

Deputy Steve Falla (P&R) – Charity Lead

Speech to address the members of the Association of Guernsey Charities at their AGM 13th April 2026

When I considered the Charity Sector Manifesto in the run up to the June 2025 election – and well done to the AGC for some effective lobbying in that respect – little did I know that responsibility for the relationship between the States and charities was coming my way.

But I was very comfortable to declare my commitment, as I believe did most of my colleagues who are now in the States, to the spirit and objectives of the manifesto.

I am going to use these few minutes as an opportunity to update charities on where “Government”, if I can use that label for the States, has got to with addressing the AGC’s “asks”. The manifesto has not been debated in the Assembly so I’m really reflecting the view of the Policy & Resources Committee this evening.

The first ask was for **Effective commissioning to become a strategic goal, establishing strong, collaborative partnerships.**

Collaboration is more effective than cooperation which may simply mean working alongside others. To quote John C Maxwell “collaboration is multiplication” and this is achieved by working together towards a common goal, often with a shared vision and mutual support.

In Guernsey, strong, collaborative partnerships are of equal importance to both partners – in this context government and charities.

Last term I sat on the Committee for Employment & Social Security where I saw the very positive impact working with what I call the 3Gs – Grow, GET and Go – of course other Gs are available!

But I consider these to be good examples of effective commissioning by the States of Guernsey, demonstrating that multiplier effect. Another is Autism Guernsey – the subject of a Guernsey Press editorial last Friday. The Press called for a better understanding about how commissioning arrangements are reached and I accept that challenge.

I understand there are 35 Guernsey charities delivering commissioned services.

But there has been inconsistency in the way in which commissioning is implemented and it needs to be elevated to a more strategic level – committees need to develop a commissioning mindset so that effective commissioning practices are embedded into their ways of working by making it standard practice to consider alternative public service delivery models.

The two partners are essentially coming from a strong starting point with shared community goals and we will address any areas where the charities sector does not feel it is treated as an equal partner.

We need to ensure that we engage the sector in the consultation phase of policy development. Charities can provide lived-experience - insight gained from working with islanders and understanding their needs and this can lead to options that may include a future commissioned solution.

P&R will seek to champion the value of early engagement with the charities sector.

The manifesto asks for multi-year service level agreements with RPI-linked funding and KPIs to ensure accountability. In principle P&R supports this request, recognising that providers may sometimes need to refine their services to ensure that continuous improvements can be delivered. Any agreement should include a mechanism where the level of funding can be recalculated if the provider can demonstrate that inflation is impacting the cost of delivering the service. Of course context can change for either party.

And co-design is a core part of producing services and solutions to maximise the value and effectiveness of the resources available.

Ask 2 was to **Recognise the charitable sector's economic and social value**

In January this year work was started, in partnership, to measure the social value that charities and the States deliver – including economic, environmental and social outcomes. We hope to determine a suitable social value model that can be deployed across the private, public and charity sectors. I look forward to hearing what Nathan has to say about this later this evening.

I'm not going to shy away from the challenges that regulation presents to charities and whether the requirements imposed on charities by multiple regulators represent a cohesive regulatory regime proportionate to the risk. Work is being done in this area and findings and recommendations will be shared with charities soon.

I am pleased to say that one of the asks that we've been able to progress is the suggested Employer Supported Volunteering programme.

It's very early days but a pilot is about to get started – already one member of staff has provided digital and social media support to Guernsey Community Savings. Up to 30 others have so far shown an interest in the programme. And an info session to garner more involvement will be held next week.

The outcomes of this pilot will be used to determine whether Employee Supported Volunteering should be introduced as a permanent feature of States employment. We are grateful for the support from the AGC in developing the pilot to this point.

It is recognised that the valuable charitable support provided to the community relies on charities being financially sustainable. Just as financial sustainability is important to the States and, as you know, this is a live subject being grappled with.

P&R will assist where it can within the confines of the wider financial environment and robust business planning. I hope that the areas I've covered so far will help strengthen the financial sustainability of the sector. P&R cannot yet give a firm commitment to unlocking dormant or unclaimed assets and funds for charitable use, following the approval of a 2021 policy letter, but we are actively exploring what is possible in this regard. One of my personal regrets and frustrations is the pace at which change can be effected.

You will all know that in February the States agreed that, IF GST is to form part of tax reform, charities will be exempt.

We are also ready to discuss further the expansion of tax relief and incentives to encourage greater public and corporate donations.

I am very aware of the frustration over demands on the charity sector from various local authorities. A workstream has been started to look at the Registry, Revenue Services and the ODP.

One objective will be to improve communication with charities. Again, there's no quick fix but it will be taken forward alongside the regulatory landscape project.

P&R recognises the positive impact of volunteering on the island and its community and we note the difficulty in recruiting volunteers. It is a vital community asset without which Guernsey would be poorer. We are prepared to work towards improving the public understanding of volunteering as a vital community asset. We look forward to the AGC providing evidence which may lead to incentivising volunteering and charitable giving through tax benefits for businesses supporting employee engagement in charities.

This may include greater recognition of volunteering and corporate social responsibility in States tendering and contracting arrangements. The procurement team is supportive of the inclusion of including social value in the tendering evaluation process and, again, this will be influenced by working with the AGC in determining the best social value model to use.

There is a lot of potential within the AGC manifesto and its asks and I hope that what I've been able to share demonstrates that P&R is listening.

We value the partnership with the AGC. It's robust but that is important and I applaud the determination shown on the part of the association.

As I said in my foreword to the AGC annual report, "Everyone in our community has touch points with charities in the Bailiwick, whether as officials, volunteers, donors or recipients of the services provided through the charities sector."

I'll borrow another couple of soundbites, if I may:

Comedian and actor Bob Hope said: "If you haven't got any charity in your heart, you have the worse kind of heart trouble!"

And, from Sherry Anderson: “Volunteers don’t get paid, not because they’re worthless, but because they are priceless.”

Thank you for inviting me to speak and thank you for all you do.

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