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**From:**  
**Sent:** 26 February 2014 12:33  
**To:** Tim Oldham  
**Subject:** Submission for the Retail Review

Dear Mr Oldham and Deputy Luce,

I own a small business in Market Street St Helier called Pebble Home and Boutique which has been on Market Street for 4 years. I'm Jersey born, with 2 small children. I went to University off island, and have lived and worked abroad and in the UK for 5 years before returning to Jersey 5 years ago because it is such a wonderful place. I am passionate about making sure Jersey, and particularly St Helier Town Centre, retains its charm and vibrancy for current and future generations.

Our Street is buzzing with entrepreneurs, who are keen to make St Helier a vibrant, social place to be and I am one of them, but time and time again we find ourselves battling against bureaucracy that make it incredibly difficult to make our businesses successful or indeed to make the town vibrant and inviting.

We tried to organise, what had been in the past few years, a hugely successful Christmas Party on the Street, but this year we were curtailed at every step with Licencing issues. For example we had lined up someone to play on an acoustic guitar who was going to collect for Charity, he was not going to charge anything, and yet he wasn't allowed to play. This was just one of a catalogue of barriers put in our way that meant the party was a flop and the Street was dead on that evening. We weren't asking for money, just support, as we tried to boost footfall in St Helier.

Please find below and attached my ideas on what would help:

1. Obvious and simple things like, free wifi would attract young people into town.

The way people shop and interact is changing but they still need a place to come to eat, shop, meet etc. So turn the town into that place. Put on events in the Town Centre, make it easier for shops to put on events. We have plenty of ideas but need to be supported. Make it a place for families to come easily and spend the day.

Please see attached letter I wrote to the Chamber of Commerce a few years ago with plenty of other ideas on how to attract shoppers to St Helier. I received no response to this letter so I'm sending it to you again.

2. Parking. The pay card system is off putting for shoppers, spaces are limited and it all pushes people away from St Helier. It's a simple fix, pay on exit. Every single car park in the UK has it. Even the airport has it, just use their system. Why make it so complicated like the Sand Street trial?

3. Give small businesses a bit of help. Times are tough.

For example, instead of charging a Licence for having a Board to try and promote their business, let them have it for free. There is no way the Public Liability insurance premium is £50 a year for one small sign outside a shop therefore someone is making some money for nothing on this.

I have been asked to pay £194 for the privilege of having a rope barrier outside my shop which ironically actually prevents a member of the Public tripping over the disabled access. So if I take it off because I think £194 is an extortionate and disproportionate amount to pay it probably will cause an accident. Many shops don't provide disabled access, so shouldn't that be the thing you're policing? The rope barrier outside my shop also prevents smokers (i.e. workers from the Market who aren't allowed to smoke in the Market) sitting on my shop front and outside my door so that my customers have to walk through a cloud of smoke to get in my shop. This all amounts to Health and Safety NOT working, and not applying common sense but rather causing another Health and Safety issue by not looking at the facts and just applying blanket rules. Applying blanket rules, is something that I see happening in other States areas, Social Security being the most obvious but perhaps that is for another Scrutiny Review.

4. I'm currently not in favour of Sunday Trading as Jersey is not the same as UK cities, where they get new footfall. Apart from a few tourists we don't get new footfall, therefore the same customers are not going to shop on Saturday and Sunday. They will choose one of those days, which means for small businesses we will incur extra costs but no extra business as trade will simply be spread across two days.

5. Retain Jersey's charm as a boutique, unique shopping experience. We don't want to become like the bland town Centres in the UK, with exactly the same shops and hundreds of discount shops. Online shopping is there for people who want to buy from the large UK chains. Keep Jersey special and tourists will love it. Everyone wants something no one else has so its nice to have different, unique, independent businesses. Support us. Promote us. Create Jersey as a destination shopping experience. We have fabulous boutique hotels, restaurants and boutique shops. Make a story out of this.

5. The Customs import system and process is very cumbersome and frustrating and causes us problems with goods arriving to us, which has a knock on effect of pushing customers away from us as they don't want long delays on their goods arriving. This is a system which impacts everybody, shops, builders, trades anyone trying to get goods for customers quickly. It is archaic. GST is already a frustration to small businesses because they have to pay it even if they don't charge it, particularly when shipping to the island is expensive, so at least make the system work.

6. Keep a Centre of town, keep it smaller, stop developing little pockets of town on the outskirts so that you end up with no centre, and lots of empty shops in each area. It doesn't make sense to tourists and it certainly doesn't work for shoppers. A smaller, fuller area would look and be more inviting and busier.

As a retailer I don't understand what the strategy is, because its so disparate. I don't understand why certain parts of town get developed and focussed on when it requires massive amounts of money to create these new areas and buildings. It would be far more cost effective to use the charming, characterful areas of town already existing and build a real hub for shoppers. It's not fair on current businesses trying to revamp their areas. And like I've said before, it doesn't work for shoppers.

I hope these comments, views and ideas will be taken on board.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

Clare

Clare Clarke

Pebble