

30<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Connétable M Jackson  
Chair, Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Panel  
Scrutiny Office  
Morier House  
St Helier  
JE1 1DD

Dear Connétable

### **Government Plan Review 2021 – 24 – Natural Environment - Water**

Thank you for asking the Jersey Farmers' Union to comment on this important topic.

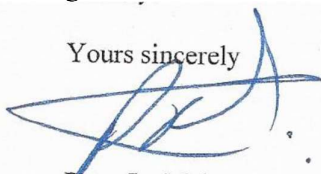
The agricultural industry started engaging with Government in 2010 to reduce the amount of nitrates in water. This was a small step in the right direction but the big step forward came in 2016 with the formation of the Action for Cleaner Water group (AFCW). This group consists of:

- Government representatives
- Jersey Water
- Civil servants
- RJA representing the dairy industry
- JFU representing our members
- Representatives from the potato marketing companies
- Chemical importer representatives

The former Minister for the Environment, Deputy Luce made it clear to all parties that by working together we could make a huge difference to water quality in the Island. At the same time a Water Management Plan was produced which provided not only a detailed way forward with targets for each of the participants but also the Government input which would underpin it. It is pleasing on reading that document again that many targets have been achieved in the time frame set out and that further initiatives by industry and Jersey Water are being pursued to improve matters further. This of course has come at a cost, extra monitoring and investigative work by Jersey Water, and the use of less chemicals (reduced yields) and more expensive ones by farmers. Government's part in this process was to provide a Water Catchment Officer.

The role of Water Catchment Officer is well known in the UK where they work with all interested parties to firstly advise then if necessary, enforce Water Catchment Management Orders. At the last meeting of the AFCW group we were informed that the Minister had secured funding for this position which is generally agreed is needed. What has come as a surprise is the size of the funds requested. It was clearly stated in the July 2016 report that the cost to Government would be around £100,000 per year up to 2021 so £300,000 in year one then £400,000 in year two seem to be excessive. As someone who has sat on the AFCW group since its inception, I can say that I have no inkling of why the figures are so large. Perhaps your Scrutiny Panel will be able to shed light on this matter?

Yours sincerely



Peter Le Maistre  
**President**