

## **Green Hustings at Durrell – Answers from Catherine Curtis, standing for Deputy in St Helier Central, for Reform Jersey**

- What is your stance/opinion on climate change and Jersey's role/current commitment to tackling it?
  - Climate change poses a real threat to our way of life, to humanity and to biodiversity. Carbon emissions must be reduced dramatically, mostly by government action but also by individual efforts. Jersey has a good Carbon Neutral Roadmap which must be implemented.

One question for sitting Deputies and one for all candidates:

- Sitting Deputies: what, in your mind, was your greatest environmental or sustainability-related political achievement in the last four years?
- Sitting Deputies and new candidates: What is your biggest environmental or sustainability-related political goal in the next four years?
  - To get Jersey's Carbon Neutral Roadmap up and running. In St Helier specifically to plant more trees and promote active travel.

"What credentials and experience do you have to advance Jersey's sustainability initiatives as we tackle the climate and biodiversity crisis?"

- I have a BSc Honours degree, in environment and innovation. I have a diploma in International Environmental Policy. I was many years ago a Soil Association licensee running a veg box scheme, and I converted land to fully organic. I created a smallholding plan for hazelnut production which was supported by the Agriculture Department, but I have not had the land available to implement it, and personally put it on hold during Covid.

What areas do you see as the priority areas for decarbonising within your Parish?

- Many government initiatives will be island wide, for example, Government of Jersey vehicles to be all electric. Reform Jersey pledges to support grant initiatives for home insulation. Within St Helier we can get safe cycle and walking routes and plant more trees.
- What is your stance on Jersey's current energy supply, would you change it and if so, how and why?

- Jersey's current energy supply is already low carbon, made up of nuclear power and hydroelectric. The JEC has projects already established involving solar power and is interested in developing an offshore wind power stream, which helps towards power sovereignty. They also keep a close eye on developing technologies such as the tidal power barrage in the Orkney Isles. A review of the potential in Jersey of hydrogen power and of tidal power, and ongoing consideration of all renewable power, for interests of heating and power sovereignty must be considered.

How do you think the relationship between the main grid and distributed generation technologies at the household level needs to be managed? E.g. how would you work with Jersey Electricity to encourage the incentivisation and uptake of renewable microgeneration for Islanders?

- Some householders will choose to have their own renewable energy supply which is connected up to the grid, so that they can sell surplus power to the JEC. To encourage this there could be subsidies such as feed in tariffs to improve the payment for excess electricity sold back to the grid. Alternatively people can install their solar panels with their own batteries for an independent power supply. Making available part grants/ interest free loans for home insulation and domestic renewables installations will help incentivize households to make this change.

• If you secured your seat in the Assembly, what would you do to support the switch to low-carbon heating systems for residents on the Island?

- We support the aims of the Carbon Neutral Roadmap to subsidise the cost of new heating systems and better home insulation. Reform Jersey pledges to establish a programme for households to transition to low carbon heating

Transport –

• What do you believe are the key areas within the transport sector that need addressing in order to achieve a reduction in emissions and benefit local Islanders?

- One of the key areas is to provide an alternative to using the car. This means safe and pleasant walking and cycling routes and an affordable and

accessible bus service. Another key area is to provide EV incentives so that drivers will transfer to using electric cars rather than petrol and diesel vehicles.

- If elected, how would you support the development and funding of active travel on the Island?

- By creating safe and pleasant cycling and walking routes, using the £1.4 million diverted from the Climate Emergency Fund by Reform Jersey to spend on active travel projects.

- What initiatives do you plan on implementing within your parish to support the Sustainable Transport Policy and encourage increased sustainable transport amongst your Parishioners.

- By creating safe and pleasant walking and cycling routes and better public transport

- What would you do to address the gender gap for active travel and encourage cycling for all young people on the Island?

- Cycling proficiency training in schools. By making roads safer so families go out cycling more together

- What are your views on walking routes to school and would you do want to develop this within your parish? If so, how would you implement it/what is your priority for developing safer walking routes to schools within your parish?

- To support more walking buses to the primary schools, but overall to make walking routes safer with wide pavements (for example, Midvale Road) and crossings and more pleasant with trees. My own children walk to school.

- As an Island 9x5 miles, it is reasonable to suggest that Jersey could be a hub for innovation and be used as an innovation test bed, such as for electric cars, or e-micro mobility vehicles. What are your views on this and what would you do to develop this opportunity for the Island?

- Yes, we have the new Technology Fund, which will help in the development of projects, some of which may be environmental projects. I would like to investigate the feasibility of a green hydrogen power plant here.

- Carbon Neutral Roadmap -what initiatives will you put in place to bolster the green credentials of your parish, or constituency, in order to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030/Net Zero by 2050?

- By making safer walking and cycling routes in St Helier we expect to have less motor traffic and therefore lower emissions. St Helier will also need to follow the recommendations of the Shoreline Management Plan, to help prevent flooding at the La Frégate area.

- What will you do to ensure that Jersey takes action to significantly reduce carbon emissions during the next term?

- Launch an Education Plan as soon as possible so that people understand the threat that is facing us
- Implementing all the recommendations of the Carbon Neutral Roadmap
- Specific recommendations which can be introduced immediately, for example - Reducing duty on biodiesel with immediate effect to help promote it as a transition fuel whilst further work is done to improve infrastructure for EVs.

Biodiversity - What role would you play in implementing the greening of St Helier/your parish?

- As a resident of St Helier I always feel better when walking past trees and hearing the birdsong. It's a joy to see squirrels in Howard Davis Park. I would work with all organisations to get many more trees in the parish and areas of park.

- What measures will you put in place during the next term to ensure that environmental biodiversity will be protected and enhanced?

- We will support the Carbon Neutral Roadmap plan to create a Carbon Neutral Alliance and Climate Action Fund to support grassroots projects, such as projects supporting specific protections for biodiversity.

- Do you think that we need more habitat protection, in order to conserve wildlife? If so, what type of land areas should be protected and what would you do as a potential Deputy to implement this?

- I would work with organisations such as the National Trust, Jersey Trees for Life, the Blue Marine Foundation, etc to protect habitats. Reform Jersey has protected agricultural fields from being rezoned for building and we will continue to protect land where habitats need preserving.
  
- The Taskforce for Nature-Related Financial Disclosure, endorsed by the UN, provides a framework for risk management and disclosure for organisations to report and act on nature-related risks. Once this is officially published in September 2023, would you support the adoption of mandatory introductions of nature based financial disclosures for organisations based in Jersey, particularly within the Finance Sector?
  - Yes, and this should not be a problem as it will happen internationally anyway, and Jersey needs to keep up. When I worked as MD of a product company, we produced environmental impact assessments for each product.
  
  - Blue Marine Foundation briefing - 'How to Make Jersey a Marine Sustainability Leader in Europe'. The proposed protected marine area was rejected by the current States Assembly despite its sequestration and biodiversity potential. To those sitting representatives, how did you vote on the recent Marine Spatial Plan proposition, and why did you vote as such, and for those new candidates how would you have voted and why?
    - I support the plans of the Blue Marine Foundation. I have met with them, and tomorrow I will be meeting with the president of the Jersey fisherman's association to try and understand the few differences in their manifestos

#### Agriculture

- Agriculture is a core part of Jersey's heritage, economy and some Islanders livelihoods. What are your thoughts on pushing the need for sustainable farming practices, particularly policies of regenerative agriculture?
  - I think this is very important. Farmers and growers in Jersey already carry out lots of sustainable practices to protect their land. As time goes on there is a move towards more and more the protection of farming land for biodiversity, for example supply of native trees for hedgerows and set aside areas. The new Economic Framework for the Rural Environment will help support farmers and growers to run a sustainable business. We

support assistance for agriculture businesses to use fewer fossil fuel products and reduce emissions by embracing regenerative agriculture, and working towards the Leaf Mark accreditation

- What are your views on the Island's level of food security, and would you change anything? If so, what would you want to change and how?
  - Our level of food security is low. One idea would be to establish a canning / preserving plant to preserve our excess crops, for example canned tomatoes, canned potatoes and imported food preserved when sea freight has been delayed which would otherwise be dumped. The government can support market gardeners and more allotments.
- How do you plan on supporting and developing the agricultural industry within your parish?
  - There are no agricultural businesses within my district but there are to the north of St Helier. At Reform Jersey we have voted to preserve agricultural land in this area from being built on. We will meet with the JFU to discuss how we can support the agricultural industry more.
- Financing our future – What would you do to ensure that the CNR receives appropriate funding to reach net zero by 2050?
  - Reform Jersey will work together and with other members of the assembly to ensure the plan is funded and up and running.

#### Circular economy

- What are your views on the circular economy and its applicability to Jersey?
  - There are huge amounts of waste in Jersey. I have done my own little bit by helping Potty Eco Pots to collect pots from La Colette and take to the different parish distribution centers and at free giveaway events, helping to prevent landfill. Jersey is already doing well with reuse of clothes and many other objects through its charity shops. There is a new repair centre event based in St Brelade.
- What initiatives would you put in place to encourage the adoption/transition to a circular economy for the Island?

- An education plan, and support for reuse shops and recycling centres
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- Waste is an ever growing issue within a high consuming society. What are your views on parish recycling and what would you do to develop recycling rates within your parish?
- St Helier does not have a glass collection. I would like to see the recycling collections expanded to include glass and other materials.

#### International

- The Paris Agreement / COP26 - COP26 was the first time Jersey delegates participated with the conference. Agreements were made. How do you plan to build relations with global delegates and to further play your part in meeting agreed targets? / how would you plan on Jersey expanding its impact and representation at the next COP?
- By working with members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Organisation small islands network on climate change.
- An outcome of COP26 was a global pledge to end and reverse deforestation by 2030. What role would you play in helping Jersey contribute to this pledge, despite the limited support for this pledge within the CNR?
- We can support the finance industry with their “Jersey for Good a Sustainable Future” finance plan. We can work with organisations such as Durrell, and the the Fair Trade Jersey organisation to promote awareness of poor environmental practices including deforestation
- Finance - the UK has ambitions to become the “first ever net-zero-aligned financial centre” - it’s clear there is a real space for us at the table given Jersey’s expertise and progress in this sector already - how do you plan to support Jersey's finance industry in collaboration with the UK to provide a solution in their decarbonisation journey?
- This is a real opportunity for Jersey. I’ll be meeting with Jersey Finance next week to discuss this.
- Our impact globally and responsibility on the world - scope 3 – The Carbon Neutral Roadmap policy OE1 Promoting low-carbon lifestyles, the Government

of Jersey will: Develop and deliver an education and engagement programme to help Islanders to reduce their off-Island (scope 3) emissions. As a Parish, what policies or strategies would you hope to implement in order to reduce your scope 3 emissions?

- We can support retailers involved with reuse, such as second hand clothes, toys, etc. Usually charity shops – by helping them to run pop up shops and by running second hand markets, in order to lower consumption of new products, thereby lowering factory emissions in China, etc.
  
- Offsetting - Jersey should be investing in offsets as soon as possible to minimise initial cost and encourage early growth and establishment of (rain)forests. If the policies outlined within the CNR are successful in reducing Jersey's carbon emissions, costs associated with carbon offsets should only reduce over time. It is worrying that GoJ have not made an official policy on carbon offsets within the CNR. Some worry that the decision to review and produce a carbon offset framework in 2025, along with the decision on becoming carbon neutral to be taken by 2028 is too late. What is your opinion on this, and what would you do to support GoJ, or your parish, in producing a carbon offsetting policy?
  
- Yes we need to produce a carbon offset policy but must take care to focus first on our policies to reduce carbon emissions through lifestyle- changes.

For wanting change/things done differently for environmental commitments:

- You will make many commitments as a politician, but how will you actually ensure these are achieved? If you have been a deputy before, what will you do differently this term to improve achievements
  
- By working with my Reform Jersey colleagues, being informed and persuading our other States Members. We are the party to act on climate change.