



PARISH OF GROUVILLE



| Minutes | |
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| Minutes of the Parish Assembly Held in Grouville Parish Church on Wednesday, 4 October 2023 at 19:00 | |
| PRESENT | Mark A Labey – Connétable (ML) John Lamy – Senior Procureur du Bien Public (JL) Peter Le Cuirot - Procureur du Bien Public (PLC) Jerry Collins - Working Group (JC) Andrew Le Cheminant - Working Group (ALC) David McLoughlin - Working Group (DM) Daryn Cleworth – Parish Secretary and Minutes (DC) |
| Apologies | Rev Helen Gunton Bruce Burnett Chris and Caroline Osgood Adrian Le Gal Dep Carolyn Labey – Attending Commonwealth Parliamentary Association annual general meeting CO Robert Hurley Kevin Hervé Centenier Drew Livingston Vingtenier Ewa Gracz CO Thomas Muguimi CO Carolina De Freitas Centenier Paul Robinson |
| Open Meeting | The Connétable opened the meeting and welcomed everyone present and pointed out the fire exits and rest rooms at the church. |
| 1. To receive and if deemed advisable approve the Minutes of the Parish Assembly held on 15 August 2023. | The minutes were proposed by Stanley Payn and seconded by Tracy Laurent. |
| 2. To receive a report compiled by the Parish on | The Connétable presented the initial report of the Financial Review and emphasised that the report was not the finished article but the start of an ongoing and evolving process, as stated in the report. He |

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| <p>the findings and recommendations of the Financial Review Working Group.</p> | <p>offered his thanks to the Working Group (WG) for the work the had undertaken to date, and introduced them to the Assembly.</p> <p>ML advised the Assembly that the next stage of the review would include trusts, savings and efficiencies and further governance matters.</p> <p>The Connétable then asked for any questions from the floor.</p> <p>Caroline Anderson referred to minute 2 of the last Assembly (quoted below for ease of reference).</p> <p><i>“Further asked if the report will include the governance of the reserve funds, i.e. how it is funded, how the funds held in reserves are used and the definitions of maintenance and property. The Connétable replied that he could see no reason why he couldn’t comply with all of those points raised and he will be bringing the report before the Accounts Committee initially and that the objective is to be as transparent as possible.”</i></p> <p>Mrs Anderson (CA) asked the Connétable about the matter of reserves, to which ML replied that this would be a matter for the Assembly to decide on as it was entirely appropriate that these should be governed by the ratepayer. CA responded by suggesting the rules governing reserves should have been included in the report. ML replied that he had already advised on this and that the Assembly will authorise both the sums and use of any reserve fund. CA continued by asking why the definitions of property and maintenance hadn’t been addressed, to which ML replied that the governance aspects will be reviewed during the next phase of the process. CA continued to press the Connétable on the definitions of ‘property’ and ‘maintenance’, which she had specifically asked for, to which the Connétable reiterated that these matters will be dealt with by the WG during the next stage of their deliberations.</p> <p>Mark Houzé (MH) thanked the WG for their work and assured them that his criticism this evening was not levied at them but at the Parish. He went on to say that the Trusts have been removed from the review and that it was only on the promise of a review into the Parish’s financial governance and practices that saw the rate, in his opinion, finally being set in December 2022. He added that the report was promised by the end of the financial year but the WG were not commissioned until May, a month after the end of the financial year. He asked why it had taken five months to commence and why the report contained no governance or accountability, only financial processes.</p> <p>MH claimed that the Connétable had set very restrictive guidelines to the WG and asked why the matters of roads and rates, those being the largest expenditure and revenue stream respectively, had been</p> |
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| | <p>excluded. He continued that the only governance matter included in the report was the procurement policy, which wasn't worth the paper it was written on. MH questioned why the reviewers had not worked with the Parish on the review. He added that he was a qualified auditor and he would expect meetings to have taken place with the Connétable and his officers. MH claimed that the report was a smoke and mirrors exercise as the review had not included financial governance and practices, and by its omission, the Parish had not delivered what it had promised to the Assembly.</p> <p>MH went on to question why an efficiencies and savings plan had not been the first item that was looked at, that the evening's Parish Assembly appeared to be a ceremonial process and the Parish had completely missed the mark. He added that the governance of the Parish is lacking and the report doesn't deliver. He also questioned why parishioners weren't invited to make submissions. MH felt that things in the Parish were very wrong at the present time.</p> <p>ML replied that governance is part of the ongoing remit of the WG and that there were no restrictions at all placed upon them. With regards to having Parochial input, ML corrected MH in that he had attended meetings when required to do so by the WG, and both he and his officers were available at all times to the WG throughout this initial section of the review. He added that, if the Parish had representation on the review, then they would have received criticism for that as the agreement with the Assembly was for an independent review. He added that he appreciated Mr Houzé's views and that the Parish was working towards a satisfactory conclusion to the review process.</p> <p>Leslie Norman asked if the Parish's new auditors were aware of the review and whether the Connétable could confirm if the recommendations contained within the report would likely be implemented in time for this year's accounts and budget. ML replied that they were aware of the review and had provided initial reservations on the items of assets and depreciation being included in the next set of financial statements. He continued that they may need to wait until 2024 for those specific recommendations to be implemented.</p> <p>CA asked if the set of recommendations would be taken forward, to which ML replied that some already had at the Assembly of 15 August 2023, that being the matter of the use of Maison Le Maistre funds. The remainder would be implemented by him as he has been charged with doing so.</p> <p>Peter Hargreaves said he was to focus on the recommendations regarding the Accounts Committee and the procurement policy. He added that he had concerns over timings, with the 2022 Rates Assembly being held as late as October, and that we are again in</p> |
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| | <p>October and there still hasn't been a Rates Assembly for 2023. ML replied that he had already apologised for the late commencement of the review process and had taken full responsibility for the delay.</p> <p>Mr Houzé asked for confirmation from the Connétable that there was more to come on the review, to which ML repeated that there was. MH asked for confirmation that the Connétable would be implementing the recommendations, to which ML repeated he would. ML added that he felt it would be odd to have tasked the WG with undertaking a review, only to refuse to implement their recommendations thereafter. Caroline Anderson commented that ML hadn't asked the Parish Assembly to agree to the recommendations and she felt that was wrong. ML replied that he had brought the review before the Accounts Committee and that it would be absurd for him not to implement the recommendations of the WG.</p> <p>Mark Houzé asked for his objection to the report on the grounds that the Parish had not complied with the Parish Assembly's wishes to be noted. ML thanked him and noted the objection.</p> <p>ML asked for any more questions and Eric Gavey asked how the Parish Hall roof project was progressing. ML replied that the scaffolding was still going up but had commenced late. Mr Gavey asked if the project was on target, to which ML replied that it was running a week late.</p> |
| Meeting Closed | The Connétable closed the meeting at 19:37. |