

Comité des Connétables



Deputy R Renouf
Chairman, Health and Social Security Scrutiny Panel
States Greffe
Morier House
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Our ref: LN/srdeg/26
Your ref: 517/34

21 March 2016

Dear Richard

Health and Social Security Panel – review of people living on low income

Thank you for your letter dated 9 February 2016 regarding the review of people on low income in Jersey which asked the following questions:

1. Have the Parishes seen an increase in the numbers of parishioners asking for help due to living on a low income?
2. How much annual income is available to funds such as La Charité, Don Gruchy, Don de Faye, Don Westaway, and others?
3. How are these funds distributed including information on eligibility criteria?

The following responses have been provided by Connétables:

St Brélade

1. We have no records of any requests in recent years.
2. Varies greatly depending if it is a trust from which only the income produced from the Capital can be distributed or accumulated funds such as Don's where the income is from the rental gained from fields owned and is held in a normal bank account. The approximate annual income overall would be just over £3,100.
3. Applicant to contact Parish, Trustees would request reason for request and some kind of proof to satisfy the deed criteria i.e. proof of bank statements of last 6 months, except in certain Trusts where it is enough if they are known by a Trustee

St Clement

1. The responsibility for "welfare" in the financial sense was transferred to the States in 2008 and from that perspective we do not, as a matter of course, provide financial help to people on low incomes.
2. Income from the charitable trusts administered by the Parish and the Church (Don de Faye) varies from year to year, but is usually in the region of £20,000 - £25,000. We receive about £7 from Westaway.
3. In the main, the trust deeds require us, the trustees, to use the income to "assist such deserving persons who are resident in the Parish of St Clement known as "Pauvres Honteux" and who are not otherwise in receipt of Parish relief". The transfer of income support to the States has made complying with this condition somewhat easier!

We, the trustees, distribute the funds for many and varied reasons, all based on unusual circumstances. We have provided specialised medical equipment and treatment, we have supported families who have been through a particularly hard time with a contribution towards school trips, we have assisted parishioners with fuel costs particularly when their home is less than fuel efficient – like having only single glazing, we have helped fund air fares for hospital visits for a carer. At Christmastime we support some families and older folk who might have had a particularly difficult year through bereavement, illness, loss of work, with some funds to ensure that they can enjoy some luxuries at this expensive time.

Grouville

1. We have seen fewer applications for assistance since the implementation of Income Support.
2. The Parish received a £3.84 payment for Don Westaway this year.

The Parish receives interest on funds held in a Charitable Investment account. The interest can be used to provide charitable grants. There is currently £14,972 available from the various trusts. There is also income provided by the Abraham Le Sueur educational trust car park. Parking spaces are rented out for £260 per year, or £10 per week. The income can be allocated to any application that is education-related.

Income of £4,668 is received in respect of rent for Parish fields. The majority of this is allocated to "Christmas Grants".

3. The various trusts have different purposes, therefore the distribution of these funds is all dependent on why it has been applied for and whether any other agencies are involved in a referral. For example, we might be approached by a School to provide assistance for uniform, or a School trip. There are no application forms to be completed, however all applications must be made in writing. Trustees will then consider the information provided and may request further information if necessary. Grants are normally paid as one offs, not as ongoing payments.

There were 40 payments made between 2014 and 2016. A total of £4654.11 was paid out in 2014/15. Grants ranged between 15.86 and £420.00. The various trusts paid out £4,840 in 2015/2016. The grants ranged between 78.00 and £637.00.

St Helier

A separate response has been sent to the Panel.

St John

- 1 The Parish has seen neither an increase or decrease over the last 4years. We've not seen anyone.
- 2 The annual income from our funds is currently zero as the banks don't pay anything. We have a Don Gruchy Trust and a Barreau Fund.
- 3 Don't know

St Lawrence

1. We have not seen an increase.
2. We have an approximate annual income is £1,700.00
3. The Connétable meets with the parishioner goes through their finances and discusses an amount that might be suitable, on occasions this amount may only be a loan.

St Martin –

A separate response has been sent by the Rector but the Connétable's response is as follows:

1. No

2. La Charité / Don de Faye held by church - "Don de Faye - the income was to be distributed at the sole discretion of the Rector and Churchwardens to needy parishioners of all social standings in each parish annually during the third week of the month of December"

Don Gruchy: In bank - £27,473; Income = rents = £3,500 per annum. Income may be paid to "Les pauvres natifs de cette Isle" (Jersey born) qui ne seront point a la charge de leurs Paroisses respectives (not already receiving Parish welfare).

Clos des Pauvres: In bank £10,566; Income = rents = £975 per annum. Rules as per Don Gruchy.

Don Westaway: In bank £1,880; Income = interest = less than £20 per annum. In 1930 a Law was passed which converted the Trusts created by the Will of the late Miss Julia Westaway into a public and permanent Trust. As part of this Law a Fund was set up for the benefit of the poor in each of the twelve Parishes of the Island of Jersey, known as "Pauvres Honteux". Once a year the income from the Fund is distributed among them twelve Parishes, the amount paid to each Parish being in proportion to its population. The population of each Parish is taken from the most recent census report. The amount is paid to the Parish Constables who then, at their discretion, distribute it as special relief among the necessitous natives of each Parish who are not in receipt of any Parish benefit.

Don Barreau: In bank £12,875; Income = interest = about £75 per annum.

Don Bisson: In bank £1,414; Income = Interest = less than £20 per annum.

3. Firstly, one can see that it is only the income or annual interest that can be distributed and in the case of the smaller funds this amounts to virtually nothing until it has built up over many years.

Secondly, some of the funds are restricted to Jersey-born only.

Lastly, the Pauvres Honteux principle is tricky. It seems to have been defined as those not already receiving Parish welfare. Now there isn't any parish welfare, so that could include everyone. But if you assumed income support has taken over from parish welfare, then virtually no-one who needs it would qualify for parish charity distribution.

We receive personal applications and referrals from third parties, which are considered by the Connétable and Procureurs du Bien Public.

St Mary

1. There has not been an increase in numbers of parishioners asking for help due to living on a low income.
2. The annual funds received by the Parish, are various small amounts earning very little interest.
3. The church distributes Christmas hampers and tokens etc.

St Ouën

1. No
2. Varies on annual income generated. Traditionally only small amounts between £50 and £250 paid quarterly.
3. Individual case and payments only when proof on need provided.

St Peter

1. We have not seen any increase (none at all) of parishioners asking for help due to living on a low income.
2. We have three Don accounts where annual income is only pence in interest payments throughout the year as these accounts are not used.
3. Funds are not distributed, whenever we have received an ad hoc request then payment has been made from our general account under the Donation nominal ledger.

St Saviour

1. Not really, we maybe get one or two a year who tend to be in receipt of Income Support anyway.
2. We have a Dons Account which over the years has built up a balance of approx.. £17,000. The Constable also has a Charity Fund with a balance of approx.. £20,000 available to dispose of the incumbent may wish.
3. We used to use the Dons Account to assist persons already in receipt of welfare with exceptional expenses such as dental treatment, spectacles, the costs of moving accommodation or buying beds or white goods. The Constable's Charity Fund was used in a similar way to Dons but is more often used these days to assist in funding school trips for children whose families are unable to afford such.

With regard to eligibility and distribution; we would follow similar guidelines to that which we used in the past with welfare (obviously taking into account increased costs etc) but more likely would provide assistance by way of issuing a Parish Order so that goods could be acquired or paying the bill on behalf of an individual.

Trinity

1. I have not been approached by any Parishioners seeking assistance during my time in office so it is difficult to comment.
2. I spoke with our Rector he advised me that the monies received from Don De Faye, which comes to us a few weeks before Christmas, was (2015) £2,721.67. The sum varies from year to year.
We have also have five small other, Larbalastier £2,499, Barreau £5,392, Gruchy £1,920, Pinel £406, Westaway £916.
3. The Don De Faye is distributed "at the sole discretion of the Rector and Churchwardens to needy Parishioners of all social standing in each Parish annually, during the third week in the month of December."

Rector and Churchwardens have moved to an arrangement whereby they maintain a reasonable float for contingencies throughout the year, and largely rely on being tipped off in relation to need by the Deputy and Head Teacher and keep grants discreet and dignified. Eg Fuel bills, school uniform and assistance with inclusion on school trips where the costs might otherwise inhibit participation. In reality we meet two or three such needs a year.

Concerned that they were building up funds, they made a decision, based on a recognition that Parishioners from across the Island who fall on hard times tend to migrate to St Helier, that we would make grants of £500 to those who work with some of the most vulnerable: Shelter Trust, Grace Trust, Outreach Group and Women's Refuge.

They are contacted each year regarding Westaway, but the Trust stipulates that it should be for people in a Christian context.

The Parish Dons, Larbalastier, Barreau, Gruchy, Pinel & Westaway sit in the Parish accounts and generally do nothing.