

PRIVILEGES AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE

(55th Meeting)

5th September 2007PART A

All members were present.

Connétable D.F. Gray of St. Clement - Chairman
 Senator M.E. Vibert
 Connétable K.A. Le Brun of St. Mary
 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains
 Deputy S.C. Ferguson
 Deputy J. Gallichan
 Deputy I.J. Gorst

In attendance -

M.N. de la Haye, Greffier of the States
 Mrs. L. Hart, Assistant Greffier of the States (for a time)
 Mrs. D. Abbot-McGuire, Finance and Administration Manager (for a time)
 Miss P. Horton, Clerk to the Privileges and Procedures Committee

Note: The Minutes of this meeting comprise Part A and Part B.

- Minutes. A1. The Minutes of the meeting held on 25th July 2007 (Part A and Part B), having been previously circulated, were taken as read and were confirmed.
- Matters arising. A2. The Committee noted the following matters arising from its previous Minutes -
- (a) **Minute No. A3 of 25th July 2007 - Members being excused attendance in the States Assembly** - the Committee was advised that the Bailiff had agreed that the presiding officer should allow the States to decide whether a member was to be recorded as being either en défaut or excused from a States meeting. The Committee agreed that more consideration should be given to the possibility of recording a specific reason why a member was en défaut from the States. The Committee felt that, in order to ensure consistency, the reason given for the absence should not be debated by members but should merely be for the official record; and
 - (b) **Minute No. A2 of 25th July 2007 - Draft Registration of Political Parties (P.73/2007)** - the Committee was advised that legal advice was still awaited from the Law Officers' Department regarding whether an amendment which was Human Rights compliant could be drafted to the abovementioned proposition relating to discrimination.
- Quarterly Report - States Assembly - Second Quarter 2007. A3. The Committee, with reference to its Minute No. A2 of 4th May 2007, received and considered the Second Quarter Report 2007 for the States Assembly, prepared by the Finance and Administration Manager.

422/10/1(80)

Encl.

The Committee was advised that the States Assembly budget showed a projected underspend of £345,254 which was almost exclusively attributed to the Scrutiny Panels which were showing expenditure levels below budget. The Committee noted that the projected underspend could be attributed to the lack of expert assistance being utilised by the Scrutiny Panels. The Committee acknowledged that Scrutiny, by its nature, was unpredictable, and it was not possible to be precise with regard to its budgeting requirements each year. The Committee was advised that the Chairmen's Committee was responsible for the allocation of the Scrutiny budget between the Panels and, once a report being prepared by Deputies R.G. Le Hérissier and J.G. Reed had been completed, the allocation of Scrutiny's budget would be looked at. The Committee was further advised that consideration was being given to employing additional staff members for Scrutiny if necessary however at present a decision had not been reached on this matter.

The Committee queried the figure for premises and maintenance which currently showed an over spend of £272,251. The Committee was advised that this was because a one off payment for the full amount was paid out of the budget at the beginning of the year.

The Committee noted the position.

Code of Practice
on Public Access
to Official
Information:

Register of
reports.

955(32)

Encl.

A4. The Committee received and considered a report dated 8th August 2007, prepared by the Deputy Greffier of the States in connexion with the Code of Practice on Public Access to Official Information: Register of Reports.

The Committee was advised that on 8th June 2004 the States adopted amendments to the Code of Practice on Public Access to Official Information: measures to improve implementation (P.80/2004). Part of the proposition related to the creation of a register of reports to be placed on the States of Jersey website. It was proposed that if a third party report or consultancy document cost in excess of an amount fixed by the Privileges and Procedures Committee the details of the cost should be published. In 2004 the amount was fixed at £2,000 however as there had been a lapse of 3 years the Committee was asked to consider whether this figure should be increased.

The Committee agreed that the figure should be increased to £2,500. The Committee was concerned that some departments were not uploading all reports onto the website and it was agreed that departments should be reminded that all of the reports produced by the States of Jersey which could be released to the media and public should be listed on the website.

The Greffier of the States was directed to take the necessary action.

Public
engagement:
Primary School
visits to the
States Chamber.
465/4(4)

Encl.

A5. The Committee received and considered a report dated 17th August 2007 prepared by the Assistant Greffier of the States in connexion with primary school children visiting the States Chamber.

The Committee noted that officers of the States Greffe, in conjunction with the Cultural Development Officer Mr. Rod McLoughlin, had recently piloted a States visit scheme which would be implemented from autumn 2007. The scheme, which involved all Year Five (aged 9 and 10) primary school children, from both the States funded and private sector, would run throughout the school terms and enable each school to visit the States Chamber on a Monday morning. The children would be able to sit in members' seats and use the voting system during a mini debate on a topic of their choice. Some members of the Committee expressed concern that their desks could not be locked and, although it was confirmed that the children would not be left in the States Chamber unsupervised, it was agreed that the matter of securing members' desks would be looked into.

The Committee was advised that the pilot scheme, involving d'Auvergne School, took place on 25th June 2007 when 36 children visited the chamber and took the seats usually occupied by States members, the Dean, the Greffier and an Usher. The role of the Bailiff was played by Mr. McLoughlin and the Assistant Greffier helped her nine year old Greffier with the roll call and an appel, when the computerised voting system decided not to co-operate. The role of the Dean was played by a little girl who had learnt the French version of the Lord's prayer off by heart for the occasion.

The Committee considered a leaflet which was given to the children before their visit. The leaflet, which gave an overview of the work of the States, had been prepared by the Assistant Greffier and the Publications Editor using photos taken by the Registry Assistant and the Assistant Greffier's artwork. The Committee was advised that the cost of producing the leaflets had been £568 and all costs associated with the scheme had been shared with the Education, Sport and Culture Department. The Committee was further advised that a DVD/Powerpoint presentation was currently being developed by Mr. McLoughlin which would be sent to all of the schools prior to their visit, in order to prepare the children for their 'sitting'. The DVD would provide some historical information regarding the Chamber and the evolution of the States. In addition it would highlight the procedural aspects of a States meeting, which the children's visit would mirror as closely as possible.

The Committee noted that the trial visit had been extremely successful with virtually all of the children contributing to the debate. The children were presented with a copy of their proposition, the Order Paper, an information sheet concerning the States member whose seat they had taken and a certificate to commemorate their involvement in the visit.

The Committee agreed that the scheme was excellent and anticipated that it would encourage local children to take more of an interest in how their Island was governed and would dovetail with the citizenship curriculum to promote participation in elections, especially since the reduction in the voting age to 16. The Committee recalled that it had previously considered the possibility of holding tours of the States chamber for members of the public. At that time it had been agreed that in the interest of security it would be necessary to have two people present at any tour and because of this the idea had not been progressed. However, the Committee was advised that the Assistant Greffier of the States would be investigating the merit of holding regular open days and conducting tours of the States chamber as well as installing a display cabinet at the entrance to the States chamber containing information on the States of Jersey which it was hoped would raise public awareness of the States Assembly.

The Committee thanked the Assistant Greffier of the States and Mr. McLoughlin for all of the work they had done to set up the scheme.

States meeting
dates for 2008.
1240/2(70)
Encl.

A6. The Committee, with reference to its Minute No. A4 of 20th September 2006, received and considered a report dated 29th August 2007, prepared by the Greffier of the States, in connexion with the proposed meeting dated for the States for 2008.

The Committee noted that under Standing Order 4 it was required to draft a list of days for meetings of the States and present it to the States by the end of September. No debate or approval was needed although any member could lodge a proposition suggesting alternative dates. Standing Orders 3 and 4 read as follows -

“3 Sessions of the States

- (1) There shall be 2 sessions of the States in each year during which they shall meet.
- (2) The 1st session shall start on the third Tuesday in January and end no later than the last Tuesday in July.
- (3) The 2nd session shall start on the second Tuesday in September and end no later than the third Tuesday in December.

4 Planning days for meetings of the States

- (1) The PPC shall, no later than the end of September in each year, present to the States a list of days for meetings of the States in the 1st and 2nd sessions in the following year.
- (2) Ordinarily, a meeting day is a Tuesday.
- (3) The list may include continuation days.”

The Committee was advised that as required by Standing Orders the first meeting in a year would be held on the 3rd Tuesday of January and a reasonably regular meeting programme had been scheduled for the First Session with most meetings being held on a fortnightly cycle. There were 2 exceptions from the fortnightly cycle with 2 longer gaps to avoid Easter and the Spring Bank Holiday week at the end of May. The Committee noted that the Easter school holidays started 2 weeks after Easter and one States meeting had been scheduled to take place on Tuesday 15th April which was during the Easter school holidays so as to avoid unduly long gaps between meetings. The Committee agreed that it would prefer not to schedule a meeting of the States to take place during the Easter school holidays as it was of the opinion that many States members, especially ones with young children at school, would arrange holidays to coincide with this period. The Committee also noted that the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association had been invited to meet in the Island during the week of 21st April. Having considered the abovementioned the Committee decided that it would remove the meeting of Tuesday 15th April and replace it with 2 additional continuation dates on Friday 14th March and Friday 4th April to compensate for the longer breaks between meetings over the Easter and school holiday period.

The Second Session for 2008 was significantly constrained by the provision of Standing Order 7 which required that the States must not meet during the 21 day period ending on the day of the Senatorial elections and again during the 21 day period ending on the day of the Deputies elections. As a result the States could not meet between Wednesday 24th September and Wednesday 15th October due to the Senatorial elections and between Wednesday 5th November and Wednesday 26th November due to the Deputies elections. It was felt that it would be too risky to plan meetings for Tuesday 23rd September and Tuesday 4th November as there would be no scope for continuation days if the business lasted more than one day. It was therefore proposed that the States meet on 9th September and the following week, 16th September, once between the elections on 21st October and once for the Budget after the elections on 2nd December. The 3 meetings for the elections of Chief Minister, Ministers/Chairmen and Committee/panel members would be held on Monday 8th December, Thursday 11th December and Tuesday 16th December.

The Committee, having considered the abovementioned, accordingly approved the States meeting dates for 2008 as amended and requested that they be presented to the

States as required by Standing Orders.

The Greffier of the States was directed to take the necessary action.

Matters for
information.

A7. The Committee noted the following matters for information -

- (a) correspondence dated 27th July 2007, sent to all members of the States regarding the use of electronic mail;
- (b) correspondence dated 3rd August 2007, received from Connétable K.P. Vibert, Chairman of the Comité des Connétables regarding the Public Elections (Jersey) Law 2002. The Committee was advised that the first meeting of the working group would take place on Friday 7th September; and
- (c) the Committee confirmed that its next meeting would be held on Wednesday, 3rd October 2007, commencing at 9.30 a.m. in the Le Capelain Room, States Building, Royal Square.