

2020.01.21

3 Deputy M. Tadier of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the maintenance of derelict properties within the portfolio of Ports of Jersey: (OQ.19/2020)

Will the Minister, as shareholder representative, advise what steps, if any, are being taken to ensure that any derelict properties and amenities within the portfolio of Ports of Jersey, including the La Folie Inn site and the Steam Clock, are maintained and restored?

Deputy S.J. Pinel of St. Clement (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):

Ports of Jersey advises that maintenance work on all their sites is undertaken to ensure they are kept safe and tidy. No specific additional maintenance is carried out on the Steam Clock and there are no current plans to restore it. Furthermore, restoration of La Folie Inn as a standalone proposition is not considered viable by Ports of Jersey but would need to be part of a wider development of that area. In this regard, Ports of Jersey have developed a Harbour Masterplan and are actively engaged with Government to integrate this plan with the Southwest St. Helier Planning Framework published in December 2019. This planning framework includes both the Steam Clock and La Folie sites.

[11:00]

The planning framework was developed with active involvement of a range of individuals and interest groups, including, for example, States Members, local residents, architects, Parish of St. Helier, Save our Shoreline, and Jersey Action Group.

2.2.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

I thank the Minister for the answer. I have seen the plans for the development of the La Folie wider portfolio but I have not seen any plans for the Steam Clock or which extend that far. The first question, I suppose ... is let us focus on a relatively simple issue about the Steam Clock and ask: can we not just get it so that the time works on either or both of those faces on the clock in between what I presume will be a number of years before we see any developments in the wider portfolio?

Deputy S.J. Pinel:

My recollection, there was considered several years ago the cost of restoration of the Steam Clock and I cannot remember exactly nor could I find it but it was considerable and it was considered a non-viable move to make.

2.2.2 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

The Minister has mentioned the Port's plans. Can she tell me if there is anything in the plans to do with the sea cadet headquarters which was mooted for that area and which the States over 10 years has voted considerable sums of money and produced absolutely nothing.

Deputy S.J. Pinel:

I do recollect the move for the sea cadets to move from Fort Regent to that area as well. But this is all being addressed as part of the Southwest St. Helier Masterplan of the whole area of La Folie, South Hill and the Harbour itself.

2.2.3 Deputy K.F. Morel:

Would the Minister agree that perhaps the best use for the Steam Clock is to restore it to its former glory as a memorial to the folly of certain States decision making?

Deputy S.J. Pinel:

Yes, but it would take a considerable amount of money which we do not have.

2.2.4 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier:

The Minister did not answer Deputy Tadier's question which was: why can she not persuade Ports of Jersey to simply fit an electric clock so that the clocks on the Steam Clock instead of being correct only 4 times a day would be correct all the time at minimal expense. I would ask her to answer that question. If I could just put in one of my own. Does the Minister agree with me that the Steam Clock site is important open space for St. Helier, which is at a premium, not only because of the recreational space it provides but the visual amenities from the Weighbridge?

Deputy S.J. Pinel:

Yes, I will ask Ports of Jersey to look into the electric side of the Steam Clock but, as I have said before, many considerations have been given to getting it working again and it is not financially viable to do so but I will ask again. I do agree with the Connétable that that area of St. Helier is incredibly valuable. It was even looked at, at one stage, as being a potential site for a national gallery.

2.2.5 Deputy D. Johnson of St. Mary:

The Minister will recall that the original M.O.U. (memorandum of understanding) between Ports of Jersey and the Minister, or her predecessor, does provide that the board will bear in mind the continuing interests of the States of Jersey in a property previously owned by the public of the Island and goes on to advise what will happen on any sale. The M.O.U. does not appear to contain any specific reference to maintenance of properties, review of the plans to which she has alluded, would she agree that it is high time the M.O.U. was updated and could she please advise what the state of play is on that and further confirm that the Scrutiny Panel will be involved with that as they were with the original M.O.U.?

Deputy S.J. Pinel:

Absolutely. All M.O.U.s with arm's length organisations or States-owned entities are being reviewed as we speak. Yes, of course we will consult with Scrutiny once the work is completed.

Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade

The Connétable of St. Helier asked the question that I was going to pose.

2.2.6 Deputy M. Tadier:

I would suggest if we want a memorial to folly we should redevelop La Folie Inn, which seems to have been named with a certain amount of prescience. I would ask: does the Minister believe that Ports of Jersey have the band width, i.e. the capability and the resources to fully develop the La Folie site when they cannot even fix the 2 faces of a Steam Clock? Do they need help with that and when can we get involved because I am very keen, from a cultural perspective, and I am sure other Islanders are as well, to make sure that these assets do not rot at a time when we need to encourage tourism and investment into that part of St. Helier?

Deputy S.J. Pinel:

Ports of Jersey do and, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, that they are working with all sorts of entities to develop this Government... the Harbour Masterplan and the framework, so that the work

is being done, a plan has been produced but when there are so many sites involved it has to be a cohesive move forward.