

20th March 2009

Deputy Roy Le Herissier,
Scrutiny Panel

Dear Deputy Le Herissier,

Re: Fort Regent Review

Thank you for your letter dated 10th March attached to an Email from Mrs Liddiard.

As a member of the Fort Users' Association, I am writing to submit a few observations for the Panel to consider in their review:

1. The Fort is widely used by the population of Jersey – some 15,000 uses per week. I am very aware that there are some people who consider it to be an “expensive white elephant”, but I would venture to suggest that they are people who rarely, if ever, visit the Fort and certainly not at times when it is being well-used.
2. The report by Roger Quinton Associates back in April 1997 stated the fact that the Fort was dated and went on to outline several areas which could be improved and even sports that could be introduced.
3. Further to this report, I would emphasise that quick access from the town area via Snow Hill would enable people to use the Fort for their particular activity during their lunch hour, or before or after their work day. Furthermore, if there was a really good restaurant up there with a view over St Aubin's Bay (one of the best views in the island in my opinion!) business people could entertain their clients up there.
4. While in Australia, a few years ago, I obtained a report on a similar centre at Tweed Heads with many facilities and activities which we do not have in Jersey. Agreed the catchment area was much more extensive, but, scaled down I could see something like it at Fort Regent, given the [political will power and vision. I would be pleased to share this with you should you be interested.
5. As to staffing levels Etc.. one thing I find quite frustrating is that some offices have been moved to areas where the general public are unable to find them, with no indication as to where they have gone. A classic example is the Technical Services Office, so if we have a problem, apart from going all the way down to the front desk, one doesn't know where to go. The Booking Office arrangements are not very satisfactory. If the main person is not in his office, or is away on a course, there does not seem to be anyone deputising for him. I would have thought that Bookings were of key importance.
6. Facilities have been provided in the past, e.g. the skate board area only for it to be ignored by the youngsters and vandalised. What a waste of money!
7. It was a great pity that the Pool was closed and the arrangement made with the private company restricting the States from building another pool in the vicinity, and now its costing the island a lot of money in subsidies.

8. Talking of the old Pool area, we suggested that another floor should be put into the existing building and the two bowls clubs could have a floor each to look after and use both floors if numbers dictated. Now I Understand that the whole building is not in a safe condition for public use ... another example of the States neglecting property!

I have to say that, although the RQA report was in 1997 – over 12 years ago, there does not seem to have been any action on it. Again, what a waste of money! That money could have been put to far better use!

I look forward to seeing the outcome of this report, and, apart from the dates that I have given to Mrs Liddiard when I shall be out of the island, I would be pleased to meet with you and other members of the Panel should you feel it to be beneficial.

Yours sincerely,
Ann J Chamier