

2026.01.20

4.6 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South of the Chair of the Privileges and Procedures Committee regarding amending Standing Orders to make it a requirement for Members to include membership of the Freemasons (or other secular fraternities) in their declaration of interest (OQ.6/2026):

Will the chair advise what plans, if any, exist to amend Standing Orders to make it a requirement for Members to include membership of the Freemasons (or other secular fraternities) in their declaration of interest; and if no such plans exist, will he explain why not?

Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier North (Chair, Privileges and Procedures Committee):

The Deputy is aware that the Assembly will debate an amended Code of Conduct at the next meeting on 3rd February. Rule 13 of the revised code will require Members to declare any relevant interest that might reasonably be thought to influence their approach to a matter under consideration, including, and I quote: “membership of certain organisations such as private societies and clubs that have specific terms and agreements, including membership by selection or invitation only.”

[10:30]

As the guide to the code states, declaring the membership of such organisations means Members can address any perception of fraternity, loyalty or being beholden to an organisation. The Freemasons are not mentioned specifically, but the introduction of rule 13 in the terms I have quoted addresses the Deputy’s question.

4.6.1 Deputy D.J. Warr:

Does the chair of P.P.C. recognise the membership of any organisation that is hierarchical, has confidential membership, and requires members to support and protect each other should be recorded as it affects the public’s perception of impartiality and trust in our political system? Does he agree with that sentiment?

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

I certainly agree that the approach that has been put forward by P.P.C. in regard to the Code of Conduct is the right way forward. We would not like to specifically choose to mention solely the Freemasons, but put it in more wider context. I think that has been appropriately displayed in the format of P.102, which we are bringing to the next meeting. I hope also that Members, if they wish to engage on this matter, can come to the briefing that we are putting on next Monday at 3.30. If there are still any concerns, we can thresh those out at that briefing.

4.6.2 Deputy S.Y. Mézec of St. Helier South:

Would the chair be able to confirm whether the declaration that he has referenced in his answers so far that Members will be expected to make in the future would go as far as to include groups which are political in their nature and in the outcomes in which they wish to achieve but fall short of being political parties?

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Under rule 13, no, that is not the intention. I understand that obviously Deputy Warr has brought a proposition which will cover some of the questions that the Deputy is asking. But that is not incorporated with the body of this work, no.

4.6.3 Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central:

Can I just ask the chair of P.P.C. whether - and I thank him for the answer to his question because it was a very clear answer to the question, which is nice to see - part 13, and he may respond and say go to the briefing, which is fair enough, but whether it would cover interest through spouses or any relatives as well because there are grey areas there as to what that influence extends to.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Rule 13 does not specify spouses or other family members, no; it is particularly for that individual. If the Deputy believes that that should be incorporated within rule 30, then obviously the only approach now would be to bring an amendment to the proposition and then it could be debated by the whole Assembly to be included.

The Bailiff:

Final supplementary, Deputy Warr.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

No, thank you, Sir.

The Bailiff:

Question 7 was one to be posed by the Connétable of St. Martin, so we will move on to question 8 that Deputy Doublet will put to the Chief Minister.