

ENSURE THE SPECIAL QUALITY OF ST. AUBINS' ENVIRONMENT IS NOT COMPROMISED

Introduction

This report describes the measures recommended by the environment working group towards achieving the above aspiration. The groups' remit includes:

Our natural environment of the air, water and land including the sea, beach and wildlife

Our built environment including historic buildings

Our community, its history, culture and sense of place

A new standard for enhancing the Environment

Such a remit encompasses so many aspects; we have elected initially, to suggest a small number of actions which we consider are realistic and achievable.

We have intentionally avoided reference to traffic, cars & parking as other groups have been tasked with preparing reports for current action covering these issues which are central to the village environment.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

1. No land reclamation

The message was clearly articulated at the workshop. It is, however, worth repeating that the single greatest specific threat to the natural environment in the village area is the proposal to "reclaim" the foreshore. The western end of St Aubin's Bay is an extremely important feeding ground for a wide variety of shore birds, and infill would not only reduce the area of exposed tidal flats on which these birds feed, it would also affect the deposition of sediments by affecting tidal flow. This could potentially reduce the quality of the substrate for invertebrates, reducing the utility of the beach for shorebirds. It would irreversibly damage the character of St Aubin's, lose its small scale and village feel, and remove its immediate access to the sea. These effects would mirror those of reclamation in St Helier, where the residents report the loss of the presence of the sea as affecting them adversely

2. No "ponding of the harbour"

A fundamental characteristic of the harbour is its tidal nature. Proposals to construct a bar across the harbour mouth to create a permanently flooded area are, we believe, misconceived. The harbour mud is extremely nutrient-rich and a very important (mostly nocturnal) feeding ground for Dunlin and Redshank. Ponding would dramatically change the physical characteristic of the harbour in a way that would be advantageous to a narrow cross section of harbour users, and disadvantageous to others.

It would be of little practical benefit, other than appearance of water in the harbour and convenience for boarding and working on boats, because access at high tide would be no greater and the depth of the harbour is insufficient for deep draft vessels. As a drying harbour St Aubin's is ideal for small leisure craft and those able to take the ground.

3. Restrictions on Marine Activities

Jet skis cause very considerable disturbance in the bay, and are audible from considerable distances on calm days. They also cause considerable pollution from unburnt fuel and spillages and slicks are frequent. We would like consideration to be given to either banning jet skis from all or the western part of the bay, or investigating options for limiting use to quiet models as silencers have been available for over 20 years. Were these proposals to be taken forward, consideration of the terms under which the water sports concession at La Haule is renewed would be required. Private boat owners launching from the beach should be subject to similar restrictions and the present uncontrolled parking of vehicles and trailers on the beach while their owners use boats should be restricted and managed, it might be sensible to relocate this activity towards the East where the Original Permit was given thus relieving Café and beach users of noise and fume pollution. .

Serious consideration should be given to setting aside part the western part of the St Aubin's bay for non powered craft i.e. dinghy's and hobiecats, this might be done in cooperation with the Sailing School and Yacht Club.

4. Minimising harbour pollution

Apart from jet skis, we are not aware of any serious pollution of the harbour arising from marine activities (e.g. boat maintenance, anti-fouling, refueling etc); we do, however, recommend that a review of potential sources of water pollution is undertaken in conjunction with representatives from Harbours with a view to producing codes of conduct for boat owners to maintain a clean harbour. It would be helpful if the harbour authorities provided disposal facilities for liquid waste.

5. Voluntary restrictions on unleashed dogs on the beach

At certain stages of the tide, unleashed dogs cause considerable disturbance to birdlife on the beaches during n, winter and early spring. We would like to educate and encourage owners to exercise their dogs responsibly by ensuring they do not allow them to disturb birds by avoiding the tide line at these times of year. This could be achieved by way of educational notices depicting bird life and explaining the effects of disturbance. This could be part of an interpretation project explaining St Aubin's.

6. RAMSAR status

A separate group is reporting on the feasibility of preparing an application for RAMSAR status. We support this step and apart from its own merits, consider that designation is an important statement about the importance of the foreshore, and a potential marketing opportunity for the tourist industry.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

1. Register of buildings of local interest

The new Planning law has given the Planning Minister the power to designate conservation areas , where the assemblages of buildings , artifacts and local character justifies special treatment to protect the character of the area . The Commitment is made in the 2002 Island Plan to designate St Aubin's, however this commitment is as yet unfulfilled. This should be rectified at the earliest possible opportunity.

We are not aware of any register of important buildings in the village. We recommend that consideration is given to preparing a list of such buildings in consultation with village residents, property owners and Planning.

2. Development of local planning guidelines.

Once designated as a conservation area, the legal power is there to set special policies which apply only to St Aubin's; this would be issued as supplementary Planning Guidance. It is recommended the Minister be requested to set the necessary procedures in train, on the basis of the output from the St Aubin's weekend as evidence of public opinion, for purposes of public consultation.

Following preparation of such a designation and list of buildings, we further recommend liaising with Planning in developing a set of planning guidelines designed to ensure that any developments and changes of use within the village area are sympathetic to the local character, and that buildings of local significance are given appropriate protection, and uses controlled as below.

We particularly request the States, the Minister for Planning and Environment to take note , particularly during preparation of the new Island Plan that there is insufficient space for increased vehicle parking in St. Aubin and that this be made explicit by condition on all future Planning Permits. See also 'cars, traffic & parking group report

We also request the Minister for Planning and Environment to make available the public record of planning agreements, ideally through the States website; for the register of planning agreements to record the payments which have been made and their exact purpose.

3. Retention of the granite harbour wall

The prospective repair of the harbour wall is essential and must be undertaken in a manner that preserves its current appearance and character. The existing materials should be reused as much as possible recognising the historic merit of the quay itself, and artifacts retained.

OUR COMMUNITY, ITS' HISTORY, CULTURE & SENSE OF PLACE

1 Development of a suitable 'Interpretation' identity

If the village is to be treated as a destination for tourists, consideration should be given to developing unique and unobtrusive signage to provide greater understanding and allow interpretation. This might include descriptive plaques on buildings or sites of particular interest, subject to permission of owners. Development of the "fitness / heritage trail" and associated signage is seen as an example of what not to do.

2 Establishment of an Information Centre

Suitable premises should be identified for, the establishment of a small information centre / museum / interpretative centre

NEW STANDARDS FOR ENHANCING OUR ENVIRONMENT

As our Environment is ALL of Life, originally provided quite free & naturally pure, beautiful & sparkling in great abundance for all to enjoy, blossom & grow, our responsibility individually and collectively is quite clear.

It is to set new standards that demonstrate what can be done to respect, care for and enhance all life that becomes the example for all to see and enjoy. Let us ensure that all our activities do just that.

OUR ENVIRONMENT – THE GIFT OF LIFE

Our Environment is ALL LIFE.....Freely PROVIDED Originally, Naturally Pure, Beautiful & Sparkling in Great Abundance for all to Enjoy, Blossom & Grow. Thus whilst this Beautiful Earth is 'Our Home' we too are Naturally responsible individually & collectively, for Truly Caring for 'Our Home'.

Let Us be Practical as We look & See 'HOW' 'We WILL' best Nourish & Care for The Air & all within It; the Water & all within It; the Ground & the Land, Trees, Plants, Flowers & Minerals; the Birds & the Bees; Humanity & Our Communities; indeed All Life as All IS SACRED. For it is quite clear that without a Pure Environment NOTHING will really Prosper, Blossom & Grow & KNOW that The Climate Changes are Demonstrating this Simple Truth.

So Let us Live and Be in Harmony with Life.....What are the Best Services & Forms of Caring We can provide??????? Let Us Set GOLDEN STANDARDS of Respect and Care for all Life & Demonstrate What Can Be Done and Enjoy, Enjoy, Enjoy.

THE MAHACHOHAN