

REFORM JERSEY A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH



First Election Manifesto Pledge Delivered

New Housing Minister, Senator Sam Mézec, has delivered on one of our election pledges after less than 100 days in post. He has persuaded the Board of Andium to freeze rents whilst a new rent calculation system is investigated.

Only 5 out of 18 candidates you may say – not a great success admittedly, but significant progress.

With all three existing members re-elected and two new members, Carina Alves and Rob Ward elected in a clean sweep for Reform Jersey in St Helier no. 2 District, we are now a force to be reckoned with in the States.

The senatorial vote was a nail-biter, but Sam Mézec, our Chairman, won a senatorial place by the simple act of asking voters to vote only for Sam – which they did in huge numbers, in town at least. This stops the faults of our system, which presents 20 or so no-hopers, failing members and relative newcomers trying their luck competing for your 8 votes. If voters find 8 candidates to vote for, the result is that

their 8th choice may beat their first.

The parliamentary party showed itself at its political best in negotiating the vote for Chief Minister and some ministerial positions. Although the vote was not that close, others opted for Senator Le Fondré knowing he had Reform Jersey's support, so it was crucial in his victory. In return for this support we have managed to get a substantial amount of our election manifesto on the government's political agenda. Senator Mézec is Housing Minister, and Minister for Children, Deputy Geoff Southern is Assistant Minister at Social Security, and Deputy Montfort Tadier is Assistant Minister responsible for Culture in the Education and Economic Development Departments

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RJ States members report on their first 100 days

Opinion from RJ JEP columnists

St Helier Roads Committee

Party News

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This should change the public's perception of us as only being a party of opposition.

Geoff Southern says, "After witnessing the death throes of the previous ministerial regime as they tried to steamroller 3 years of major propositions into 3 weeks prior to the election – a demonstration, if any were needed of the incompetence of the Gorst government – it was truly satisfying to play a

major part in the transition to a potentially more inclusive set of ministers."

Sam adds "With 5 States Members instead of 3 the parliamentary workload is easier to manage. Projects can be delegated more effectively, questions that those in government cannot ask can be delegated and Reform Jersey can have a presence at more events and functions."

- Anne Southern, Party Secretary

What are our parliamentary members doing?

Geoff Southern



After 17 years as a back-bencher, most of them spent on the Health and Social Security Scrutiny Panel where he has acted as Chair and Vice-Chair, and aspiring to be Minister of Social Security, Geoff has finally been appointed Assistant Minister of Social Security. How does he feel about his first few weeks in the post, and what does he hope to achieve?

At the end of the last session I was chasing down some answers on a new income Distribution Survey, which requires £200k from the then Chief Minister to fund. The current Chief Minister has assured me that it is his top priority to deliver this by the end of the year.

One of the joys of making policies that work is that sometimes they work in surprising ways. Thus, getting the States to commit to the Living Wage has already produced an interesting side effect, in stopping the outsourcing of some 40 cleaners from the Education department. With a living wage in place the potential savings in budgets cannot be made. With a living wage in place the potential savings in budgets cannot be made. End of outsourcing. That's 40 loyal workers still in work. Let us hope that the same

will apply to Andium Homes' cleaners who are also scheduled for outsourcing.

I always thought that a change of minister (or asst.) means a change of policies. Otherwise what would be the point of the vote? Sadly that is easier said than done. I have sat through hours of induction talks going through current policies and work in hand, much of which I already knew. We have yet to discuss future policy change at all with officers. For those who are old enough to remember "Yes Minister" it is just like that. Ministers come and go, but civil servants go on forever. Changing the direction of the ocean liner SS Benefits will take some time steering "hard a starboard".

So what will I do?

Contained in the 10 manifesto pledges we made to voters are 8 actions which are directly in the remit of Social Security.

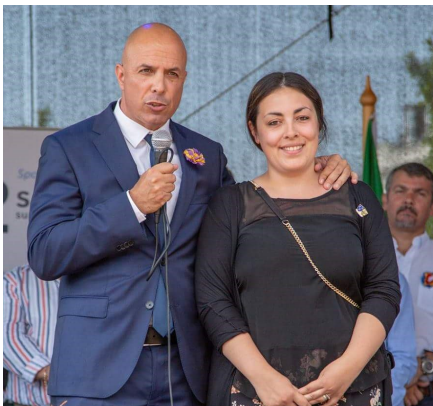
- Increase the minimum wage to £10 an hour by 2022
- Enforce the JACS guidelines on inappropriate use of zero-hour contracts through regulation
- Reduce SS contributions for the self employed
- Increase the SS contribution rate for high earners to that paid by lower earners
- 26 weeks statutory parental leave paid from SS contributions.

- 3 weeks minimum statutory annual paid leave
- Reduce the cost of GP consultations to patients
- Introduce a scheme to extend or replace the dental fitness scheme for children.

These pledges will form the basis of future SS policy. I will be strenuously promoting them or using them to form the starting point of debate in the SS department in the next 3 months. I would urge voters to be patient. It may take some time.

The next fight of course is over the appalling and abysmal imposition of a further wage cut on most of the states' workforce, about which the SEB and the Communications unit have lied through their teeth about. The unions and the workforce are rightly angered by statements which lump together unconsolidated money with that which is consolidated to make 6% over 2 years. It is not. It is 4% over the 2 years. Another effective real terms pay cut. Is this the final straw which will bring about Union action?

Carina Alves



Carina has not let the grass grow under her feet, and is already making an impact in the Assembly. In the first couple of sittings she has asked eight written and four oral questions on issues ranging from the increase in marriage fees, to under-investment in the Arts, and the banning of exclusivity clauses in zero hours contracts. She feels that the

meetings of the Reform Jersey members before sittings has helped her to focus on important issues. She said, "The assembly looks bigger on the screen than it does in person," and thinks that the new members are contributing to making it a better organised and more logical thinking assembly than the previous one.

She has been elected Vice Chair of the Public Accounts Committee, where she will put her maths skills to good use, and is a member of the Health and Social Security Scrutiny Panel. The Panel has already started a review into Mental Health, a key issue for many voters. She has received emails on the subject addressed to her personally, and is touched to know that people find her approachable.

As if that wasn't enough, she is a member of the Privileges and Procedures Committee, and on the sub-committee looking at electoral reform. She has been invited onto the Policy Board to look at the development of the new hospital, and is a member of the Funchal twinning committee.

She has started to be an effective constituency deputy, doing casework that has included getting funding for a sixth form student who is unable to live in the family home and helping to get extra support for an SEN child.

She is currently working on a proposition to get compensation for sufferers of mesothelioma.

Candidates claim to be able to hit the ground running, but Carina is positively sprinting!

Rob Ward



Rob has got off to a flying start in the States, and is really enjoying the challenge of his new role.

In the two week induction period he formed good relationships with other new members, and though they were taken through all the processes needed to function in the States he was grateful for the support of his Reform Jersey colleagues, which gave him the confidence to step straight into the role.

He was elected as Chair of the Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, which involved giving a speech and being

questioned for 15 minutes. He said, 'My Reform Jersey colleagues seemed to consider this as open season on the new boy! Their questions were by far the most challenging. This shows how party politics means constant challenge to ideas'. In fact his colleagues were giving him a chance to show off, a challenge which he rose to admirably with a quote from Einstein that raised the level of debate in the chamber.

He also had the confidence to mount a challenge as President of the Chairman's Committee. Although his performance was acknowledged to be the most impressive, the role went to Christina Moore, a more established member.

Rob also has the roles of being a member of the Access to Justice review panel, and is Chair of the Care of Children review panel.

He has submitted his full quota of written questions for the two sittings that have taken place so far, on a range of topics, which have received a mixed

response. When he was unhappy with one particular answer, on the advice of Geoff, he questioned it under Article 12. The Deputy Bailiff ruled in his favour. Rob says, 'Apparently this is as rare as a blue rose!'

As well as being active in the States, he is taking his role as constituency deputy seriously, attending meetings of the Roads Committee, the Friends of Millennium Park meetings, and other Parish meetings with other deputies and the Constable.

He has met a number of constituents and is helping them to resolve their issues.

He has a strong media profile, being the deputy chosen to feature in a JEP article in a series dealing with the 'first hundred days', and held a question and answer session in a live Facebook session.

He is truly a force to be reckoned with, and someone who has already made his mark in the States.

AGM Decisions

New Management Committee

Chair: Sam Mezec

Vice-Chair: Geoff Southern

Secretary/Newsletter Editor: Anne Southern

Treasurer: Yann Mash

Equalities Officer(s) post currently unfilled

Social Secretary/events manager/fund-raiser: Fiona O'Sullivan

Management Committee: John McNichol, Eduardo Monedero, Tom Coles

Proposed changes

The role of political Leader will be established, with a new non-parliamentary Chair/Co-Chairs to be elected.

A new media team is to be appointed to look after the files and hard drives.

Unite will elect a member to be on the committee.

Constitution

Our constitution has been reworded to make it clear that we are a social democratic party, which should counter the accusations that we are 'hard left'.

Senator Sam Mézec - 07797 811130 / s.mezec@gov.je

Deputy Geoff Southern - 07797 772632 / g.southern@gov.je

Deputy Montfort Tadier - 07797 844358 / m.tadier@gov.je

Deputy Carina Alves - 07700 750058 / c.alves@gov.je

Deputy Rob Ward - 07829 713138 / r.ward2@gov.je

Join Reform Jersey

If you wish to join as a member of Reform Jersey, please either 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.

Changes to Membership

Our membership is currently around 400, but as we are unsure how many of these members are committed, we are about to wipe the data-base, and invite members to re-apply. Membership will now be open to young people below the age of 16 (who won't be charged a fee) and we will also allow overseas membership (though such members will not be able to vote on party motions).

Proposed fees: Free to under 16s

Joining fee: £5.00 to include a goody bag of RJ merchandise; other fees, unwaged: £5.00 per year, others: £2.00 per month

We will let current members know when the system is set up to allow you to re-apply.

Party Office

We are delighted to announce that we will be opening a new office in James Street (just round the corner from Social Security). We are holding a media launch at the beginning of October. It will be used as a surgery and advice centre and we are hoping that members will volunteer to help provide regular staffing train in advocacy to undertake casework.

Party Funds

Unite the Union has now agreed to fund the election campaign. We now have an official party account with the Unity Trust Bank so are able to begin fund-raising in earnest.

Thanks to Julian Rogers, our member on the St Helier Roads Committee, and JEP columnists Colin Lever, Ollie Taylor and Anne Southern, whose contributions can be found on our website.

This is the first newsletter of the current States sitting. It will be produced after each 'half term to celebrate Reform Jersey achievements. If you have any comments, or would like to contribute to our website, please contact:

anne2southern@gmail.com