



States of Alderney

Media Release

For immediate release: 26th September 2019

Letter regarding Alderney's air services

The following letter has been sent by Mr James Dent, Chairman of the Policy and Finance Committee to Deputy Gavin St Pier, president of the Policy and Resources Committee.

26th September 2019

Deputy Gavin St Pier

President of the Policy & Resources Committee

Dear Gavin

Over the last few weeks we have experienced a huge deterioration in the air links which connect Alderney with Guernsey and the United Kingdom. The impact has been devastating for residents, visitors and our economy. We are still counting the cost.

This is not about weather. We all know that weather delays occur and disrupt our lives from time to time. It's part of Island life.

Over recent weeks you have heard directly from Alderney residents who are rightly making their voices heard about this issue. Barbara Benfield has been diligent in bringing the concerns of many people forward through a petition. And others have written directly to you and your colleagues in the States of Guernsey.

I strongly urge you to listen and respond to these voices. They are not making unreasonable demands. They are drawing your attention to a crisis in the quality and level of service which threatens the survival of Alderney as a community. This is an entirely avoidable situation and yet here we are.

I will not list in detail all of the failures which people have set out for you in many letters and emails. Delays of up to five days, diversions and cancellations have been far too frequent. There is no capacity to catch-up when delays occur. This is not just about disrupted travel plans – there is a wider human impact. There is a lack of available seats for people wishing to return home after treatment for life-threatening conditions. Imagine being made to spend three days unnecessarily when all you want to do is get home and recover.

There has been a significant impact on attendees of the Inter-Island Environmental Meeting and Wilder Islands Conference taking place in Alderney at the moment. An international delegation from the Holocaust Remembrance Alliance has been stranded in Guernsey for over 25 hours. All of this impacts on the reputation of the Bailiwick as a whole. Added to this is a paucity of timely information and customer care. I know these are not things which you and your colleagues in the States of Guernsey intend, but they are our current reality.

People in Alderney see this quite simply. The States of Guernsey bought Aurigny, the airline which was founded and operated to connect Alderney with Guernsey and the wider world. You did so with our pooled resources through our fiscal union and knowing that the service would need to continue to be provided. You have control of our air services. You own the provider on our collective behalf and you set the standards and obligations to which they work.

So this plea comes straight to you as the President of Policy and Resources. This issue needs leadership and commitment. Act now to resolve these failures and to provide a robust and resilient service so that Alderney is accessible, safe and economically sustainable.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Dent', with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

James Dent

Chairman of Policy & Finance

States of Alderney

Ends