



Welcome to the Jersey Democrat!

By Deputy Sam Mézec

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Reform Jersey is proud to launch the first edition of our new monthly newsletter - *The Jersey Democrat!*

We hope to use this newsletter to keep you up to date on the political scene in the Island and provide some progressive-leaning commentary on current affairs, provided by our guest contributors.

With the next general election less than a year away, now more than ever the Island needs a publication which is not only not afraid to be critical of the Ian Gorst-led Council of Ministers, but which will unashamedly stand by its own values and belief that Jersey should and could be an Island of opportunity for all who live here and where the poorest and most vulnerable are protected.

The people of Jersey are currently being let down by a Council of Ministers which shows itself to be more out of touch and incompetent as each day goes by.

Whether it is their failure to get a grip on population control, find an appropriate way to fund the building of the new hospital, or the lack of progress on higher education funding reform, it is clear that the current government is not working.

But worst of all, this government has spearheaded policies which have seen Jersey become a more unequal society, with poverty levels rising to levels which are worse than the UK.

We in Reform Jersey want to see a democratic States of Jersey which governs in the interests of ordinary working Islanders, rather than simply pandering to a small number of very wealthy Is-

landers.

We are on your side and we pledge to work hard to earn your trust and support. Through the pages of this newsletter, we hope to inform you of how we are standing up for your interests.

There is a huge amount to do in the next year whilst we prepare for our election campaign. We can't do it all by ourselves and will value any help or support that you can offer, from donations and volunteering, to offering to stand as a candidate in the election.

Together, I am certain we will succeed.



Inside Stories

Ian Gorst survives the Vote of No Confidence

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Majority of taxpayers better off under Reform Jersey

Electoral reform scuppered by States 'turkeys'

Chief Minister Senator Ian Gorst survives Vote of No Confidence

After a long debate, the States Assembly has voted 13-34 to retain Ian Gorst as Chief Minister of Jersey, despite many members expressing serious concerns about the conduct of Ministers behind the scenes and growing dissatisfaction from both inside and outside the States.

There had been months of speculation that the Treasury Minister, Senator Alan Maclean, and the Economic Development Minister, Senator Lyndon Farnham, were furious at the way the Chief Minister had publicly criticised their role in the Jersey Innovation Fund scandal where up to £1.4m of taxpayers money has been wasted, whilst at the same time claiming that his Assistant Minister, Senator Philip Ozouf, had somehow been exonerated. Rumours were circulating that those Ministers were preparing to resign if Senator Ozouf remained in government.

On the morning of the debate, the Chief Minister announced that Ozouf had been sacked as an Assis-

tant Minister, in a last ditch attempt to save his own skin by throwing his most loyal colleague under a bus.

This tactic was to prove successful, with those formerly revolting Ministers then lining up to speak in support of the Chief Minister, seemingly unconcerned by the knives still lodged in their backs.

Reform Jersey deputies spoke in the debate and listed their concerns about the leadership of Ian Gorst, from his record of increasing levels of poverty in Jersey and misleading the States about it, to the incompetence shown over the funding for the new hospital.

Within hours of the debate, before the dust had even settled, the Chief Minister appeared on BBC Radio Jersey, indicating his wish to bring Senator Ozouf back into government as soon as possible.

The Chief Minister's position had seemed secured, but unrest continues to grow and the likelihood that the Council of Ministers enters the next election campaign divided increases.

How they voted -

<u>Pour</u>	<u>Contre</u>
Senator Sarah Ferguson	Senator Paul Routier
Constable Sadie Rennard (St Saviour)	Senator Philip Ozouf
Constable Chris Taylor (St John)	Senator Alan Maclean
Deputy Geoff Southern (St Helier)	Senator Ian Gorst
Deputy John Le Fondré (St Lawrence)	Senator Lyndon Farnham
Deputy Kevin Lewis (St Saviour)	Senator Philip Bailhache
Deputy Montfort Tadier (St Brelade)	Senator Andrew Green
Deputy Tracey Vallois (St John)	Constable Simon Crowcroft (St Helier)
Deputy Mike Higgins (St Helier)	Constable Len Norman (St Clement)
Deputy Jeremy Maçon (St Saviour)	Constable John Refault (St Peter)
Deputy Sam Mézec (St Helier)	Constable Deidre Mezbourian (St Lawrence)
Deputy Simon Bree (St Clement)	Constable Juliette Gallichan (St Mary)
Deputy Terry McDonald (St Saviour)	Constable Michael Paddock (St Ouen)
	Constable Steve Pallett (St Brelade)
	Constable Michel Le Troquer (St Martin)
	Constable John Le Maistre (Grouville)
Not present for the vote -	Constable Philip Le Sueur (Trinity)
Deputy Judy Martin (St Helier)	Deputy Carolyn Labey (Grouville)
Deputy Louise Doublet (St Saviour)	Deputy Jacky Hilton (St Helier)
	Deputy Anne Pryke (Trinity)
	Deputy Eddie Noel (St Lawrence)
	Deputy Susie Pinel (St Clement)
	Deputy Steve Luce (St Martin)
	Deputy Rod Bryans (St Helier)
	Deputy Kristina Moore (St Peter)
	Deputy Richard Rondel (St Helier)
	Deputy Andrew Lewis (St Helier)
	Deputy Richard Renouf (St Ouen)
	Deputy Russell Labey (St Helier)
	Deputy Scott Wickenden (St Helier)
	Deputy Murray Norton (St Brelade)
	Deputy David Johnson (St Mary)
	Deputy Graham Truscott (St Brelade)
	Deputy Peter McLinton (St Saviour)

Reform Jersey continues to stand up for Jersey's care workers

Following the decision by the Health Minister, Senator Andrew Green, to slash funding for the much valued Family Nursing Home Care service, Reform Jersey deputies have continued to put pressure on the Minister to intervene to protect the jobs of care workers so that standards of care for their patients can be maintained.

However, after facing several weeks of States questions with the Minister arrogantly dismissing any assertion that he has a responsibility to ensure basic standards are maintained in employ-

ment contracts, Reform Jersey has been forced to bring a proposition to the floor of the Assembly to seek support for the introduction of a "Jersey Ethical Care Charter".

At the States sitting on Tuesday 4th July, Reform Jersey vice-chairman Deputy Geoff Southern will be making this proposition.

This charter seeks to ensure that those who provide care are given a basic standard of working terms and conditions which will enable them to work appropriate shift lengths, end the use of



zero-hours contracts and unpaid travel time, as well as introducing procedures to allow carers to raise concerns about their clients' well-being.

Will the Council of Ministers accept Reform Jersey's call to take action or continue to give platitudes instead?

Majority of taxpayers better off under Reform Jersey

To mark one year until the 2018 general election, on 16th May Reform Jersey published its ambitious plans for Income Tax reform and Higher Education funding.

Reform Jersey has pledged to simplify Jersey's Income Tax code to place all taxpayers on the same tax calculation, reduce the rate of tax from 26% to 25% and allow all taxpayers to claim tax allowances.

With the £6m revenue raised from this tax change, the party has pledged to uprate the grants for university tuition fees to cover the entire cost of tuition for every student, whilst introducing a loan scheme for living costs.

Predictably, opponents of Reform Jersey have used the pages of the Jersey Evening Post and social media to claim that these policies would see Is-

landers paying more tax to support a policy which will only benefit the few.

In stark contrast to this claim, the reality is that the States of Jersey Treasury Department themselves have confirmed that the changes would see fewer than 10% of Islanders, the very wealthiest, pay more, whilst 65% of Islanders (mostly in the squeezed middle) will see a tax cut.

Every Islander who currently receives an ITIS slip which confirms an effective tax rate below 20%, will see their tax rate go down under these changes.

The States of Jersey Education Department has confirmed that the cost of fully covering university tuition fees would have been £4.3m this year, meaning the policy contains an in-built surplus of £1.7m to cope with potential

extra demand as higher education becomes more accessible for young people in Jersey who are currently unable to afford it.

This policy aims to support the ambitions outlined in recent months by business leaders who expressed concerns about the growing skills gap in Jersey and the demand it inevitably creates for extra immigration.

By reducing the tax burden on middle earners and supporting all young people to achieve their educational ambitions, Reform Jersey is confident that the Island will see clear economic and social benefits.

This policy is part inspired by the example set by the government of Gibraltar who, since 1988, have fully funded the costs of university tuition and the living costs of all of their students.

Why 'The Jersey Democrat'?

Throughout Jersey's history, Islanders have often come together in the form of political parties or campaign groups, to contest power or to seek important changes to how Jersey is governed.

It is not often recognised that Jersey has a rich tradition of party politics, stretching all the way back to 1771, where the 'Charlots' and the 'Maggots' contested power, to the post-war era where the ironically-named 'Jersey Progressive Party' and 'Jersey Democratic Movement' fiercely contested elections.

The Jersey Democratic Movement was formed in 1943 by future Deputy Norman Le Brocq, whilst the Island suffered under Nazi occupation, to actively resist the occupation forces and lay the groundwork for a post-Occupation democratic Jersey.

They illegally distributed their first manifesto in 1943 which called for the introduction of a 'living wage', progres-

sive taxation and a democratic electoral system. Such ideas were considered radical at the time, but are now considered common sense.

Following the war, the Jersey Evening Post refused to publish their manifesto in their election coverage (even as a paid advert!) and urged their readers not to vote for the JDM.

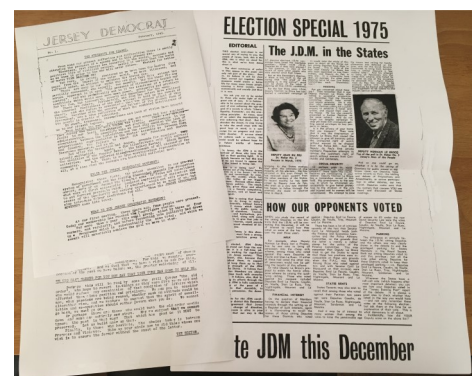
After many attempts to get elected, Norman Le Brocq was finally elected Deputy in 1966 and became a highly respected champion for working class Islanders and played a crucial role in putting together the first 'Island Plan'.

The JDM produced a monthly newsletter from February 1945 called 'the Jersey Democrat'.

They used this as an outlet to provide the public with the information that was not being reported by the mainstream media and to highlight the political shenanigans and voting records that

would be useful for the public.

In many ways Reform Jersey sees itself a successor organisation to those which came before it, and so it seemed appropriate to name their newsletter after the publication issued by the Jersey Democratic Movement.



Our thanks to the Jersey Archive for locating copies of the original Jersey Democrat leaflets to provide inspiration.

Electoral reform attempt scuppered by States ‘turkeys’

A majority of States Members have refused to put aside their self-interest and have voted against modest reforms to Jersey’s electoral system, meaning the current system will remain in place, unchanged for the next election.

Two propositions came before the Assembly to reform Jersey’s electoral system. The first was to implement the winning option of the 2013 electoral reform referendum “Option B” to retain the Constables and elect Deputies in Parish-based super-constituencies according to population.

The second was to retain the Senators and Constables and elect Deputies in super-constituencies.

Whilst neither of these proposals

matched Reform Jersey’s ambition for a States Assembly made up of just one category of States Member, elected in equal sized constituencies, each option did see a fairer distribution of States Members between the urban and country Parishes, whilst making it more difficult for so many politicians to get elected in uncontested elections.

Most importantly, both propositions saw an increase in representation for St Helier to go some way to fixing the underrepresentation that the Parish has seen in the States for hundreds of years. This made it all the more strange that four St Helier deputies voted against their own constituents interests.

The debate saw many members

claim that they supported electoral reform and fairness, but were prepared to let another attempt to achieve both fail, for superficial reasons, some seemingly more concerned about where polling stations are based, than the quality of the voting system.

In the States Members’ tearoom however, it was clear that many members were worried about the prospect of having to face robust elections, where they have gotten by for years getting elected uncontested or only challenged by political novices.

On the bright side, some stated they believed that Electoral Observers in May next year will damn our system so badly, that change will be inevitable.

Council of Ministers fails to reach it’s own population targets

At the end of June, the States of Jersey Statistics Unit published it’s estimates for population growth and net migration for 2016, showing that the government’s own targets have been missed for the 3rd year in a row.

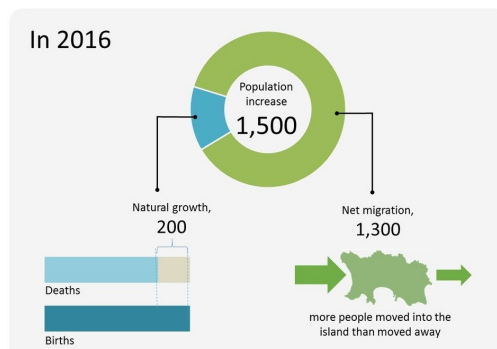
It was revealed that in 2016, net migration hit 1,300 people, despite the government’s target being just 325. This followed the 2015 figure of 1,500 and 2014’s 700.

Of those moving to the Island, 1,100 were ‘registered’ and likely to be undertaking low paid jobs (and therefore low tax-paying), in stark contrast to the Council of Ministers claim that population growth is essential to raise tax revenues to spend on public services.

The Council of Ministers had promised to publish a new population policy by summer this year, yet have not done so.

Policies

- Reform our Income Tax code to reduce the tax burden on ‘Middle Jersey’, protect low earners and ask high earners to contribute more.
- Fully fund university tuition fees and introduce a student loan scheme for living expenses.
- Raise the minimum wage to £10 per hour by 2021.
- Introduce progressive rates of Social Security contributions for the self-employed.
- Raise maternity leave to 26 weeks.
- Reform the composition of the States Assembly to have one class of States Member, elected in equal sized constituencies where all voters have the same number of votes.



Join **Reform** Jersey

If you wish to join as a member of Reform Jersey, please either email our party secretary at secretary@reformjersey.je with your contact details, or fill in the form online at -

www.reformjersey.je/join-the-party

All members details are kept strictly confidential in line with Data Protection regulations.