5. Statement by the Chairman of the Privileges and Procedures Committee regarding assistance towards the costs publicising candidates' election manifestos

5.1 The Connétable of St. Clement (Chairman, Privileges and Procedures Committee):
Since lodging the draft Public Elections (Expenditure and Donations) (Jersey) Regulations 200-, P.82/2008, on 30th May 2008, the Privileges and Procedures Committee has given further consideration to the manner in which assistance can be given to candidates to circulate information about their policies. As stated in the report accompanying P.82/2008, the committee had originally hoped that it might be possible to offer some form of free posting for candidates but, unfortunately the cost associated with this option made it prohibitive. Although the committee had therefore concluded that no assistance beyond the establishment of a website would be offered, the committee decided last Wednesday that it should also publish 2 inserts in the *Jersey Evening Post*, one for the Senators' and Connétables' elections and one for the Deputies' elections. In these inserts each candidate will be given a standard and identical space where he or she could publish details of his or her manifesto for election. The length of the insert will clearly depend on the number of candidates but the P.P.C. (Privileges and Procedures Committee) is currently hopeful that approximately one half of a page will be offered to each candidate. The committee would stress that the content of each candidate's section will be entirely a matter for the candidates concerned, with each candidate being requested to supply the necessary copy to one central location by the publication date. As stated above, P.P.C. was initially disappointed that other methods of assisting candidates to distribute election material were not possible and the committee hopes that the *J.E.P. (Jersey Evening Post)* insert will go some way towards improving the knowledge of electors, about each candidate. It is important to remember that if the Committee's proposal to P.82/2008 are adopted, the restrictions on the level of election expenses proposed would not allow the posting by candidates of manifestos to each elector, as the total cost of postage would exceed the permitted amounts.

5.1.1 The Deputy of St. Martin:
I am just a little bit surprised to see what it says here: "The length of the insert will clearly depend on the number of candidates but the P.P.C. is currently hopeful that approximately one half of a page will be offered to each candidate." Could I ask the chairman, is it half a page of the *Evening Post* or half a page of some other insert, because it would appear to me that it is going to be rather expensive. If that is the case, how much is it going to cost the States to publicise half a page for each candidate?

The Connétable of St. Clement:
It will be half the page of the normal supplement, the normal insert and it will cost, depending ... it depends on the number of candidates ... how many pages we were going to ask for, but it will come to under £9,000.

5.1.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:
Would the Chairman please inform Members what alternatives he examined and what cost are the alternatives that he rejected?

The Connétable of St. Clement:
We looked at possibilities allowing the candidates to post an election address to each elector and it came to, as far as my memory goes, something like £50,000.

5.1.3 Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:
I think that I did not understand the answer the chairman gave. Would he explain to the Assembly what the costs were for a direct mail of manifestos to individual voters?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

I said to the previous questioner that it came to somewhere in the region of £50,000.

5.1.4 Deputy J.B. Fox of St. Helier:
In relation to the proposed P.82, that candidates would be restricted on the amount that they could employ, as the information is coming out now of looking at an alternative supplement in the *Jersey Evening Post*, will that mean that individual candidates will not now be able to send individual letters or leaflets to their constituents because of the proposal of one supplement of a half page, or thereabouts in the *Evening Post*, or will they be dispensing with the original proposal of not allowing the extra money for the cost of postage? Sorry, the basic argument I am asking for is, under P.82, it was proposed to limit the amount that the election give, but it was proposed, at that point, to allow for postage to be covered by other means. That will not now happen. Therefore, is it still P.P.C.'s intention to restrict the amount of money, which would debar candidates from being able to send, to individual recipients, their manifestos?

The Connétable of St. Clement:
The answer to that question is, yes, it would be the P.P.C.'s intention to restrict the amount that candidates can spend.

5.1.5 Deputy A. Breckon of St. Saviour:
I wonder if the chairman could advise the House if he is aware of any other alternative distribution methods, for example, the telephone directories are distributed by somebody else, apart from the Post Office, if any of this was explored, because £50,000 seems an extortionate situation of a monopoly?

The Connétable of St. Clement:
I am not totally aware of postal regulations but I think that the Jersey Post has the monopoly on certain sizes and this would come into the relationship of the electoral process.

5.1.6 Deputy C.J. Scott Warren:
I have 2 questions; can the chairman give details or at least confirm that the expenditure allowed by candidates will be extremely low, in view of what has just been said, regarding individuals doing a direct mail of leaflets? Also, does the chairman accept that, in a Deputies' election, there really is no need for Island-wide distribution via the *J.E.P.*?

The Connétable of St. Clement:
The amount that candidates can spend is what the committee considers is a fair amount. As far as the Deputies' elections are concerned, well, it will be clearly identified and we are still in negotiation with the people that are going to do the inserts, but it will be clearly indicated by Parishes, who the candidates are for that particular Parish. It will be clearly indicated within the document.

5.1.7 Deputy G.P. Southern:
Could the chairman please indicate when his committee started working on these particular solutions to the problem? Was it in 2005 or was it more recently?

The Connétable of St. Clement:
At the beginning of this year, Sir.

5.1.8 Senator L. Norman:
Does the chairman not accept that the level of election expenses should be fixed, so that each candidate should have the ability to mail one manifesto to each and every elector?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

I think it is a question of how much a particular candidate could afford to spend and I think this is a fairer way of dealing with that situation.

5.1.9 Senator L. Norman:
Is the Chairman saying it is fairer that the candidate should not be able to communicate directly by mail with each and every elector?

The Connétable of St. Clement:
I think it is a question of how much candidates can afford to spend, Sir.

5.1.10 Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:
Would the chairman confirm whether or not his committee discussed the fact that it was vital for all electors in the Island to be informed of candidates' policies? Did his committee discuss the fact that the candidates' electors will be responsible for the discharging of approximately the payments of up to £2 billion during the course of the 3 years that people will be elected and did he set that aside with the £50,000 he was proposing? Does he not think that £2 per voter is an investment well made in the pursuance of better and more informed democracy, and would he finally confirm what his under-spend was last year?

The Connétable of St. Clement:
I think the under-spend is irrelevant to this question, Sir. I think this is the fairest way of every candidate being able to communicate, without the necessity of having an unlimited amount of money to spend.

5.1.11 Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:
Would the chairman please explain how he comes to the conclusion that it is fair that neither candidates are now going to be able to discharge and send manifestos, nor the States? Where is the fairness to the electors of Jersey to get informed about candidates' policies? There is no fairness at all, would he agree?

The Connétable of St. Clement:
I would not, Sir.

5.1.12 Deputy A. Breckon:
I wonder if the chairman would agree with me that a cost of over £13,000 for a distribution to over 37,000 residential addresses is beyond the means of most people who might be thinking of standing?

The Connétable of St. Clement:
Yes, I think it is, Sir.

5.1.13 Deputy G.W.J. de Faye of St. Helier:
I wonder if the chairman and his committee are not concerned that, in their determination to find a level playing field between candidates, they are going to make it extremely difficult for voters to tell the difference between most candidates?

The Connétable of St. Clement:
I think the electors are quite capable and quite intelligent enough to make that judgment.

5.1.14 Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:
Would the chairman explain how he expects electors to be informed of candidates' policies? Would he agree to reconsider this decision that he has made and would he also consider taking back to his committee, the proposal of sending out polling cards that electors can not only be informed of policies but also where and how they can vote?

The Connétable of St. Clement:
As far as polling cards are concerned, that is a matter for the Constables, not for the P.P.C., Sir. We are trying to make it a level playing field and this is the fairest way the committee consider that every candidate will be able to put their thoughts to the public because the website will also be in operation as well and, having said that, I think that we have tried to look at posting. The cheapest way of posting would be all the candidates would have their leaflets in one envelope and then it is a question of whether the public would read every candidate. We feel that this is at least a fairer way and it makes certain that all the candidates can afford to circulate their manifestos to the Island.

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:
Would he agree to reconsider it, I asked? Would he reconsider his committee's decision?

The Connétable of St. Clement:
We will not, Sir.

5.1.15 The Connétable of St. Peter:
Would the chairman agree that these policies that his committee are bringing forward are, in my opinion, not doing any good to encourage the electorate and that they are indeed killing a lot of the interest, and that is the reason why we are not getting the support in elections in the Island that we have not seen in recent years? The quicker a lot of these ideas are kicked out, quite frankly, the better for all concerned. **[Approbation]**