

2016.06.14

3.3 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding maintenance of the Steam Clock by Ports of Jersey: [9490]

Could the Minister detail what, if any, maintenance is being carried out on the steam clock by Ports of Jersey?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):

The Ports of Jersey confirm that currently no maintenance work is being undertaken on the steam clock other than to keep it safe and keep the general area tidy. When the land was transferred to Ports at incorporation the steam clock did not appear on the asset register but we have made it clear to Ports that it is their responsibility. Ports are, therefore, working up appropriate plans for both the general site and the steam clock.

3.3.1 The Connétable of St. Helier:

Would the Minister agree with me that in our crowded capital open space is at a premium, this is an important area of open space, and would he confirm that there are no plans to develop anything upon it and that the water feature and indeed the timing of the clock will be restored as soon as possible?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

What I said a moment ago to the Constable was that at the moment the Ports of Jersey are working out plans for the site and the steam clock. I have not seen those particular plans so I cannot make a confirmation as requested by the Constable but I am very happy to ensure that as soon as the planning for that area and broader port area is finalised that that information is brought forward for him to be made fully aware of.

3.3.2 Deputy J.A. Hilton of St. Helier:

The Minister has just told Members that he has not seen any plans but has he had any indication at all from the Ports Authority what their plans are for the steam clock and the surrounding area?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

No. I will explain, perhaps, to Members why I am answering in that way. Quite simply, as I alluded to in my opening answer, on incorporation this land was transferred to the Ports. The steam clock, as an asset on it, was not included on the asset register. So there was some confusion between those currently or previously responsible for the steam clock, in other words States of Jersey Development Company - who, as an aside, were spending between £25,000 and \$40,000 a year maintaining the steam clock - and the ports. The position has now been clarified and, as I said in my opening answer, I have made it clear to Ports that it is their responsibility. The steam clock is on that particular site and they are, therefore, commencing plans for that site and the steam clock itself. Once those have been worked up I am more than happy to ensure that Members are kept abreast of such plans.

3.3.3 Deputy J.A. Hilton:

Supplementary. Has the Minister any power at all to decide or control what happens or is that a decision purely within the remit of the Ports Authority? So would any decision, if it was controversial, be able to be discussed in the States Assembly?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

I would say that controversial issues are quite frequently discussed in this Assembly regardless of whether the Minister may or may not have powers and that is exactly how a functioning democracy should work. With regard to this particular issue and this particular area, if it is an operational matter that is a matter for the Ports of Jersey but they are very minded of responsibilities, social responsibility for example. They have large areas of their portfolio, such as outlying harbours, that they look after in the public interest that as a purely commercial entity they would not wish to have had responsibility for. So, as I have said, I am more than happy to come back and ensure that the Constable and other Members who were interested in this area are fully updated on what plans, once they are worked up, are for this piece of land and the steam clock.

3.3.4 Deputy R.J. Renouf of St. Ouen:

I would like to ask: why was this area transferred to Ports when it was previously administered by another authority it seems and for what operational reasons would Ports want to have a steam clock?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

Well, the latter part of the question is an extremely good one, I would suggest, and I think in truth an operational port would not but, as I pointed out, the Ports have a number of areas of what one might describe as social responsibility that they look after that are not strictly commercial. Obviously the location of the steam clock is adjacent to a commercial port area and as far as the masterplanning of the ports areas are concerned this will fall into it and once that has been worked up, as I have said, I will come forward, more than happily, with further details so Members are fully aware of what is intended once those plans have crystallised.

3.3.5 Deputy R.J. Rondel:

Would the Minister, before expensive plans are drawn up, perhaps ensure that the Ports liaise with the Parish of St. Helier as to what they do plan to put there beforehand?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

It is, essentially, an operational matter for the Ports to consider how they are going to best use the land they have got but, of course, they need to be mindful of broader issues. They are, I am sure, very mindful of broader issues relating to the Parish of St. Helier. I know in the past there has been a very good dialogue between the Ports and the Parish. I hope the Constable will confirm that and I hope that will continue in the future and that the Ports will be mindful of the views of the Constable when developing their plans in the future.

3.3.6 The Connétable of St. Helier:

The Minister is not giving us any timetable and I think with the arrival of summer, tourists looking for somewhere to come and sit and eat their sandwiches, residents of commercial buildings who have no convenient open space; I would appreciate it if he would give me a timetable for at least the restoration of the water feature and getting the clock to run on time. These are matters which surely could be done in a couple of weeks.

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

I think the Constable, I was going to say, is joking because I am not sure that ... the steam clock has probably been not operating more than it has been operating in recent years, since it was first introduced. As I have clearly pointed out, the Ports of Jersey are ensuring that the site is kept clean and tidy and general maintenance is undertaken while further consideration is given to the site and the steam clock. It is appropriate to do that work, to do both things. I take the point of the

Constable that with the tourist season upon us we would not want that area to look poor and I can assure that that will not be the case but undertaking restoration of a clock is another matter altogether at this particular juncture.