

Hi,

I am a Jersey resident and tax-payer who would like to register his views about the issue of 'user pays' policing and in particular how it applies to Jersey Live.

Firstly, I would like to state that the proposal strikes me as myopic in the extreme. Yes, it will reduce the policing bill which will have the knock-on effect of reducing the proportion of tax income required to pay for policing. Very simple. Too simple in fact. What it doesn't take account of is the larger picture.

Before I start I should like to clarify my assumption that any such charge will be passed on to attendees of Jersey Live - the organizers will not squeeze their own profits nor could they. In all likelihood, if any organizer was to try to swallow these additional costs their venture would cease to be profitable. The choice is therefore either wind-up or pass on the cost. The charge will therefore be passed on directly to the patron. With that stated, I will argue the case that from the perspective that this situation is likely to damage the Jersey tourism industry. No doubt many will argue on behalf of the Jersey consumer so I leave that to them.

The Jersey tourism industry is, and has for a long long time, been treading awfully close to being seen as an anachronism. The Battle of Flowers, Air Display etc are great for attracting a certain demographic but, to be honest, pretty much a joke to anyone under a certain age. The 2000 Tourism Strategy for Jersey stated aim was to 'gradually attract a different mix of visitor with more higher spending visitors'. I would argue that the very people who would give Jersey such a mix are those who would attend events such as Jersey Live. Effectively taxing the event can only have a negative impact on their decision of whether to attend this festival or the tens of others in the UK and the rest of Europe. I would therefore see this policy as hobbling those that are working to make Jersey an attractive destination to a new, younger, more free-spending demographic.

As an aside, here's a question. In terms of raising Jersey's profile in the media do you think that Vicky Trehorel attending the Battle of Flowers is going to get an editor's attention more than a decent, nationally known and respected band playing Jersey Live? I doubt it. Ask someone who works in PR if you're not sure though.

In conclusion I would say that this is more than a question of how policing is paid for. It's a question of how Jersey wants to see itself develop. Does it want to stick with the past or move to the future? You decide.

Yours faithfully,
Matthew Fiott