

2.11 The Connétable of St. Helier of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services regarding the lift in Minden Place car park:

Would the Minister confirm that the lift in Minden Place car park is not in operation after 10.00 p.m. and, if so, explain the reasons for this decision?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye of St. Helier (The Minister for Transport and Technical Services):

All car park lifts are closed at 10.00 p.m. due to the high levels of vandalism they sustain if left operating over later periods. Minden Place car park is one of the car parks that has suffered most frequently from vandalism. This has often prevented access to a working lift for the majority of car park users during the daytime. Due to the age of the car park and its dated design, there is no possibility of installing an additional lift in the event that the existing one is damaged or requires maintenance. Therefore, the conditions at this car park are more critical than most to keep its lift working by doing whatever possible measures can be taken to prevent it being taken out of action for long periods of time.

2.11.1 The Connétable of St. Helier:

Would the Minister not consider a range of potential solutions for the vandalism problem that might enable people, particularly using the Arts Centre but also going to the nearby restaurants, who have mobility problems to have a lift available to them, for example, up and until 11.30 p.m.? Has he, for example, looked at C.C.T.V. (closed circuit television) or getting the assistance of the States and the Honorary Police in ensuring that vandalism is kept to a minimum and that this very valuable lift can be kept running longer?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

I appreciate that the closure of the lifts will inconvenience a minority of the car park users during the evenings and those most likely to be affected though would not be the 83 per cent of the car park users who use that car park between 8.00 a.m. and 5.30 p.m., particularly parents with children in buggies as well as disabled badge holders. There are 6 disabled spaces that have access at all times via a ramp in the Minden Place car park itself and lift access is not required for those. There are also 4 disabled bays in Phillips Street and 3 in Peter Street should there be events on at the Arts Centre for example. I do not consider that additional measures are required.

2.11.2 The Deputy of St. Martin:

Will the Minister accept that there are a number of people who may not be that disabled but are certainly inconvenienced by having to climb stairs so, therefore, just do not work on those people or assume that those people who have a disabled badge are, in fact, disabled because there are a lot more than that. But could the Minister advise us how was this magic hour of 10.00 p.m. arrived at? We have heard him say about the issue of vandalism, but how was it arranged? Have we got any survey carried out to ensure that 10.00 p.m. is that magic hour because it would seem to me that people can commit vandalism at any hour of the day?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

The time 10.00 p.m. was derived on the basis of considerable experience of my department.

2.11.3 Deputy J.B. Fox of St. Helier:

I would like to ask the Minister if it is not time to review the design against crime award with which all these major States public car parks receive gold awards? This included appropriate lighting, closed circuit television, *et cetera*, and originally when it was designed and when it was given the awards there was appropriate coverage preventing the necessity of closing-down lifts, *et cetera*. So I would ask the Minister if he would be gracious enough to review the current security and come back to the House as and when appropriate, especially if finances are required to update that which has been up for some considerable time.

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

Whatever awards the car parks may have won in the past, the clear situation now is that most of them are getting past their sell-by date. Minden Place is a particular example where it is now clear that its design is no longer appropriate. Frankly, the sooner we can knock it down the better because it simply is clearly creating problems. I am happy to review the situation as Deputy Fox has suggested, but I would say to those who have put forward ideas of other supervisory options such as greater levels of honorary policing and so forth that those are really not areas under my remit and I would suggest that the original questioner may consider it himself.

2.11.4 Deputy D.W. Mezbourian of St. Lawrence:

I was pleased to see the question raised this morning by the Constable of St. Helier because this is an issue that has been addressed to me on a number of occasions, but mainly by people who have had problems accessing their vehicle after they have attended shows at the Arts Centre. As a matter of interest, I wonder whether the Minister would be able to advise us whether there has been any discussion between his department and the Department for Education, Sport and Culture in trying to resolve this issue.

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

No, there has been no discussion between my department and Education, Sport and Culture on this matter although there has been some fairly direct correspondence with users of the Arts Centre. I am familiar with the issue there. I have, regretfully, had to advise Jersey Arts Centre that we will continue to close the lift at 10.00 p.m. and they should plan their performances accordingly.

2.11.5 Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I do not think that is quite appropriate, Sir. As the Minister is aware I too have had correspondence with the general public and with the Minister on this very subject. I fully appreciate that in the past there has been vandalism but we must not bow down to the vandal. This is a public facility and must be opened for the use of the public. Does the Minister not agree?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

No, the Minister does not agree that a facility should be open necessarily 24 hours a day. I have made it quite clear that the bulk of the usage of this car park at Minden Place occurs between 8.00 a.m. in the morning and 5.30 p.m. in the evening; 83 per cent of the use occurs at that time so, therefore, we are looking at during the evening, and effectively the rest of the time period, 17 per cent only of the usage of that car park. It is not appropriate to simply construct policy for the operation of a car park such as Minden car park around one or 2 operations that happen to be occurring during the evening which is a time of very low usage. It is entirely important to keep this car park open during the daytime for its main use. I have already indicated the department has very considerable background statistics on when the vandalism takes place. It takes place after 10.00 p.m. at night and that is why we closed the lift.

2.11.6 Deputy C.F. Labey of Grouville:

I have had correspondence with the Minister in my role with responsibility for culture a couple of years ago whereby I asked his department if they would consider keeping this lift open longer. I really do think for 17 per cent of the users of this car park and theatre goers and cinema goers, they really ought to think about it, otherwise we will just bow down, as Deputy Lewis said, to the vandals in our society.

The Deputy Bailiff:

What is your question, Deputy?

The Deputy of Grouville:

Sorry. **[Laughter]** Would he please consider keeping it open until a more reasonable time of, say, midnight?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

If the Deputy of Grouville would consider dipping into her doubtless limitless resources under her Culture remit and would pay for the cost of a security guard to stand at that lift until whatever time she deems that users of the Art Centre will have left that building I will happily look at that particular course. I will discuss that at length, should she wish.

2.11.7 Deputy J.A. Martin:

This is very concerning that people cannot access this car park. On the wider issue, the Minister seems not to be able to wait to knock this car park down. Could he inform the House when this will happen and where these much needed car parking spaces will be replaced?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

I would be delighted to, Sir, but I regret I do not have any dates available.

2.11.8 Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

The Minister is throwing statistics at us, but would he be so kind as to advise us how many people 83 per cent represent and how many people 17 per cent represent?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

The reason those things have to be put into percentages is simply because they cannot be put into real numbers because, obviously, the number of users of the car park varies day to day. I really do not see the point in putting numbers to the figures. It is quite clear 83 per cent of the usage is from 8.00 a.m. until 5.30p.m. and the remainder of the usage is obviously much less use.

2.11.9 Deputy K.C. Lewis:

There was a recent error, Sir, on behalf of Transport and Technical Services - really a minor error - when the clocks went back somebody neglected to alter the time switch on the lift at Minden Place, so it was open for an extra hour for I think about 8 or 9 days. To my knowledge the lifts are still there, they have not been destroyed, wrecked or otherwise altered. Will the Minister not reconsider?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

I am happy to report that during a brief period of mechanical failure when the lift did indeed open later in the evening we were fortunate not to suffer any vandalism. I can assure Members that all sorts of quite disgusting things can take place in that lift late at night involving everything from drug use to urinary and defecatory behaviour and that is before we get into mechanical damage. This closure of lifts in all car parks at 10.00 p.m. is entirely sensible and I think one or 2 Members are really wringing this out a lot longer than it needs to go.

2.11.10 The Connétable of St. Helier:

The Minister has attempted to pass the buck - the financial buck at least - both on to E.S.C. (Education, Sport and Culture) and on to the Honorary Police. Would he perhaps tell the Assembly how much money he currently has in the car park trading fund which exists to provide these kinds of services?

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

The Constable of St. Helier well knows that the car park trading fund does not exist to provide security services for late operation of lifts and I have no further comment.

