

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CONNÉTABLE OF ST. MARTIN, CHAIRMAN OF THE COMITE
DES CONNETABLES BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 29th NOVEMBER 2005

Question

Would the Chairman advise members whether there are any names on any of the Parish electoral rolls of persons who are either deceased or have changed address and, if so, how many of the 54,000 names on the electoral roll are affected and in which Parishes do these apply, what measures, if any, are being taken to rectify the situation and in what time scale particularly in light of the potential distress that may be caused to some on receiving election material addressed to a long-deceased partner?

Answer

The current electoral registers were prepared on 1st July 2004, and will continue in force until 30th June 2006, as required by the Public Elections (Jersey) Law 2002. They are 'rolling registers' and the names of those registered change on a daily basis as persons qualify to be registered, or cease to qualify because they are no longer ordinarily resident in a Parish.

The electoral register in force for a particular public election is the register as at midday on the day before the nomination meeting for that election. All Parishes ensure that the registers are updated immediately prior to this 'cut-off' date with all information available. However, an electoral register is likely to include the names of persons who are deceased or who have changed address as this information is not always immediately made known to the Parish. Whilst every person who is eligible to have their name included on a register has a duty, under the Law, to apply for registration as soon as practicable, it may take several days or even weeks for a person who has moved to deal with the administrative 'change of address' notifications required.

It is not possible to place a figure on the number of names affected. However, the Connétable of St Helier recently estimated the names of 200 deceased persons were on the electoral register in force for the election of Senators last month.

The Public Elections (Jersey) Law 2002 requires the Connétable of a Parish to prepare the electoral register for the Parish and to include the name of a person if he has been furnished with or has obtained information in respect of that person sufficient to satisfy him that that person is entitled to have his name included on the register for the electoral district. This information is gathered annually by sending a form to every unit of dwelling accommodation for completion and return to the Parish and also by notifying any person who contacts the Parish to advise a change of address, for example on a driving licence. In addition those who become eligible during the year will complete and return a registration form to the Parish. The information contained on this form should include previous addresses where a person has been registered so that all registers may be updated but often this information is not provided. There is no requirement for persons who move away from the Island to notify the Parish that their names should be removed from the register and this information may not be brought to the attention of the Parish especially if the new occupants of the property fail to register (either because they are not eligible or do not wish to be registered). Likewise, the Parish is not always notified of the names of deceased persons and even when subsequent registration forms are returned omitting the name of a person previously registered there has been a presumption that this may be an oversight and, unless the Parish is notified otherwise, names may remain on the register so as not to disenfranchise a person.

The Parishes do receive information of deceased persons from time to time from the Registrar and these names are deleted from the electoral registers. The Parishes are already reviewing the frequency of such reports to ensure that this information is provided regularly and used immediately to update the registers. The Parishes are also reviewing the administrative arrangements when a person notifies a change of address to ensure that all records are updated as soon as possible. A number of improvements could be made to the current Law with regard to the

registration procedure and the Connétables advised the Privileges and Procedures Committee of their views during the recent consultation process on possible changes to the Law. However, no law drafting time has been allocated for this work and, therefore, no such improvements will be made in the foreseeable future.

In the meantime, the Connétables will continue to gather all relevant information to ensure the electoral registers are correct and up to date and apologise for the distress caused to those who have received election material addressed to a deceased partner or relative.