

STATES OF JERSEY



HAVRE DES PAS LIDO

**Lodged au Greffe on 10th March 2022
by the Connétable of St. Helier
Earliest date for debate: 25th April 2022**

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

to request the Minister for Infrastructure –

- (a) to ensure that the Property Holdings Department upholds its full obligations as landlord of the Lido at Havre des Pas with immediate effect, including maintaining the facility as watertight in respect of rainwater penetration through the roof (barring extremes of weather) and ensuring that the public toilets at the pool are available all year round;
- (b) to establish a steering group to maximise the benefit of the Lido to the community and to resolve any issues arising in future, with the steering group to meet quarterly and its membership to include political representation from the Parish of St. Helier; and
- (c) to initiate negotiations with the current operator of the Lido facility for a new 9-year lease, with standard break clauses.

CONNÉTABLE OF ST. HELIER

REPORT

Introduction

Few islanders would disagree with the contention that the Lido at Havre des Pas, St Helier, is one of the Jersey's most precious pieces of public infrastructure. Scores learnt to swim there while it provides sea bathing facilities at all states of the tide for hundreds of urban dwellers in the summer, as well as winter swimming for the hardy few. It is also being put to increasing use as an events space and entertainment venue, thereby making a valuable contribution to the Island's tourism offer. The facility has been grant funded in the past by the Tourism Development Fund to make adaptations to the building to increase occupancy internally and also to lengthen the operating season, therefore enabling a greater focus on shoulder months to support the visitor economy.

The Lido helped to launch the new Visit Jersey, with events including a Destination Jersey Conference, a Digital Tourism Think Tank, the Island's first beach wedding, States Training Sessions, a Junior Doctors Ball, the Emergency Service Summer Party, Sports events, the Real Housewives of Jersey and private and corporate functions ranging from 60 - 1000 people. The operator also works with all the local businesses in the Havre des Pas area to increasing occupancy for the hotels and support business generally.

The Lido also provides a space for the monthly meetings of the Havre des Pas Improvement Group, a long-established residents' group, whose members have become increasingly concerned about the apparent breakdown in communication between the Government's Property Holdings Department (PHD) and the present operator of the facility. While it is not the purpose of this report to go into the detail of these difficulties or to apportion blame for them, it appears to the members of the Group that the operator has not been treated fairly. As one of the Parish's District Deputies, who attends the meetings, I have decided to ask the States Assembly to step in to ensure that this important facility is able to continue to play its important role in the community.

Maintenance of the Lido

It is not disputed that the Infrastructure Department, through PHD, spends a certain amount of money each year on the Lido with recent work on the boardwalk and the railings. There is no discussion about what work is undertaken, however, or on how it is prioritised: the boardwalk is arguably in a worse state now than it was, while the approach to making the railings safe is questionable to say the least. The large concrete storm defences are set to remain in place this year until the end of May, long after seasonal storms can be considered a threat to the building while the toilets and changing rooms have been closed since last September, causing inconvenience to pool users, and the lighting has been non-operational or inadequate for long periods. The most obvious defect at the Lido, the leaking roof, has not been repaired, despite various requests from the operator that a proprietary roofing paint be at least trialled. It is accepted that such a structure can suffer sea water damage, yet the leaking roof with the knock-on impacts on internal decoration, electrics, and so on inside the building have nothing to do with the sea. The roof simply needs painting with an appropriate material to render the building below useable. Other parts of the building including the stairs need painting appropriately as people are tripping on cracks and holes, slipping on stairs etc. The toilets also need to be maintained and cleaned just as other facilities operated by Government are around the Island.

The steering group

In future PHD's expenditure on the Lido should be discussed with the operator whose views on the prioritisation of spending should carry some weight: to this end it is proposed that a Steering Group be set up so that the budget allocated to the maintenance of the Lido can be used to maximum effect. How much that budget is will have to await the next Government Plan, but rendering the roof of the Lido watertight needs to be undertaken immediately out of existing maintenance budgets of EDTSC.

The membership of the Steering Group can be agreed by PHD but it should include Parish political representation so that the local community will be kept up to date with developments. It is vital that the plethora of issues and challenges that will invariably arise in the management of a facility like the Lido at Havre des Pas are subject to regular meetings between the parties involved.

The lease

There is no disputing that the current operator is making a good job of running the Lido, with a growing list of bookings for functions, each of which makes a contribution via a licence fee to the landlord, nor is anyone disputing the operator's commitment to supporting the community, whether through hosting the monthly meetings of the local area group or through participation in the annual Seaside Festival. However, there is currently no lease between the landlord and operator, although PHD wishes the operator to sign a new 3-year lease, or a 9 year one which gives the landlord the absolute right to break the least after 3 years, which is effectively the same thing. Such a short lease would make it impossible for the operator to make commitments to the forward bookings which are coming in for events, conference hospitality, private parties and the like, and it would also mean that proposed improvements to the internal space would not be undertaken.

The proposition seeks, therefore, to obtain a normal commercial lease to enable the operation of the Lido to continue and flourish, the only break clauses being the standard ones in respect of non-payment of rent, etc. The operator should not be limited as to when they can operate their business and the public toilets being open all year round is critical operationally to the running of the events. The lease should also enable the operator to operate and manage their business and encourage growth and success as opposed to putting barriers in the way of growth and success. Surely the government wants an operator that is committed to running the Lido for the long term, continually investing in the building, the business and the community, and contributing to the greater visitor economy.

Financial and manpower implications

Critical maintenance of the Lido needs to be carried out using the existing revenue budgets of the relevant Government departments; funding for ongoing maintenance and repairs should be included in the next Government Plan.