

STATES OF JERSEY

r

CHÂTEAU LA CHAIRE, ROZEL, ST. MARTIN: RESTORATION OF GARDENS (P.142/2003) – COMMENTS

**Presented to the States on 2nd March 2004
by the Economic Development Committee**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The Constable of St. Helier argues that no public funds should be allocated to the garden project until a full business case supporting the expenditure has been presented to the States by the Economic Development Committee and the expenditure has been approved by the States. The Constable has no argument with the principles of the Tourism Development Fund (TDF) but is at a loss to understand the decision to commit funds to the Garden project while the Millennium Town Park project remains dormant. It should be noted that no application has been received in respect of the Town Park. The TDF was established by the States in 2001 –

In December 2001 THE STATES adopted proposition P.170/2001 – **Investing in Tourism’s future.**

The States –

- (a) received the report of the Tourism Committee dated 25th October 2001 concerning a New Tourism Investment Fund and agreed, in principle, that the sum of £10 million be allocated to the Fund;
- (b) agreed that the New Tourism Investment Fund would be used to implement the tourism strategy “Tourism Adds Value” in each of the following two areas –
 - (i) public and voluntary sector projects and infrastructure works,
 - (ii) initiatives designed to stimulate investment in improved distribution channels by more effective use of information technology and marketing development initiatives;
- (c) charged the Finance and Economics Committee to identify the appropriate source of funding;
- (d) requested the Tourism Committee to develop further a policy to address the quality and competitiveness of the supply of tourist accommodation in the Island, including the possibility of financial support for prime sites and/or Tourism Destination areas as proposed in the draft Island Plan.

The proposition received by the States clearly mentioned the importance of a new star attraction (such as a Botanic Garden) capable of generating new special interest visitors to the Island.

The proposition proposed that a new sub-committee be formed answering to the Tourism Committee with day-to-day management of the fund carried out by Jersey Tourism with Treasury to be the auditors. Membership of the sub-committee was to have a political and trade mix and be widely representative of the tourism industry in its broadest sense. This has been achieved.

The eligibility for grants has been clearly set out in documents that are available to the public and applications for grants are submitted to a sub-committee comprising 4 members of the States and 4 members of the public. The applications are scrutinized by the sub-committee and grants are awarded in compliance with the terms of reference.

In August 2002 an application for a grant to develop the gardens at Château La Chaire was received from Mrs. A. Petkovic. Mrs. Petkovic and Mr. Tony Russell were invited to present their project to the TDF and sub-committee requested a more robust business plan.

In September 2003 Mrs. Judith Quéérée and Mr. Richard Pirouet (as two of the future trustees of the Château La Chaire Sub-Tropical Gardens) and Mrs. Petkovic and Mr. Russell met the TDF and the subcommittee agreed to fund Stage 1 of the project subject to the following conditions.

It was agreed that payment of the funds should be made in 3 more-or-less equal parts up to a total of £250,000. The first payment of £83,000 would be made to the Trust as soon as the Trust has been established and a bank account opened. This sum of money should cover the following work –

- the setting-up of a Trust;
- the application for outline planning permission, including an environmental and social impact study;
- the carrying-out of a risk assessment on the viability of the project being completed and becoming self-funding;
- the creation of a more robust business plan.

The trustees confirmed that, should any part of the work carried out during Stage 1 demonstrate that the project was not viable or that major technical problems existed, no further funds would be expended without full consultation with the TDF sub-committee.

The TDF believes that this project is seen to deliver on one of the priorities identified in the Tourism Strategy 2000, namely a new star attraction such as a botanic garden. This decision was endorsed by the Economic Development Committee in October 2003.

On 24th February 2004 a letter was received from the proposed Trustees wherein they have informed the Chairman of the TDF that they will not proceed with the setting-up of a Trust; therefore no payments have been made from the Fund.