



**OFFICIAL REPORT**

**OF THE**

**STATES OF THE**

**ISLAND OF ALDERNEY**

**HANSARD**

**The Court House, Alderney, Wednesday, 11th March 2020**

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official States of Alderney website [www.alderney.gov.gg](http://www.alderney.gov.gg)*

**Volume 8, No. 2**

**Present:**

**Mr William Tate, President**

**Members**

Ms Annie Burgess  
Mr Mike Dean  
Mr James Dent  
Mr David Earl  
Mr Kevin Gentle  
Mr Christian Harris  
Mr Louis Jean  
Mr Graham McKinley  
Mr Steve Roberts  
Mr Alexander Snowdon

**The Greffier of the Court**

Mr Jonathan Anderson

**Business transacted**

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## States of Alderney

*The States met at 5.30 p.m.*

[THE PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

### PRAYERS

*The Greffier*

**The Greffier:** Good evening, Mr President.  
If you are ready, I will proceed with the roll call.

**The President:** If you would, please. Thank you.

### ROLL CALL

*The Greffier*

### Procedural

5 **The Greffier:** Sir, all 10 Members are present this evening.

**The President:** Thank you very much indeed.

10 Before we move to the formal business, I was hoping this evening to be welcoming Lieutenant Governor Sir Ian Corder and his wife. I suspect we all know why he is not here – because of the weather, unfortunately. His representative, who would normally be sitting here, is stuck in Southampton, so regrettably we do not have a representative of the Lieutenant Governor here this evening; but I can say that all things being equal, he will be coming on to the Island tomorrow morning.

## Billet d'État for Wednesday, 11th March 2020

### Convenor's Report of the People's Meeting held on 4th March 2020

15 **The President:** That being the case, can we move, please, Mr Greffier, to the Billet?  
Item I.

**The Greffier:** Thank you very much, sir. Shall we hear from the Convenor first?

**The President:** Yes, please.

20 **Mr Gentle:** Sir, colleagues, I was the Convenor at the People's Meeting on Wednesday, 4th March, assisted by the acting Head of Finance and the Programme Manager. There were eight States Members, excluding myself; the President; the Minute Secretary; 14 members of the public; six members of the press; and apologies were given for the missing States Member, Mr Dean.

25

**The President:** Thank you, Mr Gentle. Item I, please.

**I. Chief Pleas –  
No matters for consideration**

**The Greffier:** Thank you, sir.

30 Item I this evening is Chief Pleas. Following notice, I did not receive any matters for consideration under Chief Pleas.

**The President:** So I am guessing, Mr Gentle, you have nothing to add?

**Mr Gentle:** No, sir.

35 **The President:** Item II, please.

**The Greffier:** Thank you, sir.

40 Item II this evening is the new Connaught Care Home extension. A letter has been received from Mr Dent as Chairman of the Policy and Finance Committee –

**Mr Gentle:** Sir, please, before we move on to Item II – there was a comment, before we got to Chief Pleas, about the Billet itself.

**The President:** Very well.

45

**Mr Gentle:** Thank you.

50 Before we got to Item I last Wednesday, concern was raised that the People's Meeting was not lawful due to the absence of the Chief Executive. This was perceived as a breach of his contract and in contempt of the law. After a bit of searching, I read section 42(5) of the Government of Alderney Law, 2004:

The Chief Executive shall attend the people's meeting and assist the convener.

And I also noted a section covering the transfer of functions in their absence.

The meeting continued. A question was also submitted that was not related to the Billet, and I stated that it could be raised, if necessary, in part 2.

55 **The President:** Thank you, Mr Gentle.

**II. New Connaught Care Home extension –  
Item approved**

*Item II.*

*The States is asked:*

*To approve the recommendation from the Policy & Finance Committee to provide funds for delivery of the Connaught project*

*Phase 2 substructure and grounds at an amount of up to £400,000; and*

*Phase 3 additional resident accommodation and supporting rooms at an amount of up to £1.29M.*

**The President:** Back to the Connaught.

**The Greffier:** Thank you, sir.

As I said, a letter has been received from Mr Dent as Chairman of the Policy and Finance  
60 Committee, and the States of Alderney are asked to approve the recommendation from the Policy  
and Finance Committee to provide funds for delivery of the Connaught project phase 2,  
substructure and grounds, at an amount of up to £400,000; and phase 3, additional resident  
accommodation and supporting rooms, at an amount of up to £1.29 million.

65 **The President:** Thank you.

Mr Gentle, were there any comments on this Item?

**Mr Gentle:** Yes, there were, sir.

It was noted that details of successful tenders have been listed in the Billet in the past, i.e.  
70 September 2009. It was queried what the value of the selected tender is, for openness and  
transparency. I advised that the bidders have a right to expect that some of their tender  
information, i.e. pricing, is confidential as it is commercially sensitive and publication could be an  
advantage to a competitor. The approved invite-to-tender process states confidentiality. Non-  
75 winning tenders and winning tenders are confidential. The process and contract are also used by  
Guernsey, who have to approve funds for over £250,000 and whom we require to approve this  
project. Guernsey and UK bodies also do not need to disclose the price of tenders. UK rules do not  
apply in Alderney, but as a principle of good governance this is used as a reference.

**The President:** Thank you very much indeed.

80 I believe, Mr Dent, you are going to propose this item.

**Mr Dent:** Thank you.

Mr President, fellow colleagues, as you will have noted, the Connaught is States owned and  
managed by an independent board of directors. It has fallen to me to be the proposer of this Item  
85 because of my role as Chairman of Policy and Finance and because of the large sum of money  
involved. As you have already noted, phases 2 and 3 are estimated to cost £400,000 and £1.29  
million. We have an ageing population and the likelihood is therefore that further extensions of  
capacity, or capacity increases, will be required in the future.

While I commend you to approve this Item, I would like to reiterate what I said in October  
90 2019, which was that the Policy and Finance Committee has agreed to revisit the current financial  
model. A more sustainable model with a mechanism for capital cost recovery may therefore be  
considered at some future meeting.

My colleague Mr Gentle has been the prime mover and it is really he who should have the  
honour of taking you through this Item.

95 Thank you.

**The President:** Thank you.

So, Mr Gentle, you are seconding this Item – the floor is yours.

100 **Mr Gentle:** Thank you, sir, colleagues, and I thank Mr Dent for his words.

This request for money in the sum, as you have already heard, of £400,000 and £1.29 million is to enable the continuation of the building of the new Connaught Care Home extension to provide, as was explained when I asked for these funds a few months back, 13 new residential rooms, communal spaces, tailored rooms for clinics, new offices, more storage and new housekeeping facilities. It will also have a new lift installed. Our current demographics demand this new facility as the current building is regularly at full capacity and our population challenges the resilience of the new Connaught Care Home.

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110 As Mr Dent has alluded to, and as written in the Billet, the States, as part of their shareholder role, will continue to require the Connaught to demonstrate sound financial management and control and to evidence this through its ongoing business plan and submission of the annual accounts.

Just for clarification, the next stage of the work, known as phase 2, is for £400,000 for the substructure work, the underground work, the hole-digging, the piling etc., and at the request of Procurement in Guernsey we have been directed to ask for the phase 3 money now – the actual construction of the extension and final delivery of the product at £1.29 million – so that P&R in Guernsey can give the green light to the rest of the project in one go at their meeting next week and allow us to get on with providing this badly needed extension.

115  
This money is part of the approved capital programme and sufficient funding is available.  
Thank you.

120 **The President:** Thank you.

If any Member would like to speak, could they indicate, please?

125 **Mr Jean:** Sir, I would like to, if I may, declare an indirect interest: there might be a possibility that my son might tender for some of the work, so I am going to keep out of the debate and I will abstain from the voting.

**The President:** I am very much obliged to you for that, Mr Jean.  
Would anybody else ...? No. So we can take that as read, I think, Mr Greffier.  
130 I would assume you do not want to say anything else?

**Mr Dent:** Mr President, no, there is no need.

**The President:** Thank you.

### **III. Ban on the sale and distribution of single-use plastic carrier bags– Item approved**

*Item III.*

*The States is asked:*

*To agree to the recommendation that a ban on the sale and distribution of single-use plastic carrier bags is introduced in Alderney and to approve that legislation be drafted by Law Officers Chambers to that effect.*

135 **The President:** Can we move now to Item III on the Billet, please?

**The Greffier:** Thank you, sir.

140 The next Item for consideration is the ban on the sale and distribution of single-use plastic carrier bags. A letter has been received from Mr Dent as Chairman of the Policy and Finance Committee and the States of Alderney are asked to agree to the recommendation that a ban on the sale and distribution of single-use plastic carrier bags is introduced in Alderney and to approve that legislation be drafted by the Law Officers' Chambers to that effect.

**The President:** Thank you.

145 Mr Gentle, were there any comments on this Item?

**Mr Gentle:** Yes, there were, sir, thank you.

150 Clarification was sought on the term 'single-use plastic carrier bags', as some members of the public thought this would affect all types of plastic bags, i.e. dustbin liners, dog bags, fruit and veg bags. Ms Burgess advised that this initiative is to decrease the use of plastic carrier bags by removing the sale of 5p plastic carrier bags in shops.

It was noted that the disposal of plastic bags is the issue and that the Island should have doorstep recycling.

It was noted that reusable hemp bags and recyclable plastic bags could be utilised.

155 It was stated that the States of Alderney should be applauded for this initiative.

**The President:** Thank you, Mr Gentle.

Again, Mr Dent, I understand that you are going to propose this Item.

160 **Mr Dent:** Mr President, fellow colleagues, the Billet provides much of the background to this Item.

165 Alderney has committed itself to support the wider world movement for a greener future, and this is a clear move towards that wider goal. Some have described it as posturing, but I see it as a timely but nonetheless important move towards something that is of huge importance to the world, and I make no apologies for my support. Alderney has been proud to be at the forefront of this green agenda and I would like the world to see where Alderney stands.

170 Last July, we debated our position on plastics and on the Blue Islands Charter. During those debates I made my own views very clear. The consensus view at the time, and on plastics, seemed to be that a voluntary action, and not a ban, would be best. That situation has, however, changed. Some of our major retailers are now indicating it would be easier to move forward if single-use plastic carrier bags were banned. The point is being made not only by many of those who no longer offer plastic bags and who obviously want a level playing field, but, for similar reasons, by many of those who continue to offer these bags. These other retailers believe that only a legal instrument can genuinely lead to that level playing field – and so the Item that is before us tonight.

175 If this resolution passes tonight it will not be the end of the matter. We all know it will have to go to the Law Officers and we will therefore be consulted not only in regard to the new legislation but also in regard to any legislative knock-on issues that need ironing out. I think it is clear that there will have to be definitions to ensure that bin liners, and all the other things that have a clear purpose that goes beyond transporting items from our retailers to our homes, are not caught inadvertently in legal loopholes. But somehow I do not think this will be something that will be too difficult to achieve. Indeed, I see the Law Office has already started this conversation.

180 There is one last thing I want to say, and that is that for the last three years I have fought to have as many issues as possible debated in this Chamber rather than in P&F. I have said it before and I will say it again: this Chamber must not end up as just a rubber stamp at the end of the legislative process. Most legislative assemblies make it clear that one of their principal purposes is to debate the issues of the day. It is important that the public, through debates such as this, are made aware of proposals like the one –

**The President:** Mr Dent, you are straying.

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**Mr Dent:** Not entirely.

**The President:** Well, if you can keep your remarks, please, to the question of single-use plastics.

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**Mr Dent:** I will very quickly finish, Mr President.

When the draft comes back from the Law Officers we will be able, if necessary, to suggest amendments. Too many people say we are legislating in haste. We are not. In fact, we are not even legislating tonight.

Thank you, Mr President.

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**The President:** Thank you.

Ms Burgess, I think you are going to second this Proposition.

**Ms Burgess:** Thank you.

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Mr President, fellow States Members, after Kevin Gentle's comments from the People's Meeting I would like to start by saying I realised after the People's Meeting that we had not been clear enough in what we were proposing when referring to the banning of single-use plastic carrier bags. So, to clarify, it is the sale of plastic bags at the till; not your waste bags, not the bags that have been collected at home, just the sale and availability from the retail sector. We are not intending to make everyone's lives unnecessarily difficult, and with the advice from the Law Officers – advice that they have already begun to deliver – clear, simple legislation can be forthcoming.

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So, why the ban? Following our side of the Blue Islands Charter and pledging our commitment to safeguarding our environment, it seems only right to take another step forward. The charter proposes that all islands commit to moves towards a plastic ban on single-use plastic entering their island and, in particular, the marine environment. There have been moves to meet these objectives on a voluntary basis. However, it has been noted, for example, by the Alderney Wildlife Trust clear-up teams, that they can still find plastic carrier bags from Alderney retailers on our beaches, particularly on the main tourist beaches of Braye and Longis.

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There was a public consultation before the working group was formed with the Plastic-free Alderney Steering Group and about 25 people came, which is more than at the People's Meeting, but they all reported being supportive of bans including carrier bags; 402 people took the time to actually sign the Alderney Wildlife Trust petition asking for a ban on single-use plastics specifically including plastic bags.

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There is a working group set up, consisting of a representative from the Alderney Chamber of Commerce, Alderney Wildlife Trust and myself and members from the States Works. We received really encouraging feedback and, after several workshop sessions from different sectors of the community, especially the retail sector, it was felt it would not be a bad thing to level the playing field for those who had started the journey to withdraw availability of plastic carrier bags and to take the next step forward and ban them.

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According to the United Nations Environment Programme, they have estimated that more than 90 countries now, around the world, are supporting a plastic bag ban. We will, of course, be seeking the Law Officers' advice, for definitions and the legislation needs are a matter for their expertise.

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Alderney does nothing at present to legally protect one of its best assets, which is its environment and wildlife. We are only proposing to ban single-use carrier bags obtained from a retailer. This is the tiniest of baby steps. However, if we, all of us, take small steps, a great distance can actually be achieved by doing what is right for the next generation. I think, even though Alderney has a lot of issues and a lot of problems, it is not a bad thing to put our hand up and say

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240 yes, we can see what is happening to our world, and join in by taking action, especially when considering the future.

Once the Law Officers have changed the legislation, we can add more as we grow in confidence, and start to look at our consumer habits. We are good at recycling, but like other countries, we will be able to expand to address other single-use plastics where good alternatives have been  
245 created – for example, plastic cotton buds, single plastic cups, maybe water bottles.

We only have to look at the bigger picture as to why we need to address this. According to a scientific research group, fewer than one in seven plastic bags are actually recycled. On average, they are used for 12 minutes – that is including us all hoarding, but only 12 minutes. It takes 500-plus years for a plastic carrier bag to degrade in landfill and 80% of ocean plastic pollution enters  
250 the ocean from the land.

How concerned are we about our negative environmental effects? Alderney should and could be a pioneer for this important change to protect our precious sea and wildlife. We are known for our green, open spaces and for the respect we show our Island home. It is a good thing to reinforce our commitment and to send out a message that we are willing to do so. So please, let us commit  
255 and see, by creating a first small step, approving these moves towards banning retail sale of single-use plastic carrier bags.

If you pass tonight’s resolution, and after the Law Officers have provided their advice on definitions and the appropriate legal instruments, we will of course have to debate the final legislation. Tonight is not the end of the process; it is just a very important first step forward and  
260 a signal of our wider intentions.

**The President:** Thank you very much indeed, Ms Burgess.

Would any Member like to make a contribution to this debate? Mr Gentle.

265 **Mr Gentle:** Sir, colleagues, I did briefly think about raising an amendment – which would probably have had the effect of pushing this down the road for three months, so I decided just to speak to the Proposition.

I start by saying I am anti-plastic in any shape or form, so the way people imagine I am voting should be pretty clear cut. But legislation, as already mentioned, is the final step in any process.  
270 The business users in the Chamber of Commerce may well be happy for us to adopt the Big Brother role, but the feeling at the People’s Meeting, from an admittedly minuscule sample size, appeared on the surface to be one of ‘What happens next?’ This Island has always prided itself on community spirit. By getting the community to learn, by getting them to encourage responsibility, by educating them, we can usually get where we want.

275 Whilst wholeheartedly applauding the idea behind this initiative, and very grateful for the work done by all those concerned, I could argue against this in the current form if for no other reason than the clarification around the wording. Put simply, single-use plastics are goods that are meant to be disposed of right after use, often in mere minutes. Single-use plastics are most commonly used for packaging and service-wear such as bottles, wrappers and straws. Plastic bags are  
280 thought to be the world’s number-one consumer product and are now amongst the world’s most banned. Ms Burgess stated the UN has said more than 90 nations; my research tells me the UN counted 127 nations that have either banned or taxed these bags.

As important as banning single-use plastic bags is, in terms of source, the main point is to surely communicate to policymakers, the public and the industry, that we have to do something serious  
285 to reduce plastic packaging, and if we cannot figure it out together then products are going to be banned one at a time.

When we debated this without resolution last year – and apologies for straying sir, but if anyone can explain to me the rationale behind us taking a turn to stand up, utter a few soundbites that I know have not been heard and then sit down again, I would be extremely grateful – I  
290 personally focussed on wet wipes and cotton buds being thrown down the toilet, and not whether

the old lady in the high street can carry her shopping home after going out and forgetting to take a bag.

In the same debate, Mr Dent adopted the economist's view of taxing. It was not until I heard him say it that I realised it is a simple but effective idea. Denmark passed the world's first bag tax in 1993 and residents now use, on average, four bags a year; they pay about 38 pence. Ireland began charging for plastic bags in 2002 and saw a 90% drop in both usage and litter after tax was put into effect; they pay about 13 pence. We have the five-pence charge – and seriously, if I drop a five-pence piece I am not going to bend down and pick it up, for fear of putting my back out. Has the idea of upping the price and putting the money to something tangible in an environmental field been considered, I wonder?

Sir, on a direct level, banning what we are terming a single-use plastic bag will avoid the resource use and negative environmental impacts associated with their manufacture. However, the flip side to this is the high possibility of an increase in sales of bags designed for other uses, like waste bags. They may well be typically similar in size to the bags this proposal seeks to ban, but they are heavier and therefore contain more plastic. Simply banning a certain type of bag, while this might be a good idea on the surface, could have knock-on effects that are harder to manage. A UK Environmental Agency report in 2011 stated that a paper bag would need to be used three times and cotton bags at least 131 times to have a lower environmental impact than what we are calling single-use plastic bags, in terms of resource use, energy and greenhouse outcomes. If our single-use bag is being used just once, then the paper bag would need to be used four times and the cotton bag 173. Whatever type of bag is used, the key to reducing the impact is to use it as many times as possible.

Why exactly are we banning these bags? Is it litter? Potential impact on wildlife, resource consumption? All of the above? Something else? Is it because they are plastic? Because they save the supermarkets money? If we can answer these questions, then we can guide the development of an effective strategy to reduce the environmental and economic burden of taking our shopping home. With that in place, we can then develop an education strategy to help shoppers adapt.

Evidence-based policy is crucial. It would have been good to know how many people would use re-useable bags, whether they always take them with them to the shop and what they put in them. Do people generally know how many times each type of bag should be reused in order to be an environmentally better choice than the current plastic bags? If all we are going to do is swap between different types of plastic, then I find myself struggling to see how we actually achieve anything. Plastic has half the carbon footprint of cotton and paper bags and it is counter-intuitive to think that plastic could be less harmful than something natural, like cotton – but it is. What I am saying is that there is scientific evidence that states plastic bags actually produce less stress on the environment at the manufacture stage.

I voted in favour of bringing this to the States when it came to P&F, with a pretty entrenched view of supporting this every step of the way, but after doing my admittedly limited research I have to say that I did have some nagging doubts whether to come out 100% behind voting in favour of this proposal in its current form. I would have liked to have seen the actual Proposition worded – at least to me – correctly, but I think Mr Dent and Ms Burgess have already allayed my fears. As I have already said, the thought behind this is to be congratulated and every small step is a good step.

This initiative has been described as virtue signalling, both at the People's Meeting and on social media. For those unsure as to the meaning: a conspicuous expression of moral views. I do not think there is anything wrong in virtual signalling if you are looking at procedures or taking a stand.

I am aware that over 400 people signed a petition last year, that we as an Island have signed up to the Blue Islands Charter and, as the Billet notes, our neighbours across the Race have decided to ban some items that I would actually call single-use plastics – like plates, cups, cotton buds and water bottles – in certain establishments. They got rid of the flimsy, see-through bags with a capacity smaller than 10 litres and a thickness less than 50 microns in 2017. They then had

the problem that thicker bags reached the market to take their place to get around the ban, and plastic replaced plastic.

345 Sir, taking the people with you each step of the way is leadership; not taking them along results in just going for a walk. I cannot help thinking that co-operation is better than coercion, but as I sit down I must say that I will be supporting this Item.

Thank you.

350 **The President:** Thank you.  
Mr Harris.

**Mr Harris:** Mr President, fellow States Members, I was surprised at the resistance to this Item at the People's Meeting last week, as surely this is a matter that can only benefit the Island and all of us who live here. We are all very well aware of the issues posed by single-use plastic: 355 pollution to the environment, our seas, our wildlife, micro-plastics in our food and therefore our bodies. Plastic blights every facet of our everyday lives, harms us and every living being on our Island and beyond. Perhaps something was lost in translation. Perhaps the term 'single-use plastic' was misunderstood. Perhaps the term 'carrier bag' is too ambiguous. I am not entirely sure. But, 360 for fear of repetition, the definition of 'single-use plastic' is based on the item being designed to be used once and then disposed of or recycled. The average use of a plastic bag is 12 minutes, in the UK, before it is disposed of. However, most carrier bags are not recycled, if that is even possible, as many contain plastics that cannot be recycled.

Those of you who use your single-use plastic more than once, I commend you. Use them as many times as you can. This ban just entails no longer distributing them at checkout. For those of 365 you old enough to remember the early 1960s, you probably remember a time before these things were even invented – but they do say if you can remember the 1960s you were not actually there, or something like that.

The term 'carrier bag' relates to the plastic bag given at the checkout of your local supermarket or other retailer. This ban does not relate to bin-liners, dog bags and so forth, as clarified by Mr 370 Dent and Ms Burgess.

The following comments are from the Alderney Wildlife Trust, so I will let their words speak for themselves.

Bans are in place in over 70 countries and various local jurisdictions. The argument that Alderney 'doesn't do bans' ignores legislation such as banning smoking indoors and the long list of environmental health and hygiene regulations, which protect the health of our population. The plastic carrier bag ban protects the health of our environment and wildlife (and therefore also Alderney's human population, who depend on nature) from plastic pollution.

The ban has been supported by members of the public – including 402 of you that signed our petition last year to ban single use plastics, including carrier bags – major retailers and Alderney Business.

As part of the Plastic Free Alderney initiative and the Blue Islands Charter, signed by Alderney and other crown dependencies and overseas territories last year, we very much hope the ban gets approval from members and passed on to law officers.

375 So, going ahead, the bags that you have will still be available to you to use as much as you like. There will be no issue bringing them into the Island with shopping, duty free, or however they have been acquired. If you have them, feel free to use them again and again, as long as they are disposed of in the correct way. If you run out, you are always welcome to my collection in the ubiquitous carrier-bag drawer of my house. Help yourselves – they will even last you more than 500 years.

380 This initiative has been welcomed and supported by the retail sector and those who attended the open plastic-free workshops and I hope to see this supported by my fellow Members and all Islanders as much as possible. The number of vocal opposers is much smaller than the number of supporters. The immediate benefit is rarely felt by the people who instil change, but the benefit is for the future generations of the Island. Do not let those future generations of the Island

385 remember us as the ones who could have made simple changes for the better but chose to put  
their 12 minutes of convenience as a higher priority than the environment and the very Island on  
which we are all lucky enough to call home. Could we really be that selfish? I would certainly hope  
not.

390 There will be absolutely no negative impacts of a plastic bag ban felt by individuals. Paper bags,  
cardboard boxes, cotton and string bags are readily available for carrying items. However, by  
standing idly by, the negative impact will be felt and suffered for us and future generations.  
Anyone who votes against positive environmental legislation, however small a change, should not  
be remembered favourably by future generations.

395 Remember that the ban is not for you, for me or anyone sitting in this room, but for the very  
Island on which we live. Without caring for the beauty of Alderney, what are we even doing here?  
Thank you for listening.

**The President:** Thank you.

400 Could I just gently remind Members who yet want to speak that we have had quite a lot of  
repetition in terms of the views that have been expressed, so perhaps Members could limit  
themselves to new matters to bring to the debate.

Mr Jean.

**Mr Jean:** I do not think I can work up quite that amount of enthusiasm for this Item.

405 I go into the various supermarkets and I see that this is already happening. You have got paper  
bags, you have got availability of cardboard cartons – which people are taking and using. I see very  
few people buying carrier bags. Since the tax was brought in, the tax on carrier bags, it reminds us  
not to buy them, and I do not buy them. When I go shopping, I do not buy carrier bags. I will pick  
up a carton or I will take my own bags to the supermarket and shop with them.

410 My approach is much different, probably, to the approach of some people, and my views will  
be different, and they are that I believe that this should be done by voluntary means, by keeping  
on encouraging the supermarkets to phase out these bags, if that is what we really want. My belief  
is you practise what you preach. You go to the supermarket, take your own bags – and if you have  
forgotten your bag, pick up a cardboard carton, load your stuff in it and get yourself gone. That is  
415 my view.

I do not believe we need to use the valuable time of the Law Officers to deal with this. It is  
unfair. We have got other things that we are requesting, more important things, and I in fact  
probably think – if I am to be forgiven for straying for just a short moment – that perhaps we  
should be having a debate on transport, which would be a damned sight, sorry, more useful than  
420 debating plastic carrier bags which are being got rid of anyway. This is happening. You go into the  
Waitrose store and it is all paper bags and stuff now for you; there is no plastic. So it is happening.  
What I say is to encourage the Wildlife Trust, to keep working on that to get this done voluntarily,  
but do not use a sledgehammer to crack a nut. Let's not have to use the Law Officers when we  
need them for other things and we are told that they are so busy on Brexit.

425 I do hope that was slightly different and I hope you all enjoyed my remarks.

**The President:** As always, Mr Jean.  
Would anybody else like to speak?

430 **Mr Roberts:** Yes, sir, thank you.

**The President:** Mr Roberts.

**Mr Roberts:** Thank you, sir.

435 Some of our retailers really try here in this sphere. The Farm Shop is leading some very good initiatives with the glass bottles and paper bags; and others, too many to mention, are also planet-minded, as we all have to be.

440 Lots of us are guilty of using Amazon Prime, and more plastic packaging comes from that chain than a few measly plastic bags that supermarkets supply. I actually use mine more than once and keep feed for my ducks and chickens. So, one-use plastic, to me, is not the way; I utilise my bags until they fall apart. Some of them do actually biodegrade. I have seen it. Five hundred years to biodegrade a bag has not been tested: Charles I did not have a plastic bag! They could even double up as a face mask or a hat when it is raining.

445 The world is a mess and it is this generation above all that has furthered it. Plastic is driven by demand. The world's population is now 7.6 billion; in 1900 it was 1.6 billion. Look online at the moving graph and you will watch it rising by the minute, and it is scary. The world has to control population, or mankind will perish.

450 Plastic bag banning in Alderney will not make a difference. Plastic bag banning in Alderney will not change the world. So many instances of plastic bags, from dog bags to freezer bags: you cannot ban them all. So what good will it do, a message from Alderney?

But failure is never like trying in the first place and Alderney should take this as a logo in these trying times, so after all that, I totally support the banning of plastic bags in shops and supermarkets, and I apologise to those shops but every 1,000-mile journey starts with a single step.

455 Well done to all who supported this, but it is world population control that is poisoning our planet, not just a few bags. One day, the world must solve this problem, or new diseases will – and are – answer that question.

**The President:** Thank you, Mr Roberts.

460 Any other contributions? Mr Snowdon.

**Mr Snowdon:** I was trying to be last there, thank you, Mr President, fellow colleagues.

I do not want to repeat the speeches but they have been very good speeches tonight on this subject, a little bit 50-50 on both sides so far.

465 I think it is important that we give this some context. I think, Mr President, you signed the Blue Charter ... whatever it was. It was very good that you signed that, and I think, in the context of the press release that came out from there, a ban on plastic bags was part of that process. So I think if we are doing a U-turn now it is a little bit late down the road to do that U-turn, because we have actually potentially committed at P&F – we committed to sign the Blue Charter, which the President kindly did for us – and we have had discussions at P&F.

470 I was actually on the working group that Annie Burgess was on. Originally I think Norma Paris was there from General Services Committee, and there was talk about putting one of these things in the inner harbour which was going to suck up all the plastic and everything, but that did not happen. This is a small subject, but it seems like a lot of things do not actually get moving and they do not actually happen with us. The final hurdle, which we are at here tonight ... and then things come up and 'Okay, let's kick it into the long grass again.' But I think this is something we actually do need to move forward on.

480 I appreciate Mr Gentle's comments about engagement with the community, and it is absolutely essential that we have got community backing because we are the representatives of that community. So, maybe there is a little bit more work with the working group, because this is a first step on other things that you will be looking at introducing, and trying to guide the public with the Chamber of Commerce and the Wildlife Trust – maybe there need to be a few more workshops going on in the community – to see if there is a bond and actually an understanding of what we are looking to achieve here. You are trying to ban, obviously, the single-use plastic bags at the

485 shops, and I know there was concern about other, different, forms at the People's Meeting, so we need to give a bit more reassurance.

But I think we also need to look at the context of this, and really what message are we trying to send to the outside world: are we a green Island? We have got all this renewable stuff potentially happening, potentially not happening, but renewable energy is quite an important  
490 element, combined with everything, and how we move away from plastics.

If you go into any of the supermarkets here, I know they are very much trying their best but I think, as we go back to that debate we had last year, the problem really comes back to the import of those plastics from the wholesalers where those countries buy from the UK. So, if you look down by the yoghurts, and luckily milks are moving away as well from plastic use at the Farm  
495 Shop, but if we look at all the stores the amount of plastic that is coming to this Island is just tremendous.

So I think we need to work with the community and the shops at ways of reducing plastic, but also making sure that those other options are available – and I know the working group is trying quite hard on that – and if you can get community buy-in then potentially, hopefully, we can move  
500 forward. But I am hesitant. I think this is okay, but on other things we do need to make sure the community is actually understanding what we are trying to achieve.

So, in summary, I think if we kick this into the long grass tonight it is going to send out the wrong message. I know Guernsey is actually quite interested. One of the Deputies came up to me and said, 'This is fantastic – hopefully it will happen.' So, in one way we would undo that PR image  
505 that we are trying to achieve and that we have worked at for the last couple of years trying to move on to this, if this is kicked into the long grass now.

If there was an amendment to come I would obviously consider it, but I do not think anyone has put any amendments, so I will be supporting this tonight, but I would just emphasise that we do need to get the community on side and make sure they understand, and make sure, if we are  
510 removing the plastic bags from the shops, that there are other options there. I know Mr Jean has highlighted his own sorts of options, but what are the options that you are going to put in place there? Maybe Mr Dent can summarise that when he gets to the summing up.

Thank you.

515 **The President:** Thank you.

Mr Earl.

**Mr Earl:** Mr President, fellow States Members, two years ago *The Guardian* newspaper published an article entitled 'Eight months on, is the world's most drastic plastic bag ban working?'  
520 The following – and I would like to read it to you – is a short extract from the article:

A year after Kenya announced the world's toughest ban on plastic bags, and eight months after it was introduced, the authorities are claiming victory – so much so that other east African nations Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and South Sudan are considering following suit.

– and as we have heard, many other countries have also done that –

But it is equally clear that there have been significant knock-on effects on businesses, consumers and even jobs as a result of removing a once-ubiquitous feature of Kenyan life.

'Our streets are generally cleaner which has brought with it a general "feel-good" factor,' said David Ong'are, the enforcement director of the National Environment Management Authority. 'You no longer see carrier bags flying around when its windy. Waterways are less obstructed. Fishermen on the coast and Lake Victoria are seeing few bags entangled in their nets.'

David Ong'are went on to say that abattoirs used to find plastic in the guts of roughly three out of every 10 animals taken to slaughter. This has now reduced to one in 10 and the Kenyan government is undertaking detailed research to measure the overall effect of the ban. For all of  
525 your information, the Kenyan government's ban came into force on 28th August 2017, threatening

up to four years' imprisonment or fines of \$40,000 – that is £31,000 – for anyone producing, selling or even just carrying a plastic bag.

530 Mr President, fellow States Members, the only thing wrong with this proposal is that it does not go far enough. Plastic pollution has become one of today's most pressing environmental issues, as the widespread use of what I would call disposable plastic products, as opposed to single-use plastics, overwhelms the world's ability to deal with them. Suffice to say every day approximately eight million pieces of plastic pollution find their way into our oceans. Recent studies have revealed that 100,000 marine animals and turtles and one million sea birds are killed by marine plastic pollution annually, a situation that is reflected by our own gannet population.  
535 For those of you who do not believe plastic pollution is an environmental disaster, I suggest you watch the film *A Plastic Ocean* – it is available on Netflix.

Meanwhile, Mr President, with your permission I would like to introduce exhibit one.

540 **The President:** I am not sure, Mr Earl, that that is appropriate in this forum. I think we all know what carrier bags are; we all know what plastic bags are.

545 **Mr Earl:** I think this one is particularly relevant because this particular one is supposed to be ... It is called a 'bag for life'. I found it this morning, down near the recycling centre. It was about 25 m from the edge of the cliffs and if it had not been for the fact that the wind was from the west it would be in the ocean by now. Ladies and gentlemen, this is an example of plastic that is destroying this world.

**The President:** I think we have all got that message, Mr Earl, (**Mr Earl:** I hope so.) long before your demonstration.

550 Would anybody else like to speak on this matter? No. That being the case, do you want to exercise your right of reply, Mr Dent?

**Mr Dent:** I would like to exercise it very briefly.

555 I would like to thank Mr Gentle for being so placid in regard to my own ideas on taxation. I was in a minority of one during that debate and I have come to accept, of course, that a ban is the only way we are actually practically going to move forward.

560 To Mr Jean I would say we often disagree, as you know, but I believe he voted against the progression of environmental matters when it came to the meeting in September in P&F; in October, in P&F, he asked why environmental matters were not being considered; at the next meeting he supported a ban on plastic bags; and then today he has decided that he does not support.

Thank you.

565 **Mr Jean:** Thank you for your remarks about me, as usual.

**The President:** Mr Greffier, can we move to a vote, please?

**The Greffier:** Thank you, sir.

570 The States of Alderney are asked to agree to the recommendation that a ban on the sale and distribution of single-use plastic carrier bags is introduced in Alderney and to approve that legislation be drafted by the Law Officers' Chambers to that effect.

*A vote was taken and the results were as follows:*

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED
Mr Roberts	Mr Jean	None
Mr McKinley		
Mr Dent		
Mr Snowdon		
Mr Dean		
Mr Gentle		
Ms Burgess		
Mr Harris		
Mr Earl		

**The Greffier:** Sir, 9 votes in favour with 1 against.

575 **The President:** Thank you very much indeed.

#### IV. Questions and Reports– Seven questions for verbal reply

*Item IV.*

*The following questions had been received:*

*Questions from Mr Alexander Snowdon for the Chairman of the Policy & Finance Committee:*

*(1) Can the Chairman explain the different option for the delivering of the Ambulance Service and if any public consultation will be included in the process?*

*(2) Following the potential for widespread transmission of coronavirus in the UK, can the Chairman explain what steps may be taken to protect residents from infection, taking into account our older population?*

*(3) Could you explain the process agreed for appointing the next Head of the Civil Service and formation of the working group mandate?*

*(4) Could you confirm any progress with the PSO and any updates with the dire situation for air transport links?*

*Question from Mr Steve Roberts for the Chairman of the General Services Committee:*

*The recent General Services Committee meeting requested the elected Members to pass General Services Committee powers to the Harbour Civil Service, would the Chairman agree that elected Members should take decisions, not civil servants, who are not elected by the public?*

*Question from Mr Steve Roberts for the Chairman of the Policy & Finance Committee:*

*We are headed to a disaster for this summer, with air transport; please could the Chairman explain the contingency plan when we have no planes covering the service?*

*Question from Mr James Dent for the two Alderney Representatives in the States of Deliberation:*

*Would our two Alderney Representatives briefly summarise any activities, formal or informal, that they have undertaken with their Guernsey colleagues since our January meeting?*

**The President:** Now I think we move on to Item IV.

**The Greffier:** Thank you, sir.

580 Item IV this evening is Questions and Reports. Sir, I believe you are in receipt of a total of seven questions from three States Members.

**The President:** Yes, I am.

**Alderney Ambulance Service –  
Options for delivery**

**The President:** The first questions are from Mr Snowdon to the Chairman of the Policy and Finance Committee.

585 The first question, Mr Dent, is: can the Chairman explain the different options for the delivering of the Ambulance Service and if any public consultation will be included in the process?

**The Greffier:** Just before the response, sir, you may wish to check with the Convenor that there were no comments.

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**The President:** I do not think any of those questions were before the People's Meeting.

**Mr Gentle:** Sir, at the time I read the questions out –

595 **The President:** I apologise, yes. Thank you.

**Mr Gentle:** – I advised that there were five questions and it was advised that actually there were seven questions.

600 **The President:** Thank you.  
Now then, Mr Dent.

**Mr Dent:** Mr President, P&F agreed that there should be further investigations of three options: number one was developing the current States-run service into a permanent standalone service; number two was for us to work to an integrated emergency service alongside the Fire Service; and number three was for the development of a new company structure to run the service in a manner similar in approach to the Alderney Ambulance Service Ltd as they ran it until last December when the board of that company decided it could not continue.

605  
A group of stakeholders drawn from the Island's Health Services and off-Island experts have been advising the States. A detailed report will be brought to a meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee.

I can only reiterate what I have said previously, which is that the States is determined that the Island should have an efficient Ambulance Service that meets stringent safety standards, and, for each of the options to be deemed to provide similar levels of safety and efficiency, operating costs will be an important additional consideration.

615  
P&F has already undertaken consultation with those who have a professional interest in the matter. Many other members of the public have expressed their views privately. A number of those who have contacted me have wanted only to make their views known privately. Having said this, and although I can only speak for myself, I am sure all Members will take into account the professional evidence and, as appropriate, the views of others when they make their final decision.

Thank you.

**The President:** Do you have a supplementary question, Mr Snowdon?

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**Mr Snowdon:** Yes, sir. Thank you.

Would Mr Dent be able to give a timeline on when the business cases will be coming back to P&F, and if it will come back here for final approval or if it will be a P&F decision?

Thank you.

630 **The President:** Mr Dent.

**Mr Dent:** I can only say that I have been led to believe that it should be at the next P&F meeting. Sorry, what was the second part of your question?

635 **Mr Snowdon:** If it will come back here or if it will be a P&F decision.

**Mr Dent:** I must confess I need to take advice on whether it needs to come back here. I do not know.

640 **The President:** Thank you.

Would anybody else like to ask a question arising out of the answer?

**Mr Jean:** Yes. The question I would ask is: does the Chairman agree with me that it would be beneficial to have this matter debated in this Chamber, in the full States, so that people can see clarity and openness and honesty?

645

**The President:** Mr Dent.

**Mr Dent:** I think that is a matter for P&F to discuss. I do not particularly want to give an off-the-cuff answer to that question at the moment.

650

Thank you very much.

**The President:** Very wise.

Does anybody else have a question arising out of Mr Dent's response?

### Coronavirus – Measures to protect residents

655 **The President:** Okay, then, we can move on to the second question, again from Mr Snowdon to Mr Dent: following the potential for widespread transmission of coronavirus in the UK, can the Chairman explain what steps may be taken to protect residents from infection, taking into account our older population?

Mr Dent.

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**Mr Dent:** Mr Snowdon, you are right to draw attention to our particularly elderly and vulnerable population.

Health is, of course, a transferred service and we operate as part of the Bailiwick-wide resilience and emergency planning processes, so the professional advice, from a health perspective, is provided by the States of Guernsey. That advice is being updated regularly and is on the States of Guernsey website, and we also placed it on the States of Alderney website. Key advice is additionally being provided on posters that have been distributed widely and can be seen in various public, accessible places. Further information will be provided as and when appropriate by the Guernsey Committee for Health and Social Care, and I urge everyone who can to take notice of this advice as it is updated. The States Member liaising with the Committee for Health and Social Care is our colleague Mr Roberts. As our Alderney Reps, I would ask you both to do all that you can, as indeed I will, to ensure that advice is kept up to date.

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You should be aware that the response to the Covid-19 situation – which is its technical new name, Covid-19 – has now been escalated, and strategic co-ordinating and tactical co-ordinating groups have been formed in the Bailiwick. Our CEO attends the strategic co-ordinating group and

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his executive officer attends the tactical co-ordinating group. The Civil Contingencies Authority may also be convened, and I am Alderney's representative on that. To supplement the Bailiwick-wide work, we have an Island stakeholder group to which we can invite particular stakeholders. This is helpful to identify any on-Island specifics or issues that we feel need to be raised in the  
680 Bailiwick-wide discussions.

Guernsey is preparing, with the help of ourselves and the stakeholder group, some information which I hope will be distributed widely around the Island, perhaps to every property. This will cover the generic advice prepared in Guernsey but also some specific Alderney-related information. This advice was originally scheduled to be ready today for distribution tomorrow,  
685 Thursday.

In terms of the specific issues around hand sanitisers and masks, there is advice available from Public Health about the efficacy of this. We are making hand sanitiser available in States buildings and this is also happening at the Airport and Hospital. It will be for other organisations to decide if they need to offer this facility – for example our shops and the churches. It will be important to  
690 get the message across that proper handwashing with soap is just as effective, and sometimes more effective, than some hand gels.

There is a specific problem with Medevac, as Aurigny will not carry infected patients, so other arrangements are being made and this will be discussed at the stakeholder group.

It is important to stress that we are in the containment phase at present, though we  
695 understand the UK is strengthening its response by moving into the mitigation phase. The aim of the mitigation phase, should the situation deteriorate and we too move to it, will be to flatten the curve. This will mean fewer affected people at any given time, and this, although it could cause the virus to be present amongst us for a longer period of time, will allow our medical and other services to cope and may also reduce the total number of infections.

700 Thank you.

**The President:** Thank you, Mr Dent.  
Question, Mr Snowdon?

705 **Mr Snowdon:** Quite a few, but I can only ask one. (**The President:** Yes.) Following the UK Budget that has been released today – and there seems to be quite a lot to try and protect the economy and also the public in the UK – are we looking at anything to try and help the economy through these tricky times?

Thank you.

710

**The President:** Well, Mr Dent.

**Mr Dent:** Well, Mr Snowdon, you are a Member of P&F and I am sure you can raise this at P&F at the appropriate time. As you know, that has not yet been discussed, but thank you for your  
715 question. I am merely the Chairman of the Committee, not an almighty predictor.

**The President:** Would anybody else like to ask a question of Mr Dent?  
We will move on.

**Appointment of next Head of the Civil Service –  
Process agreed**

720 **The President:** Question 3, again from Mr Snowdon to Mr Dent: could you explain the process agreed for appointing the next Head of the Civil Service and formation of the working group mandate?

Mr Dent.

**Mr Dent:** Mr President, we are working according to the provisions of the Government of Alderney Law, 2004. This requires us to appoint a CEO.

725 The President has taken legal advice and the Employment Board, which is P&F under a different name, met for the first time on Monday, 24th February. You were there. An action group to oversee the process was appointed. It was agreed further legal advice would be taken as and when necessary. The action group that was formed, as you will remember, consists of the President as Chairman, myself, yourself and the Chairs of our three main Committees. The action group will  
730 drive the process and will recommend a job description to be approved by the full Employment Board.

The action group met for the first time on Thursday, 5th March, and you were there. It was a useful and constructive meeting and a number of measures to improve the previous recruitment process received support. I believe everyone who participated was content with the outcome.  
735 Further advice from Guernsey's Human Resources Department and the Law Officers was obtained yesterday, when the action group held a joint meeting with other Members of the Employment Board. The Law Officers confirmed the appropriateness of the steps that have been taken to date. The Human Resources Department offered their assistance in defining the job description. They also offered help in regard to finding head hunters or in the use of other recruitment options, and  
740 help in advising those assisting us on the wider qualities that we will be seeking from candidates was also offered.

Two quick final points. The action group will be reporting from time to time to the full Employment Board. Final approval of any appointment will need to be given by the Lieutenant Governor.

745 Thank you.

**The President:** Thank you, Mr Dent.  
Mr Snowdon, do you have a question?

750 **Mr Snowdon:** Thank you, sir, yes, I do.

I was there, Mr Dent, but the public were not there and neither were the press.

I would like to just really ask: appointing the new CEO, Head of the Civil Service, can we appoint a temporary one or do we have to make a full-term one with the appointment now? That means can you appoint a temporary one for six months, or do you have to go for a full-term one, for five  
755 years?

Thank you.

**Mr Dent:** Mr Snowdon, I think it is better in some ways that the action group, or the Employment Board ... if I were to take advice. But as I understand it, yes, we can appoint a  
760 temporary one. I believe there are no specific terms in the Law that say any specific length of time, just the point that he is making. There are obviously advantages and disadvantages of such short-term appointments, though, and I think those would need to be taken into account, as I think you probably agree.

765 **The President:** Thank you.  
Does any other Member ...? Mr Jean.

**Mr Jean:** The Chairman might agree with me that it would be beneficial that when we framed up the document itself it would be placed on the Billet in order to allow the public a chance to  
770 comment. As I have said before also, I do not think it is an item that we should rush at; we should take our time.

**The President:** Can you answer that, Mr Dent?

775 **Mr Dent:** I can say something about your question, which I regard almost as a statement of  
your views rather than a question. Alderney is in a difficult situation in some respects and I think  
to be without a CEO would cause a great deal of problems, particularly in our relations with  
Guernsey, our neighbours. If we were without one for any length of time, or if we had a temporary  
one as Mr Snowdon suggested, then I think we would be, in some respects, in a difficult situation.  
780 Does that answer your question?

**Mr Jean:** No.

**The President:** Anybody else a question?

**Air transport links –  
Update on progress**

785 **The President:** Okay, then, Mr Snowdon, it is your final question, again to Mr Dent: could you  
confirm any progress with the PSO and any updates with the dire situation for air transport links?  
Mr Dent.

**Mr Dent:** Mr Snowdon, I have written several times, over the period since November 2019, to  
790 the President of P&R and the President of STSB but have received no useful replies. I have also  
tried to meet formally with the President of P&R to discuss this urgent and serious problem.  
Informally, he has explained the process is complicated and P&R has yet to come to a conclusion.  
We understand, however, that Guernsey's procurement division may still be continuing to provide  
advice to P&R. We have not, however, been sighted on that advice, despite regular requests for  
795 updates.

These matters, and particularly the uncertainty and consequent economic damage, were  
matters raised recently by our President and myself at Westminster. There are therefore those in  
the UK who are aware of our predicament.

I believe that Tuesday, 3rd March was the last day for the submission of policy letters for the  
800 April States of Guernsey States of Deliberation Meeting. I consequently think that it is highly  
unlikely that there will be the promised debate in the States of Guernsey States of Deliberation  
in April. There is, of course, a further Meeting in May, just before the Guernsey elections. Time is,  
however, running out if the consultations with Alderney – the consultations that were promised  
– are to be forthcoming, genuine and meaningful.

805 These are the bare facts. It might be useful to expand a little on our situation. Our biggest  
problem is the fact that we are simply not in control. Aurigny was bought by the States of Guernsey  
some years ago. Much more recently it has become apparent that services into Southampton from  
the Channel Islands must be provided by either Aurigny or Blue Islands or the holders of a UK  
aircraft operating certificate (AOC). The reasons for this are a result of what happened when  
810 Guernsey set up its own 2-REG Aircraft Registry and the UK's decision to deny companies with 2-  
REG AOCs the right to operate commercially into UK airports. This is, of course, a really major  
impediment to innovative solutions to what is our biggest problem. It means, for example, that if  
Alderney were ever to put its hand into its pocket and bought a fleet of planes, we would have to  
hand them over to one of two established Channel Islands operators or find a UK operator willing  
815 to work with us. Having said this, and even if we could find a partner airline, this is not something  
we can necessarily afford to do. Running an airline has always been challenging, but with an ever-  
increasing blanket regulation, much of which has been designed for large airlines but applies to  
all, the task of making an airline profitable, or even breakeven, is becoming even more difficult.  
You only have to look at the names of some of the big players, who were around for a very long  
820 time, who have now failed and disappeared completely – the likes of Flybe, Thomas Cook, Air Italy,

Wow, Air Berlin, Monarch, CityWing. In fact, almost 200 airlines have gone bust globally in the last decade. It is a very tough industry and yet it is a critically important industry, and coronavirus is not helping.

825 Finally – and this is a bit of an aside, nonetheless it is important – I have been informed that Guernsey is unhappy in regard to certain alleged leaks that they believe to have emanated from Alderney; leaks that occurred after the meeting here with the Committee for Economic Development last year. Rightly or wrongly, it seems they have been using this to withhold further information for fear of it compromising the commercial conversations that they indicate have been progressing. Unfortunately, we are sometimes our worst enemy. Inaccurate and distorted  
830 leaks are, sadly, even worse than the leaks themselves.

Thank you.

**The President:** Thank you, Mr Dent.

Question, Mr Snowden?

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**Mr Snowden:** Yes, thank you, Mr President.

The PSO has been going on for quite a number of years now and I do not think it is acceptable, so I would like your view if we have actually come to maybe the end of the line with the PSO, where this process should be put in the bin and some long-term aviation vision should be looked  
840 at, because if we are not going to achieve anything with this PSO and it has been so long now, how long do we keep on going on this journey with Guernsey?

Thank you.

**The President:** Mr Dent.

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**Mr Dent:** Mr President, the Member makes a very important point but I think it is really somewhat out of our hands. The PSO process has not been brought to a conclusion and I will be referring with a better answer to some of your question in my reply to Mr Roberts' own question.

Thank you.

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**The President:** Anybody else? Mr Gentle.

**Mr Gentle:** Sir, I am sorry if this puts the Chairman on the spot but is the Chairman aware of comments made by the Chair of STSB, Mr Ferbrache, in the States of Deliberation last week when  
855 he managed, during the education debate, to reference the PSO and stated that he would not be in the slightest bit surprised to see it drag on until September if it is not sorted by April, because of the impending election; and, if he is aware, does he have any comment?

**The President:** Mr Dent.

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**Mr Dent:** Mr Gentle, I am aware of Mr Ferbrache's comments and I can only say it is not a good situation that we find ourselves in. He has made other comments and I will be alluding to those other comments when I reply to Mr Roberts' question.

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**The President:** Thank you.

Mr Jean, you have a question?

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**Mr Jean:** Yes. Would the Chairman agree with me that we are running ourselves up a siding and perhaps we should widen the discussion on transport to include sea transport more than we do, as we are in a situation where that is really the only thing that we can do and perhaps we should be doing it? I would like to hear the Chairman's views.

**The President:** Thank you, Mr Jean.

875 **Mr Dent:** Mr Jean, I have always been nervous about some of the things associated with sea transport alternatives. On the occasions that we have looked at it – and we seem to look at it every two years – it comes out incredibly expensive. We have talked about what it would cost us and we would have to put up our occupiers' rates by a factor of two or three. Nobody has made a constructive business plan that really has any credence at all.

880 There is also the suggestion – I do not know how true it is but it is a suggestion – that some people in Guernsey would certainly have us have a boat but in replacement to the air services. I think it is a dangerous path we tread sometimes when we push this case too much, too far forward, particularly in the present time.

Thank you.

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**The President:** Thank you, Mr Dent.

Anybody else? No. I think that completes your questions, Mr Snowdon.

**Mr Snowdon:** Thank you.

**General Services Committee –  
Transfer of powers to Harbour Civil Service Office**

890 **The President:** We now move to Mr Roberts, who has a question for the Chairman of the General Services Committee: the recent General Services Committee meeting requested the elected Members to pass General Services Committee powers to the Harbour Civil Service, would the Chairman agree that elected Members should take decisions, not civil servants who are not elected by the public?

895 Mr McKinley.

**Mr McKinley:** Thank you, Mr President, and thank you, Mr Stephens – Mr Roberts!

The request raised at the General Services Committee meeting was slightly different from the one you are asking. It requested the full transfer of functions to the Harbour Office in according with the Braye Harbour (Alderney) Ordinance, 1983, subject to further information being provided regarding the Ordinance.

900 The Committee deferred the decision because there have been a number of complaints recently from the local fishermen, from boat owners and from members of the Sailing Club and others, concerning restrictions imposed recently by the Harbour Office, restrictions which are not listed in the Harbour Ordinance. Such complaints have included no access by some commercial fishermen to their boats moored on the commercial quay and restrictions for recreational fishermen on the quay and elsewhere, and vehicle parking.

905 Over the past few weeks, I have had several discussions with the Harbourmaster about the complaints and concerns, and indeed Mr James Dent and I had a brief meeting with him this morning to discuss a possible marina plan by Gordon Owen. At the end of the meeting I raised a question about progress and public consultation on the new harbour masterplan and the recent harbour survey. We agreed that interested parties should be consulted on any proposed changes and that only after such consultation would the Harbourmaster present his proposed changes to the Harbour Ordinance to the General Services Committee; and until such time as it happens, the

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915 Braye Harbour (Alderney) Ordinance will remain as it is, unchanged.

**The President:** Mr Roberts, do you have a supplementary question?

920 **Mr Roberts:** Yes, sir. Would the President not agree we had always had a smooth running of harbour affairs before the new appointment in the Harbour Office arrived with views not really compatible to Alderney's needs and those of the stakeholders?

**The President:** You have just been elevated!

925 **Mr McKinley:** He has just elected me as President!

**The President:** Yes, well ...

**Mr Roberts:** Sorry, sir, although he did call me Mr Stephens!

930 **Mr McKinley:** Sorry, I did. I beg your pardon.

**The President:** It may be only a matter of time, Mr McKinley.

935 **Mr McKinley:** I was so stunned by that, could you ask the question again?

**Mr Roberts:** Certainly, sir.

**The President:** Not as stunned as I was! *(Laughter)*

940 **Mr Roberts:** Would the President not agree that we had always had a smooth running of harbour affairs before the new appointment in the Harbour Office arrived with views not really compatible to Alderney's needs and those of the stakeholders?

945 **Mr McKinley:** I think that the Harbourmaster is a good person and well-minded, and I think that he has probably arrived from his job in Perth and one of the other islands of Scotland thinking perhaps that the same rules apply here as apply there. In fact, our law is always slightly different and I think he is getting hold of it. I have met with him several times; others have met with him also. We have not yet decided the full details of the harbour masterplan. We did discuss the marina this morning, which he was *very* interested in and supported very much.

950 So I think we are getting there slowly. We just have to sort out this problem that is ongoing at the moment, but I think slowly it is being settled. I hope so.

**Mr Roberts:** Thank you, Mr Chairman.

955 **The President:** Thank you.  
Mr Snowdon?

**Mr Snowdon:** Can I just ask a supplementary, if that would be all right?

960 **The President:** Yes.

**Mr Snowdon:** Just referring to that question, if there is a transfer of the powers, does that have to come back here or can General Services do that in committee – or would that actually come back to the full States if there was a transfer of those powers?

965 Thank you.

**Mr McKinley:** The transfer of powers, I am not quite sure what happens with that, but I think first of all it will be decided by the General Services Committee. If they are not able to do it, it will go to the Policy and Finance Committee, and if they are unable to do it, it will come here.

970 One of the things that perhaps I missed out is the fact that the harbour masterplan is looking at something several years ahead, including possibly the extension of our commercial quay. It is going to cost an awful lot of money.

**The President:** Thank you.

975 Anybody else have a question for Mr McKinley? Yes, Mr Jean.

**Mr Jean:** To the Chairman of General Services, in the light of the unrest amongst the Sailing Club and the fishermen and various people, I would ask you whether you consider it wise that there be a transfer of any powers. And also I would reiterate that, like Mr Snowdon, I believe it would be very good ... if that does have to happen, we have to have a discussion about it. I would like it in here, not in the P&F Committee.

980 **Mr McKinley:** Mr Jean, that is fine. I think something else that should happen also is that there should be perhaps a public meeting of interested parties. We discussed that this morning and the Harbourmaster has a slightly different view. He wants to meet with representatives of those organisations. I think it would be quite good if he was able to meet with all of those organisations, all of the sailors and all of the fishermen, but we will see what happens.

**The President:** Ms Burgess.

990 **Ms Burgess:** Could I ask a question as well?

**Mr McKinley:** The most interesting subject of the evening!

995 **Ms Burgess:** The question is: do you feel that the meeting you had with the Harbourmaster – at I think it was the end of last month – with the interested parties and the users of the quay area was a constructive meeting, and do you not feel that people there were represented well and had their questions answered satisfactorily?

1000 **Mr McKinley:** I think one of the problems was that we were given very short notice of that meeting. I was only told in the morning of the afternoon that we were going to have that meeting at four o'clock, so I had not been able to do much of my homework.

I found during the meeting that a lot of the traffic was one way. We were being told a lot but we were not being given much time to ask questions. This is why I think that it would actually be much better if we had a slightly wider meeting with other interested parties, so that we could have the General Services Committee perhaps on one side with the harbourmaster and the general public or those interested asking questions.

**The President:** Thank you.

1010 Nobody else? Okay, thank you.

**Air services –  
Contingency plan for summer 2020**

**The President:** We move now to your second question, Mr Roberts, which is to Mr Dent. The question is: we are headed to a disaster for this summer with air transport – please could the Chairman explain the contingency plan when we have no planes covering the service?

Mr Dent.

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**Mr Dent:** Mr Roberts, you make a very important observation and you ask a very important question. It is in fact very similar to the question you asked in January and I would have liked to give a better answer than the one I gave in January. Sadly, I cannot. Tonight I am going to be brutally honest.

1020

Alderney finds itself in a very difficult place and our biggest problem is in fact the lack of control that we have over our own destiny, a matter about which I have just talked. Our problems are compounded by the fact that we might have talked to some people about contingencies and these people are no longer available. They are all waiting for Guernsey to signal the end of the PSO process. So Guernsey is effectively blocking, directly or indirectly, our first most obvious route for contingency planning. Mr St Pier, I hope you are listening.

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Like it or not, we are tied to the decisions made in Guernsey and decisions are made increasingly without proper consultation or meaningful liaison. There are some who say Guernsey is now trying to break Alderney. I do not think it is true – at least I hope it is not – but we are, nonetheless, in a difficult place, feeling increasingly isolated and disowned by our larger partner in the Bailiwick. There are others who say we should become a parish of Guernsey, but I am not one of them. If that were to happen our interests would be even more easily ignored. So allowing a takeover, in my view, is also not the sensible contingency plan, although in this case it could never be a short-term solution.

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As we all know, Aurigny was our airline. It began more than 50 years ago. It was bought by the States of Guernsey some years ago. What is less well known is that services into Southampton from this Channel Island must now be provided by either Aurigny or Blue Islands, or the holder of a UK AOC. Mr Roberts, you know the reasons for this and indeed I hope I was able to explain them during my answer to Mr Snowdon's question. Of course, at the time Guernsey set up their own registry, they believed it beneficial to licence operators who might not quite meet the same standards the UK was imposing. Guernsey was looking to attract to their Island business from companies with aircraft transitioning ownership. I could say that as a result of this Guernsey scored a win at Alderney's expense. It would, however, be probably fairer of me to be more forgiving and refer simply to the law of unintended consequences.

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We are, of course, also tied by the requirement that any expenditure over £250,000 needs Guernsey's approval. As we know, this approval does not come easily; witness the problems we faced over the swimming pool and more recently over the purchase of a replacement crane for the harbour, one of the most basic items of infrastructure for an Island –

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**The President:** Mr Dent, I hesitate to interrupt you again but you are straying, I am afraid. Need I remind you of the question?

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**Mr Dent:** You do not need to, but it was a good example.

**The President:** It was a good try!

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**Mr Dent:** Thank you.

So, to all of those who would simply say Alderney should buy its own planes and go it alone, which on the face it might seem the obvious solution, I have to say this: it really is not as easy as all that. We would have to hand them over to one of the two established Channel Island operators

1060 or find a UK operator willing to work with us. We would, of course, also have to finance the purchase and, as we do not have unlimited reserves, we could be talking about a several-fold increase in our property taxes on top of the hikes which have been introduced this year. Starting our own operation is, consequently, not a viable short-term contingency plan and nor would it be easy, low risk, or even a long-term solution for protecting our Southampton route.

1065 So, Mr Roberts, we are very short on short-term contingency plans, just as we are short on the powers to influence our own destiny. As part of Alderney's Government and one of the two Alderney Representatives in the States of Deliberation, you have the ability to win the hearts and minds to Alderney's plight amongst the States Members of Guernsey and I know that you and Mr Snowdon are working hard to improve relationships and knowledge between States Members across both parliaments. This is important work and the rest of the States Members here are more than happy to support you in these vital endeavours.

1070 So, is there anything left? As I stated in January, the new Aurigny timetable shows about 4,400 reduction in the number of seats on offer on the Southampton-Alderney route, but this has been offset by an increase of about 4,200 in the seats on offer on the Alderney-Guernsey route. This is not ideal. We can still get people here, but at a cost in terms of time and money.

1075 I also noted in January our [inaudible] centres on the resilience of any Aurigny operation, particularly when one of the only two aircraft they have may, indeed will, on occasions be absent for planned or unplanned servicing. Mr Peter Ferbrache, the President of STSB in Guernsey, offered us an apology, but quite frankly this does not help the Island's fragile economy or support the Island's community. Our community is wholly reliant in so many ways on our air links both northwards and southwards.

1080 Mr Roberts, I wish I could have been able to give a better answer to your question. I have come to believe that our real main hope is to convince Guernsey that we take our economic problems seriously, to give real precedence to developing our economy even if this means making some difficult decisions on Island, and to quit concentrating on the reasons why things cannot be improved and concentrate instead on moving forward. It may not be the answer you want and it is certainly not a short-term quick fix.

1085 So, have we given up? Absolutely not. We do not even know what Guernsey may yet be offering, but once we do know we will have to assess, and assess very quickly, what options we have, and we will then have to secure the best deal we can either through meaningful dialogue with our colleagues in Guernsey or, if that is not possible, perhaps through other less palatable routes.

1090 In the meantime, summer 2020 is likely to be a very difficult time for Alderney, even though we have the air route capacity from the UK via Guernsey, and of course we also have the issues of coronavirus and how that may impact travel.

1095 Mr Roberts, does that answer your question?

**Mr Roberts:** Yes, thank you very much, Mr Dent.

1100 **The President:** I suspect you have a supplementary question.

1105 **Mr Roberts:** Yes, sir, I have and it relates to something that Mr Dent has actually spoken about. I heard the Chairman's comments on the affordability of us doing something for ourselves. Would the Chairman agree that we look at the prospect of purchasing eight more affordable Islanders, along with negotiations to lengthen our runway to allow peak-time larger aircraft and executive jets that could possibly be the solution to Alderney's ongoing connectivity fiasco and futureproof our economy in a short time? Failure is never trying in the first place.

**A Member:** Quite right.

1110 **The President:** Mr Dent.

**Mr Dent:** The only thing I would like to say to that is I think we want to look at all options for the future. I am turning down no options in my head and I do not think any of my colleagues are, for that matter, either.

1115 **The President:** Just for your benefit, Mr Dent, unfortunately Mr Gavin St Pier will not be able to hear your remarks tonight because I do not think the radio was working.

**Mr Dent:** Mr President, I am devastated!

1120 **The President:** But you were in full flow!  
Any other question? Yes, Mr Snowden.

**Mr Snowden:** Thank you, Mr President.

1125 Mr Dent, don't you agree that this actually all comes back to the PSO, which is stopping everything in its tracks until there is a decision or not a decision; and the sooner we can get over this hurdle the better, but there does not seem to be any timeline when anything will actually happen, hence the frustration of you and the whole community?

Thank you.

1130 **Mr Dent:** Mr Snowden, I would like to think I made that so abundantly clear, but I will say it again: yes!

**The President:** Thank you.

1135 Mr McKinley, please.

**Mr McKinley:** Could I just ask a question of Mr Roberts on the same subject?

**The President:** No, not Mr Roberts, Mr Dent.

1140 **Mr McKinley:** That is fine.

1145 Last week on the ITV News in the evening, there was a comment made, I believe by Mr Lyndon Trott, concerning Flybe and their sudden pull-out, the problems that they were having there, and saying what a significant impact this was having on the population of Guernsey. Should we not ask our Representatives in Guernsey next week, when they get there, to asking him one or two questions on that – to remind him that they have had two or three days of significant impact, and we are having several years?

**The President:** Mr Dent.

1150 **Mr Dent:** Absolutely. What is good for the goose is good for the gander.

**The President:** Any other contributions? Thank you.

#### **Alderney Representatives' summary of interactions with Guernsey**

1155 **The President:** Finally, we move to Mr Dent, who is asking his normal questions to the Alderney Representatives in the States of Deliberation: would our two Alderney Representatives briefly

summarise any activities, formal or informal, that they have undertaken with their Guernsey colleagues since our January meeting?

Who would like to go first? Mr Roberts.

1160 **Mr Roberts:** At the Guernsey States last time, education played a massive part. It was a massive logjam in the States' Meeting and feelings around the House were divided and rare. Personal attacks, passionate speeches, tears and splits in friendships before an impending election drew blood from both sides; a debate that went on and on, and we were worried as both our Alderney allies fought on both sides of the House. Alderney picked up on this very quickly and sent us a message that they would like us to actually abstain on the vote. We, as Reps, reserve the right to vote as we feel the debate progresses. However, we decided that decision to abstain was the correct advice given.

1165  
1170 The Meeting continued into the next week and the other unheard issues were put into the next States Meetings. When I asked a question to Deputy Ferbrache on a third Dornier this year, it drew a question from Deputy Trott. He asked Deputy Ferbrache to confirm that Guernsey subsidise Alderney-to-Southampton passengers to the tune of £75 per sector. I am sure he wished he had not asked that question, for Deputy Ferbrache replied and corrected him and said it was only £40, almost half of what he thought, and that was a really sweet moment for me.

1175 We met with Gavin St Pier informally to chat and I felt there was a genuine concern to find a long-term solution to improve Alderney's lot, to go with what Mr Dent has said tonight, and source something that serves both Islands, and these talks are making informal progress as we expressed the danger for Alderney in the coming season. I hope I am right in the impressions that we received, but you can never be fully sure; one or two others are unhelpful and unable to grasp our concerns.

1180 **The President:** Thank you very much.

Mr Snowdon, do you have anything to add?

1185 **Mr Snowdon:** Sir, do you just want to ask if there are any questions?

**The President:** Sorry, yes. Does anybody want to ask a question of Mr Roberts? Mr Snowdon.

**Mr Snowdon:** Thank you.

1190 Just following on from Mr Roberts, going back to the question, would that be for January and February?

1195 **The President:** Would our two Alderney Representatives briefly summarise any activities, formal or informal, that they have undertaken with their Guernsey colleagues since our January meeting?

**Mr Snowdon:** Yes, okay, thank you.

1200 I think most of you are aware that we have been submitting questions quite regularly to Policy and Resources, written questions and verbal questions in the States to try and get some answers. I think we, and probably you, are very disappointed – basically what Mr Dent is saying as well – with the responses we have had from those answers.

Just to touch on a few things, Mr Roberts did say about the education debate, which was heated on both sides, and yes, passionate speeches on both sides, but I will move on from that one for a minute.

1205 There were also questions during the States, the last one, submitted from John Gollop about the 1948 Agreement and I think there seems to be a feeling with the 1948 Agreement that the States of Guernsey would like some action on that. All I would say about the 1948 Agreement is I think when it does happen, or if it does happen, it might be a new Assembly after the elections;

however, I think it is probably important that all Committees are consulted and it will not just be Policy and Resources when that does potentially happen in the future.

1210 There is also legislation that was passed with marriage, which is no-fault marriage now. So, instead of having the marriage where you have to come up with a fault to divorce your partner unless you wait for the time limit, it is now a quicker marriage where you do not have to come up with that fault thing. That legislation was passed.

1215 Mr Gentle actually took a particular bit that I was going to say from the education debate, when Deputy Peter Ferbrache seemed to comment that he was disappointed about how long this PSO process has taken and potentially looking at September. I am not quite sure where he has got that information from or if that was just gut feeling, but obviously that is concerning for us as a community.

1220 I just wanted to touch on one thing, and I hope it is not outside the scope of the question but I know there were concerns at the People's Meeting with the TRP, and the President did very well updating the Members who were there at the People's Meeting but yes, there was a 10% increase on TRP. However, the size of the property, if it gets bigger and bigger, it goes into different bands and hence why you have got quite a lot of high TRP costs for this year. If it was a smaller property it is 10%, but because it is a bigger property ... I thank the President for updating at the People's Meeting on that.

1225 Touching on meetings as well, we did facilitate a very informal meeting where Mr Dent came down and actually talked to Policy and Resources Members just to try and emphasise with us the importance of our air links and how it is absolutely essential to move forward. We will see what happens, I think, is the best thing to say on that one.

1230 There was some more legislation that was passed as well, with sexual offences legislation, and there were quite a lot of amendments to that. That was an interesting debate but all of that was passed as well. If anyone wants to know more details about that, I would be happy to go into those contexts.

1235 Just because we have talked about the coronavirus and Members were ... I thank whoever sorted it out – I am not sure if it was Mr Roberts or Mr Dent – but we did have a meeting with the Director of Public Health in Guernsey over the phone at lunchtime today and they went through a two-hour presentation with us, which was very useful. Since then, they have sent myself and Mr Roberts a document for businesses, how to deal with it on Island. I have asked them to pass it onto the Alderney Chamber of Commerce and I believe it is on the website as well soon, so if anyone has got any concerns with regard to businesses they can look it up, and that is something else that happened.

1240 I think I have covered everything very briefly, but I am happy to go into more detail if there are questions.

1245 **The President:** Does anybody have a question? Mr Dent.

**Mr Dent:** Thank you, Mr President.

1250 Mr Snowden, this morning you stated in a meeting with the Committee for Health and Social Care that you were unsure of where advice on coronavirus should come from, from our CEO or from the Committee for Health and Social Care. Can you confirm that the professional advice from a health perspective is provided by the States of Guernsey as a transferred service? I am sure you can, but can you confirm that you can liaise directly with them on our behalf as best as possible?

1255 **Mr Snowden:** Thank you, Mr Dent, for your question. Absolutely with regard to health, but I think what we also need to establish is with regard to the economy, and that is something where I am not quite sure what lines are. I think our CEO is making frequently asked questions available on the States of Alderney website and I know that we are all feeding into those from the concerns that we have had from the public, so hopefully those will answer the questions.

1260 Going back to your original one, yes, Health in Guernsey are very much on the case and they actually offered us potentially another meeting in two to three weeks' time with what is happening.

I just emphasise that it is probably beneficial that we also have the leaflet drop or use the local press to put messages across, because elderly people do not all have the internet, so I think that is quite an important thing, that we make sure everyone has access to the information.

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**The President:** Any other questions? No.

That brings us to the end of the formal process.

### Coronavirus – Statement by the President

1270 **The President:** I did indicate before that unfortunately, for technical reasons, the meeting tonight has not been broadcast. I had intended at the beginning of the meeting to make a Statement in the hope that it would be widely listened to in the community. That has not proved to be possible, but I think it is still important that I make this Statement so that the press will be able to listen to it.

1275 **Mr Snowden:** Could I just ask: is the meeting being recorded? Although it is not going out live, is it recorded, meaning it could it be played at a later time, at all? We do not know?

1280 **The President:** Not being very technical ... I was told it was rebooting, which has obviously taken a lot longer than was anticipated because I was told I would be given a thumbs-up when it started – but thumbs-up has there been none. So I think, unfortunately, on this occasion, Mr Bohan had an early night.

Returning to the Statement, I thought it might be helpful if I make a Statement about coronavirus and its current implications for the Island, so that the States and the public are informed.

1285 A new form of coronavirus was identified following an outbreak of respiratory disease in China in December last year. The spread of the virus has been rapid and there are now over 111,000 cases reported worldwide. The disease caused by the virus has been named Covid-19 and the first case was confirmed in Guernsey on Monday of this week.

1290 It is almost certain that the disease will also spread to Alderney, if it has not already, and it is inevitable that there will be public concern about the virus and what we are doing to manage the situation. The most important thing that people need to understand is that the Public Health service in Guernsey is closely managing the situation and providing us with sound advice about what we can do. Realistically, we cannot stop this disease but we can contain it so that it will spread more slowly and reach fewer people. The way we can do this is firstly by following good hygiene practices – for instance, by washing our hands with soap and water regularly. Secondly

1295 we need to look out for the symptoms of the disease, which can be one or all of a dry cough, a raised temperature, or difficulty in breathing.

There is so much good advice on the States of Guernsey website about what to do, and this is being updated regularly. In addition, the States of Alderney is summarising the available advice together with some specific information about Alderney so that this can be widely distributed in the Island.

1300 I am sure there will be other questions that members of the public will have, and we will do our best to answer them, but please bear in mind that this disease is only a few months old. We do not know everything. Sometimes we may appear to be overcautious; at other times we might

1305 not appear to be draconian enough. What I can assure you about is the high quality of expert advice behind the decisions of the States of Guernsey and the States of Alderney.

If, as a community, we follow the advice of the health experts and take individual responsibility to avoid unnecessary travel, follow the guidance about good hygiene, and look after each other, we stand a good chance of getting through this pandemic without suffering the same impact as the worst-affected places in the world.

1310 Would you please now close the Meeting, Mr Greffier?

**PRAYERS**

*The Greffier*

*The Assembly adjourned at 7.09 p.m.*