

STATES OF JERSEY



JERSEY SEA CADETS: PROVISION OF A PERMANENT HEADQUARTERS

Lodged au Greffe on 6th April 2021
by the Minister for Home Affairs
Earliest date for debate: 8th June 2021

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

That an appropriate permanent base of operations should be identified, and a funding solution proposed by the Government of Jersey, for the use of the Jersey Sea Cadets; and to agree that T S Jersey is not released for development or change of use as part of the Fort Regent development plans until such a permanent base has been identified.

MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS

REPORT

Introduction

The Jersey Sea Cadets do valuable work with the Island's young people and it is unfortunate that the longstanding issue of where they should be housed continues to cause them uncertainty and concern. It is my hope that Members will support this proposition and in so doing provide a clear commitment to the Sea Cadets that the Government will support them in securing an appropriate and long-term base of operations.

The following report seeks to outline, in brief terms, both the valuable work the Sea Cadets do and the unfortunate history of their search for a permanent headquarters.

Overview of Activities of the Jersey Sea Cadets

The Sea Cadets offer a wide array of activities which are of immense benefit to local young people. Through these various activities, which are summarised below, Cadets learn teamwork, respect, loyalty, self-confidence, commitment, self-discipline, honesty and strive to be the best versions of themselves in a safe and encouraging environment. The experiences and skills gained as Cadets support young people as they enter adult life and pursue their aspirations.

A 2018 report¹ which outlines the impact the Sea Cadets have been found to have on young people notes that '*Extracurricular and community activities have been shown to improve self-esteem, schoolwork, educational and occupational aspirations. Links to positive academic, behavioural and social-economic outcomes have also been shown, and research suggests that structured youth activity also helps young people develop initiative, including skills such as goal setting, problem-solving and time management.*'

Boating Assets & RYA Training Centre

In order to deliver the "cadet experience" which comprises both onshore and offshore opportunities, the unit owns a fleet of single-handed sailing dinghies, a number of varying two and three person dinghies, one Hobie catamaran and a high-performance sailing dinghy.

The unit is a recognised Royal Yachting Association (RYA) Training Centre with a nominated Principal and Chief Instructor. They offer accredited certification for Cadets taking the Youth Sailing Scheme Stages 1-4 and beyond that into the Advanced Modules. They also provide our Cadets with RYA power-boating awards up to Level 2.

Duke of Edinburgh Awards

Jersey Sea Cadets are a licensed Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Award Scheme centre offering Cadets the opportunity to participate at all levels and when training recommences are managed by dedicated DofE leaders.

¹ Denselow, S & Noble, J (2018). *How Sea Cadets Helps Young People Today: A Summary of the Evidence*. Available at: <https://www.sea-cadets.org/userfiles/files/Sea%20Cadets%20Impact%20Report.pdf>

BTEC Academic Awards

All Cadets are offered two levels of academic award, the first of which is achieved by completing all modules in the first two tiers of the cadet-training programme. This comprises: -

Level 1 Certificate in Teamwork, Personal Skills and Citizenship

Level 2 Diploma in Teamwork and Personal Development in the Community

Community / Fundraising

In 1988, as part of unit involvement in the community, a “Round Jersey Charity Gun Pull” was introduced as an initiative put forward by the Parents and Supporters Association. This has raised to date, some £55,000 for 25 local charities

A Brief History of TS Jersey – Sea Cadet Unit No. 447

There has been a Sea Cadet unit in Jersey since 1949 and a Navy League Cadet unit as far back as 1908. The unit was first affiliated to the Navy League on 14 September 1949.

The unit was officially named T.S. Undaunted on the 1 June 1950 and was inspected by the Commodore of the Sea Cadet Corps, (SCC) Vice-Admiral Sir Gilbert Stephenson KCB CB CMG. The unit was then housed in an old building, previously occupied as a German Officers Mess, in the middle of Fort Regent above the town of St. Helier. **It was the stated intention of the then States of Jersey (SOJ) that as long as there was a viable Sea Cadet Unit in the Island, the SOJ would continue to support it through the provision of accommodation.**

In the late 1960s, plans were approved for the development of Fort Regent into a sports and leisure complex which required the demolition of the unit’s then headquarters. In agreement with the Defence Committee of the day (now Justice and Home Affairs Dept.) and other departments of the SOJ, a replacement plot of land was provided at the entrance to the East Ditch of the Fort and the unit, through fundraising, was able to fund the majority of a purpose built unit with the additional money required, approx. a quarter of the build cost, being provided by the SOJ. It did not, however, acquire ownership of the building or the land, which remained in SOJ ownership. The unit was responsible for interior maintenance and the SOJ for exterior matters.

The unit moved into its building in January 1971.

The unit has always maintained a high standard and has twice achieved the accolade of winning the “Canada Trophy” as the best Sea Cadet unit in the British Isles, in 1969 & 1973 respectively and on 15 occasions has won the “Stephenson Trophy” as the best unit in its Area (Southern) which comprises approx. 70 units, with the last “Stephenson Trophy” being won in 2009. The unit’s Royal Marine Cadet Detachment (RMCD) has also been recognised, or been a contender, as the best detachment in the British Isles on several occasions, which is recognised by the award of the Gibraltar Cup and was last won by the Detachment in 2018. The 2020 award of a “Burgee” puts the overall Jersey unit in the top 10% of units in the Area.

The unit takes an active part in island life and ceremonies and over the years, Cadets and staff have taken part in two Royal Guards for Her Majesty the Queen, three for The

Queen Mother and on other occasions for the Princess Royal and other members of the Royal Family.

An RMCD was formed in 1962 and in 1986 a Girls Nautical Training Corps (GNTC) was formed which was soon fully integrated into the Corps. A Junior cadet section was formed in the mid-1990s with young persons aged 10-12 being able to join.

After the de-commissioning of the affiliated ship, HMS Jersey, permission was given to change the unit name and the unit now proudly wears the T.S. Jersey cap tally.

Accommodation issues since 1991

The Sports Leisure and Recreation Committee wrote to the Defence Committee in May 1991 supporting the move of the Unit to the Harbour area. A sum of £600,000 was allocated for this purpose.

The Unit was given encouragement to work with the relevant Departments and Committees to achieve a new HQ building in order to vacate the Fort Regent site and thus allow vacant possession of the whole Fort Regent area.

Since being given notice to quit the existing site in 1991 – some 30 years ago – several sites have been considered, these include:

- Conversion of the old agriculture building behind the La Folie Inn.
- The adaptation of a superfluous building at the end of the Albert Pier.
- The use of the site of South Hill Gym.
- Creating a link to building at the TA centre for use by the unit.
- A site at the southern end of the reclamation site where a permanent deep water slip could be provided.
- The Les Galots site in conjunction with the rowing club, (who already occupy the site), the sub-aqua club and the fishing club.

Plans were prepared for the Les Galots site, but all were discounted at that time primarily because the site was required for commercial purposes.

Despite these setbacks, full development permission was granted in 2000 on the Les Galots site – having spent over £180,000 of the original £600,000. Tenders were received and the development was ready to commence. However, this was aborted when the then Harbour Committee's support was withdrawn shortly thereafter.

An application was subsequently made to the Financial Stimulus Fund but was turned down due to an inability to make an early start on the project. Since that time the permit on Les Galots had expired and the availability of the site had been withdrawn.

The site was however reinstated as a possible combined-use site, but the subsequent application was withdrawn due to adverse public reaction to the scheme as drawn up.

This attempt was complicated by a lack of appropriate oversight over the spending of £300,000 of the remaining £420,000 of public money.

Until Covid struck, the Unit continued to operate from its existing building which was in a very poor state of repair and completely unsuitable. Therefore, last year, the Justice and Home Affairs Department worked with Jersey Property Holdings to locate an alternative location for the Unit. This resulted in their relocation into the old Police Headquarters site at Rouge Bouillon, following some refurbishment work.

I am pleased to say they are now operating from this new accommodation, which is far more suitable, dry, and safe for the Cadets. This is allowing the Jersey Sea Cadet Corps to actively recruit and train more of the Island's youth and give them focus and purpose to take with them into adult life. This exercise is being undertaken in parallel with identifying and recruiting specialist instructors and staff who will be able to impart their knowledge and experience to all the Cadets.

However, we have been clear from the outset that this solution is temporary. There are competing demands for the site in question, and for those to be realised the Sea Cadets will be required to vacate their temporary home. It therefore leaves the Unit with further uncertainty looming.

Conclusion

It is clear that the Sea Cadets have been subject to uncertainty and disappointment regarding the future location of their unit over a significant period of time. The staff and volunteers at the Unit are passionate about what they do and have spent considerable time and effort over the years working towards the various, and ultimately unsuccessful, plans for a new facility. They are left understandably frustrated and feel undervalued and overlooked.

It should be remembered, as referred to above, that the States gave an undertaking when the Unit was formed that while there was viable unit in the Island then it would provide a suitable building for the Units use.

It is with that undertaking in mind, as well as this Government's commitment to put children first, that I ask Members to reflect on the experience of the Sea Cadets and commit to ensuring they receive our support to find a permanent home.

Financial and manpower implications

At this stage it is not possible to state what the precise financial implications will be. However, it is clear that a significant amount of capital funding may be required, and a bid will have to be submitted as part of the Government Plan process to secure the project's place in the Government's capital programme.