

STATES OF JERSEY



MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF HAVRE DES PAS BATHING POOL AND CAFE

Lodged au Greffe on 1st October 2024
by Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South
Earliest date for debate: 22nd October 2024

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

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

to request the Minister for Infrastructure –

- (a) to put the contract for the management and maintenance of the Havre des Pas Bathing Pool and Cafe out to tender, with a view to concluding such tender process before the end of 2024, subject to the completion of all necessary underlying contractual obligations; and
- (b) to extend the contract of the current tenant of the Lido, Havre des Pas Bathing Pool, should the tenant so wish, until such time as the tender process is completed.

DEPUTY D.J. WARR OF ST. HELIER SOUTH

REPORT

The purpose of this proposition is to ensure that this historically significant, unique, iconic and special site thrives by transitioning its management from Government oversight to a community-led charitable framework. We must avoid the fate of other local treasures such as La Folie, Fort Regent, and the Victoria pool Jersey Marine Lake. I have stepped forward to lead efforts in creating a sustainable future that benefits both our community and visitors.

The current management framework was established under [P.93/2005](#), which created Jersey Property Holdings. Its aims include:

- Optimise operational efficiency;
- use the estate to improve the delivery of public services;
- minimise under-performing/unproductive property assets;
- optimise the efficiency of building maintenance;
- minimise management costs; and
- maximise and implement opportunities for cost reduction and for extracting capital from the portfolio.

For years, it has been recognized that there has been an inability to properly maintain the estate of “le Public.” The establishment of Jersey Property Holdings was thought to be a solution. Unfortunately, successive governments have been reluctant to provide adequate funding to ensure that the £1 billion worth of assets is properly maintained. Furthermore, the latest budget proposes a cut of £2 million to the Infrastructure Rolling Vote and Public Realm head of expenditure within the Capital Programme.¹

The latest [Fiscal Policy Panel Annual Report](#) (September 2024) highlights the limited funds available once Health and Education expenditures have been accounted for. The maintenance of the Hâvre des Pas Bathing Pool exemplifies this issue. While I was pleased to see the recent repair of the boardwalk lighting, I was dismayed to learn that these lights had been out of operation for approximately seven years after being disconnected from the power source by Jersey Property Holdings and then left.

In the report concerning proposition [P.61/2022](#) brought forth by the Constable of St. Helier and unanimously supported by this Assembly, the Constable referenced several areas that urgently required attention. To this day, the roof, covering the commercially leased space continues to leak costing the current tenant tens of thousands in insurance claims, despite first informing the landlord of the issue in 2016.

In his proposition, the Constable requested the establishment of ‘a Steering Group to maximize the benefit of the Lido to the community and resolve any issues arising in future’.² Although this Steering Group was only formed this year, it has already garnered substantial support from local residents, who increasingly view their involvement in the daily operations of the bathing pool site as crucial to long-term sustainability. However, the other requests from this proposition remain unaddressed.

A visit to La Vallette Bathing Pools in Guernsey by members of the Steering Group was widely reported. We learned about the challenges they faced, which mirror our own. In

¹ [p.51-2024 \(re-issue\).pdf \(gov.je\)](#), (p. 64)

² [p.61-2022.pdf \(gov.je\)](#), (p. 2)

Guernsey, a charitable entity was established to renovate and manage their Victorian bathing site, and the government now solely maintains the swimming pools.

This revelation was transformative for the Steering Group, presenting a new model for the operation of our own bathing pool. We joined FutureLidos.org, a peer network across the UK and Ireland, collaborating to revive and restore Lidos managed by communities. We consulted with the Charities Commission regarding the possibility of transitioning management and maintenance of the bathing pool site from Jersey Property Holdings to a limited company by guarantee with charitable status, which is the recommended structure for this type of initiative. This transition would allow all funds raised through site activities to be ringfenced and solely used for ongoing maintenance, in contrast to the current situation where there is no specific allocated budget for maintenance of the Havre des Pas complex.³

It is acknowledged that daily commercial activities alone would be insufficient for maintaining the continued free usage of public pool and its amenities, necessitating continued funding from the States of Jersey. In response to Written Question [WQ.298/2024](#), it was revealed that the average annual expenditure on the entire H vre des Pas Bathing Pool site has been approximately  120,000 in recent years. It is unclear how much of this is allocated to physical maintenance versus lifeguard services, third-party facilities management, and commercial cleaning contracts. Nonetheless, the aim is that this funding, combined with revenues generated from charitable activities, will provide the necessary budget to restore the H vre des Pas Bathing Pool to a venue of which we can all be proud. The current management model resembles a cycle of "famine and feast," where the choice between funding school repairs and the pool invariably favours the school, adversely impacting pool users.

The Steering Group has now established a company limited by guarantee named "Love Our Lido." This entity is working on its application for charitable status in collaboration with the Commission. The Lido Steering Group continually shares updates and solicits feedback from the community through its newsletter, website, and social media, emphasizing community engagement. The group comprises a diverse array of volunteers with extensive experience in multiple user groups related to the site.

Under current finance laws, the government 'must' tender the site. I hope that the government, will align with the intentions of the Lido Steering Group and the [H vre des Pas Improvement Group](#), and support transferring full management and maintenance of the site to the new company/charity, thereby securing its future. The H vre des Pas Improvement Group are also in favour of this transition and the continuation of the existing tenant.

Turning to part b) of this proposition, which is equally critical to the success of this initiative and the site's sustainable future: it is currently the intent of the Minister for Infrastructure to obtain vacant possession of the commercial area of the site by the end of October 2024.

There are considerable risks associated with the approach proposed by the Minister for Infrastructure. History shows that while it is easy to close a business, it is incredibly challenging to re-establish a successful operation, particularly at a site as demanding as this. I draw the Assembly's attention to the fate of La Folie 20 years ago and pose the question: do we wish to risk a similar outcome for our Lido?

³ [2024.06.11 states - edited \(eg\).pdf \(gov.je\)](#), p. 30

La Folie closed in 2004, and while various ideas such as 'heritage-style' visitor accommodation, an 'upmarket restaurant,' and a 'maritime attraction' were proposed, nothing has materialized. A written question posed at that time reveals much about the situation:

[1240/5 \(4304\)](#) WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BY DEPUTY S.S.PA. POWER OF ST. BRELADE ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 10th MARCH 2009.

“Question

Can the Minister explain why La Folie Inn, owned by the States, has been left empty for over 6 years and can he advise the cost of re-roofing the building prior to its closure?

Answer

In November 2004, the Harbours and Airport Committee agreed to release the then licensee of La Folie Inn from his contract following notice to quit due to a downturn in business. As the property was included in the Jersey Harbours Master Plan it was not considered appropriate to enter into a long term lease without any assurance of redevelopment. Consequently it was proposed that a 3 to 5 year lease agreement with a new tenant be secured.

Expressions of interest in the site were received and a preferred developer selected, however unfortunately this developer failed to complete and the planning process ended. In 2006, the site was re-advertised for a short term lease; the long term intention always being to redevelop the whole area.

This process failed to find a suitable tenant as the building requires significant investment to make a return.

La Folie quay is currently being master-planned by Jersey Harbours, WEB and Property Holdings with the intention of maximising the greater value of the whole site for marine leisure in the long term.

The work to re-roof La Folie Inn was carried out in 2002 at a cost of £25,000”

That was 20 years ago, and La Folie remains a cautionary tale of the dangers regarding government overreach. I do not wish to see history repeat itself. I believe the Minister for Infrastructure is mistaken if he thinks that the solution to his department's challenges at the Hâvre des Pas Bathing Pool is to remove the existing operator while a tender process is ongoing. Despite facing numerous challenges, governmental, economic and of course COVID, the tenant has been the only stable presence at this site for the past few years, successfully growing business demand, engaging with and serving the community, and raising awareness of the site both locally and beyond.

While La Folie is a notable example, we need only to consider how many hospitality businesses failed to reopen after COVID -without significant government interference- to appreciate the risk posed by the proposed actions regarding our Bathing Pool site. This is an unnecessary risk that could harm many, cause unemployment and hardship, illustrates a concerning lack of governmental support for local businesses, and completely fails to support our new [Visitor Economy Strategy](#) for growth, which I, as a business operator, consider misguided.

I urge members to support this proposition and support the will of ‘the people’ to revitalize this iconic site. This model, proven successful elsewhere, could be replicated across other properties currently managed by Jersey Property Holdings and owned by "Le Public" of this Island.

Financial and staffing implications

The cost to undertake the tender process should come from within the existing departmental budget.

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.