

STATES OF JERSEY



DRAFT AMENDMENT (No. 18) OF THE STANDING ORDERS OF THE STATES OF JERSEY

Lodged au Greffe on 13th January 2012
by the Privileges and Procedures Committee

STATES GREFFE



Jersey

DRAFT AMENDMENT (No. 18) OF THE STANDING ORDERS OF THE STATES OF JERSEY

REPORT

On 9th June 2011 the States adopted a proposition of the then Deputy of St. Martin ('Standing Orders: publication of Register of Members' Interests' P.69/2011) and agreed by 35 votes to 9 (with 2 abstentions) "*that Standing Order 154 should be amended to include a requirement for the Greffier of the States to publish the Register of Members' Interests on the States Assembly website and to permit the Greffier to make further arrangements for its publication as deemed appropriate*". The Privileges and Procedures Committee was requested by the States to bring forward for approval the necessary amendment to Standing Orders to give effect to the proposal.

During the debate, the then Chairman of PPC, the Connétable of St. Mary, stated that "*if the Assembly decides that they wish to go online, we recommend that it is done for the new House who will be elected knowing what would be expected of them and there would not be any cause for controversy at all. People will go into the election knowing what to expect of the outcome.*" As a result, the former PPC took no action to implement the decision during the last States.

Those who stood for election in October 2011 did so in the knowledge that the States had already agreed that the Register would in due course be published on the Internet, and PPC is therefore now bringing forward this short amendment which will simply require the Greffier to publish the Register on the States Assembly website. In practice this will be done by having an additional link on each member's biographical page on the website, which will open a copy of that member's Statement of Interests. As stated at the time of the June debate, the publication of interests on a website is now common practice in the majority of legislatures, and the register of interests of members of the States of Guernsey, for example, is published on the www.gov.gg website.

PPC is aware that some members have expressed concern about Internet publication of the Register, but the Committee would point out that the Register is a public document available for inspection in Morier House. Although the Greffier does not allow photocopies to be made, the States received advice from the Solicitor General during the June 2011 debate that there was nothing that could be done to prevent a member of the public from copying out details and then publishing them on a website or blog and it is probably, in PPC's view, only a matter of time before that would happen if no steps are taken to implement official publication through the States Assembly website. Official publication will give the assurance that the information will be kept up-to-date by the States Greffe as changes are reported to the Greffier by members, something

that would almost certainly not happen with unofficial publication on a private website or blog. This point was made by Deputy T.M. Pitman of St. Helier during the June 2011 debate when he stated *“I do not think by objecting to the Deputy of St. Martin’s proposals we are going to achieve anything because the citizens media now, it is quite likely someone will go and sit in there for half an hour, write it all about, put it on the internet and, as I think the proposer said, surely it would be much better to have it done officially where it is all controlled than someone who might want to leave a few bits out of someone’s interests or perhaps add a few bits in.”*

Financial and manpower implications

The uploading of the information to the website will be undertaken by staff of the States Greffe within existing resources. Some minor modifications will be needed to the Assembly website to make an amendment to the content of biographical pages, but this is not expected to cost more than £500 and can be done from the existing website maintenance budget.

Explanatory Note

This amendment to the Standing Orders of the States of Jersey requires the Greffier of the States to publish the register of interests of elected members on the States Assembly website and permits the Greffier to make further arrangements for publication of the register.

The amendment would come into force one month after it is adopted by the States.



Jersey

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Made [date to be inserted]

Coming into force [date to be inserted]

THE STATES, in pursuance of Article 48 of the States of Jersey Law 2005¹,
have made the following amendment to Standing Orders –

1 Standing order 154 amended

In standing order 154 of the Standing Orders of the States of Jersey², after paragraph (2) there shall be added the following paragraph –

“(3) The Greffier –

- (a) shall publish the register on the internet website maintained by the Greffier on behalf of the States; and
- (b) may make further arrangements for its publication.”.

2 Citation and commencement

This Amendment may be cited as Amendment (No. 18) of the Standing Orders of the States of Jersey and shall come into force one month after it is made.

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- ¹ *chapter 16.800*
² *chapter 16.800.15*