



In advance of the forthcoming elections the Jersey Music Association sent the following to all 93 candidates standing for election:

“The recently adopted Arts Strategy is a major step forward for the Arts in Jersey, however without political champions it will be a wasted opportunity. Who are those future champions? How many candidates have referred to the Arts in their manifestos or spoken out about them?

We at the Jersey Music Association see music as an important part of Island life, the value of which has often been neglected by our elected representatives. Humans thrive on music and an island without music is a lesser one for all of us. We therefore ask the candidates:

1. What commitment to support and develop the Arts have you (or your party) made in your manifesto?
2. Will you commit to ensuring the maintenance of allocating 1% of Government funding for the Arts, as agreed by the last States Assembly?
3. All children have a right to enjoy a free and meaningful musical education. They are the artists of the future. What will you do to make this happen?
4. In light of the continuing closure of the Opera House, and the uncertain future of Fort Regent, what action will you (or your party) take to secure the long-term future of these venues for the Arts - and that other rehearsal and performance spaces are developed?”

We are grateful to those candidates who replied and have allowed us to publish their responses, which were as follows, in alphabetical order:

MIKE FENNELL
Candidate for Constable of St Mary

“1. As a candidate for the position of Connétable, my manifesto deals primarily with parish issues in St Mary. One of our better-known residents has made his career as a singer, and he now performs at local events both as a professional and as a friend of St Mary, which is much appreciated. Music is important for all of us, and embedding a love for music in children is one way to give them a rewarding interest for the rest of their lives – whether as a participant or as an informed audience member. I would support the development of musical education, both in primary and secondary schools, and I know St Mary’s Primary School and Les Quennevais are enthusiastic supporters of the arts in education.

2. The States Assembly agreed in 2019 to allocate 1% of government spending to arts, culture and heritage, and this is reflected in the Government Plan 2022-2025. I support this commitment.

3. I appreciate the valuable contribution of a freely available musical education to all Island children. My children benefited from the Jersey Instrumental Service and the associated children’s orchestras, as well as from the variety of private music tuition available. Music is firmly on the Jersey Curriculum for students in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, and I would support the maintenance of its important position in island schools.

4. There is a plan for Fort Regent which the government has begun to implement. It involves Fort Regent becoming a cultural and leisure destination with entertainment options and a multipurpose venue. As these plans progress, I will study them with interest and participate fully in States debates. Funding has been allocated to repair the fabric of the Opera House by the summer of 2023. I am keen to see it back in action as soon as possible as it is a fantastic, historic venue for both visiting companies and local performers.

I believe schools should be available as rehearsal spaces outside school hours, as they are community spaces, funded by government for the Island.

But it’s one thing trying to keep old venues alive. What about a bit of vision? I’d love to have seen the Government buy the Romany Café site at Greve de Lècq, keep the car park for public use, but replace the café with an outdoor performance venue, perhaps in the style of a Roman amphitheatre, built into the hillside and looking out to sea, rather like the Minack Theatre in Cornwall.”

INNA GARDINER
Candidate for Deputy of St Helier North

“Thank you for your email and giving me the opportunity to answer your questions on Arts

1. I am of the opinion that Arts and arts development needs to be an integral part of the education curriculum.

2. I voted for the proposition brought by Deputy Tadier to increase art funding and I am committed to this.

3. Music is extremely important and has a long and meaningful cultural and educational history. Every child, from any background, should have a chance to play music if they wish.

We need to find ways to connect schools to the wider Jersey musical community, consider musical hubs, where school musical organisations, charities and private musicians can collaborate with Government support for the benefit of the community.

4. Opera house must be refurbished, it is irreplaceable as an arts venue and a historical and cultural building. Ongoing maintenance should be included in the budget allocated for art.

We should also have a modern venue, in a refurbished Fort Regent or elsewhere for standing audiences to enjoy live music year round”

ELAINE MILLAR

Candidate for Deputy in St John, St Lawrence and Trinity

“I am writing in response to your questions to candidates sent to us on 13 June.

I am at something of a disadvantage on this subject, as I don't have children and all the young people in my family live outside Jersey. As a result, therefore, I have no experience or knowledge of the current position or history of music teaching in our schools. I am unable, at this stage, to comment, other than to say that I support the teaching of music and the arts in our schools (alongside other extra-curricular activities).

I have not focussed on the arts in my manifesto but I support the maintenance of the currently committed funding.

I don't know what the Government proposals are regarding the Opera House although I agree that the current situation is not acceptable. Having no experience in this area, I don't presently have enough information to comment about what options may exist for replacement venues for music and the arts.

I apologise for the brief response”

TREVOR POINTON

Candidate for Deputy of St Helier North

“May I draw your attention to the Reform Jersey manifesto concerning the arts -

Celebrating Arts, Culture and Heritage

Jersey has always had a unique and strong sense of its own cultural identity, shaped over centuries by its geography, people and traditions. We are a multicultural community and our cultural identity is influenced by the many cultures who have

made Jersey their home.

Reform Jersey places high value on the arts, culture and heritage, in all their forms. In 2019, we succeeded in putting an end to a decade of funding cuts to this sector by securing permanent and sustainable funding of the arts and culture sector, fixing spending at a guaranteed 1% of overall government revenue expenditure. We are already starting to see the fruits of this investment with a reinvigorated cultural and creative sector. We will ensure that there is a suitable negotiation process in place that organisations in receipt of regular funding from government are able to present their funding requirements, and that good governance is in place around any government funding. We will also include all arts and cultural organisations, as well as practitioners, in the development of the cultural strategy.

Sadly, during the pandemic, many of our arts and cultural events could not take place and facilities were closed. The Jersey Opera House still remains closed and not enough is being done by the government to enable the doors to open. The government has not put adequate plans in place for the ongoing maintenance of arts and cultural facilities. Reform Jersey will work with the arts and cultural organisations to ensure that there is a suitable maintenance plan in place for these important community facilities so that we do not see a repeat of the current issue. We will investigate the feasibility of establishing an arts and culture hub in Gloucester Street when plans are developed for the current hospital site.

Events are a great way to bring our Island's culture and heritage to life. The Corn Riots Festival, a special bank holiday celebration of music, culture and the community is an example of how the celebration of our heritage can bring people together.

One of the things that makes Jersey unique is that we have our own native language. We should all be proud of this. In the past term of office, we secured additional resources for Jèrriais and the new team of teachers not only keep the language alive in schools, but they have done so much in terms of community outreach, to promote Jèrriais culture in all its forms.

We also recognise the contribution that other non-English speaking communities have made and continue to make to island life. As a party, we work closely with many groups to make sure that all cultures are represented, and we celebrate the vibrancy and diversity they also bring to the Island's identity"

LUCY STEPHENSON

Candidate for Deputy of St Mary, St Ouen and St Peter

"Thank you very much for your email to election candidates highlighting the importance of the arts, music and culture in our Island. You will be encouraged to know that this has come up on doorsteps during canvassing a number of times, with Islanders of all ages putting their views across that we must work harder to protect it and help the arts thrive. The Opera House has also been raised at two of our 3 hustings events in my district of St Mary, St Ouen and St Peter and again on doorsteps. All of this tells me, if I was in any doubt, that the arts matters to people. And because of that the next government and others after it should aim to support it. Our experiences during Covid and increased awareness around mental health also remind us just how important aspects of our culture like this are and how powerful they can be in keeping us healthy and happy as a society.

If I am elected the arts will certainly have a friend in me, although at this stage I have no specifics for you and do not claim to be an expert in the area. It is my understanding that the delay to reopening the Opera House is likely to involve another conversation about funding as I'm led to believe that allocated already may not be enough. I cannot at this stage commit to a blank cheque but I would like to see our Opera House open again and fit for purpose, and - importantly - looked after for future generations to enjoy.

The States Assembly has committed to 1% funding and the next Assembly should respect that decision”

DAVID WARR
Candidate for Deputy of St Helier South

“On a personal note I am really concerned that I have yet to see a credible Arts policy. I absolutely support the 1% contribution, however I really believe that the value of the Arts to our societies wellbeing is underestimated. It is something that I believe should be a very high priority to sort out when the new Govt is formed”

As at 17th June 2022
The Jersey Music Association