

STATES OF JERSEY

Health, Social Security and Housing Scrutiny Panel Respite Care Review

Session 1

WEDNESDAY, 29th FEBRUARY 2012

Panel:

Deputy K.L. Moore of St. Peter (Chairman)
Deputy J.A. Hilton of St. Helier (Vice-Chairman)
Deputy J.G. Reed of St. Ouen

Witness:

Chief Barker of Variety Club
Second Assistant to Chief Barker of Variety Club

Present:

Ms. K. Boydens (Scrutiny Officer)
Ms. F. Carnegie (Scrutiny Officer)
Mr. S. Jones (Adviser)

[15:30]

Deputy K.L. Moore of St. Peter (Chairman):

While we get ourselves settled, I would just like to formally welcome you and members of the public to our panel hearing of the Health, Social Security and Housing Scrutiny Panel. We are holding our review into respite care services for children and young people. I just have some housekeeping. I have to draw everyone's attention to the code of behaviour for members of the public, it is displayed on the wall and in particular the following points, all electronic devices including mobile phones should be switched to silent. The taking of digital images or audio recordings by the public will not be permitted. If you wish to eat or drink please leave the room. Finally, I would also ask that members of the public do not interfere in the proceedings and as soon as the hearing is closed that those are to leave quietly. Members and witnesses may wish to make themselves available afterwards but any communication should take place outside the building. So, just for the record as well, we will all introduce ourselves. I am the Chairman of the Panel, I am Kristina Moore.

Deputy J.G. Reed of St. Ouen:
Deputy James Reed, panel member.

Mr. S. Jones (Adviser):
I am Sion Jones. I am here to advise the panel on the review.

Ms. F. Carnegie (Scrutiny Officer):
Fiona Carnegie, Scrutiny Officer.

Ms. K. Boydens (Scrutiny Officer):
Kellie Boydens, Scrutiny Officer.

The Deputy of St. Peter:
For the record, would you like to introduce yourself?

Chief Barker of Variety Club:
I am the Chief Barker of Variety Club.

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:
I am the second assistant to the Chief Barker but also Variety at Work is my main job.

The Deputy of St. Peter:
Okay, lovely. So we would like to start with if you would be kind enough to talk us through Variety's involvement in respite care. We are aware of Oakwell, for example, where I believe you have played a large part in providing the building and adding on to it, keeping up the garden, et cetera, and other places as well. So if you are able to, if you could give us an overview of the provision that you have supported so far?

Chief Barker of Variety Club:
Just a slight overview of Variety is. Variety as you probably know has been going in the Island for 40-odd years, I think it is 42 years. What Variety does is every penny that is raised in this Island is spent in this Island on the children of the Island, which we believe is a very important point. We run on a very tight budget in our office. We built Maufant Variety Youth Centre many years ago and we have a part on the side which we use for our offices. We operate with a full time secretary and a part time secretary and 90 per cent of their salaries are paid for by the subs that all the members pay. So Variety has Barkers, which are members, they have Ladies Variety and we have now got Friends of Variety who are a younger part of Variety, hopefully to move in to Variety over the next few years. What we operate is that we are here with all the funding that we raise to spend on the children of this Island, and respite care has come up, as you have said we have helped in the past Oakwell, we have helped at Eden House, we did offer last year to help at Brig-y-Don but the public health managed to find monies within their own budget to do that, and Mont à l'Abbé we have helped quite considerably in the past. When we had a party before Christmas what happened is that we had quite a few children's parents who were there who found that they were not getting the

respite care that they needed. They were being ... not for any specific reason, it is just that they said that there were more people on full time care who were taking up the beds so that ... you know, they were reaching the end of their tether, they were quite extremely tired because it must be a tremendously hard job to look after children with special needs. Do you have anything else?

The Deputy of St. Peter:

What is your understanding of respite and why did the Variety Club consider it was an important thing to invest in and to assist with?

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

It is for the benefit of children. That if a parent is physically tired they cannot look after the child so therefore they do need time when ... you know, they have time to themselves and we consider that very, very important. We do not differentiate with any child. Any child who needs help we are there to try and help them, because it is the people of this Island who raise the money that we utilise to try and help all the children here.

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

It also impacts on the rest of the family. You know, if there is younger or even older children, if you have a child with special needs if you could take them out of that situation, even for a couple of days, it just helps the whole family then to work together again as a unit and maybe have a break away or something, which would do them the world of good.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

You say the Variety Club has been operating for over 40 years, during that time has there always been an involvement in supporting the services to children with special needs?

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Yes.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Would you say that you have seen that demand increase over the time?

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Yes, I am not that old but since I have been involved in Variety, which will be the last 25 years, yes, it definitely has increased and I do not know the reason. Who knows the reason but we are there as ... in many instances we are there as like a back up. We do not believe that is our primary objective. Our primary objective is to try and spread what we do with all children who do need help in whatever way we can.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Just to help us get an understanding of your contribution on an annual basis, your contribution towards more respite care and so on and so forth, all to do with children's special needs, what sort of percentage of your overall funds would you say are used in that area?

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

I suppose that varies on the demands that we get. What we do not get involved in is something that is paying salaries for staff. That we do not do. But we will help if areas need refurbishment, things like that. Also in our constitution we cannot commit our committee, which is what we call our crew, for future years. But if we, for example, take a major project on then what we will do is that will all be accounted for and that will be ongoing but this is why we do not get involved with paying for staff.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

That is why you specifically have focused, as you say, provision of respite facilities, the provision of transport and the buses to help that at level.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Also we have provided specialist beds, hoists.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Right, so it goes down to that sort of level.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Oh yes, for families ... we helped a family about 3 or 4 years ago with a small car ... well, when I say small not a bus but one that had the ramps and things. So we will help in any way like that. But it is not salaries, we do not do the salaries.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Out of interest, what is roughly the overall sum that Variety Club have raised during the year?

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

We would hope to raise - obviously this is in confidence - £120,000 to £130,000 but we work very hard at that. We have a ball in November which raises considerable sums, we have just had gold heart, so I do not know whether you have seen those, that is one of the things, we will be resurrecting our bike-athon. This is why the Friends of Variety are so important because they are going to help drive these things forward. But there are lots of different people who raise monies for Variety. We have Flag Day this year on 18th August where hopefully we will raise considerable funds.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Again, forgive me for my question, but with regard to Oakwell it is my understanding that you helped purchase that property, am I right?

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Yes, I cannot remember.

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

It was the extension, was it not?

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Yes, we built the extension several years ago.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

The extension, right.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

I think that we have also refurbished part of it about 4 or 5 years ago.

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

We have done the gardens as well.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

At Mont à l'Abbé we have the sensory gardens, among other things we have done trim trials at school which were ... 2 or 3, was it not?

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

Yes, and we put in a special playground up at Oakwell which was for special needs children.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

So generally am I right in saying that because of your constitution your funding is limited to a project that is able to be completed within a 12 month period?

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

No, no. As long as it is agreed and committed, because these things obviously take longer, and if it is a big project it can take a couple or 3 years. We have not had a major project for several years that I can recollect.

Mr. S. Jones:

It is more just one-off items of expenditure. So not ongoing costs like staff salaries, energy bills and all that kind of thing?

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Yes. I mean, we will help families, for example, for after school care, but we will only commit ourselves to a certain length of time. We have what we call Variety at Work which is the main part of our work which Sandra runs and has for several years. If you just want to explain what that is.

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

That is the welfare side. So daily we have people coming to us with requests for food, for nappies or shoes, for children to go on a school outing, it could be anything but it is huge because it is daily. We send out these vouchers to these families who are in dire need, some do not have any money at all and we have just got to help them as soon as possible.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

But also often when the ... we have never quite understood this, but if someone is in a States flat and they move, they just rip out all the carpets, curtains, the whole lot. Even if they are serviceable and we will supply them

because we just do not think that children should be living in accommodation without carpets, without beds. You know, it is quite harrowing, is it not?

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

It is. It really is, and you would not think on the Island that you would have this but it is an eye opener when you do a job like this.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

That is a daily occurrence?

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

Absolutely.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Yes.

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

Of course with the income support we have a few problems there because we have had families, 2 for example in the last 6 months, who have gone off the Island because the babies are ... either there is a problem with the baby and the mother has had to stay with the baby in hospital in England, after 28 days income support is stopped.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

So how closely do you work with income support?

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

I try to work as close as I can but I do not get as much information as I would like to, even though we have got the data protection clause signed on our form. Because you just do not know how many people are going to different charities who might all be getting the same help. So we try to check it out as much as we can.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

So you work with income support, you work with the children's service ...

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

Parish halls.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

The parish halls. Education Department?

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

Yes.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Yes.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Who else is included in your list of partners, if you like?

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

I think that is pretty much covered who we deal with.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

What about others, what I would term as third sector providers?

[15:45]

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

The charities? We tend to plough our own furrow. The only time we have tried to raise funds together we came unstuck and so we would tend to do that ourselves and we would then call on people to help us.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I am just trying to think, for instance we know there is Autism Jersey as a group, would they ... in the normal course of events they would not necessarily approach you directly with some identified need. It is more likely they would suggest one of their clients would contact you as an individual?

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Contact us, yes.

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

When Phil Le Claire was at Autism, he did used to contact me direct if there was a problem and he knew that there was a family in real need which he could not help. So he has done in the past.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

But that is not necessarily the case at the moment?

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

No, I do not know who is in charge of Autism now so much but Help a Jersey Child, also people there, one of them is Wendy Hurford and she contacts me as well, because they get people contacting them as well, so that we can work together.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Brighter Futures.

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

Yes, Brighter Futures.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I will let you have a go, Kristina. Just one last question. It seems though that you are more than prepared to work with any partner to ensure that a need is met.

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

Absolutely.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Is that a correct statement?

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Any child that needs help, we are here and that is why we raise the monies in this Island to be spent in this Island, purely for children. Apart from the secretary and the part time secretary, those are the only people who are paid. We do not pay anybody else. Obviously if we put on a major event and we have to employ cabaret then we would pay them but often a lot of the acts, et cetera, in the Island will give their time for free for us.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

If you invest a substantial amount in a project, say like the refurbishment of Oakwell, do you ever place any demands on the organisations that you have helped in that you must continue to use this property for this reason in perpetuity, for example?

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

For the children. Well, we would, yes. The other thing we probably have had is a plaque on the wall. Yes, I think it is the same thing with the Sunshine Coaches, we do say that they have to be kept in proper order, they are properly maintained, because unless they are then they could be a hazard for children. So it would be ... if we spend substantial sums, we work on the basis that if we do spend substantial sums we then have to go out and raise it which really focuses all our membership. But, yes, it is for children.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Yes, so if an alternative site was found to provide respite for the children who currently go to Oakwell would you have a problem - this is purely a hypothetical question - with that site being given an alternative use or would fund another project that would still benefit children but not at that site?

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Yes, obviously what we are saying here, we have approved to agree because everything we do is by consensus. Theoretically what the Chief Barker says goes but it does not happen half the time. So, yes, it is by consensus. For example, Les Amis was built by Variety but because ... originally it was for children and then because obviously the clients got older Variety had to step back and I think that was given ... I mean, we have got all the minutes and things but that was given to Les Amis. I cannot remember what it was called.

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

I do not know, I cannot remember what it was called. It is by the *Evening Post*.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Yes, as you drive up on the left of where the ramp is.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

That is very helpful, thank you. Going back to the pre-Christmas party and the contact you had with those parents. Have you met those families on numerous occasions? You would maintain contact with them?

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Yes, we would see ... we do put on parties at different times, or take them out on outings but it was more specifically that night that they said ... because there seemed to be ... I suppose there must have been certain times when they were going to have respite that had been cancelled.

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

But they all stayed on at the Christmas party and they enjoyed the party as well, so we made it a party for the parents as well as the children and that is what they really appreciated. They said they had such a wonderful time because they do not get that opportunity and then they told us, you see, about the respite problem.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

You have probably also seen that we did Child of the Year last year, for the second year because there is so much criticism of young people we felt that it would be ideal to show the Island that there are fantastic kids here, there is only a tiny small minority. There were kids with learning difficulties who won various awards last year.

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

The little boy whose mother is in a wheelchair and he is the carer, he really helps a lot and they have sent in photographs this week thanking us and said what a fantastic incentive to do this. You know, we have had children who have lost partial limbs, and children with illnesses. The boy with teenage cancer, Kelvin, it has been absolutely fantastic what he has done. It has just been so great that we could get these children recognised for what they do.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

I presume you also organise outings and one-off events for the child who is a carer and various others?

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

Yes, we do. Well, they win ... they have lovely prizes because the event itself is sponsored by the Co-op, which we are grateful for, and they get that outing but this year we are going to partner up with Helping Wings so all the children who are going to be shortlisted are all going to get flights at the Aero Club, so that is going to be fabulous.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Do you feel that you are in a good partnership, a good relationship, with the States departments, or do you think there could be improvements in the way that you operate alongside of Government?

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

I used to work in the States, I used to work in schooling. But the only problem I have has been the income support because they have just closed down on me and said: "No, we can't give you any information at all" and I said: "Even if I am not asking you for names or I am not giving you names or whatever, or it is just between us and I have this data protection clause." Because I just do not want to hand out money or goods to people who are already getting it.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

From what you have told us, you are making a significant contribution on an annual basis to supporting children in all sorts of different ways and it seems very clear to us that all the different partners need to work closely together because we all have the same aims and objectives and I think that that is ... it is interesting to hear your comments because, as I say, obviously income support is one area but in all of the other areas, whether it is children's service or any other department, would you say that you have got a close working relationship with each of those or do you think there still could be further development?

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

I think there could be a further development really because we do not meet up, which I think would be quite a good thing, if you could meet up with, say, people from different departments that you are associated with.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I get criticised for asking too many questions. Do you meet up with other third sector or charitable organisations that are also focused on supporting children during the year?

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

I have got contacts in a lot of the different associations like Headway, and I used to have the Waters, which I do not have now, the Bridge, I have a very close association there. We have just sent a party of children to the circus. But, no, I think we do have good association with quite a few people.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Obviously personalities change and different people are there but generally there is someone among our membership who might know other people. I think that what Sandra was saying was that when a problem, which I just could not believe ... with this little baby in Southampton and when we were told about this then we got on to various people and it was solved, but it should not have really got to that situation. There is this girl of 19, 20 ...

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

She was 17, or she is 17 in Southampton with a baby.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Literally she could not afford anything.

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

Yes, because the baby was over the tiny age it needed nappies and the hospital was not there to provide the nappies. They could not believe how this girl was being treated in Jersey.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

It has obviously slipped through the net.

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

It was awful.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Basically as soon as we heard about that what happens is that Sandra has a certain amount of money that she is allowed to spend without coming back to the crew. So straight away she could give monies or whatever the family needed. It was her mother was going across, was it not?

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

Yes, her mother was there for Christmas to help her but had to leave her other child behind because they were living in a charity hostel. So it was really dire, you know, and she should not have to put up with that, she was a Jersey girl.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Again, we have helped the Women's Refuge in the past when it needed refurbishment because, again, that is children. We did a run with ... by accident we had a Christmas run and they had a Christmas run both on the same day at the same time and so we combined and it made it a much better event and we are doing that again at Easter with them. But that goes ... that does not contravene our constitution, it is for children.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

What do you think of the idea of setting up a post, a full time post, that would co-ordinate all the third sector and offer assistance?

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

You have one, have you not? Lyn Wilton does that, does he not?

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

On the Association of Charities that is, but do you mean on the respite side?

The Deputy of St. Peter:

No, no, I was talking about ...

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

No, I think the idea is being promoted by the Minister for Treasury and Resources, I think that is where it came from, and it was that it might be useful to have an officer ...

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Not from the U.K. (United Kingdom)?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I cannot tell you. That it would help co-ordinate the support provided by the third sector. As you have rightly said, we have the Association of Charities and I think it is also acknowledged that charitable organisations, like yourself, have their own identities and their own aims and objectives and it would be wrong for anyone to dictate a direct ... but I think there is a genuine desire to see a closer working relationship and I think the challenge that everyone is facing at the moment is how we can develop and encourage that closer working relationship.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

I suppose if you have got the Association of Jersey Charities ... I mean, we only dip in, not a lot, but presumably that must be a vehicle then to be able to expand without it costing very little. It is a possibility that that might be a ... Sandra tends to go to ... when was that? Yesterday, was it?

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

Last night we had a meeting at the R.J.A.H. (Royal Jersey Agricultural & Horticultural) Hall to do with a Diamond Jubilee Fair and all the charities were there because they want to open up to all charities to come along and do something. So it was good to have that group and, of course, you are talking to people as well. So it is really good to have that.

[16:00]

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

They also did that at the schools, at J.C.G. (Jersey College for Girls), one of the Masters invited charities and it was the most tiring morning of my life, 600 kids asking what you do and standing on my feet for that long but very, very beneficial because we have got quite a few of the girls of 16 and 17 who have come and helped us at parties we have put on, which is fantastic. That really is something that we would think would be great if they did it around more of the schools. It only needs a couple or 3 hours in the morning, the charities come up, there were dogs and all sorts of things, it was actually very interesting.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I am interested to hear your comments about the Association of Jersey Charities because that is a relatively new development and from your experience you are saying it is working, it is helping to encourage that dialogue between the charities and a better recognition of what everyone is doing.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Yes, they did that thing at Radier Manor, did they not?

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

Yes, it was for recognition of the different charities on the different levels with how many you have in your association or whatever, and there was an award ceremony, was there not, and all the charities were there?

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Yes, it was very good. It was the driving for people with strokes that won the small one, but it was very, very ... you are right, it does get people to get together, you meet people from differing charities. We tend to think that everyone knows Variety but they do not.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Separate from the main together, do you get together with other charity workers or paid charity workers on a regular basis? Would you meet with, let us say, the individuals from hospice outside the big meetings?

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

Not really, if they have a problem and they need our help then they will call upon us and I will go and meet them. But not otherwise, we do not have meetings ...

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

They have quite a big team of fundraisers at the hospice.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

You do not see a need for that sort of arrangement to develop further?

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

Because we are children anyway, if there are children at hospice, which I do not think there are so much, they would be more likely to be at Oakwell, I would have thought.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Yes, I was using it in the wider sense of the term.

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

Yes.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Our focus is totally children so therefore any of the other charities that deal with children we would be there, whereas with hospice there is not really ... we do not cross at all. I think what one tries to make sure is that with the amount of charities in the Island often various charities put events on at the same time and I think that is something that the Association of Jersey Charities could help with. If we are, for example, doing a big do at the beginning of November and then you have the Roundtable and somebody else all on the same day, then no one really benefits. So that is quite important, we feel. I suppose that is something which we could speak to Lyn about but it is communication in that respect.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

How do you get involved with the funding that you provided to Eden House recently? Does somebody from the States contact you or do you contact them and say: "Hey, are there any projects that you need help with at the moment?" how does it work?

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

If we went around all the States departments we would need more fundraisers than hospice. What happens is that people will approach us and we have a totally open mind. If there is something they want, we have a crew meeting every month but if we need to we could call a meeting. If somebody wants to come and meet with us, give us their ideas then we will look at it with an open mind. That is how we have basically operated over the years.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Are there any intentions at the moment to create a big project to work towards?

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

We have not got one at the moment. We were, as I said, going to help at Brig-y-Don last year and Health found it within their monies, Mike Le Fevre, I think, is it not?

The Deputy of St. Peter:

If several projects come at once, how do you decide? Do you vote? Does the crew take a vote?

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Yes, everything is by consensus. There is nothing that happens without it being by consensus. There are some quite strong arguments both ways and then it is up ... same as in the States, is it not, you have to convince the other person that you are right or wrong. But generally if it is for children ... there is only so much we can do but we are very open to any suggestions that might come along.

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

I do not think we have ever had sort of 3 projects coming along at the same time. Not really, no.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

There tends to be one ...

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

We have not had any real problem with trying to have to decide what we would go with.

Mr. S. Jones:

You mentioned earlier the problems about respite care that the parents had been telling you about before Christmas, and you would not respond to that by initiating something, the way you work is that you rely on somebody else to initiate something to deal with the problem and you can contribute funding?

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Yes, that is right. We do not know enough about it. We are purely I suppose a bunch of people who are members of charity which focuses on children. We do not have that expertise and we non political, and really we do not want to get into that because there are far more people who know what is happening.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

With Variety at Work, do you allocate a specific budget to that?

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

No.

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

It can be anything up to £50,000 per year.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Whatever is needed.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Yes, so obviously if ... obviously we are talking as to budget, let us say that the Variety Club decided that they would fund a particularly large project, it could be that the funds available to support Variety at Work would be affected or reduced?

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

No, no, we would make sure it did not. As I said, if there is a large project that really focuses the minds of the members to go out and raise more. We do have some reserves which we have obviously built up over the last several years which we hold and we would make sure that that would not be affected. We have to go out and raise more money, that is the long and the short of it.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I am sure that is very encouraging to many of the people out there that have benefited from your support in the past because if it was a tap that could be switched off ...

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

No, no, that ... well, as long as I am involved it would not happen. The most amazing thing is that when we do collections you get little old ladies who come up and put money in there so you help whatever.

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

Even children will come up.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Yes, children. So one sees it ... for example, if there is a one child in a class and they are going on a trip, as long as we know, we would pay for that child because why should one child be differentiated, it just does not ...

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

This is the primary schools. We do not help so much in the secondary schools because they are not so much school bound, you know what I mean? They are not going on educational trips, they are going on like skiing trips or going to Spain or things like that, where the youngsters of 10 and 11 are maybe getting off the Island for the first time and going to France for 4 days. If one child in a classroom cannot afford to go I think that is so unfair and it is just putting an awful strain on the family. So that is where we step in and we help.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

It is also embarrassing to the parents, the whole way through. We have helped on that ski trip.

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

We have, that was a very special ... that was ...

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

With severe behavioural problems.

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

The one at St. Helier House. There was a crowd of youngsters there.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

We should avoid making mention of individuals.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

No, no, we are not going to mention it, it is just that we have helped ...

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

No, no, no, it is just at St. Helier House there was a group there. They came and gave a presentation to us.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Yes, they were fantastic. They came and gave us a presentation after.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Yes, so basically you are saying anyone that is in need and is unable to participate, it is not through financial problems that they could not.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Exactly. If we just leave it at that, it is on really ...

Mr. S. Jones:

So in places like Oakwell and Eden where you spent a lot of money to help with extensions and so on there, who came to you with a request? Was that the States? Do you respond to requests for help from the States?

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

I think Oakwell, I think it was Eileen Smith who came to us from Oakwell saying: "We need your help."

Mr. S. Jones:

So it was the manager of Oakwell.

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

The same with the gardens as well.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

It is like with Centrepont, we have helped them as well.

Mr. S. Jones:

The gardens are lovely, we saw them this morning.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

What, the sensory garden?

Mr. S. Jones:

The Oakwell Sensory Garden, that is right.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

You helped with the pool as well, we believe.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Yes, we did that several years ago, yes.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

We cannot not recognise the contribution that you make to support children and families in the Island and I think it is invaluable that charities like yourself can add value and make a difference to some basic support, something that is very much targeted to the individual. Long may it continue.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

That is right.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Long may it continue.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Thank you very much for coming today.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

Thank you for listening to us.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

It has been very helpful.

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

I was not quite sure what we were going to say.

Second Assistant to the Chief Barker, Variety Club:

I wish you luck with this because I think it is really important, and that is why I responded saying: "Even if we are not so involved with the respite itself we are here to support and do what we can."

The Deputy of St. Peter:

That is really marvellous, thank you.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Yes, it is much appreciated. As I say, we have had teachers and people involved with Mont à l'Abbé and parents saying how grateful they are for the transport you provide that helps youngsters get out and about and so on and so forth. Although sometimes we do not fully recognise the contribution which our charitable organisations make, people do recognise that you are making ...

Chief Barker of Variety Club:

You see it, as I said, when you are collecting at Christmas. People come up and thank us, so it is well worthwhile. Great, thank you very much indeed.

Deputy J.A. Hilton:

Can I just apologise for not being here at the start of your submission but I have been at a funeral this afternoon.

[14:13]