

**QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE ON TUESDAY 2nd DECEMBER 2003, BY DEPUTY G.C.L. BAUDAINS OF ST. CLEMENT**

**Question 1**

With regard to Jersey's obligations under the Ramsar Convention, would the President advise members—

- (a) of the number of nature reserves that have been established on wetlands to date and give details of the manpower and other resource requirements occasioned by their management, together with the number of persons trained in wetland research/management and the associated training costs? and,
- (b) give details of the steps taken to increase wildfowl populations, if any, and advise what success has been achieved in this regard?

**Answer**

The Ramsar Convention is an international agreement on the conservation of wetlands of international importance especially as waterfowl habitats. Members will be aware that the Ramsar Convention is one of many multilateral environmental agreements whose ratification has been extended to Jersey. Worldwide there are 138 contracting parties who have designated 1,327 wetland sites with a total area of 112 million hectares.

Turning to the specific points contained in the question –

- (a) In Jersey we have designated the South East coast from La Collette to Gorey as a wetland site of international significance. Nature reserves, (SSI status), have also been proposed for Ouaisne and St Ouen's Pond. The management of these sites and their interpretation for educational purposes has been delivered through existing departmental resources *carried out by close cooperation between the Sea Fisheries Department, the Harbours Department and the Environment Department. This demonstrates the benefits of the proposed merger of responsibilities.* No additional training costs have been required as existing staff of the Planning and Environment Department have relevant experience in the management of wetlands, both in terms of species and habitat conservation and monitoring, and also in their physical protection from development and pollution.
- (b) Increasing wildfowl populations is not an objective of the Convention. Ramsar recognises the current importance of sites and seeks to maintain and conserve it through the concept of wise use. In Jersey we have delivered this through the incorporation of these objectives into the Island Plan.

*Contracting Parties report on progress in implementing their commitments under the Convention by submission of triennial National Reports to the Conference of the Contracting Parties. The National Reports become part of the public record. We have made one report so far for the Conference of Parties (7) last year.*

*It is important to realise that the UK is the signatory to the convention and Jersey's wetland is designated by the UK on behalf of the Island. Recent communications with DEFRA, the U.K., ministry responsible for Ramsar, indicate that it is satisfied that the Island is fulfilling its obligations under the Treaty. A review of all Ramsar sites designated by the UK including Overseas and Dependant Territories is at present planned by the end of 2004 and the Committee will note the results of this review.*

I can also say that Jersey's designation of the South East coast as a Ramsar site in fulfilment of its international obligations has been an unqualified success. It has strengthened our international profile and provided a real source of local pride. There has been no impact on traditional activities which can all be accommodated into the "wise use" description and we have benefited from the site acting as a

significant attraction for tourism with many people taking advantage of the guided walks and tours of the area. The Committee is currently proposing the extension of the Ramsar designation to the offshore reefs of the Ecrehous and Les Minquiers and a consultation process is being established.

## **Question 2**

At the Environment and Public Services Committee's meeting held at the Royal Jersey Agricultural and Horticultural Society, Trinity, to determine the Jersey Heritage Trust's planning application for Mont Orgueil Castle, it was stated that work would have to be prioritised. As the only visible activity is new work as opposed to repair, would the President make available the schedule of work currently approved by the Committee, together with the estimated timescales?

## **Answer**

The Planning Permit issued on 7th August 2003, was conditioned to ensure that appropriate priority is given to works of repair and consolidation at the Castle. The Committee did not insist that the repairs be done first, but rather that repairs should be undertaken in a timely manner.

The Jersey Heritage Trust duly submitted a programme of works to the Committee for consideration at its meeting on 19th September 2003. Committee Members were satisfied that the programme included the timetable for each approved proposal in the Development Strategy, satisfactorily showed how the repair and improvement work will be spread over the next three years, and indicated that available funding has been allocated to deal with significant repair and renewal works.

It was agreed that implementation of the works against the programme and cost assumptions will be reviewed formally by the Committee at six month intervals.

I will be happy to supply Deputy Le Hérissier with a copy of the programme of works.