

Helen Miles – Jersey Zoo Green Hustings Q&As

What is your stance/opinion on climate change and Jersey's role/current commitment to tackling it?

The consensus within the scientific community is that our climate is changing due to human activity. As a wealthy and developed jurisdiction, Jersey has a moral responsibility to cut emissions as far as is possible and play our part in limiting climate change that will disproportionately affect the poorest people in the world.

What is your biggest environmental or sustainability related political goal in the next four years?

For Jersey to continue making sensible steps towards becoming carbon neutral and a greener economy by, for example, improving cycle and walking routes, increasing recycling and providing better public transport. I also want to extend the Evie electric care share scheme to St Brelade.

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

My background is in law enforcement, criminal justice, academia, and the charitable sector. I take an evidence-based approach to every issue and seek solutions based on what is achievable and appropriate for Jersey. I follow the evidence and believe in community-based policy development. I would follow this same approach to dealing with our response to climate change.

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

The main sources of CO₂ in St. Brelade are from transport and heating. We should focus on encouraging and incentivising greener modes of transport, insulating our homes and transitioning to low carbon heating systems.

What is your stance on Jersey's current energy supply, would you change it and if so, how and why?

Jersey has access to relatively cheap, low carbon electricity that is produced at scale in France. Moving to our own green electricity supply for the whole Island would come with significant build and maintenance costs that would, certainly in the short to medium term, likely drive-up prices significantly for consumers. As matters stand, I therefore support the status quo position for supplying the Island.

I would like to enable those who seek to generate their own power and will also be supportive of moves that, in the long-term, will enable us to utilise green technology and our natural environment as a means of generating energy for the Island. This must be our long-term objective and, as noted above, will need to be managed in a way that is not detrimental to consumers.

How would you work with Jersey Electricity to encourage the incentivisation and uptake of renewable microgeneration for Islanders?

Solar energy is becoming cheaper as time progresses – uptake could be encouraged through incentives such as waiving GST, tax relief on the installation costs and a more streamlined planning process with respect to panel installation.

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?

I would support a ban on the sale / importation of new fossil fuel boilers and allow current boiler systems to run down to the end of their life cycle. New builds or refits should be mandated to use low carbon heating solutions.

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?

The alternatives to driving a car need to be easy, accessible and affordable. We should encourage car-pooling, continue improving our cycle infrastructure and public transport network, especially at peak times. I would support creating an island wide cycle to work scheme.

Electric cars and bikes are still too expensive for most people and there's no real second-hand market at present – these are challenges which will hopefully be eased as time passes.

If elected, how would you support the development and funding of active travel on the Island? What initiatives do you plan on implementing within your parish to support the Sustainable Transport Policy and encourage increased sustainable transport amongst your Parishioners.

I would integrate narrow cycle lanes (*'bande cyclable'*) into the arterial roads of the parish. We should make the x22 bus a more regular service and provide free basic bike servicing for parishioners at the parish hall. We could also make charging points available in all parish car parks for electric cars.

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

The parish could facilitate cycling courses to help people gain confidence cycling on the roads. This could also be applied for students at Les Quennevais School.

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?

Walking buses should be expanded to every primary school. The schools in St. Brelade are well served by roads with pavements – more crossings could be considered if there was found to be a need for them.

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?

I would encourage Digital Jersey to reach out to these automotive tech companies to scope the feasibility of such a scheme, while ensuring that it provides some kind of tangible benefit to Islanders (i.e., jobs, tax revenue).

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?

This is about tackling the main sources of CO₂ in St. Brelade, which are transport and heating. We should focus on encouraging and incentivising greener modes of transport, insulating our homes and transitioning to low carbon heating systems.

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

I will support the implementation of the Carbon Neutral Roadmap and follow the policies I have set out here and in my manifesto – seeking greater use of electric transport in Jersey, more cycling and walking, insulating our homes and buildings, transitioning to low carbon heating systems.

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

I would encourage urban areas to be planted with sufficient tree cover – the trees reduce the urban heat effect and will be important in our efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change locally on Jersey.

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

In addition to focusing on floral beauty, we should also be considering the environmental benefit. I support creating more pollinator patches, encouraging ‘No Mow May’ and reducing the use of pesticides.

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?

Mature trees and woodland should have basic legal protection. All too often, large, wooded areas are felled (there are notable examples in St Brelade) with no consideration for the loss in environmental or aesthetic value. Any proposed “fellings” should be assessed on their merits before being allowed to proceed.

Would you support the adoption of mandatory introductions of nature based financial disclosures for organisations based in Jersey, particularly within the Finance Sector?

Financial Institutions will likely soon be required to disclose the carbon emissions originating from their loans and investments, I would encourage the adoption of a nature-based disclosure if the correct frameworks were agreed internationally.

For the Marine Park how would you have voted and why?

I am supportive of the development of a Marine Park to promote Jersey's international reputation as a leader in marine conservation and an accessible eco-tourism destination. These habitats can sequester carbon at a faster rate than terrestrial forests and protecting/enhancing them should be an essential part of Jersey's fight against climate change.

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?

The agricultural industry has made good progress in moving towards more sustainable practices to protect our soil and waterways. This sustainable land management should continue to be pursued. I would support providing incentives by rewarding farmers where environmental improvements are achieved.

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?

It is highly unlikely that Jersey could feed itself, even if we faced an extreme emergency situation where that became necessary. We should be seeking to improve our resilience in this respect. I would support a study to explore the extent to which Jersey could reduce dependency on food imports.

How do you plan on supporting and developing the agricultural industry within your parish?

I have an Islandwide policy of supporting the agricultural industry to become more productive and more environmentally friendly so that it can continue to produce goods that we all enjoy and which make Jersey famous around the world. The industry is part of our history, our culture/heritage and our future.

What would you do to ensure that the CNR receives appropriate funding to reach net zero by 2050?

The CNR will use the Climate Emergency Fund – this pot should be adequately resourced and ringfenced to ensure the strategy achieves its objectives.

What are your views on the circular economy and its applicability to Jersey? What initiatives would you put in place to encourage the adoption/transition to a circular economy for the Island?

Jersey should look to maximise its circular economy. One means is to encourage the adoption of a repair cafe within each parish – these could share a pool of resources and parts for repairs.

Recycling should be expanded to include a larger variety of products, with sites easily available within the parish.

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 Brelade has numerous recycling points and a curbside scheme. An issue I have noticed is ensuring that recycling facilities are emptied at sufficient intervals to ensure Parishioners always have access to these facilities.

I also hope we can enhance the uptake of the curbside scheme. Any Islandwide efforts to normalise and increase the types of products available to recycle will have my support.

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?

I would support the Ministry of External Relations in their efforts on behalf of Jersey to build relationships with the UK and international partners who may be able to support our objectives in reaching agreed targets.

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.

There is limited scope for Jersey to act on global deforestation in an impactful way. However, Jersey could act by focussing carbon credits on projects that undertake reforestation, or even possibly preventing the finance industry from dealing with businesses known to be actively contributing to deforestation.

How do you plan to support Jersey's finance industry in collaboration with the UK to provide a solution in their decarbonisation journey?

The finance industry has a key role to play in the journey to decarbonisation and is one of the major means by which Jersey can contribute to global net zero. There is a great future for the industry in sustainable finance, and this is already being embraced by the industry, and supported by Jersey Finance (including through important programmes such as the Jersey Fund for a Wilder World) and the Government. I support the objective of Jersey becoming the leading sustainable international finance centre in our core markets, notably in private wealth, funds, banking and fintech.

As a Parish, what policies or strategies would you hope to implement in order to reduce your scope 3 emissions?

The Government and Parish should review its procurement process to place stronger emphasis on using suppliers and contractors closer to home whose business activities are proven to be less carbon intensive.

What is your opinion on this, and what would you do to support GoJ, or your parish, in producing a carbon offsetting policy?

Carbon offsetting is an ideal tool for Jersey to meet its decarbonisation goals, as we have limited capacity for conventional carbon sequestration methods (i.e. planting forests). Carbon offsets should be used to help us achieve net zero when local decarbonisation is not practical.

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?

I will vote in accordance with the principles set out here and in my manifesto, and I will encourage practices, policies and action (in myself and others) that brings us closer to achieving these objectives.