

### **3.18 Deputy M. Tadier of the Chairman of the Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel regarding the establishment of a Dog Warden role and the introduction of on-the-spot fines for fouling**

Would the Chairman state what action, if any, his panel is taking to ensure the implementation of the recommendation in relation to dog fouling of the Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Report of 18th July 2011, which in section 3.3 recommended that the Minister for Home Affairs should work with the police and Parishes to establish a Dog Warden role; and consider on-the-spot fines for fouling?

**Connétable S.W. Pallett of St. Brelade (Chairman, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel):**

I thank the Deputy for his question. It is a very important issue. The panel obviously recognises the emotive concerns and environmental problems caused by irresponsible dog owners, but to specifically answer the question. The current Education and Home Affairs Panel has not taken any action at this time to ensure that the implementation of the recommendation, and does not plan to do so. It is currently focused on issues that it considers to be of higher importance at this time.

#### **3.18.1 Deputy M. Tadier:**

What are those issues that they are focusing on which are of higher importance?

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Current legislation, as we have been working closely with the Minister for Home Affairs in regards to the Draft Explosives Law, and a current review into the Trackers Apprenticeship programme, and a forthcoming review into the Youth Service.

#### **3.18.2 Deputy S. Power:**

Would the Chairman agree with me that the issue of dog fouling on beaches may be a minor issue and that most dog owners, so far as he is aware, are quite conscientious in dealing with this issue?

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Absolutely. It is a small minority of dog owners that make life very difficult for the few, like myself, that take care when they do walk their dogs on the beaches and elsewhere. But just to put people's minds at ease. Although this particular panel is not looking at this at the present time, subject to a question last November from the Deputy in regards to dog fouling, when it was stated by the Minister for Home Affairs that he had already spoken to myself about taking this to the Comité des Connétables, I can say that since that time work has been undertaken by the Comité des Connétables on these and other associated matters. I can assure and I am understood to believe that a period of public consultation is to be undertaken very soon.

#### **3.18.3 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:**

It is sometimes the custom that Scrutiny Panels have a pause for thought on issues, could the Chairman say whether he will revisit the issue and, for example, look at the matter of walking dogs on the beach during the summer, of which there has been some recent publicity? Or does he think that is a barking proposition?

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

I think there is a move at the moment from a group to go down exactly that route, and they contacted myself yesterday in regard to this matter. I think it is something that needs to be

taken rather than the Scrutiny Panel, to maybe the Comité des Connétables for their review and consideration.

**3.18.4 Senator L.J. Farnham:**

I am myself a dog owner, I walk my dog regularly on the beach. I am conscientious. But would the Chairman not agree that the majority of mess on the beaches of Jersey are made by humans themselves who tend not to clean up after them. **[Approbation]** Not the dogs. Would he agree that use of such resource for a Dog Warden would be best put in to making sure people clean up after them and if they do not, fining them?

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

In specific relation to that, the consultation that is being considered will not just look at dog fouling. It also will be considering general littering as well, but it would be wrong for me to speak on behalf of the committee. The Chairman is not here today and I think it is best that the Chairman himself speaks on this subject. But, as I say, work on this has been undertaken. It will be forthcoming very soon.

**3.18.5 Deputy M. Tadier:**

I obviously fully endorse the comments that most dog owners are acting in a correct way and it is a minority. Nonetheless it was a key finding of the Scrutiny Panel that this was a serious issue both for the public and also for, I think, States Members, *et cetera*. Does the Chairman accept that the issue is not the fact that there are not regulations in place, it is the fact that they are not enforced and it is important that we find a way to enforce regulations that already exist in an effective way rather than necessarily introducing new laws?

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

As the Deputy knows, the actual recommendations were rejected by the Minister for Home Affairs at the time. In terms of enforcement, enforcement is an issue. I think that is something that the Comité des Connétables have been aware for some time. Policing it, from my own experiences, as a Centenier and a Constable's officer, is very difficult. It is the way it is dealt with. It can be a very long-winded process taking it through a Parish Hall Inquiry system. I think it does need to be looked at other ways around dealing with this, and fixed penalty notices and on-the-spot fines were mentioned in that report. Again, it is something that will be part of the consultation that the committee will be bringing forward in the very near future.