

23.10.03

10 The Connétable of St. Brelade of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the carriageways of Victoria Avenue (OQ.189/2023)

Will the Minister advise whether he is content with the current state of the planted sections between the carriageways of Victoria Avenue; and, if not, whether there are any plans for improvement?

Deputy T. Binet (The Minister for Infrastructure):

I think the Constable knows my answer to this question; no, of course, I am not content with it at all but he will be delighted to know that I have already put measures in place to ensure that that does not happen again next year.

[10:45]

3.10.1 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Does the Minister agree that since the loss of internal departmental gardening staff and the policy of outsourcing this work, standards have fallen? If so, what does he plan to do about it?

Deputy T. Binet:

I think I would refer the Constable to the answer I gave to that question originally. All of those problems have been recognised and measures are being put in place to make sure that there are improvements for next year.

3.10.2 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

It is all very well for the Minister to stand up and say: "I think the Constable knows what I think about this" but the rest of us want to know what the Minister thinks about it. Can you please answer the question and give us an answer to the question that he was asked? Do not just answer the questioner, tell the Assembly and the public.

The Bailiff:

Sorry, what was the question, Connétable?

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Sorry, I did say can he please answer - that was my question- will he please answer the question? Because he responded to the questioner by saying: "The Constable of St. Brelade knows what I think." My question to ...

The Bailiff:

Well then the Minister went straight on to say he did not find it acceptable, in other words, he answered positively what the Connétable had asked him.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Okay, I apologise, because I did not hear that. I will ask him to expand in that case on what he does not find acceptable.

The Bailiff:

Thank you, Connétable. Are you able to expand on what you do not find acceptable, Minister?

Deputy T. Binet:

Yes, I think so, but I think the Constable also needs to be corrected in terms of the way I answered the question, Sir, because I referred my response to you and not to the Constable. So I think I answered it correctly. I said measures have been put in place. I do not think I can really expand on that. I can tell you a little bit more about the conversation. We have had words with the team and we are going to do those things internally, so more than that I really cannot say. We are going to put the job straight for next year. Maybe the Constable could tell me quite what details she is expecting from my response.

The Bailiff:

I am afraid the Constable can only ask questions, cannot provide information, but a supplemental question, Connétable?

3.10.3 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Yes. The Minister finds it unacceptable but what is unacceptable? I have got no idea. We are talking about the vegetation on Victoria Avenue. Is it that it is hanging over the road? Is it the plants that are growing there? I have got no idea. There seems to have been maybe a private conversation between the Constable of St. Brelade and the Minister for Infrastructure. We are told it is being addressed but what is being addressed? What is the problem? How is it being addressed? I do apologise, in my older age I am getting a little bit hard of hearing. So I apologise to the Minister for thinking that he had directed his answer to the Constable of St. Brelade but apparently he directed it to you.

The Bailiff:

He did.

Deputy T. Binet:

I find it a little surprising that I am being required to embellish the questioner's question but I am quite happy to do that if it is helpful and say that it has been apparent that a number of the flowerbeds and the central reservation flowerbeds this year have not been well maintained; that has been recognised. We have been short-staffed, we have recruited further, and we have plans in place to make sure that that is not repeated next year.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

It is not worth following through, but a general description, they have not been well treated and it is going to be amended.

3.10.4 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I would just ask the Minister whether he considers there is sufficient funding in the forthcoming Government Plan to accommodate an enhanced gardening offering that the Island really needs?

Deputy T. Binet:

Like most other departments, I have not been able to obtain the funding that I would really have liked but we have had some improvements in our funding. Given the constraints that we all have to suffer, I am very hopeful that we can achieve that which I have said we will do.