the Procureurs (contact details are provided on the Parish website).
- In accordance with the Complaints Procedure published on the Parish Website.
- By issuing a r  quite to convene a Parish Assembly to reverse the previous Parish Assembly decision.

21. How does the parish ensure that allocated funds are spent as intended, and are there any measures in place to prevent misuse?

See the answers to earlier questions regarding the approval of budgets and the auditing of accounts

22. Is there any joint funding or shared investment in projects between the parish and the government? If so, can you provide some examples?

The Parish and Government worked together to improve road and pedestrian safety by the stabilisation of a wall at Le Grand Clos on Rue es Picots, the Parish funding the majority of the project and the Government providing project management and £50k.