

THE STATES OF DELIBERATION
of the
ISLAND OF GUERNSEY

9th April 2025

Proposition No. P.2024/105

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

RECTORIES IN PLURALITY

AMENDMENT

Proposed by: Deputy C Le Tissier

Seconded by: Deputy Neil Inder

To delete Proposition 1 and substitute therefor:

“1. To agree that any customary law duty to provide suitable accommodation for the Rector of a parish and the Rector's household shall be abolished and to amend the Parochial Church Property (Guernsey) Law, 2015, and any other relevant legislation, to give effect to such abolition on and from 1st January 2030.”

Rule 4(1) Information

- a) The proposition is neutral as far as any contribution to the States' objectives and policy plans are concerned.
- b) In preparing the proposition, consultation has taken place with the Dean of Guernsey and the Douzaines have been made aware.
- c) The proposition has been submitted to His Majesty's Procureur for advice on any legal or constitutional implications.
- d) There are no financial consequences for the States.
- e) Drafting advice has been sought from the States' Greffier and notification given to the Policy & Resources Committee.

Explanatory note

Although historically the parishes have provided accommodation for rectors and their families, parishes having to provide for rectors and any dependants housing is an anachronism in 2025, and it has been for many years.

Many islanders i.e. Parishioners are not all followers of the Church of England, and some maintain beliefs in other faiths. In fact, there is a growing number that follow no faith at all. For these people, the need to contribute financially to the accommodation for rectors from the Church of England faith is considered plainly inequitable.

Parishioners are seeing increased Parish rates to maintain these buildings some of which have reached the end of their economic lives. The Rectories have and will continue to cost parishes. In some cases, hundreds of thousands of pounds may be required to maintain the parish rectory

Without any rental income the total cost falls on the Parish ratepayers that could see either rates doubling for several years or the Parish having to borrow money to prevent a sudden increase in the rates.

The Douzaine Liaison Group in November 2024 supported the abolition of the customary law obligation with 7 votes The Vale abstained as the parish do not own the rectory. At a recent meeting of the Douzaine Liaison Group it is understood that two parishes wanted more consultation, however this has been discussed by Douzaines since 2019, and I believe the time for consultation is over and action to support the majority is needed.

It is essential to relieve the burden on rate payers as soon as possible rather than wait 10 years as proposed in Amendment 1 in view of the struggle islanders are having with the cost-of-living crisis.

As of December 2023, the Church of England has a large endowment of £9.97 billion which generates over £1 billion a year in income therefore they should be able to assist the Deanery in maintaining their Guernsey rectories without dependency on struggling Guernsey Parishioners.

Abolition would be by way of Projet de Loi as it is understood by the Proposer, having consulted with H M Procureur, that changes in customary law obligations may only be made by a Law.

The period up to January 2030 before which abolition is to take effect is a reasonable transitional period during which it will be possible to negotiate arrangements for accommodation that do not necessarily involve free provision by those parishes that may wish to opt out of the traditional practice of the free provision of accommodation. It would also allow parishes to undertake further consultation if they felt that was necessary.