

The Scrutiny Office

States Greffe

Morier House

St. Helier

JE1 1DD

27th March 2009

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am privileged to be provided with an office at the Fort for the use of Jersey Swimming Club and as such also appreciate the work that is done by Education, Sport and Culture to assist the many sports on this Island in their endeavour to produce healthy generations of Jersey residents.

Sitting in my office Monday to Friday at Fort Regent I am always amazed by the work carried out by the team of workers when there is a concert/event being held in the Gloucester Hall. The ease with which they change the area from a large Sports Hall into a Concert Hall is amazing. This is mainly due to the large amount of practice that they have had over the years and the dexterity that they now bring to the job.

Having said that, it is sad to see the demise of parts of the Fort and the lack of facilities for young people. The play area in the Piazza is often very busy with mums taking the time to meet friends for a coffee, but apart from this there is nothing for the youngsters to do. With a culture where young people are often hanging about street corners bored I would hope that somewhere like the Fort could provide a distraction for them.

Having said that the Jersey Instrumental Service is to be congratulated on its increase in growth and the amount of young talent it is finding in our Island Schools and their use of the Fort should long continue.

The Sports facilities in the Gym area are superb as is the staff and the availability of areas to be used for indoor bowls, gymnastics, karate and similar sports is outstanding. This centre of excellence is only lacking in a swimming pool. The structure on the hill has been left to rot away and will eventually become an eyesore. This should be demolished and in an ideal world a 51 metre pool could be built in its place. This would have a boom which could be moved giving a 50m competition pool or two 25metre pools for teaching and training. If the island had this facility visiting teams would come over to train creating a source of income for the Island. Of course there would have to be the facility to board the swimmers and if ever Haut de la Garenne or a similar Hostel becomes available the promise would be there.

The Aquasplash is not an ideal pool, although 25metres long it has no electronic equipment to enable galas to be held there. Because of the current climate the need to close the Leisure Pool during competitions would cause an even greater deficit in the money made at the pool and therefore cannot be allowed. Haute Vallee and Langford are excellent pools but again not the best place for competitions due to lack of seating, electronics etc. Les Quennevais our only competition pool is always under pressure when competition time is needed.

When the Fort Regent Pool was up and running it added to the sporting prowess of the Fort and even now I am asked by visitors where the pool is. The Fort Pool gave us the opportunity to hold the Island Games and also to hold competitions without putting pressure on Les Quennevais, an all round good situation as members could still swim at a pool when competitions were taking place.

We as an island must make sure that our present and future generation of children maintain a fit and healthy lifestyle and sport and exercise are paramount to preventing obese children who will eventually be a drain on our Health Services as their health deteriorates in later life. Swimming is an excellent form of exercise which with lessons learnt in how to remain safe in the water will also save lives, given the number of children who go down to the beach every summer.

I would like to see the Fort humming with life, ask anyone who used to come up here in the 60s and 70s when there were facilities for the children and they will tell you how brilliant it was. The current sporting facilities should be paramount in any refit, but this place is not just a Centre for Sporting Excellence it is also a Centre for Family Entertainment, a Centre with spectacular views of the Island. A rooftop Restaurant should be a must, not an expensive outlet though one in which families could meet up for a meal without breaking the budget and get to admire the views at the same time.

How about a new pool with a Restaurant on top, now where have I heard of that idea before??????

Finally I will add that Fort Regent is so visible on top of the hill that no-one visiting the Island can miss it, even more reason to make it accessible and usable by as many people as possible. This venue should be a flagship for the Island not an eyesore. The dome should remain as part of the structure and all effort should be put into making it an even better centre than it is at present. Over the years certain areas will need to be updated but the areas that are excellent now should not be changed only added to, to increase their prowess.

I will add that these are my personal views and not necessarily the views of Jersey Swimming Club although of course we would love to have the use of a 50metre pool, as the cost of travelling to train in France or the U.K. is getting more and more expensive. Put this down to the ramblings of someone who sees the Fort on a daily basis and who feels strongly about the Jersey Heritage having been the produce of a Jersey father!

Yours faithfully,

Carole Penfold