

STATES OF JERSEY



A NATIONAL DAY FOR JERSEY

**Lodged au Greffe on 3rd February 2025
by the Minister for International Development
Earliest date for debate: 18th March 2025**

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

that Liberation Day should be adopted as Jersey's official National Day.

MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

REPORT

The Island Identity Project

A consultation followed the recommendation made by the [Island Identity Project](#), led by the Minister for International Development, to designate a National Day for Jersey. A National Day is a day which celebrates the nationhood of a state or its people and is often an official public holiday. Many countries have more than one National Day. Denmark and the United Kingdom are some of the only countries without an official National Day¹.

The Island Identity Report Panel's aims were that, whatever our background or occupation, we can benefit from a shared understanding of what it means to be Jersey. These gestures build a sense of identity which remind the world that British does not automatically mean English. The designation of a National Day aims to support a stronger sense of citizenship and belonging for everyone who lives in Jersey, particularly in light of the Island's low rates of civic engagement reported by the OECD².

Many Islanders already consider Liberation Day to be Jersey's National Day, which serves to recognise the sacrifice made by those who lived through the war and to bring Islanders together to celebrate the freedom which we can all enjoy today, regardless of our ethnic or cultural background. Formalising Liberation Day as Jersey's National Day would preserve this date's significance for future generations and signal its importance to those outside of Jersey. Indeed, in a rapidly changing international environment, the need to assert Jersey's distinct identity has never been more important.

The public were given the opportunity to have their say on whether Liberation Day – or an alternative day – should be officially recognised as the Island's National Day. The consultation, which took place from 18 November 2024 to 18 January 2025, asked the public whether Liberation Day or another day should be formally recognised as a National Day for Jersey. Alternative suggestions were prompted, with a list of alternative days set out in the original Island Identity Report. Details can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

The States Assembly are therefore asked to decide whether Liberation Day should be given the recognised status of a National Day.

Consultation Process

The consultation comprised of an online and paper survey. It was felt that the consultation would be more constructive if the public were provided with a suggestion of a National Day to consider. Liberation Day was selected due to its cultural significance in Jersey and the fact that it is already considered by many to be Jersey's unofficial National Day. The consultation welcomed feedback from the public on this proposal, as well as alternative suggestions. A list of possible alternative days had been

¹ Fisher, Max (26 February 2013). "[A surprising map of the world's national holidays \(only two countries have no national day\)](#)". *The Washington Post*.

Elgenius, Gabriella (2019). "National Days in Nation Building: Similarities and differences". *Symbols of nations and nationalism : celebrating nationhood*. Basingstoke, Hampshire. pp. 94–132.

² [Jersey's Better Life Index](#)

originally suggested and listed in the panel’s Report which is available on the Island Identity website.

The following communication channels were used to raise awareness of the consultation across the community:

- government social media posts;
- an advert in parish magazines and the JEP;
- paper surveys distributed to parish halls; and
- outreach work to schools, undertaken by L'Office du Jèrriais on behalf of the Island Identity project.

A number of stakeholders and representative groups³ were contacted directly about the consultation in November 2024 and invited to give feedback via the survey. L'Office du Jèrriais undertook outreach work to ten local schools⁴ on behalf of the consultation, collecting 1,207 survey responses from young people.

Demographic data was not collected as part of this consultation to avoid bias or weighting towards any particular demographic group. However, the significant response from schools indicates that at least 49% of respondents were under 18 years of age. This is important as the decision to formalise a National Day will affect generations to come.

Public Response

Overall, the consultation received 2,466 responses as of 18 January 2025. Liberation Day received overwhelming support with 2,007 respondents (82%) in favour of designating this date as Jersey’s official National Day.

A breakdown of the results, as well as sample comments and suggestions left by respondents, can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

Jersey Anthem

The Island Identity Panel explored the need for Jersey to have its own official Island Anthem, distinct from the British National Anthem, “God Save the King” which obviously remains unchanged. However, there is a need for a Jersey Anthem to be used at sporting and cultural events where Jersey is represented independently. On occasion, embarrassment has been caused when our athletes win medals and stand proudly on the podium, with no one knowing what should be played to recognise their achievement on behalf of their Island. The Island Identity Report also highlighted that an Island Anthem could provide a unifying way for Islanders to connect with 'Jersey' in a manner that is welcoming, accessible and inclusive. In turn, this could foster longer term social benefits, such as a stronger sense of community and belonging.

The consultation asked the public for their views on whether “Beautiful Jersey” should be formally adopted as the Jersey Anthem. “Beautiful Jersey” was suggested due to its

³ Stakeholders included the Bailiff’s Office; Chamber of Commerce; Committee des Connétables; School Councils Network; Youth Parliament; Jersey Sport; Jersey Connections; Jersey Heritage; Societe Jersiaise; Jersey Occupational Society; Institute of Directors

⁴ Schools include: JCG Prep, JCG, Victoria College, Plat Douet, St. Lawrence, Beaulieu Primary, D’Auvergne, Springfield, Hautlieu and La Passerelle

cultural prominence, as it is sometimes used at sporting events, sung during Liberation Day and taught in some schools. Other suggestions were encouraged and welcomed as part of the survey.

While 50% of respondents were in favour of “Beautiful Jersey” being formalised as the Jersey Anthem, this did not represent a convincing body of support. The Council of Ministers has instead decided to issue interim guidance to sports clubs and other relevant bodies as to what should be played during official events where Jersey represents itself in its own capacity, such as the Commonwealth Games and Island Games, where there is currently no conclusion on what should be played. This guidance will include recommending that the chorus of “Beautiful Jersey” (in either English or Jèrriais) is played at such events until a formal anthem is selected. This decision aims to address concerns raised by members of the public about the lack of a consistent piece of music to be used and confusion at official events.

Financial and staffing implications

Existing Island Identity budget was allocated to the consultation, which included advertisements and the printing of paper surveys. If the States Assembly approve this proposition, government social media channels would be used to raise awareness of the decision ahead of the Liberation 80 celebrations for minimal cost.

Note that the adoption of Liberation Day as Jersey’s national day would not change the way Liberation Day is celebrated. As Liberation Day is already a public holiday, there are minimal economic implications of designating this as a National Day.

Children’s Rights Impact Assessment

A Children’s Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) has been prepared in relation to this proposition and is available to read on the States Assembly website.

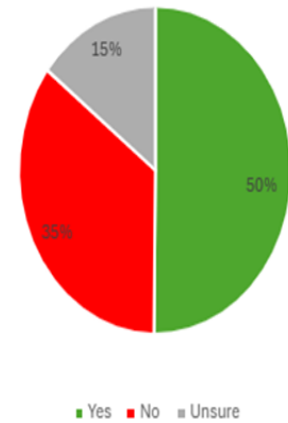
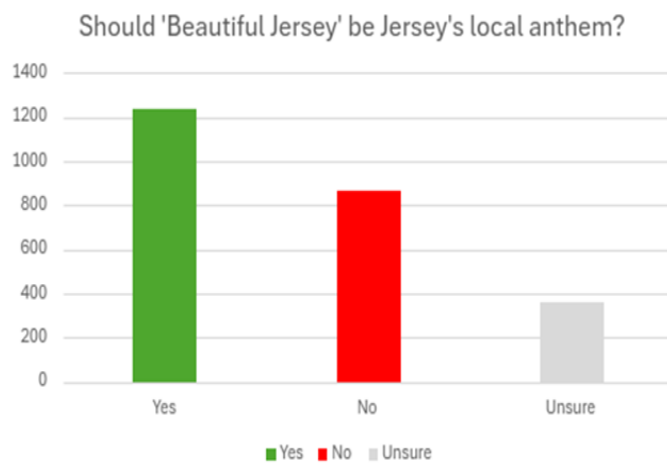
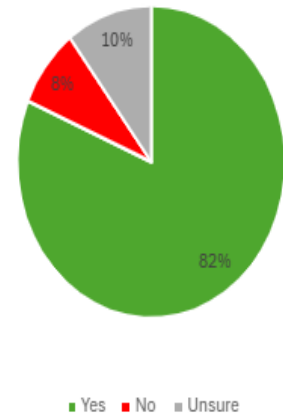
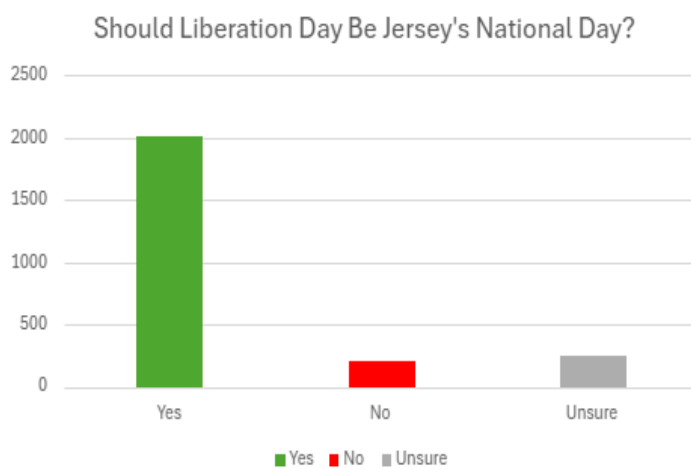
Appendix 1: List of National Days suggested in the Island Identity Report

6th January	Until probably WW1 the date of the Battle of Jersey was considered in some quarters as Jersey's National Day, a day of celebration especially after the centenary of 1881, and reinforced by the fact it coincided with Lé Vièr Noué (Old Christmas Day) still marked especially in the countryside into C20th 55
17th February	Proclamation of Charles II in the Royal Square (1649) - ties in with the gift of the Mace as a visible national symbol
7th April	Formal adoption of modern Jersey flag (1981)
9 th May	Liberation Day
24th May	La Grande R'veue (Queen Victoria's birthday was a day off for militia during much of C19th for parading) - this is the origin of the Jèrriais expression: 'un jour pouor la Reine', to describe a bank holiday. (cf Bermuda Day)
21st June	Summer solstice. If "Sunny Jersey" is a culturally resonant concept, then celebrating the sun and midsummer (as with origin of IoM Tynwald Day, and Greenland's National Day) could be popular.
28th September	Reform Day / The Corn Riots
29th September	Michaelmas - Feast of Saint Michael, patron of Normandy. Norman cultural festival (it was also quarter day, which is why reform riots happened on the previous day as payments fell due)
14th October	Battle of Hastings. Significant politically as establishing link with English crown, culturally through literary description by Wace There are significant historic years, but without identifiable or convenient days: 911 foundation of the Duchy of Normandy 933 incorporation into the Duchy of Normandy 1204 division of Duchy of Normandy (we celebrated "800 years of independence" in 2004)

Appendix 2: Consultation Results

Data from the Consultation

Total Responses (2,466)			
	Yes	No	Unsure
Liberation Day	2007	203	256
Beautiful Jersey	1237	870	359



Sample Comments and Suggestions from the Consultation

Should Liberation Day be Jersey's official National Day?		
Yes	No	Unsure

<p><i>“Yes. There is no alternative meaningful date.”</i></p> <p><i>“It is such an important day for me and my family due to our strong ties to the island. The story of the Occupation should be made aware across the island but also across the globe, so they can better understand our story as an island.”</i></p> <p><i>“I have always considered this already as our national day. Jersey can always mark other important days such as Corn Riots, but Liberation Day should be as our national day.”</i></p> <p><i>“It is already regarded as Jersey’s national day and has been for 20 years. To choose any other day now would be quite wrong. Liberation Day speaks to the removal of oppression and the reinstatement of freedom; and if anything justifies a national day, those do.”</i></p> <p><i>“Absolutely! It’s already Jersey’s de facto national day, and I think a lot of people would be surprised to know that it technically isn’t.”</i></p> <p><i>“It is vital that Liberation day remains. As we lose those who were here for Liberation, a good way to maintain the links would be to have the day as Jerseys national day, the day Jersey was freed from occupation will help keep alive the sacrifices many islanders made and remember the best of the Jersey population and their sheer grit and determination to thrive”</i></p>	<p><i>“Liberation Day should be a day of remembrance and celebrations of freedom - we should have a separate national holiday, like St Helier's Saint Day, as a national day to celebrate our island identity.”</i></p> <p><i>“I think Liberation Day is too tied in with UK identity and will be counterproductive - if Jersey is trying to establish its own international identity, maybe consider other days as options.”</i></p> <p><i>“No, it should be a separate day, rather than replace the existing holiday.”</i></p> <p><i>“If we had to have a national day, that should be a separate day. Liberation day is specific to freedom after the war.”</i></p> <p><i>“If it were designated Jersey's National day there is a risk that 9 May will be referred to as that rather than "Liberation Day" and, over time, the reason why we remember 9 May as special may be forgotten.”</i></p>	<p><i>“The Corn Riots would be another suitable date, but less well known.”</i></p> <p><i>“If not 9th May, the only other suitable date would be the date of the Battle of Jersey.”</i></p> <p><i>“I’m unsure if we need a national day. I worry that a national day, whilst including other nationalities, would water down the significance that Islanders experienced in the Occupation.”</i></p> <p><i>“Yes as Liberation Day represents the day we became free, but no as it is for commemorating soldiers.”</i></p> <p><i>“We’re a British Crown Dependency, not a nation in our own right. That said, I have no problem having a Jersey Day (without the 'national'), but not sure that 9th May is the most relevant date.”</i></p> <p><i>“I personally think Liberation Day should stop at 100 years”</i></p> <p><i>“Maybe January 6, the day of the battle of Jersey”</i></p>
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<p><i>“This would be a fantastic way to show the important of this day to future Generations and formalise a island historical date”</i></p>		
Other suggestions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 respondents stated that the National Day should be 28 September (the Corn Riots) (0.3% of all respondents). • 4 respondents stated that the National Day should mark the Battle of Flowers (second week of August). • 3 respondents stated that the National Day should be 6 January (Battle of Jersey). 		

Should “Beautiful Jersey” be Jersey’s official local anthem?		
Yes	No	Unsure
<p><i>“Yes, it represents Jersey as an island and helps keep our heritage alive.”</i></p> <p><i>“As far as local Jersey people and many long-standing immigrant residents are concerned, “Beautiful Jersey” is already the anthem, so it should be made it official under that title.”</i></p> <p><i>“Alternatives like “Island Home” just don’t have the historical significance as Beautiful Jersey, which is sung every Liberation Day.”</i></p> <p><i>“I already consider Beautiful Jersey as our anthem. It was so important to my grandparents and parents during the occupation. There can be no other”.</i></p> <p><i>“I think this is a fabulous idea. It should perhaps be amended slightly to be more inclusive - as not all people who consider Jersey their nation will be born here.”</i></p>	<p><i>“I support adoption of “Island Home” in anticipation that with appropriate processes, it could become familiar to many islanders.”</i></p> <p><i>“We need something punchy, rousing but succinct like the Italian or French or Irish anthems. “Beautiful Jersey” is not appropriate - it is a ballad not an anthem.”</i></p> <p><i>“Beautiful Jersey does not reflect our history and heritage - Ma Normandie is far more appropriate.”</i></p> <p><i>“I have heard Beautiful Jersey on many occasions and whilst it is evocative, it does not have the musicality and formality of Island Home. Whilst Beautiful Jersey is a song, Island Home is an anthem.”</i></p> <p><i>“I really don’t like Beautiful Jersey - it makes me cringe. I would much rather stick with the national anthem if nothing else can be put forward.”</i></p>	<p><i>“I’m not bothered about what the anthem is, but the anthem should be in Jerriais.”</i></p> <p><i>“It would certainly come in as a close second, my preference would be Ma Normandie. God Save The King is not Jersey’s national anthem in my book.”</i></p> <p><i>“Living here all my life, I’ve actually never heard it! I see no harm in making it our official anthem, as it would be good to have something specific to Jersey, rather than just God Save the King.”</i></p> <p><i>“It’s a bit old fashioned and dreary. Its heritage is sound but maybe it should be given a 2025 update.”</i></p> <p><i>“In the absence of a will to commit systemically to a new anthem, I think Beautiful Jersey will have to do. It would have to be taught in schools, sung by our teams on away visits and</i></p>

<p><i>“It is already used as the anthem by the Jersey Island Games team, Commonwealth Games team and cricket team, as well as many other sports.”</i></p>		<p><i>accompany the National Anthem (God Save the King) for island-related events.”</i></p>
<p>Other suggestions</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 39 respondents stated that the sole anthem (both national and local) should be “God Save the King”. This accounts for 1.6% of all respondents. • 15 respondents stated that the local anthem should be “Ma Normandie” (<1% of all respondents). • 12 respondents stated that the local anthem should be “Island Home” (<1% of all respondents). 		