

**2.12 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of the Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding repairs to the St. James Centre and Vicarage:**

Would the Minister identify the cause of the current repairs of the St. James Centre and Vicarage and state the cost and source of funding?

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

This is the Assistant Minister.

**Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondre (Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources):**

As a curiosity, Sir, can I ask how long we have left in terms of...

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

You just need to make a concise answer.

**Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondre:**

It was just how concise I needed to be. Essentially, the majority of the repairs being undertaken at St. James arrived from damage caused by moisture ingress and the need, obviously, to prevent more moisture coming into the building. The cost is in the order of £125,000 and it is funded from the Minor Capital Budget Allocations for Art and Heritage Trust Properties. I am told the original balance was £350,000 and that by the time this money has been spent there will be roughly £70,000 left outstanding.

**2.12.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:**

Would the Assistant Minister identify whether there is a rolling maintenance plan now in place for St. James or whether he expects further surprises?

**Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondre:**

I will give as detailed an answer as I can. Would I expect further surprises? I have already had a few nasty ones, I will say. There is a rolling maintenance programme, and the reason I am pausing is I have read somewhere in the last 24 hours that it is somewhere in the order of £30,000-odd a year, I believe. I can confirm that privately to the Deputy afterwards if that is acceptable. It is an old building, and the reason I pause is that with old buildings you never quite know where you are in terms of ongoing maintenance. There is an issue at the moment with the scaffolding which we are currently trying to resolve.

**2.12.2 Deputy F.J. Hill, B.E.M. of St. Martin:**

Will the Assistant Minister advise and inform the Members whether in fact the repairs being carried out now are repairing repairs that had been carried out only about a year or 2 ago?

**Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondre:**

I have to say I am not aware of them being repairs to repairs. If the Deputy has additional information perhaps he could communicate it to me later and I will undertake to look into it. I think that is all I can say on that matter, Sir.

**2.12.3 Deputy C.F. Labey of Grouville:**

In the past, the States made a decision to purchase St. James but did not vote sufficient funds to make it fit for purpose. Does the Assistant Minister not agree that at some point a decision has to be made about the venue and when sufficient funds have been spent on the place maintenance will be far lower than it is now?

**Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondre:**

I certainly agree, Sir, that the longer-term decision does need to be made on the building and, yes, I believe when the original purchase was undertaken, insufficient funds were put into it to make it fit

for the purpose it is currently used for. Certainly it is the case, as I understand it, that if the building is, for example, inadequately heated, then as a venue for entertainment it loses some of its attraction. That is, I think, a discussion for another day.

**2.12.4 Deputy J.B. Fox:**

I wonder if the Assistant Minister could advise the House when the likely time will be - another day/time factor - because any building not maintained will deteriorate and we have a policy to maintain buildings. I am just curious to know when we are going to be able to answer the question.

**Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondre:**

There are 2 issues at the moment. There is the current maintenance which, as I said, I was informed was in the order of £120,000 and that is ongoing. The additional issue that I have commented on and is currently being investigated is that during the course of that work additional problems were found particularly with the pinnacles at the top of the building of which there are 8. There are various solutions. They all require, given that there is an S.S.I. (Site of Special Interest) attached to the building, a very considered negotiation and discussions with the Minister for Planning and his officers as well as, in particular, the Assistant Minister for Education, Sport and Culture responsible for culture because of the impact. So the reason I am pausing in terms of the longer term is because the short answer is I do not know because it is a matter of identifying what the solution is going to be, what it is going to cost and where we are going to get the money from.

**2.12.5 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:**

Am I, therefore, Sir, to infer from the Assistant Minister's words that, notwithstanding the excellent work carried out by the Assistant Minister for Culture and her very fine cultural officer, the Assistant Minister is very worried about the costs, that in terms of value for money he has some serious doubts? Secondly, Sir, is he of the belief that the Vicarage, as currently used, is really a burden upon the public purse and should form part of the property to be sold portfolio?

**Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondre:**

I will take the last point first. The idea of splitting off the Vicarage, for example, for sale has... I would not even like to give it the credence of having been discussed or considered, but obviously it is always an option. I think the difficulty with it is the whole place was bought effectively as a package when, I think, the St. James school was acquired and, therefore, the other consideration is if you did, for example, sell off the Vicarage what would be the impact on the use of St. James as a continuing cultural centre. In terms of value for money, that is always a difficult one when you are dealing with the arts. What value do you place on the benefit derived from that centre weighed off against pounds and pence? As I said, the discussions are ongoing which is why I have yet to arrive at a decision personally and, obviously, as you can tell, there are a number of other parties involved in it.