

**STATEMENT TO BE MADE BY THE
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM,
SPORT AND CULTURE
ON TUESDAY 22nd OCTOBER 2019**

250th Anniversary of the Corn Riots

Three weeks ago, the Island marked the 250th anniversary of the Corn Riots which took place on 28th September 1769. On that momentous day, about 500 islanders marched to St. Helier from the rural Parishes in protest at the high price of wheat, which had been set by the ruling classes and was pushing ordinary people towards starvation.

The rebellion led directly to a more democratic system of government in Jersey. This was enshrined in the Code of 1771, which laid down rules for the conduct of the States Assembly, the election of officers and the government of the Island and curtailed the powers of the Royal Court. The Code confirmed that neither the States nor the Royal Court could enact legislation (except certain temporary ordinances and regulations) or change existing laws without obtaining Privy Council approval first and that no significant changes should be passed except by the whole Assembly of the States.

Records of this hugely significant moment in Jersey's history were scant and, despite their importance, the Corn Riots of 1769 largely disappeared from our consciousness. This was until former Deputy Trevor Pitman lodged proposition P.107/2012 in 2012 and the States Assembly agreed that 28th September should be recognised annually as 'Reform Day' to mark the anniversary of the events in 1769.

Seven years later, following a collaborative process between the States Greffe, the Bailiff's Office, the Chair of the Privileges and Procedures Committee, heritage organisations and Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture, a day of events was organised to mark Reform Day. It included live music and speeches in the Royal Square and an open day for the States Assembly. The event was very successful, and hundreds of people took the opportunity to visit our Royal Court and States Chamber, many of whom had never been inside the building before.

Visitors were able to learn about our system and the events of 1769. A very accessible interpretation was provided by Jersey Archive, which included the original manuscripts from the 28th September 1769 with the demands that had been made, recorded and subsequently scribbled out.

I would like to thank the States Greffe, the Bailiff's Office, Jersey Archive, my officer at E.D.T.S.C. who arranged for a stage, and Ferryspeed who provided it free of charge. Also the musicians and participants of the outdoor animations for giving of their time and energy freely. Lastly, thank you to Deputy Russell Labey, the Chair of P.P.C., who took it upon himself to produce an excellent video which was both educational and entertaining.

I trust that the event will now be firmly entrenched in our calendar and that there will be increased interest and participation in our democratic institutions as a result of these celebrations.