

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMITÉ DES CONNÉTABLES  
BY SENATOR S.Y. MÉZEC  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 10th JULY 2018**

**Question**

Further to the response to my oral question at the last States sitting (OQ.73/2018), in which the Chairman referred to a workshop being held on 14th July 2018 to begin reviewing the Honorary Police, will she confirm the following details –

- (a) when it was decided to hold this workshop;
- (b) who has been invited;
- (c) what specific subject areas will be covered;
- (d) how contributions made at the workshop will be recorded;
- (e) whether the findings of the workshop will be reported on, and if so, to whom; and

will the Chairman commit to holding more public workshops / consultation to obtain the views of others who may not have been invited to the first workshop?

**Answer**

The oral question on 26 June 2018 (OQ.73/2018) asked whether I would commit to holding a review of the honorary system to determine what can be done to improve recruitment to the Honorary Police and secure its future as an important part of our community. Certainly all suggestions to strengthen the Honorary Police and to improve their effectiveness are to be welcomed and will be considered. But the Honorary system as a whole is not under review. It is a community organisation which, like the parish system, is at the heart of island life. The contribution made by the Honorary Police to the delivery of local justice is essential and has been praised by independent reviews.

For example, the 2002 Review of Criminal Justice Policy in Jersey by Andrew Rutherford said in its conclusions and recommendations:

*“The Parish Hall Enquiry is one of the most remarkable institutions to have evolved on the Island. It has no close parallel elsewhere. Long pre-dating the formal criminal justice process, the Parish Hall Enquiry developed as a core ingredient of the honorary police service. The Parish Hall Enquiry, in modern parlance, seeks the localised resolution of criminal events outside the formal process.”*

Similar remarks were made in the 2008 Report of the Howard League for Penal Reform, which conducted a review of the Jersey youth justice system. The Howard League said:

*“5.16 We were able to observe a PHE in action. We saw four young people dealt with through this system, none of whom were referred for prosecution. The enquiry was held in an exemplary manner with an excellent balance of firmness, combined with a friendly sensitivity to the circumstances of the young person and their family, and the circumstances leading to the offence.*

*5.17 In general terms we believe the PHE is an excellent method of dealing with children and young people in trouble with the law, and clearly has the potential for diverting the great majority of children away from the youth justice system, in a positive and constructive manner. We agree with Rutherford that the rôle of the Centenier “in appropriately diverting cases away from the criminal justice process, is one that should be consolidated.”*

Furthermore the powers of the Centenier both at the Parish Hall and to present cases in the Magistrates Court were scrutinised by this Assembly as recently as this year and confirmed in Articles 12 and 23 of the draft Criminal Procedure (Jersey) Law passed in March 2018, which is now waiting for Royal Assent.

I mentioned that the workshop being held on 14 July 2018 would include considering recruitment to the Honorary Police and the involvement of the wider community in its work.

The workshop was first mentioned in this Assembly on 7 June 2018 by the Minister for Home Affairs when answering questions on his appointment. The Minister explained the workshop would include a discussion of ways of improving the relationship between the States of Jersey Police and the Honorary Police.

In relation to the specific questions:

- (a) The suggestion of a joint meeting to ensure that the Honorary Police are prepared for current and future challenges was first raised by H M Attorney General at a meeting of the Comité des Chefs de Police on 19 February 2018 and, at the meeting held on 16 April 2018, it was decided to hold a 'workshop'.
- (b) The Comité des Chefs de Police is organising the workshop and has invited H M Attorney General to chair the event, which the Chefs de Police and the Deputy Chief Officer of the States of Jersey Police will attend. That Comité has also invited representatives of the Comité des Connétables and the President and Vice Presidents of the Honorary Police Association to attend.
- (c) The agenda has not yet been finalised but it is proposed to cover a range of strategic and operational policing matters. Examples of the subject areas are:
  - communications and the use of technology
  - checks of licensed premises
  - traffic and patrols
  - recruitment and training
  - policing of events, community policing and joint patrols.
- (d) For each subject area it is anticipated there will be a brief explanation of the current policing approach of each of the Honorary Police and the States of Jersey Police followed by discussion with a view to identifying any areas for improvement. A written record will be prepared to summarise the discussion.
- (e) Proposals and suggestions arising from the workshop may require further action such as a change to operational policing arrangements or, perhaps, to legislation. Depending upon the outcome the findings are therefore likely to be reported to other bodies or groups. Any legislative changes would need to be considered by the States Assembly.

Accordingly, the focus of this workshop is operational policing and how this is delivered by the Honorary Police of each parish and by States of Jersey Police. Whilst there are no plans, at this time, to hold public workshops, members of the public may, at any time, contact the Chef de Police of their parish or the Jersey Police Authority/States of Jersey Police about operational policing issues. All suggestions designed to improve arrangements are welcome. Each Connétable is responsible for the efficient and effective policing of his/her parish and parishioners are always welcome to raise with us any issues, suggestions or concerns relating to the Honorary Police of their parish.

I will also arrange a briefing for States members on the Honorary Police, which is a unique system and an important part of our community. I also believe we can do more to ensure the wider community is aware of the huge contribution made by the Honorary Police.