

21.04.20

1 Connétable R.A. Buchanan of St. Ouen of H.M. Attorney General regarding Parish Centeniers charging their own cases (OQ.89/2021):

Will H.M. Attorney General advise whether it is the intention, once COVID restrictions have been lifted, to resume the normal practice of Parish centeniers charging their own cases (including those that require a person to be charged at Police Headquarters); and will he further advise whether there is any intention to make changes to the role of the centenier in the Magistrate's Court?

Mr. M. Jowitt., H.M. Solicitor General (*Rapporteur*):

Where the formal charging of suspects is concerned, Article 3 of the Honorary Police Law expressly reserves that power to the centeniers. There are no plans at all to change that law. The only considerations at the moment are practical ones as to how centeniers can most conveniently exercise that power in future. That is the subject at the moment of consultations, which the Attorney General is having with all centeniers. The same provision of the Honorary Police Law expressly reserves the centeniers to power or presenting a person charged with an offence before the Magistrate's Court.

[10:00]

That is now supplemented by Article 23 of the Criminal Procedure Law 2018, which provides that on a defendant's first appearance in the Magistrate's Court the particulars of the offence with which that person is charged shall be read out by the centenier unless the centenier agrees that it may be read out by a prosecution lawyer instead. There are no plans to take the centeniers out of the Magistrate's Court and every intention that they should continue to have a role. But consideration is being given in the same consultation process I have just mentioned to how that role can best operate in future and what its ambit should be in the interests of the good administration of criminal justice. Discussions with the centeniers and the Comité des Chef on these continues at the moment. The Attorney intends to provide an update to centeniers this June in advance of their quarterly meeting. At present no firm or final decisions have been reached.

3.1.1 The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Would the Solicitor General confirm he is able to take steps to ensure that the newly introduced electronic case management system currently used by St. Helier is available to all Parishes?

The Solicitor General:

We will do what we can, to ensure that whatever technology is in place to assist matters going forward is available to all centeniers in all Parishes. That is the best I can say at the moment.