

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHAIRMAN
OF PRIVILEGES AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 10th DECEMBER 2013**

Question

What measures, if any, does the Chairman have under consideration, in conjunction with the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture or otherwise, given that 2014 is an election year and that all those over 16 on election day will have the right to register and to vote, to improve:

- (a) the numbers of 16 to 19 year olds who register to vote;
- (b) access to politicians in schools and colleges through hustings, PSHE lessons or otherwise; and,
- (c) awareness of current election issues with the aim to significantly increase turnout of 16 to 19 year olds in the forthcoming elections?

Answer

The Privileges and Procedures Committee is committed to raising awareness among Islanders of their right to register to vote and to vote on election day. The Committee has commenced preparatory work on its voter registration and turn-out campaign for the 2014 elections and hopes to see an increased turnout among all Islanders in the forthcoming elections.

The Committee was interested to read the Jersey Annual Social Survey 2013, which showed that just 16% of Islanders aged between 16 and 34 years voted in the October 2011 elections, compared with 74% of those aged 65 years or over and 39% of 35 to 44 year olds. We are keenly aware that there is significant capacity to improve voter registration and turn-out among the younger generations.

The Committee will be liaising with the Education, Sport and Culture Department to assist in raising awareness of the forthcoming elections in our schools. The Committee will be preparing information packs for students and posters will be distributed to schools aimed at encouraging younger voters to register to vote and explaining the voting process. Areas will be set aside in schools for candidates to display their manifestos and posters, and school premises will be made available outside of school hours for hustings meetings to be arranged, should candidates wish to take advantage of this opportunity. The Committee is also keen for voter registration forms to be made available in schools for students to complete, should they wish to do so.

The Committee will also continue its work with the Youth Service to raise awareness among young Islanders. Voter information, voter registration forms and candidates' manifestos will be made available online and social media will be used to engage with Islanders. The campaign in respect of the 2011 elections focused upon election issues, such as the provision of housing and education, and the Committee will consider its approach in respect of the forthcoming campaign

early in the new year. The Committee also intends to discuss whether consideration should be given to the provision of pre-poll voting facilities in schools.

The Committee wishes to emphasise that its campaign will not just focus on 16 to 19 year olds but will encourage **everyone** who is entitled to register and vote to do so. While it is important that the Committee does all it can to increase awareness among young people we must not forget that 16 to 19 year olds represent a small proportion of the total number of voters. The Committee will therefore be working to encourage Islanders of all age groups to register to vote, and to cast their vote in the October elections.