
STATES OF JERSEY



JERSEY CONSUMER COUNCIL: ANNUAL REPORT 2013

**Presented to the States on 29th April 2014
by the Minister for Economic Development**

STATES GREFFE



Annual Report
2013

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1. Memberships & Meetings

The Jersey Consumer Council held 6 meetings in 2013.

The membership of the Jersey Consumer Council is:

- Advocate Rose Colley – Chairman
- Mr John Stephens – Representative of the Citizens Advice Bureau
- Advocate Jean-Marie Renouf – Representative of the Law Society
- Mr Ian Barnes – Representative of the Jersey Hospitality Association
- Mr Ray Shead – Representative of the Jersey Chamber of Commerce
- Representative of UNITE (formerly Transport General Workers Union) did not attend or participate in the Consumer Council
- Members of the Public:
 - Mr Brian Penaluna
 - Mr Peter Drew
 - Mrs Joan Cadoret
 - Dr. Sriskantharajah Arun

Dr Sriskantharajah Arun resigned from the Council late in 2013 when he relocated to the south of England. The Council, with the approval of the Minister, formally wrote to UNITE to terminate their role in the Council as they did not participate or contact the Council in any way.

2. Chairman's Statement

2013 was my second year of my term of office as Chair of the Jersey Consumer Council. I am once again pleased to report that all of the objectives that were set for the year have been met and in some cases exceeded.

I have continued to meet a large number of business and community leaders and I hope that the Council's profile within the Island has continued to be enhanced.

The Council have worked extremely hard during the year to maintain our positive links with Trading Standards, CICRA, the CAB and the Chamber of Commerce as well as forging a strong relationship with Community Savings.

Much of the Council's time during 2013 was spent contributing to young consumer issues both in respect of our on-going training role and highlighting the issues that are crucial for younger people to understand such as money management. I am particularly proud of what has been achieved in this pioneering area of work in Jersey.

For the second year the Council surveyed the views of all Islanders. For 2013 the topic chosen was transport. A large number of Islanders responded to the survey and the results will be used during 2014 to hopefully influence and inform the Island's policy in relation to public transport.

Another new initiative was the holding of our 'Big Breakfast' in October. The breakfast was open to all Islanders and proved to be a great success. It was also instrumental in putting the Council in touch with a number of people who had not contacted us previously. It was a very positive event and one that we hope to repeat in the future.



I have continued to use every opportunity to publicise the work of the Council. The local media have continued to recognise that the Council is a key voice on consumer issues. The Newsletter continues to go from strength to strength and I am proud to have been instrumental in ensuring that this contains information on the most important consumer topics of the day.

The Council has continued to maintain its positive links with the Northern Ireland Council. I continue to be impressed not only by the work that they do but by the support that they have given to Jersey during the year.

Once again, the Council could not have functioned as effectively without the help of the members of the Council who give their time and energies to consumer issues. Many thanks are also due to the continued support of Senator Alan Maclean, Mike King and Trevor Le Roux. Finally, Anne King, the Consumer Council Executive Officer continues to amaze me with her ability to tackle consumer issues and without whose support my role would so much more difficult.

Advocate Rose Colley



3. Council Main 2012 Issues

During 2013 the Council was involved in a variety of issues and debates: for example the impact of Gigabit Fibre roll out and power cuts, taxis and Sunday trading.

A key focus of Council's activities this year has been those associated with raising the profile and public awareness of the Council.

The Council liaise with Channel Island Competition regulatory Authority (CICRA), Trading Standards and Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) on a regular basis to ensure that we have a joint approach to progressing issues which have an impact on Jersey consumers.

Education

The Council worked with Community Savings and contributed to the delivery of the financial, consumer rights and health aspects of the Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum for children of secondary school age – to date we have delivered a variety of talks to all year groups in Le Rocquier School and year 10 in JCG, with the aim of helping youngsters to understand how important it is for them to be responsible for their own health, welfare and monetary matters

Trading Standards have been extremely helpful and visited both schools to explore consumer rights and on line purchasing. Our success in 2013 has led to a commitment from Les Quennevais and also we are helping ESC to structure the delivery of PSHE across the island.



Council Membership

The Chairman has reviewed the existing Constitution with the professional support of Carey Olsen with a view to making recommendations to the Minister regarding the make up of the membership.

UNITE the Union has continued to be absent throughout the year and we have written to advise them that we are removing them from our membership; in line with the termination clause set out in the Constitution. One of our public members has left the Island and therefore created a vacancy.

Transport Matters

A key focus in 2013 has been transport related issues – ranging from our all island Transport Matters Survey, mystery shopping ‘on-the-buses’ and reviewing transport companies conditions of carriage and passenger charters.

The survey was crafted to reveal consumers attitudes and transport experiences with particular reference to customer care, facilities, and transport preferences and complaints management.

The Council engaged the services of Forest Consulting to assist with the survey compilation and analysis. The Chamber Transport Group, Condor, the Ports of Jersey, Jersey Taxi Drivers Association and Libertybus were all consulted regarding the survey.

The survey was limited to buses, public rank taxis, private hire taxis, airlines and ferry's, we recognised that whilst car parking is an intrinsic part of the island's transport infrastructure it was considered that this was too broad for the purposes of our investigation. We received over 3,800 replies to the self-selecting survey.

The emerging themes were presented at Our Big Breakfast and will be published in 2014.

Our Big Breakfast

The Consumer Council invited Islanders to attend a breakfast briefing on Tuesday 1st October 2013, where the chairman presented details of the Council's activities.

Our chairman, Advocate Rose Colley stated that : "We held our first ever breakfast briefing so that we can let Islanders know, face-to-face, who we are and what we are currently doing on their behalf. It will also give us the opportunity to hear more from them – we are the voice of the Jersey consumer and to do that job effectively, we need to know the thoughts and opinions of the people we represent."

We had over 100 attendees and received positive and constructive feedback about the presentation and projects.

Primary Health Care

We continue to follow up on our recommendations following our Primary Health Care survey; we have liaised with health and primary health care providers to explore focus groups and a patient opinion forum.

Financial Services Ombudsman

The introduction of a Financial Services Ombudsman in Jersey continues to generate comment and eager anticipation. We have published articles on the subject and have kept in contact with Darren Scott at the Economic Development Department (EDD)

Telecommunications

The topic of telecommunications continues to generate a significant proportion of our consumer contacts. The ongoing roll out of fibre, roaming charges and bill shock are the main topics.

We have engaged with the providers to present better clarity of information for consumers on these topics.

The Council has continued its work with other agencies and CIRCA to generate better consumer information on several issues – including the roll out of fibre, battery back up and the vulnerable, Optimal Network Terminal (ONT) boxes and the consumer.

4. Communication with Consumers & the Media

Newsletter

The Newsletter is the main tool for connecting with the public. In 2013 we published 6 editions of Jersey Issues. During the course of the year we developed a new look 8-page edition to make the copy more attractive to all ages.

We continue to research and write on local issues, which affect our local residents. Contributions to the newsletter continue to blossom and we receive copy from a broad range of contributors; including CAB, Transport & Technical Services (TTS), CICRA, Health Promotions, Members and service providers.

The Council aims to spark and generate areas of debate via the newsletter as well as to provide user-friendly information to help consumers to make informed decisions.

The Council website is a popular source of information – we had over 8,100 hits in 2013. The most popular items being accessed were the newsletters and articles on telecommunications issues and transport; Facebook, twitter and Google all directed hits to us. It is now at a point whereby we will look to update it once again as our ‘library’ of information and articles continues to expand.

It is our aim to engage with a greater range of audiences and thus we employ the services of specialist writing consultants to bring to life certain topics to appeal to different age groups and market sectors.

Media

The Chairman regularly gives interviews to BBC Radio Jersey & Spotlight TV, Channel Television, the Jersey Evening Post & Commercial Radio station 103 on a variety of consumer issues generated from within or from outside of the Island.

Publications

During 2013 the Council researched and prepared the following leaflets based on ongoing projects, consumer concerns and recommendations from other agencies:

- Your Guide to Contents Insurance
- Your Guide to Household Budgeting
- Funeral Matters
- Plain Sailing Booklet detailing ferry passenger rights
- Plane Facts Booklet detailing airline passenger rights
- Access to Air Travel a guide for passengers with disabilities and the less mobile
- Access to Ferry Travel for passengers with disabilities and the less mobile

General Contact

Consumers contact the Council through our website and email us directly from newsletter articles or word of mouth references. Although the Council were initially cautious about being located within Liberation Place it does provide a welcoming port of call for any visitor to the Council.

5. Financial Report

The Council generated expenses of £ 149,626 during 2013. These are detailed in the attached profit & loss report. (Appendix 1)

This was met by a grant from Economic Development Department of £125,818 received in three parts:

1. 25th February 2013 £ 47,500
2. 26th April 2013 £ 20,500
3. 19th August 2013 £ 57,818

Please refer to the attached quick books profit and loss account (Appendix 1) ; the accruals to be added to 2012 expenditure as stated in the profit and loss are detailed below.

It should also be noted that the Council received £34.03 in Bank Interest during 2013.

The financial matters of the Council are being formally audited by Grant Thornton.

The current account balance at the end of 2013 is £ 6,084.13

The deposit account balance at the end of 2013 is £29,103.74

The Council is accruing the following amounts for works in 2013;

Newsletter	£10,094
Primary Health Care Focus Groups	£ 9,250
Publications	£ 5,339
Social Security	£ 1,500
Audit Costs	£ 1,000
Total	£27,183

Appendix 1 – Profit & Loss 2013

	<u>Jan - Dec 2013</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Bank interest received	34.03
Grant received	<u>125,818.00</u>
Total Income	125,852.03
Expense	
Dues and Subscriptions	
Data Protection Notification	<u>50.00</u>
Total Dues and Subscriptions	50.00
Focus Group	39,549.40
Honorarium	
Staff wages	<u>11,000.00</u>
Total Honorarium	11,000.00
Insurance	310.00
Issued Publications	
Design	4,273.00
Distribution	18,647.35
Printing costs	<u>5,550.20</u>
Total Issued Publications	<u>28,470.55</u>

Licenses and Permits	
Web Site Management	
Design	<u>2,850.00</u>
Total Web Site Management	2,850.00
Licenses and Permits - Other	<u>842.09</u>
Total Licenses and Permits	3,692.09
Meeting costs	
Presentations	1,397.50
Travel	227.84
Meeting costs - Other	<u>1,623.61</u>
Total Meeting costs	3,248.95
Miscellaneous	469.03
Office expenses	
Stationery	1,193.39
Office expenses - Other	<u>200.00</u>
Total Office expenses	1,393.39
Payroll Expenses	
ITIS	2,730.41
Social security	4,534.40
Staff wages	
Honorarium	0.00
Staff wages - Other	<u>32,755.85</u>
Total Staff wages	32,755.85
Undergraduate Intern	<u>-1,415.66</u>
Total Payroll Expenses	38,605.00
Pricewatch	
IT Support	1,968.75
Petrol Pricewatch	<u>595.00</u>
Total Pricewatch	2,563.75
Professional Fees	20,006.50
Telephone	
Land line	<u>267.68</u>
Total Telephone	<u>267.68</u>
Total Expense	<u>149,626.34</u>