

STATES OF JERSEY

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COMPOSTING FACILITIES AT LA COLLETTE, ST. HELIER: CESSATION

Lodged au Greffe on 15th June 2006
by Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of St. Clement

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

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

to request the Minister for Transport and Technical Services to cease the composting of all green waste at La Collette, St. Helier, until such time as the composting can be undertaken in a strictly odourless fashion

DEPUTY G.C.L. BAUDAINS OF ST. CLEMENT

REPORT

St. Clement has endured the results of Jersey's 'progress' for some time. A once rural parish is now distinctly urban – with all the unfortunate consequences that brings. Pleasant green fields covered in housing – the more recent the more cramped and unpleasing to the eye. A main drain that serves these developments as far as Gorey passes along our Coast Road. Development over recent decades has loaded this infrastructure to the extent that huge tanks with pumping stations are required along its length – at Fauvic, Le Bourg, Pontac, Le Hocq and Le Marais. The one at Le Dicq is just over the border in St. Saviour. They all emit disgusting smells at times– some stations more than others.

Our coastline is prone, depending on tidal and weather conditions, to smell from rotting vraic. Very occasionally these days, there is the sinus-clearing odour of slurry on fields.

These three odours parishioners are used to. We certainly do not need a fourth – composting at La Collette.

The latter is by far the most irritating and unpleasant of them all and, with Jersey's prevailing south-westerly winds, dissipates itself over the parishes of St. Clement and St. Saviour. In recent months, it has been noticeably worse. To suggest, as some have, that the smell is unidentifiable – perhaps rotting vraic, maybe emissions from the JEC, fuel farm, etc. – not only stretches credibility, but insults those parishioners who are used to the aforementioned smells and are fully aware that this is a fairly recent phenomenon.

We are told there is no health risk. Parishioners would challenge that, but that it is disgustingly unpleasant is undeniable. To this end, I have formally requested the Minister for Health and Social Services to launch an investigation under the Statutory Nuisances Law.

But what is the resolution, and when will it be?

This project is brought because no resolution is in sight. The cause of the impasse is the Minister and his Department setting their sights on one large in-vessel composting plant at the existing location. Whilst in-vessel composting will undoubtedly reduce the odour nuisance, other issues arise – such as traffic and unnecessary travel. As a result, politicians have asked for alternatives, such as 3 separate composting units in the country. Unfortunately, rather than the matter being debated in the Assembly so that work can start as soon as possible on constructing new plant, the decision has been deferred and is currently in the wilderness.

As the discontinuation of the smell nuisance is therefore indefinitely delayed, with no idea when the issue will be debated, never mind resolved, the only responsible alternative must be to cease the current operations and deal with the material in alternative ways until such time as alternative processes are operational.

I am not able to give an accurate assessment of the exact financial and manpower implications of this proposition but I believe that dealing with the material in another fashion would require similar manpower and financial resources to the present process and that the effect would therefore be neutral.