

**JERSEY BATTLE OF FLOWERS ASSOCIATION:
REDUCED INTEREST LOAN**

**Lodged au Greffe on 14th July 1998
by the Tourism Committee**



STATES OF JERSEY

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PROPOSITION

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

- (a) to authorise the granting of a loan to the Jersey Battle of Flowers Association to assist with structural improvements to its headquarters at Meadow Bank, St. Lawrence;
- (b) to agree that the loan should be in the sum of £50,000, should bear interest at a rate of four per cent a year and be repayable in equal instalments over a period of ten years, with the first payment falling due in the year 2000.

TOURISM COMMITTEE

NOTE: The Finance and Economics Committee supports this proposition.

REPORT

The history of the Association

The first Jersey Battle of Flowers was organised by the Connétable of St. Helier and took place in 1902 to celebrate the coronation of King Edward.

It was so successful that it continued to be held each year with the exception of the periods of the First and Second World Wars.

Then the Battle started again with the new Executive Committee in 1950 and returned from Springfield to its original venue along Victoria Avenue.

The Battle of Flowers has continued to be held at Victoria Avenue in August of each year and has maintained its position as Jersey's major tourist festival.

Value to the tourism industry

Approximately 25,000 people pay to enjoy the Battle spectacle each year, almost all visitors to our Island. The Battle of Flowers occurs during mid August, the peak of the tourism season, and is an unforgettable experience for those who have the opportunity to see it. Whilst it is not possible to estimate the actual numbers of visitors who view the Battle of Flowers, it is known that the reputation for the event extends throughout the world and thus the Jersey Battle of Flowers is a major attraction. It is a focal point for international media and invariably attracts television and national press coverage.

The Battle is a huge community effort. Quite apart from the actual spectacle, it is a prime example of the ingenuity, dedication and extreme hard work of many local residents. The Battle is community led, the only paid official being one part-time executive secretary. It is a very large organisation involving, probably, 3,000 in organising, designing, building, growing and sticking flowers, marshalling and taking part in the parade.

The need for an extension to the premises

The current Meadow Bank Headquarters is a prime facility and has been used to maximum capacity since its construction in 1989. The building houses the offices of the Association in one of some 27' x 22'. This also contains toilet and kitchen facilities, and a warehouse measuring 160' x 60' in the style of a farm shed, used for the purpose of storing equipment for the construction of floats during the period immediately prior to the Battle of Flowers.

Due to the decline of warehouse premises in St. Helier, the Meadow Bank Headquarters is no longer of sufficient size to meet either the current or future needs of the Association, assuming that the Battle continues to attract a large number of 40' floats. Currently the Association has rented space at Barette and Gruchy, Mont Mado, at a cost of £4,700 per annum. The Association would prefer to invest in larger premises rather than continue to pay rental.

If approved, the new construction would measure 26' x 80' and be situated in an area behind the existing Meadow Bank building. It will be of a similar construction to the current building. Quotations have been obtained by the Association which indicate a total cost in the order of £50,000.

Planning permission

The Planning and Environment Committee has given approval to the proposed development.

Financial status of the Jersey Battle of Flowers Association

In 1997 the Battle of Flowers produced a surplus of £27,562 after payment of Jersey income tax. This surplus was reduced from £34,870 in 1996. The balance sheet dated 30th September 1997 showed the assets of the Association to be - stock: £9,853; debtors: £12,104; and bank balances of £143,008. In total: £164,965.

A previous low interest loan over a ten year period was agreed by the States in 1989. At that time, £75,000 was loaned for the original construction of Meadow Bank repayable over ten years with interest at

four per cent. The final payment of the previous loan will be made in 1999 and thus, if approved, the new loan will start to be repaid in the year 2000.