



OFFICIAL REPORT

OF THE

STATES OF GUERNSEY

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT

COMMITTEE

Review of Island-Wide Voting
Public Hearing

HANSARD

Guernsey, Monday, 2nd October 2023

No. 4/2023

*Further information relating to the Scrutiny Management Committee
can be found on the official States of Guernsey website at www.gov.gg/scrutiny*

Members Present:

Panel Chair: Deputy Yvonne Burford – President
Deputy Simon Fairclough – Vice-President
Deputy Carl Meerveld – States’ Member and Island-Wide Voting Panel Member
Ms Michelle Le Clerc – Island-Wide Voting Panel Member

Mr Mark Huntington – Principal Scrutiny Officer

Business transacted

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Scrutiny Management Committee

Review of Island-Wide Voting Public Hearing

*The Committee met at 10 a.m.
in Castel Douzaine Room*

[DEPUTY BURFORD *in the Chair*]

Procedural – Remit of the Committee

The Chair (Deputy Burford): Good morning everyone and welcome to the Scrutiny public hearing on the Review of Island-Wide Voting, the outcome of which will feed into this Committee's Review. On the Panel this morning with me, I have Deputy Simon Fairclough, Mrs Michelle Le Clerc and Deputy Carl Meerveld, together with the Scrutiny Principal Officer, Mr Mark Huntington.

5 So this morning there are going to be two one-hour sessions on two different themes and we will be commencing with the effect of Island-wide voting on the parishes. The Scrutiny Management Committee's Review Panel recently commissioned a survey, which attracted over 1,400 responses. Some of the questions may refer to parts of that survey.

10 In addition, several of our witnesses over the course of the four hearings submitted written representations to our call for evidence and, where that is the case, we may ask them individual questions based on that evidence. So if I could respectfully ask for our witnesses to endeavour to be as concise as they can in their answers so we can cover as much ground as possible in the time available.

15 Please be advised this hearing will be live-streamed and in due course a *Hansard* transcript of the hearing will be published on the Scrutiny website. Could you please ensure all your phones are set to silent and I will now ask the witnesses to introduce themselves, starting with Mary.

Thank you.

EVIDENCE OF Mr Richard Digard, Vale Douzenier and former Editor of *The Guernsey Press*; Ms Mary Lowe, former Deputy; Deputy Susan Aldwell

20 **Ms Lowe:** I am Mary Lowe. What would you like me to expand on? I am Mary Lowe, I was in the States for over 26 years. I have been a Deputy; I have also stood Island-wide and been successful as a Conseiller back in 1997. So quite a lot of experience in being a Deputy and Island-wide previously.

The Chair: That is lovely, thank you.

25 **Deputy Aldwell:** Deputy Sue Aldwell. I am on Home Affairs and Education, Sport & Culture and I have also been a Constable at Torteval for five years.

30 **Mr Digard:** I am Richard Digard. I suppose I am probably here because I am the former Editor of *The Guernsey Press*. I currently write a column for the paper and I have been serving for eight years as a Douzenier on the Vale Parish.

The Chair: Excellent, thank you very much.

Without further ado I will come straight into the questions. Generally, we will just address the questions to all of you and whoever would like to answer please feel free to do so. Obviously, you do not all have to feel obliged to answer on every question.

35 In our survey, a third of respondents said that a candidate being resident in the parish was very or moderately important to them. How well is the desire amongst some for local or parish representation adapted in practice to the new situation under Island-wide voting? Who would like to go first on that one?

40 **Mr Digard:** Sorry, how well has it adapted?

The Chair: Yes, so there is obviously, we have established that there is still a desire amongst some people for there to be that parish link. Do you think Island-wide voting has managed to deal with that at all?

45 **Mr Digard:** If you are happy for me to go first, no, not at all. I think from a parish perspective it has been something of a disaster. Can I make the point that at the outset I am not here to speak on behalf of the Vale, because I cannot; that is the Constable's job. Clearly, I cannot talk on behalf of any of the other parishes, so these will be my views informed from eight years with the Vale and, if we get time, I would not mind referring to some of the points that the Vale parish themselves formally made on this. But their view, I think quite clearly, is that this just has not worked at all. There has been a complete disconnect from the current Assembly, certainly as the Vale is concerned, with our parish.

55 **The Chair:** Okay, thank you.

Ms Lowe: I would agree with that. Back in 1997 when I was elected Island-wide, I wrote to all the parishes and said, 'I can represent you all because I have been elected Island-wide and if you want to invite me to your Douzaine meetings I would be more than happy to come along.' I went to a couple at the Vale but then they decided actually there were enough Deputies so they would call me if they needed to.

65 But we know from previously and Richard would be aware of that, where Deputies are invited, certainly down the Vale, to each monthly Douzaine meeting. Unfortunately not every Deputy would turn up but at least some did and you had that possibility of feeding stuff into the States and equally feeding it back into the Douzaine as well.

70 There is no doubt about it that there is a great loss to the parish and we just had a recent event where it does affect everybody Island-wide, there was only one Deputy turned up down at the Vale, and that is where the attitude of, 'We do not have to because we are not in the Vale parish and it does not affect us.' Actually you have got an Island-wide mandate and it is your responsibility to turn up to some of these things and they do not.

Mr Digard: Before Sue puts her thing, can I just read this out, because this was part of the full response from the Vale to your survey:

The loss of parish deputies has removed a conduit between the douzaine and the States. The attendance of your parish Deputy at Douzaine meetings was a valuable link. Deputies open doors in a way that Douzaine members are unable to

do. The parish deputies invariably had a pride in representing their parish and many worked very hard for the benefit of those parishioners. The monthly surgeries being well attended by both the parish Deputies

75 – parishioners and Douzeniers. I think that probably reinforces what Mrs Lowe was saying. Very strongly we feel that loss. There is now a total disconnect and I think some Deputies have actually welcomed that because I think for some, having that parish involvement could be – and I think Mrs Lowe was saying some would not turn up – but in terms of where we are today that is the biggest single deficiency, I think, in Island-wide voting, that it has completely emasculated the parishes.

80 **Deputy Aldwell:** I speak from a different point of view, then, having been a Constable. So I know within the upper parishes, for example at St Peter's, they have always had Deputies on there. Al Brouard used to set up a rota between St Saviour's, St Peter's and Torteval, so we would have a Deputy that would come, each monthly meeting.

85 In the States we have a parish Douzaine meeting once a month and all the Constables come across or Douzaine representatives come in. I have said many times, 'Your meetings are closed meetings. You need to put an invite out.' If you ask a particular Deputy, they will absolutely come to your meeting. At the Forest I know that Deputy Fairclough goes to the Forest. I know that you have offered your services to St Saviour's.

90 We are there to be asked to come but it is a closed – *respectfully*, it is a closed – Douzaine meeting and you need to be invited to go along. I would not have been happy if someone had just turned up at Torteval. It is the respect that you would invite them. I know since, actually, 2018, it was decided by Torteval, not by the Constables but by the Douzeniers, they did not see the value of Deputies coming to meetings. We were asked to ask them to no longer come.

95 So that is interesting. Every parish is very different but every Deputy, I would think, would be very happy if they were invited to a Douzaine meeting, to come along and discuss any subject.

The Chair: That is a very interesting perspective on it, thank you.

100 **Ms Lowe:** Can I just add to that, though, because what you are referring to there as well is very much when it went into districts, whereas if you go back before it went into districts, everybody had parish Deputies, but once we went into districts, some parishes, collectively, did not have a Deputy elected from their parish so they were excluded from back then of having that personal Deputy or Deputies representing their parish because it was then in a cluster or district.

105 **The Chair:** Okay, thank you.

Do you accept, though, from a point of view of the parishioners' connection with Deputies, they can still approach Deputies who live in their parish but also have more choice because they can approach Deputies who live anywhere on the Island when they want assistance?

110 **Ms Lowe:** I stood as a Conseiller back in 1997 because my first term, from 1994, I received huge criticism because I was covering the whole Island and it was a case of, 'This is our parish, you should not be helping.' I used to say, 'Why aren't they ringing you? You need to ask yourself that and if somebody wants help I am happy to do it.'

115 So when I stood Island-wide back then in 1997, there was an apprenticeship scheme. You could not go Island-wide until you had served 30 months in the States. So it was nearly three years you were in the States before you could stand Island-wide. That is a shame that is not still there as part of the new Island-wide system, really. I have always been for full Island-wide but actually when you see the lack of experience in the States, I think maybe we have missed out there and maybe we should have done some Island-wide and some parish because –

120 **The Chair:** So, having observed this States has made you change your mind on what you thought before?

Ms Lowe: Yes, and I am quite happy to admit that, you know, because I have served as a Deputy, I have served as a Conseiller, I have served the parish. I have done it all, really. Looking now, I still receive probably every 10 days, roughly, or a fortnight, I still receive a phone call or I receive letters asking me to help people and I have done all of them. Nobody turned around and said, 'You need to speak to a sitting Deputy.' Because I have got that experience, I know who to contact and I have dealt with them all. But they are not ringing, necessarily. Some of them, to be fair, thought I was still in the States and I said, 'I am not in the States, you need to speak to a Deputy if you wish but I can still help you not being in the States.' And I have helped all of them.

Mr Digard: I think what Mrs Lowe is saying reinforces what my response would be, which is your question, I think, is theoretically correct. In practice, people do not really know where to go. If you have a particular parish problem, you would go to the parish Deputy. The fact that they are still going to Mrs Lowe confirms to me, I think, that there is that lacuna. Who is going to look after me? Previously you would go to the parish Deputy. If it was a bigger issue, you would probably go for somebody who had a higher profile in the States and who had a bit of a reputation for looking after Island-wide topics. But now it is what will we do?

In the Vale's case, we see quite a lot of this stuff coming through the website, social media, and people are casting around for a focal point for somebody who is going to express an interest in the problems that they feel they have got. And again, as I say, if Mrs Lowe is getting these phone calls, it tells you that the system that is in place really is not working at a domestic and a parish level.

The Chair: Okay, thanks.
Deputy Fairclough.

Deputy Fairclough: Yes. Turning, Deputy Aldwell, to you in the particular and this is following your submission, you said that the solution, and this is already something that you have touched upon, to the loss of parish links under Island-wide voting is for the Douzaines to send out invitations, as you have touched on, to Deputies to attend meetings who are resident in their parishes. To what extent are you aware that they are doing this? You have made the point that parishes are very different in their approaches but could you tell us how many parishes, or your understanding of parishes inviting Deputies who live within them to attend Douzaine meetings?

Deputy Aldwell: Well I can only speak from the upper parishes because that is having spoken with the Constables up there and I know, for instance, that St Martn's invite all of the Deputies in turn, who live in that particular parish. I know that, as I have said before, St Peter's they have Deputies already on their committee, on their Douzaine, and I know that at St Saviour's they also have a Deputy on there. So I know that they do not necessarily send out invitations but if they wanted to on a particular subject then they could do.

So saying that they have no contact, they will have contact if they put out. St Peter Port ask for help when they have parish elections. I always get a phone call, 'Will you come and help do the count?' I am very happy to go and help, I have been doing it for a long time. Within my upper parishes, I am going to say upper parishes because people know me from up there, I get phone calls all the time, with simple problems that they need to have sorted. Invariably on a Saturday, I am out in my parishes doing my local shopping and I get asked all kinds of questions and I have said, 'Phone me of an evening, that is what I am there for.'

The question is do Douzaines put out invitations. I do not know if they put out invitations but I know, like yourself, you go to the Forest, you live within the parish, you are invited and it is up to the Douzaines to put those invitations out because we are very happy to go.

Deputy Fairclough: Did the parish link, previously, act as a disincentive, do you think, for Deputies to propose unpopular but arguably necessary policies that affected their area and do you

175 think that Island-wide voting, therefore, makes Deputies less vulnerable to an electoral backlash?
Mrs Lowe, maybe you want to come in on this as well.

180 **Ms Lowe:** Definitely. And that was the plus side of having Island-wide. You are answerable to the electorate rather than to your parish and we knew that would actually happen, that people would not be looking over their shoulders so much because you are talking Island-wide, even though it affects your parish, because they can, especially the smaller parishes as well, they did not always take too much notice of what was happening down in the north. You used to see that with the voting in all the housing and everything happening down the north, where they were okay, up the upper parishes.

185 Of course, the Vale Deputies and St Sampson's Deputies, St Peter Port Deputies, always used to try and make sure that they could look after their parish from that point of view and that was the plus side of having Island-wide, that they would start taking notice of what is going on. Whereas before, they did not necessarily have to, but there is a huge amount of voters in St Sampson's, St Peter Port and the Vale that they have now got to look at because if you upset those, that is a lot of votes that you would not have had before but you are going to have to think twice about it
190 because it is down in the north of the Island.

195 **Deputy Fairclough:** Just one follow-up question. Do you think that so-called Deputies' surgeries are a way of bridging the gap at all because my perception is, and this could be completely wrong, that there are fewer of those now this political term so that is another, perhaps, conduit between the States and parishioners?

200 **Mr Digard:** I am trying to phrase this without sounding too cynical or dismissive of Deputies but previously you had a real interest in the parish because you were appealing to the people who lived in that parish or district to support you and get you into the States. That link has gone. So, yes, the parishes can invite people along but that emotional attachment, if you like, that electoral dependency on the parish has gone.

205 If Deputies are invited and turn up it is almost like out of goodwill rather than, with the concept of them actively representing the 4,500 households who are in the Vale. In a way your question is suggesting how can we mitigate that? My contention is we should not have broken that link in the first place.

210 I have given you quite a detailed submission in writing, if you look back historically, the Island has functioned on the basis of having strong parochial representation and having a system where those who are able to vote have probably quite an active personal knowledge of the candidates and that goes back literally over the centuries. That, it seems to me, has just been swept away with Island-wide voting.

215 Doing that, I think, is fine if that is what you want to do. What was the point? What was the purpose? What were we trying to achieve with Island-wide voting? For me, that would be a useful question for Scrutiny Management to be asking itself. Without getting all kind of management consultancy on this, normally if you make a material change it is for a specific reason. If you have made that change, it is practical to review it and ask yourself has it produced the desired objectives? Perhaps somebody here can tell me what were the desired objectives of Island-wide voting?

220 **Deputy Fairclough:** I think that is a question that we are going to ask this and other panels, moving forward.

Mr Digard: Because I am not aware of it. This was sold to us as a package for what? To do what? To achieve what? We are here today because all of us are thinking we can only see the downsides. Madam President, please rectify those downsides and give us back what we had before because it worked.

225 **Deputy Aldwell:** I do not think we have anyone out in the upper parishes, any parish that likes Island-wide voting. Having spoken to all the Constables they all would like to go to parish or district, or a hybrid.

230 **Ms Le Clerc:** Question, so we are hearing about some of the negativity of Island-wide voting, to what extent do you think successful candidates received votes disproportionately than from their own parish? For example, Richard, Mary, you will know there was an under-representation, I would say, on Island-wide voting for Vale in particular and for St Sampson's. The other areas were more or less the same as they would have been on the previous election. So my question is why do you think that happened?

235 **Mr Digard:** I suppose the easy answer is people who lived in the parish did not stand for election. Why that would be I would not like to say. Sorry, have I missed the point?

240 **Ms Le Clerc:** No, I think there were people that stood in those parishes but they were not successful. The turnout for those parishes, people living in those parishes were not voting for their own candidates from those parishes.

Mr Digard: I really would not like to –

245 **Ms Lowe:** Yes, I can concur with that.

Ms Le Clerc: And have you got a feeling as to why that happened, Mary?

250 **Ms Lowe:** No, there are several reasons, I guess. You could clutch at all sorts of straws. Ultimately for me, you stand in every election, prepared that they might not want you any more and I stood for seven successful terms. What was unusual in my own situation, my numbers went up every time, whereas normally once you are in the States your numbers drop. Mine kept increasing.

255 Also, when you are a President, you are the face out there. You are the one that will be facing the criticism, coming out with what you need to say, representing the Committees. You are paid to do that extra as a President. Currently we are seeing too many spokespersons instead of them doing their job and getting out there and putting their name and taking responsibility for Committees, but that is another issue.

260 So you are the front face of all that is happening there and there are other sorts of things that happen as well. You are not going to please everybody all the time and having two Lowes on the sheet probably does not help. But you cannot clutch at that. One or two of the officials said that was a concern but you cannot do anything about that at all and you just have to accept it and take it on the chin that people want to have somebody else and that is fine and I totally accept that.

265 As you know, I still attend all the States' Meetings. I think I sit in the Gallery more than many of those States' Members who disappear for quite a considerable amount of time because I am still interested in politics and I used to sit in the Gallery before I was elected and that is a great shame that we do not actually see people that are actually interested in becoming a States' Member sitting in the Gallery.

270 We started last term, we are seeing it this term, the lack of experience. They turn up on the door and they have been elected and they have no idea what is going on and that is a worry because it is a serious position. It is a privilege to be elected and they should have taken more interest in what is going on to become a States' Member.

275 But that is democracy. People decide what they actually wanted. From my point of view I can only say how it has happened for me personally. Is it right? I do not know. Having so many candidates made it very difficult for people as well to understand the candidates that were actually before them. It did become a bit of a lottery, to be honest. But again that goes down to democracy but I think there is a great learning curve of what has happened and from that experience, and

knowing what is still happening currently, I do believe that, hands up, I would not support Island-wide voting again.

Some I would but not all.

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Ms Le Clerc: Richard, did you want to come in at all about that question, about under-representation?

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Mr Digard: Yes, I think Mrs Lowe is right, It was a bit of a lottery, frankly. If people had been selecting purely from candidates who were representing the Vale, then it may well have been a different outcome. When you are faced with, what was it, 119 candidates, and you have got a maximum of 38, a lot of people, I was one of those who tried to use all 38 votes. Frankly, it is impossible because maybe 10 people you would know and think that they could do a competent job, whether you agree with their politics or not because again one of my views is what are we doing better to match candidates for the role that is implicit in being a States' Member? Because it is a job and it has responsibilities and so on.

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So when you are faced with a cast list of 119, making informed choices is exceptionally difficult. You can make a better informed choice when you have got 10 candidates for five seats in the Vale or another district.

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The Chair: Before going to Deputy Meerveld, I will just follow up slightly on the point that Michelle was making. The last election actually resulted in a shift – north to south shift – of where Deputies are resident. So the Castel and St Peter Port remained essentially the same but the Vale and St Sampson's saw a fall from 12 elected Members to six, while the west and the south-east together, so the southern half of the Island increased from 10 Deputies previously to 17 now. So it is significant.

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In other words, the two electoral districts in the south have nearly three times the number of resident Deputies compared with the two in the north, for the same population more or less. Do you think this is a cause for concern?

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Ms Lowe: It has always been a concern in the past, regarding St Peter Port, because you know from St Peter Port that they do not necessarily live in St Peter Port, it was where they need more seats so –

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The Chair: No, but I think the majority of Deputies did live where they stood because it was, to a small extent, some might say, slightly frowned on to stand out of parish. St Peter Port and the Castel have stayed the same, if you join together St Peter Port North and South, where there has been a shift. But we talk about a north/south split on the Island when it comes to housing, when it comes to other things and now the south has also got significantly more of a resident Deputy population.

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Under Island-wide voting, does this matter? Do you think there are any negative implications of this shift that has happened or is it just merely a democratic shift and it is fine?

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Mr Digard: It is probably going to be difficult to answer that until we have had another Island-wide general election and –

The Chair: Yes, because it could all change again.

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Mr Digard: But on paper it cannot be healthy, can it? The very fact that you have analysed/spotted it would suggest to me that your inclination is, 'Hmm'. I think if you were to ask people in the north of the Island do they feel that their concerns are adequately listened to, particularly about traffic, transport and housing, they will tell you no. Why is that? Well because who is championing the north? As you say we have gone from 12 to six. In some respects that speaks

330 for itself, doesn't it? Yet again – I am sorry I am repeating myself, but yet again – that disconnect with the parish is kind of self-evident from the figures that you have just read out.

The Chair: Thank you. Deputy Aldwell? No. Anybody else? No.

335 **Deputy Aldwell:** Clearly we are hearing that the north are not happy so hopefully there will be more candidates that come forward next time, 2025, quality candidates that come forward – we have quality now and we had quality before – and that they will come forward and hopefully we might get some from the Douzaines that will have had some input, have some understanding, and will put themselves forward for the election.

340 **The Chair:** Okay, Deputy Meerveld.

Deputy Meerveld: I would just like to put forward a little challenge. At the end of the day the people who are elected as Deputies are the choice of the people so if they choose candidates they think they are getting quality candidates from one end of the Island to the other then that quite possibly is influencing the numbers more than anything else.

345 But going back to a point that Deputy Lowe made earlier, Vale and St Sampson's represent very large voting blocks. I would have thought that any Deputy would be mindful of the needs in the north, and yes, there are issues but I think those issues pre-date Island-wide voting, about traffic and infrastructure and transportation. I would have thought that Island-wide voting would actually see Deputies being more mindful.

350 There is natural tendency, if you have got a large number of voters in the north, you need to be mindful of their issues. So I do not necessarily correlate the fact that if you do not live in the parish that you would not be concerned for that area.

355 **Ms Lowe:** I think it goes back to what we were saying before. It is the parochial matters, isn't it? Or who is going to champion for it? Previously, if you had Deputies in those parishes, you pick up the phone and say, 'We would like you to vote this way. Why have you voted that way?' Etc. Now, because it is Island-wide, you have lost that. Because who do they ring and phone up about what they would like actually represented in the States.

360 There are too many, not enough actually out there leading their departments and promoting that. I have never seen so few media coverage of all that is going on or responding to them. I think that goes to now, whereas before it was always the President would be out there and addressing all these issues, it comes from the coms team all the time. That is fine, I am not criticising the coms team, they are paid to do that job, but equally the Presidents are paid to do that job and they should be out there. If they were out there more, instead of it being a spokesperson, the public would then be able to ring somebody.

365 They cannot ring a spokesperson. You can look at the *Press* quite often and there are at least five spokespersons for different articles that are in the *Press* –

370 **The Chair:** But that is not necessarily anything to do with Island-wide voting, is it?

Ms Lowe: Well it is, because if you have got that person who is from a particular parish, you know who to contact. So it is the parochial thing against the Island-wide thing. We have no longer a person there representing parish matters. You have got a spokesperson instead of somebody from Island-wide addressing it as the head person to it. Do you understand what I am trying to say? Okay.

380 **Mr Digard:** I think to come back to your question, if I may, if you have been elected with an Island-wide franchise, without picking up any particular issues from the north, and let us stick with housing, in what was it in your interest to say, 'We should reduce the amount of building in the

north.' I.e. put it somewhere else in the Island where some of your power base actually has been because that is how you got in.

385 So there is no real incentive, I think, to look at specific areas. If one is being brutally cynical about it, most Deputies will want to get re-elected and they will have their eye on what they need to do to do that. I hope that is not too cynical. I assume that is how you guys operate. Now that we have Island-wide, who actually is in dialogue with their community, the people that previously used to put them in office? Who is directly involved with them to say, 'There is a problem with building in the north. There is a problem with access. There is a problem with public transport. Yes, you have lost the nine o'clock bus weekdays without consultation, without discussion, secretly off line.'

390 So who is picking up these issues? You were kind enough to turn up for the Hougue Jehannet closure meeting and I think there were three other Vale Deputies –

Deputy Meerveld: I think it was more than that. There were quite a lot of Deputies there.

395 **Mr Digard:** There were a few Deputies there but it was not viewed as an Island-wide issue, I do not think.

Deputy Meerveld: No.

400 **Deputy Fairclough:** That is an interesting point that you raise, Mr Digard, because I turned up to the second one –

Mr Digard: Sorry, you did, yes I saw you there.

405 **Deputy Fairclough:** – but that is not the reason I am raising the issue. The reason I am raising the issue is when I turned up there somebody said to me, 'What are you doing here?' As if this was an issue that I should not engage with because I did not live in the north of the Island. That really was the first comment I was greeted with.

410 **Mr Digard:** Yes, which sort of again reinforces the tack that we are taking here, which is people expect to have resident Deputies who are passionate about their parish, their patch or their district. That has pretty much gone.

Deputy Meerveld: So, could it be addressed by having –?

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Mr Digard: By scrapping Island-wide voting? Most definitely! *(Laughter)*

420 **Deputy Meerveld:** I obviously have campaigned very strongly for Island-wide voting and I can answer a lot of your questions about why have we done it and what is its impact. And also some of the downside of having Deputies focus on two square miles over the best interests of the whole Island and making the two square miles a priority.

425 I would also say that I have attended a lot of Douzaine meetings this term and I was invited by the Douzaines to do so and I am still approached by people in the parish and Island-wide, as I always have been. But going back to the specific issues there are other ways of approaching this. For instance, at the next election, you could ask for Deputies to put their names forward for representing specific parishes, whether they live there or not, because we do have people standing out of parish, we did have people standing out of parish last term, in the 2016 Election.

430 You could quite easily have one, two, three Deputies per parish volunteering to be a representative for that parish and of course we have to remember in 2016 we did not have parish elections, it was district-based elections. We moved away from parish-based elections a long time ago.

Ms Lowe: That is when it started to change. There were people frustrated still because there were some parishes where in the district they did not have somebody live in their parish.

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Deputy Meerveld: But, to counter, there was a lot of frustration as well, that people could not vote for candidates they wanted to, outside of their parish. My mother could not vote for me in St Sampson's because she lived in the Castel and there was a lot of frustration that some Deputies were getting elected on 500 votes from a fairly, it was perceived as a weak group of potential candidates in one parish or district, whereas other strong candidates in other parishes were not getting elected because it was a competitive parish.

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Ms Lowe: I used to say, I took a requête to the States, I have taken amendments to the States over the years to try and get Island-wide voting so I have always been glued to Island-wide voting and I used to say that the electorate should be able to elect their Government, not part of it. But seeing the fallout from what has happened this term and the backlash from people who feel that they have been deprived of being able to have a Deputy, whether it is a shared Deputy or not in the districts, I think it has actually come back to more and more people want the parish Deputies and not even the districts any more. Not from what I am actually hearing from various people across the Island, you know.

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Deputy Meerveld: I would make just two final comments. One is I was very pleased to be invited by Deputy Burford to participate in this Panel because with any major change there is a danger that the pendulum swings too far and, as you say the negative consequences are there. So this process here is a very valuable part of consulting with the Island and seeing what they think they have lost and then trying to find ways to potentially adjust back to them. I will leave it at that.

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Mr Digard: Just to say your suggestion about, in effect, nominating a parish representative, it is interesting, firstly, because it is yet another work round for a process that in my view is fundamentally flawed but, secondly, how would that work in practice? You are suggesting that the parishes or the districts have to say, 'Here is a field of candidates, we rate X, Y and Z, we will approach them and say, "If you get in you will have a particular fondness for the Vale, will you? Thank you very much."' And they will say, 'Absolutely we will. Rely on us. Vote for Bloggs.' Then what happens afterwards. Where are the checks, the balances? Where is the traction there?

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It is a nice idea but it strikes me very much just as a work around for something that is a flawed system anyway.

Deputy Meerveld: No, I was thinking the other way around. Post-election, candidates are asked which parishes they would like; if they want to help represent a parish and which ones. Then put their names forward to those parishes as Deputies would like to represent –

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Mr Digard: That is quite a fundamentally different process or prospect from you, as a Vale resident, saying, 'Would you people in the Vale please support me because this is what I am going to do for you and the Island.' The boot is on the other foot there, it seems to me.

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Ms Lowe: It is not for the States to decide who is going to represent the Vale –

Deputy Meerveld: Not the States. I think we are digressing here from the purpose. So I think we need to move on.

480 **The Chair:** Okay. In that case, then, Deputy Fairclough can you pick up on the supplementary
for me? Thank you.

Deputy Fairclough: Yes. In our survey, 72% of people said they felt sufficiently well-informed
485 about at least three-quarters of the candidates, when voting in the previous parish-based election.
So that is 72%. Under Island-wide voting, that figure fell to just 33%. Do you think this is a cause for
concern and, if so, what do you think can be done about it? I think I know your answers, Mr Digard!

Mr Digard: Do you want the stock response or the knee jerk response to that? Yes, we ought to
490 be concerned by that and that reinforces I think what we are all saying here is that trying to make
an informed choice from 119 candidates, or whatever it was, is impossible. You just cannot do it.

Deputy Fairclough: Of course whether we like it or not, to some extent, we have got Island-
wide voting at the next election. How can the electorate, in your views, learn more about so many
495 candidates? Is there a mechanism?

Deputy Aldwell: It is really tricky. I think we did everything we could. I walked the 10 parishes. I
went in areas in every parish and I went to chat to as many people as I could but lots of other people
could not do that. They could not get around to all the parishes. It was just a huge ask to have. But
500 also you can only give so much information and you can only put so much down on a page and to
sit down, as we all did, to read 119 manifestos, is just a mammoth task.

But I think that with the parishes at least you had the hustings and you get to really cross-
examine your candidates and probably, if people are standing within those areas, they have put
their name forward, maybe it would be asking the parishes very kindly if they would put on some
hustings within their parishes for those people who are standing within their parishes so they can
505 be cross-examined.

The Chair: The point that you made about assessing adequately 119 manifestos is one of the
ones that has come across most strongly in our survey and I think that it would be fair to say that
510 people find that the biggest issue with Island-wide voting is the impossibility or potential
impossibility of adequately assessing that many people, which is not surprising really, and I think
that point was highlighted before we even embarked on the referendum by some who were
concerned about the potential outcome.

But balancing it the other way there were strong calls for people to be able to vote for anybody
and that probably was the reason behind why a lot of people supported and some people do
515 continue to support Island-wide voting. How can that dichotomy be resolved so that people can
have that opportunity to vote for a wider range of candidates but are not faced with so many
candidates to assess?

Mr Digard: I am not sure that it can, frankly.
520 How can you mitigate some of the effects of that? As you know, one of my concerns is that being
a Deputy today, done properly, is a particularly onerous and difficult job with enormous
responsibilities and it requires quite a lot of skills. The problems that the Island faces have changed
out of all recognition to when I started writing about this in my twenties.

It is a task, it is a role, whether it is a job we can argue about. But I think being a Deputy requires
525 certain strengths and abilities and attributes and I think one of the ways of mitigating this lack of
understanding of the candidates is if there was some process that made sure that whoever stood
actually knew in a very real fashion what they were letting themselves in for and they had a pre-
induction process, if I can put it that way, because I think quite a few States' Members or new States'
Members get in and think, 'Blimey, I did not understand that. Did not know that.'

530 I think the classic example is where what was put forward as a party on a particular tax platform
then gets in and says, 'Well actually now we know a little bit more about what we do we realise that

we cannot have no taxes.' You kind of think as an elector, wouldn't it be nice if some homework had been done ahead of the standing for election, so that we did not have hiccoughs like that?

535 I am trying to be diplomatic here. But it does seem to me that if we are electing to put people into positions of really quite significant responsibility and influence, doesn't it make sense to have them as up to speed with the job before they take office, which is what I suggest in my paper to you that having that sort of pre-induction process might actually pay off.

Deputy Aldwell: If I can just say, (**The Chair:** Yes, certainly.) what was really good this time, I did not stand before but what was good for me when we came in was that all the Committees had like a careers day and you went around and you understood what Committees did in every area and you could ask all kinds of questions to the officers.

540 Now, I think before people stood, if that was the case that people would understand those areas, that would be really helpful and as we know, we went to about 20 inductions that were put in place when we joined, as well, and some of those would be brilliant to have a kind of mix of them, to have for candidates to be able to understand the process –

The Chair: Do you think these should be mandatory for candidates?

550 **Deputy Aldwell:** I think so because it is quite amazing, actually. Obviously I did not understand, even being sat as a Constable for five years, there were areas which I certainly did not understand and so I loved every one of them. I really enjoyed having the understanding. But then there were a lot of Deputies who never came. So they did not come to any of those presentations and I think there were probably just the same people that went to each one. As you know, not everyone did. 555 But if it was made mandatory before you stood, great idea.

Mr Digard: And I think that would be particularly useful for me, as an elector, knowing that candidate Aldwell had gone through that process so that, (a) there was some evidence that she had done that – clearly you would – but it would be useful to think, 'Okay, so they have done this, so and so has not done that pre-induction course.' That would be material for –

The Chair: But then if it was mandatory, if you are suggesting it was mandatory, presumably people would not be allowed to register to stand if they had not done it?

565 **Mr Digard:** I imagine that some people will gib at making it mandatory. I am saying that if you do not make it mandatory well then at least make sure that it is something that the candidate can show whether their homework has been marked or something or that there is a record of attendance.

570 **The Chair:** Do you think it would act as some sort of deterrent to some candidates, who maybe had not looked into it sufficiently deeply to therefore reduce the overall candidate list? The interesting thing is, of course, that we have had in previous elections around about 80 candidates standing across the Island, in their districts, and then this time it was sort of an increase of nearly 50% to nearly 120 candidates, which seemed unusual in the space of one election.

575 **Mr Digard:** I am sure that everybody who stood did so for the right reasons but if you are of a cynical disposition, having some sort of process that demands a tangible demonstration of commitment, yes, it is going to weed some people out, clearly.

580 **The Chair:** Okay, Ms Le Clerc.

585 **Ms Le Clerc:** Well, just picking up on that, I do think that that is an excellent idea. However, there are a lot of people who are working full time prior to standing for election, who struggle even to do the canvassing ahead because they are in full-time employment. And I know from the induction that I did over the years, there is a considerable time for that induction process so how would that fit in? Would that reduce the number of potential candidates, perhaps very good candidates, because of this pre-induction process?

590 **Mr Digard:** You raise a good point. As I suggested in my paper to you, quite a lot of thought would need to go into however you handle that so that it did not become an obstacle so that it did not become discriminatory. Young mums, for instance. So if you do early evening. There are some problems with it, I have to say there are. But if you want to stick with Island-wide voting, it seems to me that you have to have something in place that says, 'Everybody on the sheet in front of you at least has a rudimentary understanding of what it is that they are trying to get elected to.'

595 **Ms Lowe:** I think the onus is very much on the candidate, which we do not actually see. You know, from sitting in the Public Gallery, how many, when you have all stood, are in the Public Gallery observing what is going on, how many have attended the parish meetings, how many have attended States' presentations, how many have taken an interest in finding out what the States is all about before putting their name forward and you could probably count on one hand. That is the problem
600 that you have got, people have not really taken enough interest to find out. They have come into the States and then they wanted to be treated like a civil servant or like somebody at school and be told what it is all about.

No, it is up to you to go and find out before you put your name forward what the States is all about, what it entails. To have a pop-in with all the various Committees before you can open up and put your name forward as a candidate, absolutely fine, I have no problem with that. That helps them educate what the States is all about. But once elected, to me, I use the expression they are being cloned.
605

I cannot believe all the induction processes. When I was first elected, it was 20 minutes with the Bailiff in the States: toilets are out there, coats are there, you stand up when you want to speak, I will decide if you can speak, if not you sit down. And that is what it was. You were expected to do the work yourself. You were expected to ask the questions. You were expected to find out what it was all about, attend the parish meetings; we used to have the Deputies' surgeries, so they would attend the Deputies' surgery and find out what it was all about.
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You are not seeing that. You are just seeing people going in and they are expecting to be told what they have got to do and that is wrong. It not only can be seen as Christmas to some of the civil servants who think they have not got a clue but also it delays the process. There is no learning curve. You are accountable from the day you are elected. It is no use saying, 'I have got a year. I have got to find out what it is all about.' No, they did not elect you, waiting for you to find out what it was all about. You hit the ground.
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You are more accountable from the day you got elected and I think it has just gone too far, much too far the other way, where candidates and people once they are elected are expecting to be told what to do instead of them – this costs the taxpayer money putting on all of these things – it is up to the individual to go and do it, in my opinion. But that is how I was trained for being a States' Deputy many years ago.
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625 **Ms Le Clerc:** Okay, we are going to move on to the next question.

Richard, this is a question for you, specifically, but other people might want to chip in. You have said that political parties are a, 'reaction to significant forces around them and a movement pressing for change. They tend not to emerge to prop up a flawed system of electing people's representatives.' Can you expand on this?
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Mr Digard: Did I really say that?

Ms Le Clerc: Yes, you did! *(Laughter)*

635 **Mr Digard:** Yes because if you go back, you know, post-war, if you look at the reasons for the formation of the Labour Party, these movements that respond to events, to social need, social pressure, what we are saying here is how do we make Island-wide voting work? Perhaps if we have parties. Well, who is going to lead the party and if you have one party, presumably you are going to have a party of 38? It is just so bizarre, isn't it?

640 I do not think you can magic up parties. You might be able to get a group of people together who are like-minded but the problems we saw with the last election is that although there were groupings or there were parts and kind of this, that and a third, it was just names. There was no whipping. So I could vote for you and you from the same grouping but you would not be told that you had to vote in accordance with the manifesto on which you had stood. So the whole thing just struck me as being really rather pointless.

645 The other thing, of course, with political parties, is that there is a filter system so that you can make sure that the candidates that you field kind of know what they are doing and have a knowledge and understanding of what it is that they are trying to put themselves up for. So it upskills the process to a degree. Which is why, listening to Mrs Lowe's comments, there is a move to upskill parliamentarians.

650 If you think about it, it is pretty obvious, isn't it? Because the complexity of life increases year by year, so you want people who know what they are doing. You want people who understand how public finances work, what taxation revenues do. I think the days of learning on the job, sadly, are probably gone. Your perspective is quarter of a century, maybe a bit more?

655 **Ms Lowe:** I agree with that but equally it goes back down to the candidates and if you go back, looking at the States many years ago, there were very many business people in the States who understood finances. What we are seeing now, we are not seeing that. We are seeing people, in all good faith, putting their names forward but they have not got experience of running a business, they have not got experience of understanding accounts and all of those things as well.

660 So of course there is that big void, which going back when it was 57 Members in there, those that have got that void would be lost in the system and learn as they were on the job when, by reducing the number of States' Members that void becomes even more apparent and more scary that they have not got the knowledge and understanding about accounts and businesses and everything else, and the ramifications of the broader decisions that affect the economy and not just a Committee that they are on. There is the knock-on effect of all of that. So that is the point that I was trying to get across on that.

670 **Mr Digard:** Yes, if I can quote from Allister Langlois' book, he did a guide, *Representing the People: A Guide for People's Deputies* and he says that everybody who is elected brings a unique combination of skills and experience:

Combining those different backgrounds in a way that makes Government and the Legislature efficient and effective is a significant challenge. That challenge can be made easier if Members have a more shared view of how the system operates and the behaviours, which lead most effectively to consensus, while accommodating a wide range of political views.

675 Now I think that in some respects that is actually hitting the nail on the head, We know that there is no realistic prospect in the short-term of having anything like Executive Government or Cabinet Government or such. So we are going to have a Government that comprises of 38 people. My contention is you need those individuals in there and we want a broad church, we want it to be representative. Clearly the days of just having retired businessmen are long gone and hurrah for that!

680 **Ms Lowe:** Excuse me, they were not retired. And that was the difference so there was less than –

Mr Digard: But you take my point, it was predominantly kind of fairly well-to-do blokes who had made a few bob along the way but they were still working at the time.

685 **Ms Lowe:** But they were still running very popular and busy businesses. (**Mr Digard:** Indeed.)
They were not actually retired.

690 **Mr Digard:** But they had some skills that were particularly relevant to running a community, running a government. So having a broad church of folk who, as a result of the process for seeking election, get a strong understanding of whatever they are letting themselves in for and what that 'job' entails, and also understanding the culture in which they can best operate would be really helpful. That, I think, gives you a much better chance of trying to make Island-wide voting work than coming up with parties or groupings or anything like that.

695 What we are saying is, or at least what my contention is, being a Deputy is a really important function. Please be clear on what it is that you have to do, the stuff that you need to know and the way that you have to behave with your colleagues to get that job done. No, you are not going to get your own way every single time but you are trying to move Guernsey as a community from here to there in a sensible, non-damaging way. And I think that we have lost that sense of purpose and that has been accelerated in my view by Island-wide voting.

700 **Deputy Fairclough:** Okay, just a very quick follow-up on that because you raise a very interesting point there and the fact that we have a consensus system of government but how does the potential candidate convey his or her ability to be able to work within a consensus system or, perhaps more importantly, how can a Member of the electorate be able to judge that candidate on their ability to be able to do that and make our system work as it stands?

705 **Mr Digard:** Short answer, you cannot, not unless you have seen them in action previously. So if you have got a group of new candidates coming along and you do not know them and you do not have them knocking on your door as you used to in the old days and you do not have the hustings, you are kind of reliant on a bit of paper that they are putting in front of you, which is why I suggest that having something that says, 'I have gone through the induction process,' at least gives you some knowledge that they have done some homework and the very fact that we are actually saying under the new system we have almost by default moved from the old way of everybody having an individual manifesto and a Chamber of 38 independents to a system that actually more or less forces you into saying, 'I am going to join an Assembly of 38 people where we will all work collegiately together to try to improve the Island.' It is quite a shift.

710 **The Chair:** I think we might have to hold it there because we have run out of time but it has been very interesting. So thank you very much to all our witnesses and we will take a short break now and reconvene in five minutes with the next Panel.

720 Thank you very much,

*The Committee adjourned at 10.58 a.m.
and resumed at 11.05 a.m.*

EVIDENCE OF

**Miss Shelaine Green, Chair of Women in Public Life;
Mr Alistair Doherty, former Westminster House of Commons Clerk;
Mr Peter Gillson, former Deputy and former St Sampson's Douzenier**

725 **The Chair:** Okay, good morning again and here we go with part two of this morning's Scrutiny hearing and so if I can without further ado just move straight onto our second Panel of witnesses and ask them to introduce themselves and say a little bit about themselves, starting with Mr Doherty.

730 **Mr Doherty:** Yes, my name is Alistair Doherty, I will be a familiar face to some people on the Committee. I used to be a House of Commons Clerk but long since retired and have worked as an adviser to the Scrutiny Committee off and on over the past 10 years. So I am here, I think, to give an outsider's view but hopefully not too ignorant an outsider's view.

735 **Miss Green:** Good morning or afternoon? It must be afternoon by now. No, morning still. My name is Shelaine Green, I am the Chair of Women in Public Life. We are a group of volunteers who inspire and support the women of Guernsey to stand for all forms of public office but of course that also includes the role of People's Deputy.

Mr Gillson: Peter Gillson. Relevant experience here was Constable, Parish Douzenier and eight years as a Deputy.

740 **The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Right, so without further ado, then, we will kick off straight into the questions, which are broadly around the Island-wide voting, the composition and operation of the States but we will move into some more on a general theme, as well.

745 So the first question is what impact do you think Island-wide voting has had on the political culture of Guernsey? Is the States all that different as a result of Island-wide voting in its composition or in the way it works? I do not know, shall we start with Ms Green?

Miss Green: Miss.

750 **The Chair:** Miss Green.

755 **Miss Green:** I cannot speak for all aspects and I certainly cannot speak for Island-wide voting itself. Our studies and our submission was based on what happened to the demographics at the 2020 Election and it is not possible to directly attribute that to Island-wide voting on the basis of one election. You just cannot. There were all sorts of other factors at play.

760 But nevertheless, if you do look at the 2020 Election, from what we have looked at, things contracted, effectively. So fewer women, fewer older people, fewer younger people and an increased number of men aged in their fifties or sixties. Nothing against men aged fifties and sixties, really glad for your service, but it increased from 20 to 25 which means you are now two thirds of our States' Assembly.

The Chair: Thank you. Mr Gillson.

765 **Mr Gillson:** Looking at the candidates, looking at who got elected, I do not think the composition of the States would have been different – *significantly* different – had the same people been elected or the same people, candidates stood under a parochial system or district system. It is down, really, to how you attract people of the right calibre rather than the electoral system.

770 **The Chair:** Picking up on a point from the last session, we went from 80 candidates, approximately, in 2012 and 2016 to nearly 120 candidates in 2020. Why do you think there was such a marked increase in the number of people wanting to stand for election?

775 **Mr Gillson:** I think there was probably novelty value for want of a new system. I think people may have thought it was easier to get elected Island-wide than parochial. A big weakness with the district and parochial systems was that some districts people were virtually guaranteed to regain their seats and it made it difficult for new people to come in, I suspect that next election there will be fewer candidates.

The Chair: You think so?

780 **Mr Gillson:** Yes, I think so.

The Chair: Okay, that is interesting. Thank you.

785 In terms of public engagement and the perception of the legitimacy of the States, do you think that is better or worse under Island-wide voting?

Mr Gillson: I do not have to hand with me the statistics of numbers of people who have voted so it is difficult to comment but I think there must be some statistics showing the percentages of people that actually voted and PIN numbers on the Electoral Roll to be able to determine –

790 **The Chair:** Yes, I mean the turnout was very good for the last election, I think just under 80% –

Mr Gillson: In which case that makes it a reasonably legitimate Government.

The Chair: Yes, so it is as simple as that?

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Mr Gillson: Yes.

The Chair: Yes, okay.

800 Do you have any comments?

805 **Miss Green:** We ran an entire event in June, called *It Does Not Have to Be This Way – Making Guernsey Politics Work Better for Everyone* and we had a turnout of 150 people to that, which would imply that there are some concerns around the current States. But I do not think, again, you can attribute that directly to Island-wide voting at this early stage.

The Chair: Okay, thank you.
Deputy Fairclough.

810 **Deputy Fairclough:** Just to ask a follow-up question on that because there is an argument that under Island-wide voting the successful candidates have got a stronger mandate than they have ever had before, in that you could look at the numbers that you needed to get elected, 6,000-odd, whatever it was, whereas in previous States you did have Members sitting in the States with only a tenth of that amount of votes. Do you feel that there is a feeling, either within the body politic or amongst Islanders or parishioners that there is a stronger mandate for the States, now, simply based on the numbers? Or do you think that is far too simplistic?

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Mr Gillson: Too simplistic. I think people have got a wider mandate and not necessarily a stronger mandate.

820 **Miss Green:** I cannot say I have ever heard anyone mention it.

Mr Doherty: Could I say on the turnout it went up to 79% but I think there were some other factors as well, like postal voting and so on. If you want to measure legitimacy in terms of turnout, it is the best you have ever had.

825 Just in answer to the more general question, I just jotted down what I thought in theory should have happened with Island-wide voting and then what actually seems to have happened. So anyway the things which I thought should have happened were there would be huge advantage for incumbents and people who were Island-wide names but the picture is slightly odd. I think you had 16 incumbents got in and 11 incumbents were thrown out. So it worked both ways. Some people
830 used Island-wide voting to punish some incumbents for policies they did not like.

The other thing I thought would have happened was that you would have the growth of single issue candidates. For example, I am a cycling fanatic. I would have cycle lanes everywhere. No chance of being elected in a district for that but there just might be 5,000 or 6,000 people on the Island who would support such a thing. So I thought you would have a core of single issue people in the States but that does not seem to have happened.
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And then finally of course I assumed that Island-wide voting was predicated on the idea of political parties. Now you had in the election, that seemed to be the case. Richard said you cannot magic up parties and you cannot. But parties did emerge, or two of them did successfully but then were not sustained. So that was another factor, which surprised me really.
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Deputy Fairclough: It is interesting that you mention those particular points, Mr Doherty, particularly the single issue question, because it was going to be my next question, actually.

Turning to some of the other witnesses, do you think we have or have had more lobbyists for single issues amongst States' Deputies or did have at the last election?
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Miss Green: Not particularly. I think there are two factors here. I, like you, would have expected that once you go Island-wide it would be easier to stand on a single issue but any uplift from that seems to have been drowned out by how difficult it was to choose between the candidates and the fact that you went from having to choose between 10 or 11 candidates to 118. That means inevitably
850 you have only got a tenth of the time per candidate to evaluate them.

When you have got such a short amount of time then you are going to fall back on shortcuts and it is likely that you will then fall back on even subconscious shortcuts like what you mentally expect a Deputy to look like.

855 **Deputy Fairclough:** Mr Gillson, do you have any thoughts?

Mr Gillson: I do not think I can add any more.

Deputy Fairclough: Bringing this down to what happened at the last election and of course this
860 is just our opinions and speculation to some extent, do you think that the inevitable election issues, looking back to that time, they are possibly very different to what they are now? Maybe they are not for some people. Two or three schools was one of the big ones. Do you think that people's positions taken on those sorts of issues, those specific issues, election issues as we sometimes call them, potentially mask less obvious weaknesses in candidates' understanding and views on politics
865 generally?

Miss Green: Easily.

Deputy Fairclough: Why do you say that?
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875 **Miss Green:** Well, because again people take shortcuts and one of those shortcuts is how did X vote on Y and people can become very impassioned about that particular subject. Tax, for example, which way you voted, how you voted on schools. A lot of the women who lost their seats in the last election were on the wrong side of the education debate. So, yes, the public does respond quite strongly to single issues.

Mr Gillson: But that would happen under any system.

880 **Miss Green:** Yes, either.

Mr Gillson: The same would happen under the district-based system. You would have people looking at single items –

885 **Miss Green:** It might happen a little bit more when you have such a huge plethora of candidates to choose from.

890 **Mr Gillson:** It might happen more because you have got candidates, if you are in your district you may not have candidates who have got a strong view on your particular issue. So you will not make that decision based on that. Whereas Island-wide you will do. So I think that changes it. But generally I think people have always voted on single issues.

895 **The Chair:** Do you think in the districts that I think it is fair to say – I mean feel free to disagree – that the people generally know their candidates better because maybe they have been there longer or there are few of them, certainly, and maybe they might say, 'Well I did not agree with them on this prominent single issue but underneath it all I know they are a good egg.' And that aspect will not translate into Island-wide voting?

900 **Mr Gillson:** No. I think one of the big problems politicians have generally is the belief that outside of election years most of the public are interested in politics and I think most of the people do not really care about politics. They just want to be able to do right by their family and be treated fairly and get the chance to have a good life and hope that the politicians create the environment where they can do that.

905 But in terms of people who actually follow politics, I think there are very few and my experience of walking the parish, you could virtually guarantee the subject that will be raised on most doorsteps by looking at yesterday's *Press* and the day's *Press*. Because whatever the front page was, most people when you knock on the door, they have not thought about it, they have come from work. It is whatever they have read on the *Press*. That is invariably the questions you would be asked.

910 So I think you do a disservice to the public if you assume the public actually are interested in politics all the time. They have got better things to do in terms of getting on with their life and focusing on politics during the election period.

915 **Miss Green:** But you also do a disservice to the public to assume they all are not interested. (**Mr Gillson:** No, it is a mixture.) We have well over 100 people on our politics WhatsApp group and I am tweeting out to them all the time about events like this, about the States' Meetings. We get together, we have discussions about it. So I think, certainly of course you cannot get everybody to be interested but you can get a proportion and I was fascinated by Deputy Peter Ferbrache's appearance on *Guernsey People Have Your Say*, and how many respectful questions he got. There is interest out there, we just do not cultivate it enough.

920 **Ms Le Clerc:** Can I just pick up on the single issue? When we had district elections, it was much easier for a potential candidate to deal with that single election issue because you would have your 6,000, 7,000 doors that you would knock on and you would have your programme and you had a

925 greater opportunity to actually address those people's concerns one-to-one either on the doorstep
or in those district hustings and surely Island-wide voting has taken away that opportunity for those
single issue items to be addressed, because you do not have that opportunity to knock on as many
doors and get the support of your district electorate? Would you agree or disagree with that?

Miss Green: Knocking on doors is a fantastic exercise and even under Island-wide voting I think
930 Deputies should still do it as much as possible. They are not going to be able to cover the whole
Island but they can cover as much as they possibly can. But what I would say this 2020 Election
brought us in terms of an innovation was the event at Beau Séjour, where all of the candidates were
present in the room and, as a voter, you could dot between all of them.

Whatever happens in the future, I think we should retain that. It was a fantastic opportunity to
go and see individual Deputies who may or may not have tapped on your door at all.

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The Chair: Looking at that particular event, I think speaking to most of the candidates who took
past, at most they will have spoken to 30 or 40 people during that whole day, out of 24,000 people
who voted. So again, is it only scratching the surface?

940 **Miss Green:** Oh yes, it is not efficient. It is not going to reach too far. But hustings are exactly
the same. Even the St Peter Port hustings only had a couple of hundred people there. So you are
never reaching everybody. You are reaching the top of the pyramid. The people who are really
actively interested. And you must never forget how influential those people are on their friends and
neighbours and colleagues as well. So I still think it is worth it. I just would not want to see it go if
945 we go back to the old system.

Deputy Meerveld: The fact is we still have the same opportunity as candidates to knock on
exactly the same number of doors, we just get to choose where those doors are as opposed to
restricting to a specific thing. But also, using Deputy Burford's example, people go into a hall and
950 there are 119 candidates, they only get to speak to 30. Well, if you are at parish level, you are
speaking to nine or 10 out of the total universe so you are actually getting more –

Miss Green: I am not saying this would replace it, I just would not want to lose it on top of
everything else.

955

Ms Le Clerc: I will go onto the next question. Populism may be hard to define but we probably
think that we know it when we see it. Is there any evidence of its increase as a consequence of
Island-wide voting? Alistair, you have not said much so would you like to contribute to that one?

960 **Mr Doherty:** Although I think that is the one question I would like to duck, actually, because I
do not know enough about the politics of Guernsey. I think my two co-panellists would be much
better placed for that. But if I could just comment on some of the points which have been made. All
I have seen is the survey here. I can imagine that a lot of your submissions were from people who
were very actively engaged.

965 They were probably very fixated on the parish link and the Douzaine and when Peter Gillson
talks about most people not being that interested I think we have to distinguish between the people
who are politically active and fascinated, and I am one of them, and then the bulk of the population,
who on the basis of this survey, which you commissioned, are sort of a bit 50-50 on some key
questions, I thought. Like when you asked the question should we keep Island-wide voting, 50-50.
970 When the question was asked about the importance of parish matters, again it is about 50-50.

I think we need to distinguish, I am not calling that indifference at all, but there is a lack of
fascination with the detail if you like. But somebody mentioned the word consensus, I think maybe
one of you and I suppose the question I have is does the States, as you describe it, operate as a

975 form of consensus government? I am not sure it does. My image of consensus is that you do not have votes, really, you just keep talking until you all eventually come around to agreeing.

So my question to you who know would be on how many occasions does the States push things to a vote? Obviously, Westminster is the antithesis of consensus. It is very binary. You have a vote, somebody loses. The European Union's Council of Ministers is utterly consensual. There is qualified majority voting but you just keep talking until you bring everybody along and, if you want to be negative, you say it is a fudge.

980 But that is what I see consensus as being so I think to describe the States as consensus and everything else as party politics makes me wonder, is it really consensus that you work under?

The Chair: Okay, do you want to carry on with the next question?

985

Ms Le Clerc: Yes, okay.

Briefly, what do you each see as the principal advantage and the principal disadvantage of Island-wide voting? That is a bit of a tough one! Yes, Shelaine.

990 **Miss Green:** We discussed this at our politics group and I was very struck by how much, particularly the younger people in the room, really valued being able to vote for people outside of their district. They gave examples of having looked at the candidates in previous elections and just not feeling any affinity for any of them. So that, I think, is the biggest advantage, being able to vote for people outside your district and potentially inspire voters by having somebody they can really identify with.

995

The disadvantage is, as I have said, 118 candidates and really people inevitably having to be quite perfunctory about how they do their choosing. So I think there is a particular opportunity that we need to take to educate the voter on what they should be looking for and that is probably the question I get most when I am showing people the manifesto booklet, 'Tell me how am I supposed to start with this?'

1000

Ms Le Clerc: Peter?

1005 **Mr Gillson:** The obvious big disadvantage is the number of candidates. We have heard that from other people this morning and it is quite obvious. The main advantage, I think, is you can look at it as almost two: one is the greater democracy because, removing constraints, people can vote for people outside their parish, which is great; there is also a more subtle advantage, that you are less likely to suffer the parochial wrath if you make a decision which the parish does not like.

I will make a huge bold statement here and say that if we had had Island-wide voting in 2016, the secondary education in this Island would have been sorted by now. I say that because Robert Sillars was Minister of Education, closed St Andrew's School. The *Press* exit poll in 2016 showed his vote in St Andrew's collapsed and St Martin's held up and I am making the assumption that if it had been Island-wide voting, he would have got back in, in which case the two-school model, he would have been back as Education Minister and the proponents of the two-school model would not have been able to take him down in the way they took Paul Le Pelley down.

1015

I think we would not have wasted two years on the two-school model. We would have saved millions and we would have an education system which is not quite in the state of flux that it is now. Now there are a few assumptions in there but I think there is a logic to all of them.

1020 **Mr Doherty:** I mean that is an interesting point. Is there any way of finding out the extent to which the States now discusses Island-wide issues, more tricky Island-wide issues than it did before? Is there any evidence that people are less likely to be looking over their shoulder about things like the Airport extension and so on?

1025 There was a question, I think the question was about voting: you can vote for everyone, but half the people nearly, in the survey, say, 'I thought the advantage was I could vote against anybody as well.' So there is that.

Deputy Burford, I think you said in the previous session, you talked about this ability, or you mentioned this ability, being able to vote for anybody, being something which appealed to people. But we have not answered the consequence of that. So an awful lot of people voted for Gavin St Pier and then, say, 'Why isn't he running the show?' But it is not a presidential system.

1030 Tony Blair could have got in with a majority of one in Sedgefield and nobody would have been saying to him, 'Why are you Prime Minister?' But I think we have brought in this almost popularity hierarchy and there is some expectation that the States should do something with it in the way the governance develops.

1035

The Chair: I think there always has been. When we had a hybrid system before under the Conseiller system, I think there always has been an expectation that people voted in Island-wide have a greater mandate than those voted in in the parishes and I think that is what contributed to its fairly short-lived thing between 1994 and 2000.

1040 Coming back to the point that has been made about the main disadvantage, and I think this is something most people would coalesce around, the main disadvantage being that there are too many candidates to adequately assess them all to the standard one might wish to; can you think of any way in resolving that particular issue?

1045 One of the suggestions that we have had made, that came through surprisingly loud and clear, is that a majority of people think that they have too many votes and maybe the task – because there is a feeling that votes are a very precious thing under a democracy and people do not want to waste them and I think that was an issue with parish voting, where people had six votes, 10 candidates, and said, 'But I only like three of them, I am wasting three of my votes. I do not want to waste votes so let us have Island-wide voting so I do not waste my votes.'

1050 Now, under Island-wide voting people are going, 'Well I have got 38 votes but I only like 20 of the candidates so I am wasting my votes.' So we do not seem to have progressed on that particular issue. Do you think there is an argument now, under Island-wide voting, to give people fewer votes than 38?

1055 **Mr Gillson:** Clearly there is an argument, but whether it is a good one or not is a debatable question. I think that the problem is if you do that, you have to look and say, 'Yes, that may make it easier for people in terms of choosing,' but you will then end up with some very popular candidates with huge numbers and we will go back to what a previous person mentioned, a number of people getting in with a low number of votes because people would use their top X number on popular ones and then a few.

1060 So you will end up with the same arguments which we had under the district system of, 'Oh, Joe Bloggs got elected with 500 votes, whereas someone else got elected with 3,000.' You will get that thing, just numbers will be bigger.

1065 Now that is a criticism, whether it is a reason not to reduce the number of votes, that is a subjective decision but that is the consequence of what would happen if you reduced the number of votes.

The Chair: Do you think it is, because there were significant arguments ahead of Island-wide voting, with people arguing against it who said, 'Under Island-wide voting, people are going to be elected with 500 votes.' It was a refrain, it was published in the *Press*. But in the event, you needed 6,500 votes to get in. So there were possibly people with 500 votes but they were number 119.

1070 **Mr Gillson:** I used 500 as a random number. I was not specifically suggesting that number would be it but I think there will be a bigger range of the number of votes people get on those who are elected.

1075

1080 **The Chair:** Because on average I think in the last election people used 26 votes, so they were not that far away from, let's say, 20 as a hypothetical number. But there was also a lot of evidence that people said they wanted to use all 38 because they felt if they did not use all 38, they were allowing other people's votes to count for more, who did use 38. And yet other evidence we have had has said the first 10 were easy to choose, the second 10 were a bit more tricky and the last were a lottery.

1085 **Mr Gillson:** Any system you put in place is not going to be perfect. So any system is going to have pros and cons and it is balancing those. You are also not going to have a system that everyone is going to like. So if we have the next election with 38 votes, a load of people are going to say, 'Great, 38 votes, I can vote for everybody.' A load of people are going to say, 'It is too many.'

1090 You cannot square that because whatever you do is going to upset people or they may say they are disadvantaged by not having the full 38 votes. So in many ways some of these things are, 'You pays your money you takes your choice,' in terms of what system we put in place. It is really a case of balance, trying to minimise the downside issues, or at least have them so that people can understand what those downside issues are, why they are deemed to be acceptable downside issues compared to having another slightly different system with different downside issues.

1095 **Miss Green:** Perhaps we could make it clearer that you do not have to use all of your votes, so instead of taking them away, just say, 'You do realise you do not have to use all your votes and that there are strategic reasons why you might want to. There are other strategic reasons why you may not want to.'

1100 I may be wrong in this but in my head if you only voted once for one candidate, effectively you are giving all 38 votes to that candidate because the other candidates are not being raised up by your other votes so you are making your candidate stand out. So I think we just need to tell people they do not have to use them if they do not want to.

And regardless of how many votes people have, you still have to sift through 118 candidates to find who you want to vote for.

1105

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

1110 **Mr Doherty:** One of the more baffling or intriguing factors to come out of the survey was that 36% of the electorate voted for all 38 candidates. Now that would seem astonishingly high. But then when the question was asked, 'How many do you think you ought to have been able to vote for?' only 2% said that you should be able to vote for between 31 and 37 candidates.

1115 I cannot quite get my head around those figures and most people seem to say, or the largest group seem to say, it should have been six to 10 candidates that we could have voted for. So I do not know what was going on there.

The Chair: Okay, thank you.
So, moving on.

1120 **Deputy Meerveld:** The next question is mine?

The Chair: Yes, Carl, please.

1125 **Deputy Meerveld:** Okay, so we have already heard that obviously there was a decline in female representation in the States at the last election and Miss Green has already said that you cannot specifically blame it on Island-wide voting. But does the Panel have any suggestions of how the system could be improved to try and encourage female representation and of course, ultimately, the electorate to vote for them?

Miss Green: I had better go last on this one! (**Mr Gillson:** Oh, no.) Are you sure?

1130 First of all, the lack of representation is not just women. So there are fewer older people, fewer
younger people, etc. But the lack of women does stand out most strongly. We did have 12 in 2016.
That went down to eight in 2020. Again, I do not think you can necessarily attribute that to Island-
wide voting but what you can do is respond to what the election observers said when they saw that
result, which is that should be more Government encouragement of a wider variety of people to
1135 join the candidate pool.

Not the Government telling people how people should vote. They are not saying you would
have to vote for women they are just saying you need to encourage a more diverse group of people
to join the candidate pool. Now that might sound a bit contradictory considering I have been talking
about the 118 candidates and now I am – as are you, Deputy Meerveld – talking about encouraging
1140 more people to stand but I think we need to kind of increase the gathering of candidates and then
narrow them down more, which was the subject of your previous half of the hearing, very strongly.

You can increase the number of candidates who are attracted to stand but if you do a more
rigorous explanation to them, be it mandatory or not, of what it takes to be a Deputy, then you
narrow that back down again. So hopefully what pops out at the end is more diverse, more
1145 competent candidates.

Deputy Meerveld: Okay, for some people the election was a popularity contest for which top-
scoring Deputies should be in the leading position, something I think was touched on previously.
Do you agree with this sentiment and should the States adapt in some way to what the electoral
1150 term is, basically a hierarchy of Deputies within the States based on that electoral result?

Mr Gillson: No, if we do not have a presidential system.

Miss Green: But we need to explain that because it is very difficult for the electorate to
1155 understand, when they have gone to the trouble of spending good time choosing their Deputies to
then find that those Deputies are sitting on the back benches unused. So we need to explain that.

The Chair: There is an expectation, certainly we have seen this in some of the feedback that we
have had, that people assume that if somebody comes top in the polls they should have the top
1160 job in the States.

Miss Green: It should be an indicator, surely? It is not absolute, but it is an indicator.

Certainly, in Jersey, Kristina Moore topped the polls and I think one of her Assistant Chief
Ministers was second.
1165

Mr Doherty: I am going to give a political parties answer to this. I think at heart I feel that the
Island-wide voting made sense if you were wanting to move towards political parties. I come from
a system which is utterly political parties. Even to answer the woman representation, it was all-
women shortlists by the political parties that did it for the UK.

1170 In terms of this representation aspect, it is not just that there are not political parties here, I think
the other issue is there is not really an executive to capture. So political parties, I know Richard
Digard said you cannot magic them up and I agree with that. I think it is very interesting to look at
why the parties failed and whether Guernsey has those societal cleavages around which parties
could form. Maybe it just does not.

1175 A couple of reasons why you have political parties are societal cleavages, usually left/right, or –
and this is where I disagree with Richard – you do actually have an electoral system, which
encourages people to form political parties because they want to capture power but...the strange
thing about Guernsey is there is not this power to capture. The Chief Minister does not then allocate
seats, choose him or herself who is going to be the executive.

1180 So I think what I am trying to say is I do not really understand Island-wide voting, unless it was
linked to the expectation of political party development, really.

1185 **Deputy Fairclough:** Miss Green, a question specifically to you, if you do not mind. The focus of
your submission is concerned about, as you have already said, a gender and age imbalance. You
also mention diversity in terms of the communities within the Island. I think you specifically say
Latvian and Portuguese, Madeiran communities. What about income and personal wealth?

1190 **Miss Green:** Absolutely. No, I completely agree. But it was impossible to give you evidence of
that so we were trying to give you a very technical, evidence-based submission based on actual
hard numbers that we could gather data for and I do not know what individual Deputies' income
status is. I do not think anybody does and I would not hazard a guess. But you are right, there is
probably quite a disparity on the income front.

1195 **The Bailiff:** Is that something that anything could be done to address or is it something that
needs to be done ahead of the next election to address that issue?

1200 **Miss Green:** That is up to you and SACC, really, rather than me. From our own point of view as
Women in Public Life, yes we are trying to recruit women to stand for election but we are trying to
recruit the broadest group of women we possibly can to do that and also doing the kind of stuff
that you were talking about in the previous half, which is making sure that the women are
comfortable talking about politics, they know their amendment from their sursis, they know what a
Billet looks like, they have been in to watch the States, all of those kinds of things we are trying to
do to give people, whatever their socio-economic status, the confidence to be able to go forward
if they want to.

1210 **Mr Doherty:** I think if you do not have political parties, which you do not and you probably do
not want, does that mean that the States needs to be more representative of its electorate? If what
you are going to do is just gather together 38 people and say, 'You are all individuals, come up with
programmes and so on,' is there a greater onus on having it more representative? I think there
probably is.

1215 And then the question is representative of what? Obviously the easy things, because you can
see it, are gender and ethnicity maybe. But something like social background, it matters. But when
you look at your wonderful survey on selecting candidates, it has got 'what were the most important
factors' which people voting picked on. Well the views expressed: 'performance of a Deputy' but
the third one was 'candidate's professional skills'. And then, way down the list is 'candidate's record
of voluntary and community work'.

1220 In Westminster it has become a massively professional middle class parliament over my working
life there but I think that is sort of inevitable really, but it is not representative.

1225 **Deputy Fairclough:** That is interesting. There have been some calls for, as well as the two pages
in the telephone directory-type documents that you get ahead of the election, that there has been
talk about looking at other ways of assessing candidates' eligibility. Is there any way that that can
be done?

1230 **Mr Gillson:** I think the greater strength of Guernsey's democracy is also its greatest weakness.
Its strength is it is pure democracy in that anybody can stand and be elected. You are elected into
Government. There is technically no such thing as a back bench in the way of the UK. You are in
Government. Hugely strong. And that is its great weakness: that anybody can be elected straight
into the Government.

1235 I have long said we need a broad church of people of differing views, differing backgrounds, but we need to have the brightest and the best. In the UK system, you have got a filtration, in that the party will ensure that their candidates for a particular seat – or they should do – are reasonably competent, capable people, and then they get elected into Parliament and then the best of those, you would hope, go into the Cabinet and actually become part of government. The large majority of MPs do not form part of the government.

1240 Whereas in Guernsey every Deputy is part of the Government, And so whilst we have a very strong democratic system in terms of anybody being able to get into Government, it is a weakness and I think that has shown over the last two States, where I think the quality of Deputies, as a whole, is not as strong as it was a few elections ago. How we get around that, there have been some ideas about mandatory pre-election training. There are problems with that. Maybe expecting or having it mandatory that people do put something about their background in the manifestoes, potentially. There could be problems with that.

1245 The role of a Deputy in Government is equivalent to really being a senior management director role in any organisation and I think it is a weakness that we have got some people who have expected to jump into that role while never having that experience and there is nothing in the way of training or any time to train people and give them the experience to get up to operating at that level.

1250 **The Chair:** So you are comparing this Assembly and the previous one with the one before that?

Mr Gillson: Just generally. I think there has just been a general trend over this century.

1255 **The Chair:** Possibly a slightly controversial question because I know there are strongly held views on this but do you think the number of Deputies, because of course it was reduced from 45 to 38 in 2016, has affected that, insofar as there is a smaller pool of Deputies within the States to draw from for the important roles that need to be done?

1260 **Mr Gillson:** Yes. I hold the view that we should actually ... reducing the number of Deputies was a mistake, I think for that reason ... is one of the reasons. One of the problems we have, or misconceptions, is that it is possible for Deputies not to meet each other outside of States' Meetings. When we had more Committees, more people worked together. Now we have only got half a dozen Committees, they do not necessarily meet and work with other Deputies and I think that is part of the reason why we are getting this system where people, a range where people, just are not working together.

1265 It is a very divisive States and I think that is because quite possibly people do not ... even when I was a Deputy there were other Deputies which I would never or rarely come across in any way outside of the States' Chamber. Those that did not sit near me, I rarely talked to. It probably got worse in 2012-16 because the 2008-12 States, we spent more time during States' Meetings in the Members' room, just discussing and chatting things and getting to know each other.

1270 I think the onset of iPads and iPhones, people started working more at their desk or at their seat in the States. So people stayed in the States' Chamber more. Whether they were listening to debates more I think is doubtful. But I think that mix between States' Members, that meeting and getting to know your colleagues has gone and that is part of the reason why we have got such a partisan States at the moment.

The Chair: That is very interesting. Thank you.

1280 **Miss Green:** I just wanted to go back to the diversity of candidates and the diversity of States' Members. When we were talking about it earlier I am afraid I caught a whiff of diversity equals dilution, that there was some kind of if you have a more diverse States therefore you will not have as competent a States.

I would just like to refute that absolutely. Firstly, because it is entirely possible to be a good States' Member without being a business person. But even if you are a business person, you do not just bring your skills to the States, you bring your values and you bring your life experience. Two accountants could both equally well rattle through the Funding and Investment Plan and the Budget and everything else but one could be a 70-year-old man, one could be a 35-year-old Latvian woman and they are going to bring very different things to their decision-making because of their life experience, even though they are both incredibly competent accountants who can sort out the Budget.

So I just wanted to slap that one down and also to say that in all the work that is done to increase diversity, that is increasing the diversity of the candidate pool. That is not saying to Guernsey you have to vote for them. If they are not competent, do not vote for them.

Mr Doherty: Could I just comment on, well support what Peter said about the size of the States. Because I suspect it is too small, and this links to Michelle, your question about populism, because it is very easy to say, it is very populist to say, 'Let us cut down the number of politicians.' But I think it is interesting that the Welsh Parliament is 60 and it is too small and there have been repeated commissions saying it does need to expand to between 80 and 100.

The reason is that no matter how small your jurisdiction, if you are self-governing the jobs are the same, the tasks are the same. So whether it is Guernsey, or whether it is Wales or London, there are jobs to be done. I first had contact with the States in 2012 and it has shrunk since then. One of the problems we always had then on the Scrutiny Committee, and I hope, I am sure it is not the same now, was Members were constantly ducking out of things by saying. 'I have a conflict of interest.' You had all these overlapping roles, which meant that you could not effectively have a Scrutiny Committee, because people were conflicted as they saw it.

So I think I would absolutely go along with the idea that you need a larger parliament/government.

The Chair: Thank you.

Deputy Fairclough: There has also been a suggestion amongst some people that it might be useful to see candidates' CVs ahead of the election. Do you think that is a good idea or do you think that there is a danger there in potentially professionalising, once again, the pool of candidates or the States?

Miss Green: We as the voters are employers, effectively. Every four years, five years in this case, we sit down and employ our next States like an employer would do. So an employer would see CVs so it is not unreasonable. The problem more is that, as employers, we only wake up once every four years. We do not do any kind of appraisal process in the meantime and just at the end of that time we just go, 'Right, you can stay and you can go.' So we are very brutal and not very kind as employers, you might say.

Deputy Fairclough: Okay, I would just like to come on to a question specifically for you, Mr Gillson. Your submission debunks the role of the Douzaine and pointed to the downside of district voting in terms of restricting Deputies' ability to risk taking up contentious, Island-wide issues. Now you mention two specific cases where Deputies may have lost their seats and I think you have referred to one of them, potentially.

Do you believe that undue concentration on local matters has limited Guernsey's ability to tackle necessary Island-wide issues?

Mr Gillson: I think that is a really difficult question because the Island does make decisions and then people that do not like it accuse the Island of not making a decision and keep revisiting it. It is the inability of the States to stick to a decision. For instance, extending the Airport runway. I will

1335 not make any comment as to whether I agree or disagree with this but the States made a decision
not to extend the runway and it has been revisited and revisited and revisited. And people say, 'The
States do not make a decision.' Well, yes they have, it is just that a large group keep revisiting it
because they did not like the decision. That is where I think the States gets a bad reputation.

1340 **Deputy Fairclough:** People have told us that they like Island-wide voting because it enables
them to vote tactically to try and keep out candidates they do not like. Something we referred to in
the previous session. Equally, others have said that they dislike Island-wide voting because tactical
voting causes unsuitable candidates to be elected. Who is right and what do you think the effects
of tactical voting are?

1345 **Mr Gillson:** They are both right. Both are valid opinions and the effect of tactical voting, if it
works and you are on the side that it works, you are happy. If you are on the side that it did not
work then you are not happy. There is not a right answer. That question is an impossible one to
answer in terms of is it right or wrong because it depends on your perspective.

1350 **Ms Le Clerc:** Yes, talk about hustings. Popular, I think Peter said, 'popular but not useful' seemed
to be your view of hustings. Can you elaborate? Is that still your view?

1355 **Mr Gillson:** I sat through two hustings at St Sampson's. There were 14 and 15 people in each
one. Half a dozen questions, maybe seven or eight, nine questions were asked. If you were the first
one up you got to answer. If you were number 15, there was nothing left to say. In fact if you got
to about number seven to answer there was nothing left to say. By then, of course, people would
gather which were the popular answers so you would notice that the answers got very same-y down
the line.

1360 I think they were interesting because you saw someone on a stage and whether they can perform
confidently in public but whether that is a good indication of how somebody will operate in
Government, where most of the Government work is done at Committee level and in private, it does
not necessarily follow.

1365 I think, yes, they are useful but I think they are very much overstated because when you get, like
we did, 15 people, only two or three – and I had the ridiculous situation when I was first to answer
one question and by the time it got to the third person the chairman decided it was an inappropriate
question to answer and nobody else had to answer it.

1370 **Mr Doherty:** I do not think that just happens here. If you remember, when Nick Clegg was riding
high, I think in 2010, we had a televised debate between the leaders of the parties and they were
all saying, 'I agree with Nick', by the time it got round to them. So even three people were too many!

The Chair: Do you think not having to put oneself up for a hustings could be another reason
why we saw more candidates in 2020?

1375 **Mr Gillson:** Possibly.

1380 **Ms Green:** Yes, it is a real baptism of fire and it can be very off-putting. At the same time I find
them personally very revealing, regardless of the individual specific answers, just the demeanour of
the candidate, how confident they are, etc. So they are a good part of the mix but they are not the
only part of the mix.

Deputy Meerveld: There have been public calls for Island-wide voting going back to the 1990s.
From the public perspective, why do you think there were such constant calls for this to be adopted?

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Miss Green: I think we have been through that already and people wanted to vote for people outside their district and also wanted to vote against people, as they perceived it, outside of the district.

1390 **Deputy Meerveld:** So the follow-up question to that would be, if we were to return to district or parish-based elections, how do we still address that issue that people do want to vote for people outside of their parish, or not vote for them as they choose?

1395 **Miss Green:** You cannot. You literally, physically cannot. So I guess one thing you could do is explain more clearly that in voting for the candidates in your particular district you are doing a service for the rest of the Island. Basically we cannot all look at 118 candidates, so, 'You in the Castel have been given the job of looking at these 11 or 12, please grill them on behalf of the rest of the Island and vote in the way you would see.'

1400 So people get the perception that they are doing their job in their district, other people are doing their job in their district and the collective comes together into the States.

1405 **The Chair:** Anecdotally on that, and I think other Deputies will have this story, is that when we were operating under district voting people would say, perhaps on the doorstep, 'I am not going to vote until we have got Island-wide voting because there are people outside of this parish I want to vote for.' When you asked them who those people were, they were inevitably people who got elected anyway in their districts. So do you think it is also about a matter of perception?

Miss Green: All of this is perception. It is bound to be.

1410 **The Chair:** Okay.

1415 Well, I think that has pretty much brought us up to the end of this hour. It has gone very quickly. Thank you very much for your input. It has been very valuable and that is very much appreciated, to have your time. We have got another hearing on Wednesday afternoon in the same format, two separate sessions, and that hearing will start at 2 p.m. on Wednesday afternoon, so thank you very much all.

The Committee adjourned at 12 p.m.