

Submission to the Scrutiny Panel Review on the relationship between the Parishes and the Government of Jersey

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A prescription for parish renaissance

Introduction

While this review concerns the relationship between parishes and government, I have given particular focus to parish administration. I propose reforms to enhance transparency, accountability, and participation in parish life. These reforms would enable parish staff to focus on community involvement and outreach, thereby fostering local democracy and community vitality.

By way of comparison, the reform that I envisage is similar to changes I have seen elsewhere in the Government of Jersey. For example, at Jersey Library, self-service technology was introduced around ten years ago to free library staff from issue counters and date stamps, enabling them to spend more time helping readers and using their professional skills.

This review presents an opportunity to address the role of parishes and how we connect with them in our everyday lives. The submission proposes an alternative vision in which parishes step back and consider why they are doing the various administrative tasks they do and whether there is a different way of doing things which would free up staff's time in order to prioritise meaningful connections with all parishioners, transforming parish halls into vibrant community hubs.

The reality is that an average of 66% of parishioners are of working age (16–64), yet, according to their websites, six parishes – St. Mary, St. Lawrence, St. Ouen, St. Peter, St. Saviour, and St. Helier- offer no out-of-hours access. Pockets of best practice exist but there is no agreed standard of service among the Comité des Connétables, who appear to prioritise individuality over collective best practice.

I urge the Connétables to step back and consider whether there is a better way than the current focus on administrative functions such as dog licensing, gun licensing, and processing driving licence applications through twelve disparate systems. I urge the panel to recommend reforms that encourage evolution, collegiality, transparency, and accountability.

The former editor of Jersey Evening Post Editor Andy Sibcy said, "The parish system must evolve or it will die". The government has the potential to play a significant role in this relationship, offering support, expertise or funding to parishes to shift from 12 administrative models. Centralising specific administrative tasks, such as driving licences and gun licences at governmental level could free up resources for more impactful community work.

Jersey's parish system is culturally significant, perceived as a key feature of island life and local democracy. Some might view government attempts to encroach on self-rule through mandates replacing consensual cooperation as a direct attack on self-rule. I imagine there will be some push back to any suggestions for reform and I could imagine a situation where some Connétables might view any attempt at external review as constitutional overreach.

However, if some Connétables are reluctant to examine their administrative functions, then their justifications for maintaining the status quo must be critically evaluated. The reality is that the role has not been static since 1462. Connétables originally had military responsibilities and over time their role has become civil and administrative. However, much of what is done now is a legacy of an era before the digital age.

John F. Kennedy famously said, "We choose to go to the Moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard." He argued that such ambitious goals "serve to organise and measure the best of our energies and skills." His broader point, often paraphrased as "doing the hard thing" or "doing the right thing", was about leadership and courage: choosing difficult paths because they lead to growth, unity, and achievement rather than comfort or complacency.

With that thought in mind, I encourage the Connétables to do the hard thing as a test of our island's strength and determination. I encourage the Connétables to show leadership and courage and choose the difficult path to move from the administrative status quo to a focus on community involvement and outreach and not just for the 34% of parishioners who are not of working age.

Core Recommendations for Government-Parish Relationship

Centralisation of Administrative Functions

The government should collaborate with parishes to consolidate routine administrative tasks, such as driving licences, into unified systems, reducing inefficiencies from 12 parallel operations and freeing parish resources for community initiatives.

Mandated Accessibility Standards

Suppose parish halls are to maintain their administrative function. In that case, all parish halls should be required to adopt flexible opening hours, including at least one evening session per week to serve the 66% of parishioners who are of working age.

Enhanced Accountability and Transparency

I propose that the parishes voluntarily agree to record community engagement metrics and to report annually to the public, and all committee minutes should be published promptly online in standardised, searchable formats. If a voluntary agreement fails then it should be mandated.

Specific System Reforms

Parish Rates and Financial Standards

I propose that the parishes implement standardised accounting principles across all parishes, following St. Helier's lead in adopting Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

Further parishes must separate budget approval from account presentation processes to ensure democratic oversight occurs before expenditure.

If 40% of parish rates are to continue to be sent the Treasury central pot then, parishes must establish a single island-wide rates assessment methodology to address the current inequitable system where the same property could be assessed differently across parishes, with variations ranging from 8,300 to 10,509 quarters for identical properties.

Administrative Efficiency

I recommend that the parishes replace **dog licensing** with mandatory microchipping. Jersey could contract with an existing database in the UK.

I recommend centralised **gun licensing** under a single authority rather than maintaining twelve separate systems, with Connétables consulted but no longer bearing direct responsibility for issuing licences.

Democratic Participation

I propose a minimum of 7 days' notice for **parish assemblies** and 14 days for key assemblies, such as rates assemblies, moving away from the current 2-day minimum that hinders meaningful participation.

If the island is to continue to run 13 roads authorities, then the parishes must take meaningful steps to address gender imbalances in parish governance, where five of twelve Roads Committees are entirely male, with only two women serving across 36 elected positions. We should also evaluate whether it is necessary for the Rectors to be members of the Roads Committees.

Strategic Coordination Areas

Waste Management

We must implement an island-wide standardised recycling methodology if we are to address Jersey's lamentable 35% recycling rate.

Infrastructure Planning

Critically evaluate whether having 13 roads authorities is the best way to manage our roads systems. If it is decided to maintain the current system- then I recommend we strengthen coordination mechanisms between parish Roads Committees and the Infrastructure Department, including shared information systems, joint training programmes, and collaborative planning for major projects.

Community Development

This review presents an opportunity for a new vision for the role of parish halls in all residents' lives. I propose the government provide support for all parishes to upgrade their IT through offering grants and training. At the simplest level, an online booking portal would allow the public to see what is on offer at one glance and book the parish hall for their own events.

My vision for the parishes is to redirect their focus from bureaucracy toward community building.

1. Parish Hall Opening Hours (Appendix one)

If the parishes decide to continue their current administrative tasks, then they must open for at least one hour outside of working hours.

Despite an average of 66% of parishioners being of working age (16–64), six parishes: St. Lawrence, St. Mary, St. Ouen, St. Peter, St. Saviour, and St. Helier offer no out-of-hours access, according to their websites.

According to the official 2021 Jersey Census data, 66% of Jersey's population is of working age (16-64 years).

1. **Helier: 72%**
 - **St. Saviour: 65%**
 - Trinity: 63%
 - St. Clement: 63%
 - **St. Mary: 63%**
 - **St. Ouen: 63%**
 - **St. Lawrence: 63%**
 - St. John: 63%
 - St. Martin: 63%
 - Grouville: 60%
 - St. Brelade: 61%
 - **St. Peter: 60%**

A simple average across all 12 parishes would be approximately 63.3%. However, the population-weighted average is 66%, as the parishes differ in size.

Not opening outside working hours inconveniences working-age individuals, who must take time off work or utilise lunch breaks to handle essential administrative tasks. Certain professions, such as teaching, make this virtually impossible. Only three parishes (St. John, St. Martin, and Trinity) provide after-hours access, whilst three others (Grouville, St. Brelade, and St. Clement) open sufficiently early for quick pre-work visits. Limited opening hours prioritise bureaucracy over people. My enquiries with the Connétables and parish secretaries revealed that on request St. Mary and St. Lawrence will offer ad-hoc out-of-hours appointments, but this is not publicised on their websites.

In contrast, Connétables such as St. John's Connétable, Andy Jéhan, view the hall as a "hub," hosting activities including yoga, book exchanges, and mother-and-baby groups, alongside Wednesday evening openings that coincide with drop-in surgeries. This approach attracts working people and students. For example, in St. John 35 young people have or will turn 16 in 2025 and 33 have or will turn 17 in 2025. In St. John, they can easily obtain provisional licences. St. Martin's Connétable, Karen Stone, aligns evening hours with honorary police enquiries, whilst Trinity's Connétable, Philip Le Sueur, emphasises social benefits, welcoming parishioners for casual interactions and recognising that evenings suit workers and students, including rural manual labourers requiring licence exchanges.

These examples demonstrate that when parishes prioritise accessibility and community engagement, they build stronger connections. The government could provide professional HR, legal or IT support where barriers to change are perceived.

2. Parish Rates System Standardisation (Appendix two)

In 2023, Grouville's assessment methodology was officially found to be "non-compliant with the Rates Law" by the Rates Appeal Board. My investigation into parish rates assessment methodologies, published in the Jersey Evening Post in July 2024, revealed fundamental inconsistencies across Jersey's twelve parishes that undermine public confidence and fairness (Bridge, 2024a). As documented, "surely if it was a fair and equitable system, you should be able to put the attributes of your property into each methodology and get the same outcomes. But that's not what happens". In 2024, I decided to put my property's attributes (assessed at 11,000 quarters and reduced to 10,200 on R6 appeal in 2025) into the other Parishes' methodologies. Using best effort, the results are as follows:

St Saviour: 8,300

St. Martin: 8,410

St. Brelade: 8,750

St. Mary: 9,258

St. Peter: 9,400

Trinity: 9,613

St. Lawrence: 9,962

St. Helier: 10,509

St. Clement: 10,000

St. Ouen: 10,296

St. John: 10,370

AVERAGE: 9,533

This suggests that Grouville is out of kilter with all other parishes.

Key Issues Identified:

- Twelve different rates assessment methodologies create an inequitable and opaque system.
- Lack of transparency in rate calculations and fund allocation
- Lack of awareness that 40% of rates contribute to a central pot at Treasury
- Significant variations in rate increases
- Standardised documentation explaining rate calculations to parishioners can be found on the Comité des Connétables website.

I am advised that the Rates Supervisory Committee paper, headed "A guide to the assessment of Parish Rates in Jersey," has been adopted and published on each Parish's website.

In the case of Grouville, the document cannot be located using the search function.

To find the Rates guidelines, you must:

- Open the parish website
- Find the rates section
- Open the page called "What does the Rates Law cover"
- Scroll to the bottom and find the words "in this guide" in a different colour.
- Click on those words as they are a hyperlink to the Comité des Connétables website, where the guide is published.

The guidance explains the rates procedures, but not how each Parish conducts assessments. That information is still hidden away in FOI responses on the Comité's website. Except for Grouville, who immediately changed theirs after publication. With this in mind, I

propose that all FOI applications are through one central portal – I can see no justification for running two systems. Further, any information successfully revealed through FOI should be fully integrated into parish and government websites.

An off-putting appeals process

My experience of the appeals process is documented in an extract from my blog found in

Appendix two.

Recommendations:

- Implement a single, island-wide rates assessment methodology.
- Mandate that every parish website publishes transparent, standardised, searchable documentation explaining rate calculations and fund allocation
- Establish regular reviews of rates assessment practices to ensure ongoing fairness and transparency.
- Reconsider the 40% of rates that contribute to the central Treasury pot. Is this taxation by another name?
- A more radical solution- if the 40% central contribution were transferred to general taxation – this would allow parishes to operate 12 independent systems without requiring standardisation.

3. Parish Transparency and Democratic Participation

Current Challenges:

- A minority of parishes publish the minutes of their roads committees online.
- Minutes should be published in draft form within seven days of the Parish Assembly.
- Where minutes of assemblies and committees are published, the lack of practical search functionality on parish websites hinders access to research.
- Parish assemblies can be convened with as little as 2 days' notice by law, while parishioners regularly receive only 1 weeks' notice.
- Some parishes hold assemblies on set days (e.g., the last Thursday of the month), while others lack fixed schedules, making planning difficult for busy parishioners.
- Inadequate information is presented to parishioners in advance of major debates (except St. Helier which requires a projet).
- Fragmented and unsearchable information systems across parishes create barriers to citizen engagement.
- Limited public awareness of parish roles and responsibilities beyond basic service delivery affects meaningful engagement.

When writing in the Jersey Evening Post about Roads Committees, several readers wrote on social media to say they had not heard of the committees and wanted to know how to become members.

Recommendations:

- Mandate online, timely publication of all parish committee minutes in a standardised format with full search functionality.
- Require all propositions to be accompanied by a full report.
- Until such time as a law change can be implemented, invite the Connétables to enter into a voluntary agreement to provide a minimum of seven days' notice for parish assemblies and a minimum of fourteen days' notice for key assemblies, such as the Rates Assembly, or for significant expenditure approval, to enable meaningful democratic participation.
- Establish uniform parish website standards with significantly improved search functionality.
- Subsume the Parish Freedom of Information system into the central system.

4. Relationship between the Parish, its Roads Committees and the Infrastructure Department

This review represents an opportunity to consider why the island has 13 roads authorities and whether this is the best way of managing our roads systems. If the Connétables believe it is then they should have no trouble in explaining their reasoning.

Each of Jersey's twelve parishes maintains a statutory Roads Committee (Comité des Chemins), which functions as the local highway authority responsible for the Parish's by-roads under the Loi (1914) sur la Voirie. The Roads Committee oversees:

- Maintenance and repair of by-roads and verges
- Inspection of parish roads
- Authorises works
- Ensures compliance with the law
- Supervision of branchage
- Setting and maintaining boundary stones between parishes
- Considering planning applications and licences for structures or utilities on parish roads
- Inspection of roads during the Visite du Branchage (biannual inspection)

Composition and Election

Each Roads Committee is chaired by the Parish Connétable and includes the Rector and three elected parish Principals (five in St Helier) who serve three-year terms. The Committee instructs the Roads Inspectors, elected for each vingtaine, who ensure practical works are carried out.

Distinction Between Parishes

While all parishes follow the same legal framework, St Helier's Roads Committee also manages parks, open spaces, and other urban matters. It meets monthly and includes, without voting rights, the Procureurs du Bien Public.

Relationship with the Government

Parish Roads Committees manage by-roads, whereas main roads are maintained by the Government of Jersey's Department for Infrastructure.

From media reports, it appears that a recurrent issue involves consultation issues between the Infrastructure Department and parish authorities before implementing major road schemes or developments. Projects such as the new Government headquarters and the Overdale Hospital access routes have drawn criticism from parish officials for insufficient local input and for disregarding parish expertise on road safety and community use.

According to a BBC news report from 23 January 2025, the Infrastructure Minister acknowledged underinvestment and limited coordination between government and parish efforts, which impacts road quality across the island (BBC, 2025).

For example, a recent Jersey Evening Post report detailed how Waldemar Waligora, owner of the Courtside Café at the Caesarean Tennis Club in Grands Vaux, suffered an 80% drop in takings during an eight-week road closure linked to major infrastructure works on Trinity Road (Jersey Evening Post, 2025). The roadworks caused significant disruption, leading to severe

losses for several businesses in the area. Despite repeated pleas, Mr Waligora and fellow traders were unable to identify who precisely was responsible for the closure. The government responded by promising to review engagement procedures for future works. At that time, I proposed, "Surely where multiple stakeholders are involved, they could agree on a communications plan so that if someone phones St. Helier, they can answer the question even if the road in question isn't in their Parish? Parishioners should not be passed from pillar to post". I then discovered that a law exists for this purpose- The Roads Works and Events (Jersey) Law 2016 which sought to address coordination and communication by clarifying responsibilities. Therefore, this law's effectiveness and implementation should feature as part of this review.

In 2016, the Jersey Evening Post reported that the Grouville Parish Assembly agreed to a Roads Committee proposal introducing a uniform 30 mph limit across most parish roads (Jersey Evening Post, 2016). That framework was expanded by the Parish Assembly of 14 October 2021, which approved further measures to protect pedestrians and cyclists by extending the Green Lane network and creating new 20 mph zones on La Rue du Coin, La Rue Soulas, and Le Chemin du Radier, to be implemented by the Connétable and Roads Committee (Parish of Grouville, 2021). Whilst some changes have taken effect, several 40 mph roads remain in Grouville. Over the past four years, numerous residents have enquired with the Parish and the Infrastructure Department about why the Parish Assembly-approved changes had not been implemented. Only in recent months did it become apparent, after considerable investigation, that parishes operate on a six-year cycle dictated by the Infrastructure Department and that parish assembly votes for speed limit changes can take six years to implement.

The principal risks in the relationship between parishes and government stem from fragmented governance, inconsistent communication, and differing priorities between local autonomy and central oversight.

Proposed Improvements:

- Evaluate whether having 13 roads authorities is the best way to run our island's roads – if it is decided to maintain the status quo then the following apply:
- Shared information systems for service coordination
- Evaluate whether the Rector should remain on the Roads Committee
- Joint training programmes on governance best practice
- Collaborative planning (including communication) for major infrastructure projects
- Re-evaluation of The Roads Works and Events (Jersey) Law 2016

5. Gender Representation and Democratic Renewal in the Roads Committees (Appendix three)

Research published in September 2024 exposed gender imbalances in parish governance (Bridge, 2024b). Focusing on elected members, there are only two women serving across 36 available positions.

The compilation of this data required weeks of work, involving emails to parish secretaries and a Freedom of Information request.

Structural Barriers Identified:

- The ends of the terms of office are not consistently displayed on parish websites
- Opaque nomination processes disadvantage newcomers
- Inflexible meeting schedules exclude working parents
- The current culture discourages diverse participation
- Short notice periods for elections favour established candidates

Recommendations:

- Connétables should actively seek diverse candidates and address participation barriers
- Implement flexible meeting arrangements to accommodate working parents
- Provide early notification and clear role descriptions for parish elections
- Make all Roads Committee meetings public (using an A and B agenda format as St. Helier does)

6. Waste Management and Environmental Coordination (Appendix four)

If Jersey decides not to replace the Energy Recovery Facility (incinerator) and significantly increase recycling, the parishes will be required to play a pivotal role in the success or failure of an island-wide strategy. The current system presents a key risk for the island's future waste strategy.

Guernsey operates with remarkable simplicity: one strategy, one recycling organisation, and an easily communicated system enabling residents to make environmentally responsible choices effortlessly. Jersey, by contrast, involves thirteen different organisations in waste management. Whilst nine (soon to be ten) of the twelve parishes provide kerbside recycling, they operate three slightly different systems.

A key foundation of Guernsey's success is The Parochial Collection of Waste (Guernsey) Law, 2015, which provides the legal framework for household waste collection and disposal across parishes (States of Guernsey, 2015). This legislation assigns responsibility to each Parish's Douzaine for arranging regular collections, with the primary purpose of ensuring efficient, consistent waste management by empowering parishes to set reasonable waste quantity limits while aligning with broader States' waste management plans. The law provides enforcement powers addressing non-compliance, streamlining parish-level collection while supporting sustainable disposal practices.

Considering the Jersey situation, the question arises whether a Parochial Collection of Waste (Jersey) Law is needed. How would this work in practice? Consider the scenario where the Infrastructure Minister lodges a proposition to centralise kerbside waste collection, removing this role from parishes, or alternatively proposes to mandate parishes such as Grouville and St Clement who currently do not provide kerbside recycling to do so. Would either proposition be embraced or perceived as an attack on parishes' cherished historical autonomy, sparking debates over the future balance of power within Jersey's unique governmental system?

As it stands, a key risk for the future of the island's waste management is that it lies in the hands of 12 independent Connétables and I imagine that any proposal to mandate unified action could be regarded as shifting the constitutional balance, setting a precedent for future ministerial intervention in parish affairs. Equally, if such a proposition failed, it could reinforce the strength of parish system independence and limit future reforms – potentially leaving the island without kerbside food waste collection.

Fiscal considerations would also arise. Parishes currently set their own rates and allocate spending; centrally imposed mandates may create disputes over funding responsibility. If parishes were forced to deliver kerbside services, negotiations would be needed over government funding, rate adjustments, and resourcing.

Regarding service quality, if parishes failed to meet service standards- for example, due to vehicle breakdowns or the inability to secure contractors- would the government wish to intervene, further undermining parish autonomy?

Hopefully, this remains a hypothetical discussion and a future Comité des Connétables will willingly agree to work with the government to produce a waste management strategy that serves the entire island's best interests. As it stands, the Connétables' current autonomy poses a key risk to the successful implementation of a waste management strategy.

35% of household waste is food waste. If Jersey decided to move towards producing biogas from food waste as Guernsey does, all parishes would need to participate. Under the current system, any Connétable can opt in or out, thereby providing significant risk to the viability of an island-wide waste management system.

Current Inefficiencies:

- Thirteen different organisations are involved in waste management
- Three different kerbside recycling systems across participating parishes
- Jersey's recycling rate of 35% compared to Guernsey's 68%
- Two parishes (Grouville and St Clement) still lack kerbside recycling

Recommendations:

- Implement an island-wide standardised recycling methodology
- Strengthen the government coordination role in environmental service delivery
- Consider legislative frameworks similar to Guernsey's Parochial Collection of Waste Law
- Establish clear parish environmental performance targets and reporting

7. Gun Licences

Jersey's twelve parish Connétables serve as the firearms licensing authorities under the island's unique constitutional structure, personally interviewing every applicant and making final decisions on the 1,096 active certificates covering over 8,200 legal firearms. As the Police maintain a central gun database, the system could be improved by consolidating licensing authority into a single body. I propose that the Connétables should be consulted, but licences should be centrally issued.

Recent revelations about dangerous gaps in 25-year-old legislation demand urgent attention, particularly Police Chief Robin Smith's confirmation that Connétables currently have no legal power to suspend firearms certificates temporarily; they can only refuse, revoke, or rely on voluntary surrender. Reform addressing this public safety concern through practical, evidence-based solutions is necessary. It appears eminently sensible to separate firearms and ammunition licensing, ending the automatic authorisation for 5,000 rounds that leaves people with ammunition stored at home, despite some not shooting for years. Similarly, excessive authorisations that allow some individuals to purchase more than 25 different firearms without individual justification should be eliminated. Further, enhanced referee requirements, a prohibition on military-grade conversions, and club-based ammunition distribution are required.

8. Dog Licences

Parish staff are very busy at the beginning of each year updating their databases, with nearly 10,000 licensed dogs generating £100,000 in licence fees annually. It is rumoured that fees will be doubled. Parish involvement in licensing appears to be a relic from a bygone era of paper-based administration prior to the digital age.

The Dogs (Jersey) Law 1961 requires all dogs aged six months or more to be licensed annually at £10 per dog (£20 for late applications after 31 January), and to be renewed by 31 January each year (States of Jersey, 1961).

The official purposes of this system include:

Dog Registration and Identification:

The licensing system creates a parish-level database of dogs and their owners, helping to identify ownership when dogs are found or reported as strays. This provides a traceable tag that links a dog to its owner and enables authorities and veterinarians to keep records up to date.

Administrative Control and Revenue Generation:

The system provides parishes with a mechanism to track dog populations and maintain records for local administration purposes, whilst generating approximately £100,000 annually across all parishes to help fund administrative costs.

Legal Framework:

Licensing establishes a legal requirement that reinforces other dog ownership responsibilities, such as wearing collars with owner contact details, and reinforces that a named adult is responsible for control, welfare, and compliance with local by-laws.

However, it is worth questioning whether the Dogs (Jersey) Law 1961 serves Jersey residents effectively.

Key limitations include:

Limited Enforcement:

Only four fines have been issued since 2019 for unlicensed dogs.

Redundant Function:

Lost dogs are typically reunited with owners through collar information and dedicated Facebook pages, or through microchips, rather than through parish licensing records, making the parish involvement largely obsolete.

Administrative Burden:

The considerable time parish staff spend updating databases at the beginning of each year could be better spent on community outreach activities to support the elderly and vulnerable at that time of year.

Outdated System:

Britain abandoned dog licensing in 1987. The number of unregistered dogs in Jersey remains unknown. Britain replaced dog licensing with mandatory microchipping in 2016, requiring all dogs over eight weeks to be microchipped and registered on government-approved databases.

Recommendation:

I recommend mandatory scannable chips linked to a central database, which could be one of the existing UK databases, and would provide superior identification capabilities whilst eliminating the administrative burden on parishes.

9. Planning and Development Coordination

Parish involvement in planning processes requires a more precise definition and coordination with government strategic objectives. Under the Planning and Building (Jersey) Law 2002, parishes have specific statutory obligations and rights within the planning consultation framework. Yet, the extent and effectiveness of these obligations are inadequately defined and inconsistently applied and I suggest need critical evaluation within the context of this review.

The Planning and Building (Jersey) Law 2002 states that planning applications must be made available at parish halls for public consultation, with parishes serving as consultation points for residents (States of Jersey, 2002). While the register of planning applications is available at all parish halls, and parishes can become non-statutory consultees on applications affecting their areas, there is no mandate for parishes to provide formal commentary on applications that may significantly impact their communities.

This ambiguity creates inconsistencies in parish engagement with the planning process. Some parishes actively monitor and comment on applications, whilst others take a passive approach, leaving some parishioners perplexed as to why some controversial applications receive comment while others do not.

Structural Deficiencies in Parish-Planning Coordination

Recommendations

Performance Monitoring:

Evaluate the effectiveness of current parish-planning coordination processes and implement improvements based on evidence of what works best for community engagement and development outcomes.

10. Financial Relationships and Accountability

Key Issues Identified

1. No Standardised Accounting Principles

Current Situation:

Parish financial accounts are prepared using accounting principles that each Parish individually "adopted" or "selected", creating a patchwork of incompatible financial reporting standards across Jersey's 12 parishes.

Specific Parish Accounting Approaches:

St. Helier remains the only Parish to have adopted Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP)-type accounts, demonstrating that professional accounting standards can be successfully implemented at parish level (Parish of St. Helier, 2024).

2. Government Standards vs. Parish Standards

The Jersey Financial Reporting Manual requires government entities to follow International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), UK Companies Act provisions, and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) (States of Jersey, 2024). The States' accounts must "give a true and fair view" and undergo rigorous external audit processes.

Meanwhile, parishes continue to operate with individually selected accounting policies that would not meet basic professional standards required of private companies or government departments.

3. Inappropriate Timing of Budget and Rate Setting

Current Practice:

Parishes uniquely set rates to fund budgets partway through the financial year, creating a fundamental disconnect between democratic approval and fiscal execution that would be considered unacceptable in any other democratic institution.

General Pattern:

Most parishes hold rates assemblies 3-4 months into the financial year, forcing citizens to vote retrospectively on expenditure decisions rather than providing prospective budget approval.

Democratic Deficit:

Rates demands are not sent out until after a Rates Assembly, so while parishioners pay after approval, they are also paying after expenditure has been committed or spent.

Consequences:

- Democratic oversight is rendered meaningless when expenditure precedes approval
- Citizens are denied the fundamental right to approve budgets before money is spent
- No effective mechanism for public input into spending priorities
- Parish expenditure proceeds without a proper democratic mandate

Recommendations

Reform 1: Mandatory Standardised Accounting Standards

All parishes must be required to adopt standardised accounting policies based on Statements of Standard Accounting Practice (SSAPs) or simplified GAAP principles. St. Helier has demonstrated this is achievable at parish level. All parishes should follow identical accounting standards, enabling meaningful comparison and proper public scrutiny.

Reform 2: Separate Budget Approval from Account Presentation

The combination of account presentation with rate setting creates an illogical sequence in which democratic approval follows expenditure rather than precedes it, a practice that violates basic principles of democratic financial governance.

Reform 3: Public Financial Comparability

Mandate that all parish websites publish standardised financial summaries using identical formats, enabling residents to compare parish financial performance and identify best practices or areas of concern.

Reform 4: Legal Framework for Parish Financial Standards

Amend relevant legislation to require parishes to follow established accounting principles.

Conclusion

The parishes embody Jersey's distinctive cultural identity, what sociologists term 'impermeability', representing both fierce independence and community bonds. This unique characteristic creates what the Island Identity Project recognised as one of Jersey's most distinctive cultural features.

Rather than serving narrow demographics, parishes collaborating on accessibility, digital inclusion, and community outreach could ensure no Islander is left behind in modern society. The parish system's strength lies in its ability to reach every household; when harnessed collectively, this represents an unparalleled network for social support and community building.

The reforms outlined in this submission are not attacks on parish independence; they are prescriptions for parish renaissance.

Jersey's parishes could become an exemplar of how ancient institutions can address contemporary challenges without sacrificing their cultural distinctiveness. A parish system that combines individual character with collaborative strength, traditional wisdom with modern innovation, and local autonomy with island-wide vision could demonstrate to the world how small communities can thrive in an interconnected age.

The Government and Parishes Review Panel has an extraordinary opportunity to recommend changes that will strengthen rather than weaken this precious inheritance. The parish system deserves a future where it serves all Islanders- young and old, newcomers and established families, entrepreneurs and retirees, speakers of all languages- creating inclusive communities that honour the past while embracing the future.

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Appendix one: Parish Hall Opening times

PARISH	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	Working Age Population 16 -64	Working Age Population 16 -64 as %	16 years old in 2025	17 years old in 2025
ST JOHN	09:00 - 16:00	09:00 - 16:00	09:00 - 19:00	09:00 - 13:00	09:00 - 16:00	1928	63.20%	35	33
ST MARTIN	08:30 - 14:00	08:30 - 14:00	08:30 - 14:00 & 17:30 - 19:30	08:30 - 14:00	08:30 - 14:00	2496	63.20%	48	46
TRINITY	09:00 - 13:00	09:00 - 13:00	09:00 - 13:00 & 18:30 - 20:30	09:00 - 13:00	09:00 - 13:00	2129	63.50%	59	47
GROUVILLE	08:00 - 16:00	08:00 - 16:00	13:00 - 16:00	08:00 - 16:00	08:00 - 16:00	3249	60.20%	61	73
ST BRELADE	08:00 - 17:00	08:00 - 17:00	08:00 - 17:00	08:00 - 17:00	08:00 - 17:00	6735	61.20%	128	90
ST CLEMENT	08:15 - 17:00	08:15 - 17:00	08:15 - 12:30	08:15 - 17:00	08:15 - 15:45	6266	63.10%	103	129
ST LAWRENCE	09:00 - 15:00	09:00 - 15:00	CLOSED	09:00 - 15:00	09:00 - 15:00	3511	63.10%	64	60
ST MARY	09:00 - 13:00	09:00 - 13:00	09:00 - 13:00	09:00 - 13:00	09:00 - 13:00	1153	63.40%	19	16
ST OUEN	09:30 - 12:30 & 14:00 - 16:00	09:30 - 12:30 & 14:00 - 16:00	09:30 - 12:30	09:30 - 12:30	& 14:00 - 16:00	2632	62.60%	54	49
ST PETER	09:00 - 16:00	09:00 - 16:00	09:00 - 16:00	09:00 - 16:00	09:00 - 16:00	3140	59.70%	42	65
ST SAVIOUR	08:45 - 15:45	08:45 - 15:45	08:45 - 15:45	08:45 - 15:45	08:45 - 15:45	9063	65.20%	182	170
ST HELIER	08:45 - 16:45	08:45 - 16:45	08:45 - 16:45	08:45 - 16:45	08:45 - 16:45	25753	71.90%	282	301
							63.4%		

Appendix two: An extract from my blog

Monday, Jun 23rd, 2025

I WON!

Appealing your Parish Rate is not for the fainthearted. Gathering evidence to complete the Review form (R5) can be devilishly difficult and can feel like the world is conspiring against you. Once the information is collected, it must be sent within 14 days of receiving your Rates assessment. If this initial review fails and you are still unhappy, the data must be re-presented on a new form (R6), and then you will be called to a hearing.

Last year, I went with a good friend well-versed in the Rates (Jersey) Law. He had offered to kindly support several people embarking on this alien process for the first time.

Emboldened this year, I decided to go solo. It's still a nerve-wracking process. At 9:00 am, six people appeared in two vehicles to inspect my home. I found the process hugely intrusive, as my home is my sanctuary. That said, they were all very kind and polite. I went out for coffee and left them to it.

At 10:20 a.m., I arrived at the parish hall. I was instructed to sit in a small, unprepossessing waiting area in a gloomy, unlit corridor. Portraits of former parish officials ominously stared down at me. Feeling like I was in a lightless passage grave, my hope withered.

Then, at 10:30 am, the call came.

I was beckoned to enter the hall of judgment. Before me lay a quasi-courtroom. Suddenly, I felt alone, exposed, facing the Rates Appeal Board Chair, flanked by board members on either side. To my right sat the Grouville Rates Assessors. After brief introductions, I began: I own my home, a two-bedroom detached property situated in a small close of a much larger mixed social housing (Andium) and private development adjacent to the old Jersey Pottery site in Grouville.

I have a kitchen, lounge, two bedrooms, and one bathroom. The property has a single garage, one parking space, a small garden, and a small conservatory. It has no aspect other than onto the fences of other properties. The property was designed by the States Architect and built in 1981. It is part of a mixed development with rental properties managed by Andium. It is in moderate condition.

In 2024, I discovered that my property was assessed much higher than similar properties and the same as the larger three-bedroom properties in my close. There are unexplained variations within our small close of houses, even though the two-bedroom properties are identical.

REDACTED (2 bed) 9,600

REDACTED (2 bed) 10,600 reduce to 9,600 on R5 appeal 2024 & increased to 10,400 on inspection in 2025.

REDACTED (3 bed) 11,000
REDACTED (3 bed) 11,000
REDACTED (2 bed) 11,000

In 2024, I went into the R6 appeal unaware that my neighbour's R5 appeal had been successful. Their property, which was valued at 10,600, was reduced to 9,600. My appeal was rejected, and my quarters were maintained at 11,000.

In 2025, after inspection, my neighbour's quarters were increased to 10,400 (still lower than mine!). Therefore, twice, an identical house to mine has been valued at a lower figure than mine.

In 2024, I decided to put my property's attributes into the other Parishes' methodologies. Using best effort, the results are as follows:

St Saviour: 8,300
St. Martin: 8,410
St. Brelade: 8,750
St. Mary: 9,258
St. Peter: 9,400
Trinity: 9,613
St. Lawrence: 9,962
St. Helier: 10,509
St. Clement: 10,000
St. Ouen: 10,296
St. John: 10,370
AVERAGE: 9,533

This suggests that Grouville is out of kilter with all other parishes. This is a battle for another day.

This year, in preparation for my appeal, I submitted an FOI request, which was subsequently treated as a BAU (Business As Usual) asking for ALL properties island-wide with the same attributes. I was asked to sign a confidentiality clause indicating that I would only use the information for the purposes of the rates appeal. Therefore, I have redacted those figures in this blog.

I was only given one property from Grouville, with 12,000 quarters (even though there are identical properties to mine in my estate).

I requested a review of the BAU results as the word 'range' was used, leading me to believe that I had only received partial information.

I was subsequently advised by email that I had received ALL properties similar to mine. I note that NONE of the properties provided by Grouville against my appeal were included in that 'complete' list provided by Grouville.

As required for this appeal, I provided the properties the Parishes chose with attributes similar to mine. NOTE — I did not choose these.

Of those properties, I chose the following from St. Brelade and one from St. Ouen, averaging 10,042 quarters.

REDACTED

REDACTED

REDACTED

REDACTED

I was surprised to see that all these properties had been discarded 'Other properties were listed in the form of REDACTED and we have no way of knowing what properties these are'. On reading this, I urgently emailed REDACTED and asked that this information be made available to the panel prior to the commencement of the appeal. I am grateful to REDACTED for making the information available [all the assessors had to do was ask].

Turning to the assessors' comparisons, my FOI/BAU request produced only one similar property. Therefore, are the assessors saying the Parish has failed to provide me with the correct and full information?

This one property has not been included in the assessors' comparison.

Of the 8 properties provided by the assessors, 5 are 3-bedroom and are not similar. NB REDACTED has 3 bedrooms.

All 3 properties provided in St. Brelade are 3-bedroom and are not comparable.

In 2025, Grouville produced new rate assessment guidelines. Given that my analysis of the 11 other parish guidelines produced an average figure of 9,533 quarters, the new guidelines appear to still leave Grouville out of kilter with the other parishes.

According to the guidelines, my property should be:

Small 2 bed: 9,000

Single garage: 500

Parking space: 200

Conservatory: 500

Total: 10,200 quarters

Notwithstanding that Grouville appears out of kilter with the other parishes, I am asking for natural justice. №1 and 2 REDACTED are identical to my property; therefore, we should all have 10,200 quarters.

Appendix three: Roads Committees membership

	ROADS COMMITTEE MEMBER	End of Term of office	ROADS COMMITTEE MEMBER	End of Term of office	ROADS COMMITTEE MEMBER	End of Term of Office	RECTOR
Parish							
Grouville	William Stanley Payn	14.12.26	Eric Gavey	14.12.26	David Cummins	14.12.26	Helen Gunton
St Martin	Richard Le Cornu	14.12.26	Daniel Wherry	14.12.26	Michael Jehan	14.12.26	Peter Stone
Trinity	Barrington Charles Fossey	31.12.26	Norman Le Maistre	31.12.26	Alan Dunford	31.12.26	Geoff Houghton
St. Helier	Heather-Anne Hubbell	31.12.26	Mario Pirozzolo	31.12.26	Jason Lagadu	31.12.26	Mike Keirle
	Bernard Manning	31.12.26	Kevin Proctor	31.12.26			
St John	Alan Armstrong	31.12.27	Nicholas Lane	31.12.27	Alan Coutancge	31.12.27	Beverley Sproat
St Peter	Paul Townsend	31.12.25	Keith Capern	31.12.25	Martin Zimmer	31.12.25	Robert Harris
St Saviour	Paul Houzé	31.12.26	Michael Officer	31.12.26	Stuart Pirouet	31.12.26	Martin Evans
St Brelade	Jeff Hathaway	31.12.26	Edward Baker	31.12.26	Michael George Videgrain	31.12.26	Sarah McLelland
St Clement	Mark Albert Matthew (joined 1978)	31.12.26	Andrew Barry Jeanne (Joined 2024)	31.12.26	Glen Charles Hamel (Joined 1990)	31.12.26	Kirsty Allan
St Lawrence	Eton Wnston Le Brun	31.12.25	Rodney Pallot	31.12.25	Jennifer Cartright	31.12.25	Phaip Warren
St Mary	Alan Moulin	31.12.25	Peter Lilliard	31.12.25	Trevor Le Sage	31.12.25	Kirsty Allan
St Ouen	Martin Le Maistre	12.12.26	John Philip A'Court	12.12.26	Richard J. Michel	12.12.26	Ian Pallent

Appendix four: kerbside recycling methodologies

	KERBSIDE	PAPER & CARD	PLASTIC BOTTLES	METAL PACKAGING
GROUVILLE	NO	NO	NO	NO
ST CLEMENT	NO	NO	NO	NO
ST MARTIN	SOON			
ST JOHN	YES	BLUE BOX OR LABELLED BIN	RED BOX OR LABELLED BIN	BLACK BOX OR LABELLED BIN
ST BRELADE	YES	BLUE BOX WITH BLUE STICKER	RED BOX WITH RED STICKER	BLACK BOX WITH BLACK STICKER
ST LAWRENCE	YES	BLUE BOX WITH BLUE STICKER	RED BOX WITH RED STICKER	BLACK BOX WITH BLACK STICKER
ST MARY	YES	BLUE BOX WITH BLUE STICKER	RED BOX OR LABELLED BIN	BLACK BOX OR LABELLED BIN
ST HELIER	YES	BLUE BAG	CLEAR BAG	
ST OUEN	YES	BLUE BOX OR LABELLED BIN	RED BOX OR LABELLED BIN	BLACK BOX OR LABELLED BIN
ST PETER	YES	BLUE BOX OR LABELLED BIN	RED BOX OR LABELLED BIN	BLACK BOX OR LABELLED BIN
ST SAVIOUR	YES	BLUE BAG	CLEAR BAG	
TRINITY	YES	BLUE BOX WITH BLUE STICKER	RED BOX WITH RED STICKER	BLACK BOX WITH BLACK STICKER