



Aidan Matthews

Parish: St Martin
Experience: New candidate
Party: No Party affiliation

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- **THREE SCHOOL MODEL:** Listen to what the people want
- **FRESH THINKING:** New ideas to help improve our island
- **OPEN GOVERNMENT:** I will champion a Freedom of Information Law
- **ACCOUNTABILITY:** Increase our democratic checks and balances
- **PARTICIPATION:** Engage with the people on the issues

responding to the concerns of the public and business on the island.

What a contrast with the situation just a few weeks previously. On the 2nd of February, thousands gathered in Town to protest against proposals which would combine secondary schools into one school, on two locations. Many felt these would be overcrowded and were saddened at the loss of local schools in their corner of the island. Education professionals warned standards could worsen rather than improve. Others foresaw traffic chaos from the move. Yet it seemed the States was not listening to these concerns.

In this election you have many choices. You can vote for the same “business as usual” approach, but you can also vote to make a difference. I believe we should have an open, accessible, and transparent government. I would like to see freedom of information made a reality. I’d like to see a more inclusive States that listens, and less reliance on external consultants brought in to bolster unpopular ideas.

Having worked in technology within banking, fund administration, the public sector and insurance, and earned my business degree locally with the GTA, I have a broad view of industry in Guernsey. I am used to finding novel and creative solutions to complex and difficult problems.

As a parent with a son about to start Year 1 at St Martin’s Primary School, I have been inspired to seek election because I’m determined that when my son gets to secondary school, we provide the best education our island can deliver. I’ve seen politics close up when my father was Deputy in SPP for many years, Rhoderick Matthews for those that remember. I believe that the States can only be at its best when it listens to the advice of professionals and the concerns of the public.

Economy

- Guernsey’s enviable position as a global finance centre provides much of our employment and inward investment. We should support its growth and development, but remain conscious of our international reputation
- Borrowing during the COVID-19 emergency was the right choice, but we need to face up to the difficult choices ahead with additional debt of up to £500m
- There is extremely limited scope to increase tax rates without damaging our competitive position as a low tax jurisdiction
- Broadening the tax base with new taxes will likely be proposed. GST should be a last resort, because it affects those on low and middle incomes the most

Education

- The protest clearly showed most parents and teachers prefer a three-school model
- An option for three 11-18 all-ability schools is worth serious consideration, it can offer the fairest balance
- Rebuilding La Mare de Carteret should be reconsidered, the plans already exist and as it’s ideally located for the West coast
- Schools should create their own identity, not merge into one. Parental choice and competition drive up standards

Planning

- The planning authority should be more open in its dealings with the public. All planning meetings should be open
- Planners must open up the policy process, and let the public have a greater say
- Small applications could be decentralised, and processed by parish Douzaines more

quickly, reducing bureaucracy and with local accountability

- There has been too much development in the North of the island and too much emphasis on high density housing. Following lockdown, more people want gardens and home offices

Transport

- Air and sea links are poor, but travel has much reduced globally. Public ownership of Aurigny might enable some direct routes that avoid UK airports
- Our roads are narrow and congested, but improving the alternatives works better than trying to frustrate drivers into leaving their cars at home. Too many roads are dangerous for children and older people to walk, and difficult for cycling by all but the most experienced cyclists
- The way dangerous roads are prioritised is too opaque. Some could be improved with pavements or become one way, whilst others are already safe enough to increase their speed limits
- I would not support paid parking, innovative solutions such as congestion charging are more efficient. Parking fines must not become a profit centre

Health

- Healthcare has been amazing during the pandemic, we must protect our bubble, ensure affordable healthcare is available for all, and healthcare workers are fairly paid. A reciprocal healthcare arrangement is a priority too

Law & Order

- Our sentencing policy appears too lenient for crimes such as for child sex offences, whilst harsh for others such as drug offences. I would like to see this reviewed, and I would support Canadian style regulation of legal cannabis

Social Security

- We need to make sure work always pays, not trap people with benefits that discourage earning. This will become more important as our recovery progresses

Environment

- Globally, aim for net zero emissions before 2050, and invest in renewable energy generation to get there even sooner. Locally, let’s stamp out recent fly tipping by ending charges for domestic refuse, and reimburse recycling instead.

Personal statement

Firstly, thank you for reading this far! My partner Natasha and I live in St Martin’s with our 5-year-old son Ted. I am proudly standing as an independent, with some fresh ideas. I am 45 years old and have lived in Guernsey most of my life, building a 25-year career in technology as a software developer. I believe in open and accountable government that listens to the people.

Manifesto

On the 9th of March this year, rumours circulating on the Guernsey grapevine were confirmed by the first positive case of Coronavirus. Sixteen islanders died in the outbreak, and each represents an individual tragedy, but the toll could have been so much worse. Our response showed the island at its best and proves we can succeed, when we put our minds to it and work together. We saw clear direction and leadership guided by advice from our own scientific advisors and international authorities. But at the same time, listening and