

## INTRODUCTION

Mister Bailiff, Madame Vice-President of Policy & Resources, distinguished States Members, thank you for your kind words and allowing me the honour of responding to this venerable assembly.

Mister Bailiff, you have spoken before of the 'Long farewell' and this moment has, indeed, been some time coming. But, with the aircraft's engines now metaphorically '*spinning up*' on the tarmac as I speak, I think it is at last safe to say that I will be gone very shortly, and thankfully, without recourse to a bullet – well at least not one fired from a gun!

## TRIBUTE TO STATES MEMBERS

But I do sincerely thank you for granting me this opportunity. The tradition whereby a departing Lieutenant-Governor addresses the assembly is a long established and symbolically important one.

Alongside the Courts and the rule of Law, the elected legislature is one of the most fundamental, if not the most fundamental, instrument of government in any jurisdiction. Its proper conduct is central to 'good government', which, as you all know, is the Crown's principal concern and responsibility in relation to its Dependencies.

So it is entirely appropriate that, on departure, as the Sovereign's representative, I pay my final respects to this assembly, and duly acknowledge its enduring 'proper conduct'. As, indeed, I have done in the States of Alderney and Sark Chief Pleas.

Apologies for the slight cliché, but the role of an elected representative is indeed a most challenging one. In fact, I doubt many who haven't done it (myself included) understand just how challenging!

When I was Director of Naval Personnel Policy (or HR policy to use the more common business term) I used to joke that there were 35000 people in the Navy, of which 34,999 clearly (and vociferously) knew how to do my job much better than me.

I expect that sentiment resonates with all of you here. Only in your case – it isn't just one policy strand you are grappling with, its all of them; social, health, economic, environmental, educational, domestic and international, all woven together into an incredibly complex web of interrelated cause and effect.

Furthermore, your decisions almost invariably have implications Bailiwick wide – directly or indirectly to both Alderney and Sark – whether or not the relevant legislation formally extends there.

And the world has hardly left you to ponder these matters in peace. Even in my limited tenure - two UK elections, three significantly different UK governments, 6 Lord Chancellors, 3 US presidents, COP26, Brexit and, of course, a global pandemic – these are just a few of the curved balls the world has thrown you over the past 5 years.

In the words of Bob Dylan’s best-ever song (I hope Deputy Queripel agrees with that assessment)– *‘the times they are a changin’*. And it is you who have to lead these islands in adapting to that change. Or, better still, staying ahead of it! The lyrics of the third verse are particularly pertinent:

*‘Come senators, congressmen, please heed the call  
Don’t stand in the doorway, don’t block up the hall  
For he that gets hurt will be he who has stalled  
The battle outside ragin’  
Will soon shake your windows and rattle your wall  
For the times they are a changin’*

So yours is not, nor ever will be, an easy role! And I pay genuine tribute to you all for having the courage and commitment to take it on.

I have had the chance to get to know many of you in the assembly personally and, likewise your predecessors in the last States. I can say, without hesitation, that I have not yet met a Guernsey Deputy who has entered the ring, motivated by anything other than a heartfelt desire to do what is absolutely the best for their island.

I have enjoyed many a thought-provoking debate and acknowledge the hours and hours of intensive research, thought and political energy that underpin many of your contributions in the chamber. I also acknowledge the time equally spent in committee, parish, and community work; all at, I suspect, considerable cost to your personal, professional, and family lives.

So, on behalf of both the Crown, and the community you serve, I say ‘thank-you’.

### TRIBUTE TO STATES OFFICIALS & BAILIFF

Thank-you also, Mr Bailiff, to you and your Court, Crown and States Officers. I am well aware of the immense amount of legal and procedural preparation involved in bringing even the simplest proposition to this house, not to mention the administrative efforts to ensure that Deputies are properly supported – and, of course, to ensure that they are all ‘correctly seated’.

The enduring smooth functioning of ‘Les Etats’, not least in the context of the last 20 months of Covid restrictions, is a huge testament to the efforts of you all.

And specifically, to you Mr Bailiff,..... the position of ‘Monsieur le Baillie’ is an ancient and distinguished one, a totemic symbol of the fusion of our Anglo-Norman heritage. Here and in Jersey, it is one that sits, almost uniquely amongst other jurisdictions, at the intersection of our judicial, legislative, and civic lives.

The success, or otherwise, of this peculiarly Channel Island office, is implicitly dependent upon the quality of the individuals chosen to fill it. And I have been lucky enough to work alongside two of the very best - you, and your predecessor, Sir Richard Collas.

You have both been most generous with your time and wise advice, drawing not only on your extensive legal and constitutional expertise, but also your innate understanding built up over many years (or in Sir Richard’s case, many generations), of the intricacies and nuance of the Bailiwicks’ three principal island communities.

It has been a genuine pleasure and privilege to work alongside you both.

### CONSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

And on the subject of constitutional matters, it has also been a significant privilege to have had the opportunity to play my small part in sustaining the unique constitutional relationship between the Bailiwick and the Crown.

I can say Mister Bailiff, with absolute confidence, that this Bailiwick continues to have a very special place in Her Majesty’s affections as indeed I can also say, with equal certainty (having spoken to so many people over my tenure), that that affection and loyalty is reciprocated almost universally by islanders of all backgrounds and from all walks of life.

This relationship and, through it, our relationship with the United Kingdom, has evolved in nuance and sophistication over so many years, and has survived so many tests; wars, famines, disease, economic and political crises....even five long years of occupation by an enemy power.

It is, to my mind, a very special association indeed. From it flows all the principal elements of our laws, our government, and our place in the world.

It balances, with the finest of judgement, our historic rights, freedoms and autonomy with the innumerable benefits and protections arising from our integral association with the United Kingdom, and the rest of the British 'family'. Benefits which would, frankly, be well beyond our island means were that relationship not to exist.

It is, of course, only human nature to push the boundaries occasionally in a relationship such as this. But I would urge caution and an enduring eye on the long game.

We are, I am certain, in a new age of what historians refer to as 'great power' competition - with the long-term, existential interests of major powers increasingly at stake, not to mention global existential issues related to climate change. A world where the interests of small jurisdictions such as us could so easily become collateral damage. A world where many are finding that, hitherto perhaps slightly *unfashionable*, traditional relationships, relationships underpinned by history and shared fundamental values, are taking on a renewed importance.

#### TRIBUTE TO THE PEOPLE OF GUERNSEY

Finally, through you, Mr Bailiff, and through the people's representatives here in the States, I would like to express both Kathryn's and my sincerest and most heartfelt gratitude to the people of Guernsey, and indeed of the whole Bailiwick.

These islands are very lucky to have such a wide array of talented, resourceful, resilient and independently minded people living here. But you are even luckier to have that 'talent base' underpinned by such a profound sense of 'community' – a real willingness to 'look out for' and 'look after' each other.

Nowhere has this been more evident than in the Bailiwick's response to covid 19. We have, of course, been favoured by geography. We have also been fortunate to have had balanced, clear sighted leadership throughout supported by an incredibly competent and committed public health team and other key officials and front-line workers.

But it has been the communities' response that has been the real key to our relative success. The level-headed and highly responsible manner in which the very great majority of the public have responded to the strictures of lockdown, and other constraints on our daily lives, has been exemplary.

But, more than that, the courageous and self-effacing manner in which so many people mobilised themselves to help those more vulnerable to the consequences of the pandemic – perhaps volunteering to support public health, vaccination programmes or supporting food deliveries to those isolating or shielding, or just providing company and emotional support to those left frightened or alone by the consequences of the pandemic – this has been absolutely pivotal.

There is no doubt that, for the most critical months of last year, 'Guernsey Together' was very much more than a mere 'strapline', it was a very tangible manifestation of a community coming together in adversity.

The secret, of course, is not to let that spirit slip away as the long tail of the pandemic continues to drag out, normal pressures return, and solidarity gives way to angst and frustration. In the cut and thrust of daily life, and particularly the cut and thrust of political debate in this chamber, it is so easy to lose sight of what a genuinely special place this is and what a genuinely special community we have.

More than anything Mr Bailiff, this Bailiwick is defined by its community and people – people who are hospitable, generous, warm-hearted, fun loving, and loyal – and people who have taken Kathryn and myself into the very heart of their island lives for the past 6 years. We both feel immensely privileged to have been accepted so readily into your midst and to have had the opportunity, in whatever small way we have been able, to contribute to this special and unique place.

**CLOSE-OUT**

**We have enjoyed our time here immensely. We have made many new friends. We will take away many special memories.**

**We have been proud to call Guernsey 'home'!**

**If I may, Mr Bailiff, I would like to close with a line from the Irish poet, W B Yeats:**

***'Think where man's glory begins and ends, and say my glory was I had such friends!'***

**Mr Bailiff, with your permission, I will now take my leave.**

*(Delivered by His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor in the States' Assembly, Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021)*