

STATES OF JERSEY



SELECTION OF ELECTED MEMBER TO PRESIDE AT STATES MEETINGS (P.86/2024): COMMENTS

Presented to the States on 13th January 2025
by the Privileges and Procedures Committee

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The Committee has not taken a stance on whether Deputy Gorst's proposition should be adopted or rejected; that will be a matter for each Member individually. The Committee has nevertheless identified information and considerations which may be of use to Members for the purpose of the debate.

Deputy Gorst's proposition relates to the application of Article 3(2) of the [States of Jersey Law 2005](#). Specifically, that Article states –

“If both the Bailiff and Deputy Bailiff are unable to preside at a meeting of the States, the Bailiff shall choose an elected member, the Greffier of the States or the Deputy Greffier of the States to preside at the meeting.”

As the Deputy has acknowledged, it is already therefore procedurally possible for an elected States Member to preside over a States Meeting in the absence of the Bailiff and the Deputy Bailiff. Whatever the reason, the norm has become that the Greffier of the States and the Deputy Greffier of the States are asked in the first instance. The last occasion on which an elected States Member presided was Connétable Len Norman on 30th November 2016 (the Connétable also having presided at least once in each of the three preceding years too). Prior to that, Senator Jean Le Maistre had presided for a short time on 22nd March 2005. The Committee is aware that, in the more distant past of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, other Members also presided on occasion; although further work would be required to establish the frequency.

Whilst it would be possible for the system proposed by Deputy Gorst to be introduced in short order, as he has correctly identified it would also require an amendment to Article 3(2) for the system and process he proposes to take full effect. The Committee does not think any Bailiff would wilfully ignore a decision of the Assembly, if this proposition were adopted; but without such an amendment, it would remain the Bailiff's sole prerogative as to who should preside in their absence (and that of the Deputy Bailiff). An amendment to this Article would clarify that the Bailiff's prerogative was subject to the parameter that an elected States Member be chosen to preside in the first instance.

The Committee would highlight that Deputy Gorst's proposition would not allow for the elected States Member in question to exercise any functions outside of States Meetings. If this proposition were adopted, the elected States Member would therefore be able to exercise all powers and responsibilities of the Presiding Officer during States Meetings. However, the Bailiff as President (or the Deputy Bailiff in their absence) would remain responsible for the consideration and approval of propositions, the consideration and approval of questions and the determination of any rulings required outside of meetings. Adoption of the proposition would nevertheless give the current Assembly experience of what it is to be presided over by an elected States Member.

As an indication of how often the Assembly might see an elected States Member act as Presiding Officer, the Committee has pulled the following statistics from recent States Assembly Annual Reports:

Year	Total States Meeting Hours	Proportion of Presiding Time – Bailiff and Deputy Bailiff	Proportion of Presiding Time – Greffier and Deputy Greffier	Proportion of Presiding Time – Elected States Members
2024	184:53	95.2%	4.8%	0%
2023	167:28	95.6%	4.4%	0%
2022	253:49	88.8%	11.2%	0%
2021	237:34	94.6%	5.4%	0%
2020	348:28	92.0%	8.0%	0%
2019	195:14	88.4%	11.6%	0%
2018	191:19	84.7%	15.3%	0%
2017	229:48	80.0%	20.0%	0%
2016	173:49	87.5%	12.4%	0.1%
2015	159:26	85.8%	10.9%	3.1%
2014	264:11	85.5%	14.5%	0%*
2013	223:35	84.9%	12.4%	2.7%
2012	183:03	90.7%	9.3%	0%
2011	366:31	87.8%	12.2%	0%
2010	293:46	85.9%	14.1%	0%
2009	322:35	66.7%	33.3%	0%
2008	298:50	79.7%	20.3%	0%
2007	240:49	79.4%	20.6%	0%

* An elected Member presided for 7 minutes in total during 2014.

Notwithstanding the above, it is impossible to say for certain how much time an elected States Member would spend presiding; as it would all be dependent upon when, and for how long, the Bailiff and Deputy Bailiff were both absent.