



PARISH OF GROUVILLE



Minutes	
<u>Minutes of the Parish Rates Assembly</u> <u>Held at Grouville Parish Hall on</u> <u>Monday, 02 December 2024 at 19:00</u>	
PRESENT	<p>Connétable Mark Labey – Chairman Peter le Cuirot – Procureur du Bien Public Chris Osgood – Procureur du Bien Public</p> <p>Patricia da Silva – Parish Secretary and Minutes</p> <p>In attendance:</p> <p>David Moehle – PKF bba</p>
Open Meeting	<p>The Connétable opened the meeting by welcoming everyone in attendance and pointed out the fire exits at the Parish Hall. The Connétable informed that the meeting will be recorded for the purpose of accurate minute taking.</p> <p>The Connétable invited the Parish Secretary to read out the Convening Notice.</p> <p>The Connétable apologised for the lateness of the Rates Assembly and thanked PKF bba for their assistance regarding the use of the Maison Le Maistre (MLM) fund. ML explained that due to waiting on legal advice about the MLM fund, the Parish Assembly was delayed longer than expected. ML thanked Jerry Collins for the extensive research undertaken on the matter regarding MLM.</p>
Apologies	<p>Apologies were received from the following:</p> <p>Anne Hargreaves, Peter Hargreaves, Mark Houze, Steven Higginson, Elizabeth Pinel and Kim Koester.</p>
1. Approval of the Minutes of 29, August 2024	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 29 August 2024 were proposed by Leslie Norman and seconded by Tracy Laurent. The Assembly voted and the minutes were approved by the majority.</p> <p>The Connétable advised that all votes taken this evening will be by a show of hands.</p>
2. Adopt the Audited Accounts for the Financial Year Ended 30 April 2024	<p>The Connétable invited any questions from the floor for David Moehle.</p> <p>No questions were raised.</p> <p>The Connétable explained the overspend on the following items on page four of the accounts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upkeep of premises – The fire alarm system was upgraded and the system can now send alerts via text messages if the alarm is set off. • Other general expenses – A CCTV system has been installed in the office for the safety of staff, especially during lunch hours where on occasion only one member of staff is present. An electronic door locking system has also been introduced in the offices for further security.

- Audit fee – This was due to the extra work undertaken regarding the MLM fund.
- IT costs – There was an outstanding bill from 2022 that hadn't been paid. A new digital notice board was installed in the office and new laptops were provided to the Procureurs and other members of the Parish team. Microsoft Teams has also been introduced in the office and the till was upgraded.

The Connétable referred to page six and explained that the expense under sundry was due to Storm Ciaran.

The Connétable invited any questions from the floor.

Leslie Norman asked for clarification of the total amount spent on the Parish roof project. The Connétable explained that the original estimate for the roof project was £426,000 and the cost put forward by W Horn Ltd was £382,000, who did an outstanding job. There was a supplementary cost for £41,000 and other additions that weren't put in the roof project, such as the new curtains in the hall, and the Parish have come under budget by approximately £2,500. The Connétable mentioned that the lighting system in the hall has also been upgraded.

Roger Russ asked for an explanation of the Supervisory Committee expenses. The Connétable advised that the Supervisory Committee expenses cover the following, which is prorated between all 12 parishes:

- The driving licence system
- Dog licence system
- Rates system
- Parish website
- Digi map

The Connétable confirmed that the Comite des Connétables have accounts presented to them that are approved and audited for these expenses.

Caroline Anderson questioned the governance surrounding reserves and if that is going to appear in the final Financial Review Working Group (FRWG) report. The Connétable replied that the final section of the FRWG report was to do with the Trust funds, which will be investigated by Chris Osgood. ML said that governance will be looked at for all reserves.

Chris Parlett asked if the MLM property fund will become a property and vehicle reserve. The Connétable said it is his intention but it is important that there is governance surrounding the reserve. Chris Parlett proposed to create a joint property and vehicle reserve and this was seconded by Andrew Koester.

Caroline Anderson agreed with setting up a vehicle reserve, however said it should be separate to the property reserve. Charlie Pinel endorsed Caroline Anderson's comments and said it is not appropriate to vote on the proposal as it is not on the agenda. The Assembly withdrew the proposition.

Sarah Howard referred to the roads budget and mentioned that the assembly was reassured last year that the budget would be spent. The Connétable explained that the two roads surrounding Les Pres Manor both require specific conditions for work to be undertaken. The roads budget is one of the most difficult to predict and therefore The Connétable could not promise that all the funds would be spent. Sarah Howard claimed that the Connétable promised the budget would be spent and the underspend has now gone into the general account. The Connétable referred to the separate document provided with the accounts and explained that the underspend has been removed from the total roads budget for 2024/2025.

Caroline Anderson asked if the rate would stay at 1.24 as the underspend of the roads budget has been kept in the general account. The Connétable

	<p>said that this is not the case as the roads budget for 2024/2025 has taken the underspend into account.</p> <p>The audited accounts were proposed by William O'Brien and seconded by Chris Parlett.</p>
<p>3. To Place the Amount Required for the Upkeep and Maintenance of the Byroads for the Financial Year Ending 30 April 2025</p>	<p>The Connétable referred to the roads budget explanation sheet inserted with the accounts and invited questions from the floor.</p> <p>Caroline Andreson expressed her concerns with the figures and highlighted that including the roads reserve of £71,000, £170,000 is what can be spent on roads.</p> <p>Mark Dawson asked that it was minuted of his disapproval of the accounts.</p> <p>The Connétable asked if there was a proposer to approve the amount required for the upkeep and maintenance of the by-roads to which Kevin Herve duly did so, with Angela Mitchell seconding. The Assembly voted by a show of hands with 52 in favour and 10 against.</p>
<p>4. Present, and Approve, the Estimates for the Financial Year ending 30 April 2025</p>	<p>The Connétable went through the estimates on page 18 and explained the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upkeep of premises – The Parish has signed a formal agreement for the Impots Hut at Les Minquiers and therefore, the budget for upkeep of premises will cover maintenance required at the hut. • Insurance – Insurance has unfortunately increased, but the Parish must ensure that it has the correct insurance in place. • Salaries and Pension – There has been an increase due to recently hiring a new Honorary Police Administrator. The Parish have had new members of staff recently join and therefore this will also increase pension costs. <p>The Connétable invited any questions from the floor.</p> <p>Mark Dawson asked why depreciation has been included in the estimates for 2024/2025, when it wasn't last year. The Connétable explained that it was proposed at the Rates Assembly of 29 November 2023 to defer the decision to remove depreciation from the accounts for two years. Mark Dawson said that it does not make sense and will cost the ratepayer. The Connétable admitted that he had forgotten about the proposition and depreciation had to be added to the accounts at the last minute.</p> <p>Denis de Gruchy queried if the Connétable has looked at where savings could be made. The Connétable advised that this will be looked at, however pointed out that a minimum of two quotes are requested for large projects that need to be undertaken.</p> <p>Roger Russ questioned the increase of heating bearing in mind the hall has a better insulated roof. The Connétable explained that the hall will be used more now it has reopened and it costs a substantial amount to heat due to the high ceiling.</p> <p>Deputy Carolyn Labey asked why the Parish did not include donations to the Jersey Association of Charities in the estimates in previous years. The Connétable advised that it was overlooked.</p> <p>Phil Bertram asked for clarification regarding the increase in refuse costs. The Connétable explained that the contract states there is an annual RPI increase, which is around April. The RPI was 12.7% as of March 2023, however an 11% rise was negotiated with the contractors.</p> <p>The Connétable asked if there was a proposer to approve the estimates for the year ending 20 April 2025 to which William O'Brien duly did so,</p>

	<p>with Anthony Powell seconding. The Assembly voted by a show of hands with 67 in favour and 5 against.</p>
<p>5. To Approve a Parish Rate</p>	<p>The Connétable explained that should the Parish set a rate of 1.31 pence, this would put the Parish of Grouville as the eighth lowest in comparison to other parishes.</p> <p>The Connétable asked for a proposer for the rate of 1.31 to which Robin Hamilton-Howes duly did so with Phil Barber seconding.</p> <p>Caroline Anderson asked for clarification on page 20 of the accounts regarding the balance of £420,073 brought forward under rate option 1.31. £95,000 will be removed from the £420,073 because Connétable said that the Parish was going to use the underspend. The Connétable said that if the underspend is taken off, it'll be added back in the expenses so it will not make a difference. The Connétable asked for comments from David Moehle, who then advised that this was the first time he had been shown the roads explanation sheet. After further discussion, Caroline Anderson commented that this matter is highly confusing and has not been done correctly.</p> <p>The Connétable asked for any other proposals for a rate.</p> <p>Caroline Anderson proposed to keep the rate the same at 1.24, which was seconded by Mark Dawson.</p> <p>Jerry Collins asked for an explanation of the purposes of the notional balance on page 20. David Moehle clarified that he is not involved with the estimates process or the setting of the rate, however, advised that it is the projected general account balance. Jerry Collins replied that the purposes of that across the parishes is generally to combine a cashflow buffer for a number of months. If the Parish take three months of the general Parish expenditure, it won't come to £424,000. The Connétable thanked Jerry Collins for his comments.</p> <p>Caroline Anderson mentioned that there is no need for an increase in the rate, especially as there are underspends from previous years that could be used. Charles Pinel endorsed Caroline Anderson's comments.</p> <p>The Connétable highlighted that the Parish of Grouville underwent a period in which there was no increase of the rate for nine years, and it has taken a few years to get over the potential damage that was caused with regards to property maintenance, etc.</p> <p>Don Eddie mentioned following his own calculations for his property using the rate of 1.31, this comes to an increase of 0.93 pence a week and the Assembly must be realistic in terms of what the rise will mean.</p> <p>No other proposals were made.</p> <p>The Assembly voted by a show of hands for the proposed rate of 1.24 pence, with 23 in favour and 48 against.</p> <p>With the proposed rate of 1.24 having been rejected, the Connétable asked for a show of hands for the proposed rate of 1.31 pence. With a show of hands, 54 were in favour and 20 against.</p> <p>The Connétable confirmed that the rate per quarter set is 1.31 pence.</p>
<p>6. To Elect Members of the Accounts Committee for the Financial Year Ending 30 April 2025</p>	<p>The Connétable announced the former Procureur du Bien Public, John Lamy has stepped down from the Accounts Committee.</p> <p>The Connétable confirmed the current members of the committee who wish to remain, those being:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mark Labey – Connétable 2. Chris Osgood–Procureur du Bien Public 3. Peter Le Cuirot – Procureur du Bien Public 4. Helen Gunton – Recteur

	<p>5. Drew Livingston – Chef de Police 6. Anthony Powell – Grouville Rates Assessor 7. Caroline Anderson – Parishioner 8. Anne Hargreaves – Parishioner 9. Mark Houze - Parishioner</p> <p>There were no proposals to elect further members on to the committee.</p> <p>Caroline Anderson proposed to elect the current members of the committee. This was seconded by Angela Sevant. The Assembly voted and the proposal was approved by the majority.</p>
<p>7. To Appoint the Auditors for the Financial Year Ending 30 April 2025</p>	<p>The Connétable asked for a proposer to appoint PKF bba as the Parish’s auditors for the financial year.</p> <p>Caroline Anderson proposed and Chris Parlett seconded. The Assembly voted and the proposal was approved by the majority.</p>
<p>8. Meeting Closed</p>	<p>The Connétable closed the meeting at 20:16.</p>