

2.3 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of St. Clement of the Chief Minister regarding the prayer breakfast at the Totem Club:

With reference to the recent invitation by one of the Assistant Chief Ministers to a prayer breakfast at the exclusive Totem Club, will the Chief Minister advise whether this was initiated by him or his Council and if so, the cost and purpose of it?

Senator I.J. Gorst (The Chief Minister):

The invitation to a prayer breakfast was issued by Senator Routier in his private capacity as a States Member following informal conversations with colleagues. As indicated in the email invitation to all States Members, the purpose of the event was to give States Members an opportunity to join together in non-partisan fellowship to reflect on some of the wider and deeper aspects of our common life. The costs of the event were borne by the hosts Business Connect, a charitable organisation, although attendees were invited to make a donation towards costs.

2.3.1 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

I must say when I first received the invitation I presumed that the lodge in Stopford Road was closed for refurbishment although the Assistant Chief Minister advised me that he did not know. I wonder what are the Chief Minister's views on what sort of message this is sending out to the public that, in fact, we are using a club which is advertised on the internet as having hallmarks of luxury service, privacy and opulent surroundings?

The Deputy Bailiff:

I am not sure that is within the Chief Minister's responsibilities but perhaps, Chief Minister, you would like to do your best with it?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Thank you, Sir, you have just taken my opening response. I am not sure what it has got to do with my official responsibilities as Chief Minister. As I indicated in my opening answer, that is a property which is used and, as I understand it, provided on a subsidised basis to Business Connect and therefore it was a natural extension for them to invite States Members to use that facility.

2.3.2 Deputy S.G. Luce of St. Martin:

Does the Chief Minister find it somewhat amusing that Deputy Baudains in his written question 4 asks for the reinstatement of States Members' lunches in order, and I quote: "To get together and resolve issues which otherwise could take days or weeks" and questions a prayer meeting which is there for exactly the same reason?

[10:00]

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I do not find it strange at all. I find very little strange being a year into this job. **[Laughter]** I do, however, believe that probably at their core basis, they have the same intentions that Members should be meeting together informally to discuss not just the things that directly come before this Assembly but the whole gamut of issues facing our community and the wider world and together develop constructive approaches and ways forward. We will not always agree and that is as it should be, but it is important that we have the conversation and we understand everyone's point of view before coming to decisions. The only thing perhaps I would say is, of course, this morning's meeting was at no cost to the taxpayer. If we reinstate the States lunches, which I am in favour of having voted against it, that would be a cost to the taxpayer.

2.3.3 Senator L.J. Farnham:

Nothing really of great importance. I just wonder if the Chief Minister knows whether Deputy Baudains attended the meeting or not.

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I am really struggling to see how that is part of my official responsibility. **[Laughter]** I am not my brother's keeper, nor Deputy's Baudains. He did not attend, I did attend but, of course, he will be very welcome to attend any future meetings.

Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

I can help the Chief Minister out. No, I did not attend.