

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
BY DEPUTY G.C.L. BAUDAINS OF ST. CLEMENT
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 13th MAY 2014**

Question

Would the Minister advise whether he intends giving support to fishermen who have suffered as a result of this winter's weather and, if so, would he describe the means by which he will achieve that?

Is he considering interest-free loans or grants and, if so, would he explain how that will be administered and how he will achieve fairness?

Furthermore, should the support be, for example, funding to replace lost or damaged pots etc, how will he ensure claims are genuine?

Answer

My Assistant Minister, the Deputy of Grouville, wrote to commercial fishermen on 14th April 2014 outlining a package of measures designed to support them following the recent sustained period of bad weather.

The package comprises:

- The Economic Development Department (ED) covering the remaining Harbour Dues and / or commercial moorings (Ports of Jersey already discount Harbour Dues by 50%) of commercial fishermen for 2014 (ED will pay Ports of Jersey who will reimburse dues already paid).
- ED, supported by the Chief Minister, are working with Treasury & Resources to secure funding to be able to provide grants to commercial fishermen covering up to 80% of the cost of replacement or 20% of the cost of repairing, pots lost in the recent bad weather. If funding is secured from Treasury & Resources, grants will be awarded based on information provided to the Department that warrants that the losses have been incurred and that any grant monies awarded have been used for the purpose for which they were intended. All grants will be subject to published criteria.
- ED covering the Jersey Fishermen's Association's contribution in 2014 and 2015 to the annual Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) audit for the accreditation of the lobster fisheries and providing the minimum order quantity of bands carrying the MSC logo.
- ED have arranged for fishermen to discuss with Social Security means to be exempted from contributions liability during times when businesses are suffering from reduced incomes with the previously supplied dedicated points of contact.
- ED will arrange for officers from Social Security to meet the JFA and other commercial fishermen to explain Income Support and/or discuss any problems fishermen may be experiencing in accessing the scheme. The Income Support scheme is available to self-employed people on low incomes, subject to their other family circumstances and can adjust to variations in earnings.
- The structure of contributions, particularly for the self-employed, including share fishermen, will form a significant part of the fundamental review of the Social Security contribution scheme from 2015 and officers of ED will be involved in proposing new structures and schemes.

- ED will arrange individual and collective business support as appropriate, in particular for marketing and export activity, by Jersey Business Limited.
- ED will facilitate discussions between the JFA and the Genuine Jersey Products Association with a view to promoting the consumption of local fish and shellfish.
- ED working with the JFA, and other industry representatives, to commission and deliver a long term business development strategy for the fishing industry in Jersey.
- Strenuous efforts being continued by Government at political level, to assist fishermen with the territorial challenges they currently face with Guernsey.

Officers are working with the JFA to establish a set of criteria in addition to Financial Directions for the proposed grants which will ensure any grants made are equitable, proportionate, and made to genuine claims only. This will involve the establishment of a panel comprising members of the JFA to review all submitted claims.