

2026.01.20

4.9 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the former bowls club site at Les Creux (OQ.8/2026):

Will the Minister provide an update on the tender process for the former bowls club site at Les Creux?

Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John (The Minister for Infrastructure):

I thank the Deputy for his question. I should start by saying that we have not run a tender process but indeed expressions of interest were sought. Who is out there and what can you do, as opposed to a tender, which is: "Give me your best detailed price proposal"? The Jersey Community Land Trust, who I would describe as being the party in the lead, having been selected by a panel, are currently working with Jersey Property Holdings. At the moment they are seeking pre-planning advice on whether or not changes to the use of permissions would be required to deliver their proposals. Once that advice has been received I expect to receive an update on their final proposals, which I understand are being developed, following further engagement with the local community. I would like to thank the Deputy and his colleagues for their patience, and I hope to be able to meet the district representatives before the next sitting to update them.

4.9.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

I am grateful to the Minister for confirming the preferred - I do not know if I should say - bidder but expressions of interest lead candidate. Can he say what timetable he has put on those discussions and whether he expects that to conclude before the next election?

The Connétable of St. John:

I am reluctant to put a timetable. I expected the whole process to take 3 months and currently we are 9 months down the road. As I have mentioned, we are waiting for feedback from colleagues in Planning, and I do not have a timescale for that. I would certainly hope that this will be concluded in weeks rather than months.

4.9.2 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Just to avoid any confusion, can the Minister confirm that the preferred bidder still remains the same as that which was explained to us on 17th September when we met with the Minister and his department?

The Connétable of St. John:

I can, and I think I made it quite clear to both the representatives of St. Brelade and officers that I had fully expected that all bidders were consulted by the preferred party to see if there were synergies that we could include within the proposal. I am frustrated because I met somebody who took part in the process only last Wednesday and they told me they had not been contacted. I fed that back to the department.

4.9.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

In all of these I have always thought that it is right for Deputies in the district not to get directly involved with the process. But there is also a counterpoint to that, that the local community did expect to have some form of consultation and input about what would, ultimately, be put at Les Creux. Does the Minister accept that this does not seem to have happened? While there might have been consultation with the bidders of course there will be - that there does not seem to have been that wider consultation with the community about what they wanted to see there. If that is the case, what lessons have been learnt?

The Connétable of St. John:

I think similar lessons have been learnt with Les Creux than we have learnt with Havre des Pas inasmuch as we should get an external panel to see from start to finish. The delay was compounded originally because of the uncertainty around St. Aubin's tunnel. St. Aubin's tunnel has concerned some members

of the St. Brelade community and not others because shooting takes place there. Some people support shooting, others do not. We had a duty, in my opinion, to ensure that those tenants that we had in the tunnels, who through no fault of their own were looked after, so that delayed the process. I have committed to meeting the Deputies for a second time before I make any decision.

4.9.4 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson:

It is now a number of years and right back at the beginning of this political term that the bowls club gave notice that they would be leaving. One of the things that they said to me at the time is that they wanted to give that advance notice because this was a really good asset for the Island and they really did not want it to go to waste, and the Government to do what they always do and not get on and find new tenants and use for it. Yet here we are and it has still taken a very long time, and I do not think we are at a solution yet. What is going wrong? This is not a one-off example, it happens frequently. What is going wrong and what could be done better to ensure this does not happen in future?

The Connétable of St. John:

I pay tribute to the former club, who did give the Government notice. Les Creux is used widely each and every day, each and every week. There are a whole range of activities that take place at Les Creux. We are talking about a part of Les Creux. As I mentioned in my previous answer, part of the delay was because of the uncertainty around the St. Aubin's tunnel. We were not able to forge ahead when we thought we could forge ahead originally. The preferred bidder had plans which would not have received planning permission, it involved 2 very large structures.

[11:00]

We are talking about a country park in the green zone. But they do have a number of good ideas and suggestions. I do believe they have the will and the expertise to deliver.

4.9.5 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson:

Is there a structural problem within Government that means that in cases like this in future they could be handled differently and better?

The Connétable of St. John:

I think we need to, as I said earlier, stick to timetables. We have some people who are interested, others who are not interested. Whatever we do we are not going to please everyone. We are trying our best to be as fair as possible, to involve as many people as possible. I do think we have learnt lessons, which I hope the department will take forward.

4.9.6 Deputy J. Renouf:

I thank the Minister for his answers. As Deputy Stephenson has alluded, the former bowls club has now been empty for around 2 years, despite many proposals coming forward and huge community interest. Does he accept that the risk here is that from the public's point of view the only question now is going to be whether Les Creux goes the way of La Folie or Havre des Pas?

The Connétable of St. John:

I cannot comment on La Folie, only to say that when I became Minister for Infrastructure I tried to take back La Folie. But we are in a long lease with the Ports of Jersey, so they are responsible for La Folie. Havre des Pas is open, people are swimming daily, they are using the changing rooms daily and the toilets daily, so Havre des Pas is open. As I mentioned, Les Creux is widely used and we hope that further use of this facility will start very shortly.

The Bailiff:

The Connétable of St. Martin is absent for question 11. We then move on to question 12, which Deputy Warr will put to the Minister for Infrastructure.

