

Dear States Member,

I am writing to you as an independent business owner who has operated within Jersey's hospitality industry for over thirty years and as someone who has been deeply involved in industry representation throughout that time. I have previously served on the board of the Jersey Hospitality Association and currently sit on the Visitor Economy Group for the Chamber of Commerce. I am also writing on behalf of many colleagues across hospitality and the wider business community who share the serious concerns outlined below.

You may have seen a statement I recently shared publicly on the BBC Jersey Facebook page, following comments made by the Jersey Hospitality Association. That statement reflected deep disappointment at the decision by the Comité des Connétables to put forward an amendment to the proposed new Licensing Law, an amendment that risks completely derailing years of work and progress.

This proposed legislation has been developed through extensive consultation, collaboration and careful consideration involving industry bodies, government officers, legal experts, and stakeholders from across the visitor economy and events sectors. The amendment now being proposed has the potential to cause the legislation to collapse entirely before the next election, forcing the process to start again with a new Assembly and new Ministers. If that happens, **Jersey will remain bound to a Licensing Law dating back to 1974 (that is over half a century ago!) for the foreseeable future . This would be indefensible.**

Since the amendment was announced, there have been a number of meetings between representatives of the Jersey Hospitality Association, the Chamber of Commerce and members of the Connétables. During these discussions, our position has been clearly and constructively set out. Despite this, the amendment has been pursued in a way that demonstrates a failure to properly engage with the process, a failure to represent the interests of island businesses and a prioritisation of self interest over the economic wellbeing of the island.

At a time when the island economy is under immense pressure, when businesses are struggling to remain viable and when we urgently need government support to modernise and progress into the twenty first century, this action has undermined everything that has been worked towards so far.

This issue is not just about hospitality. **It is about the wider relationship between government and business**, about accountability and about whether Jersey is prepared to take difficult but necessary decisions to secure its future. The island business community, far beyond hospitality alone, will view this decision-making process extremely negatively should this amendment succeed.

I ask you to consider your position very carefully when voting on this amendment. Should the new Licensing Law fail to pass before the next election as a direct result of this intervention, the Connétables will be held accountable for that outcome. The

industry will be clear about where responsibility lies, and this will be reflected in how business owners, employers, and their teams choose to engage politically going forward.

Organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Jersey Hospitality Association will be considering very carefully the positions taken by States Members as they develop their future policy priorities and election manifestos. **This message is directed not only at those voting next week, but also at those who intend to stand in future elections and may be seeking the support of the business community. Please make your decision based on what is right for the island, for its people, its businesses and its future. Do not cling to outdated traditions or Parish-based control structures that no longer serve a modern economy or an internationally competitive island.**

We are asking you to start listening. We are asking you to engage with the reality of the very difficult situation our island economy is facing. This is a broader representation of island business, not a narrow sectoral issue. To the Reform Jersey representatives specifically, I respect the core values you seek to represent. However, there must be a better understanding of the real-world impact of policies on local businesses run by local people. Business owners in Jersey take significant risks, work extremely hard, provide employment and contribute enormously to the fabric and culture of our community. Contrary to common perception, not all business owners are wealthy. Many are under sustained financial and operational pressure, yet continue to invest in this island and its people. **We need your support too.**

To those States Members who remain committed to future generations in Jersey, I urge you to stop ignoring the change we are trying to push forward. The hospitality and visitor economy sector is vibrant, engaged and experienced. We are desperate to move forward, not backwards. Retreating into the comfortable familiarity of “this is how it has always been done” is not leadership. Jersey has to grow. Jersey has to change. Jersey has to be honest with itself about where it is now and where it wants to be. That requires courage, vision and a willingness to stand up to old-school thinking that no longer serves the island.

Meaningful progress is not optional. It is essential.

Yours sincerely,

Natalie Parkin
Restaurant Owner



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