

An opportunity for you to have your say

In last Wednesday's JEP, I announced that IoD Jersey will be launching a campaign early next year, to support democracy in our Island. We are going to do that by helping inform people about the importance of voting, and to encourage more people to stand for election. We had a tremendous response to that article which demonstrates that so many people are behind the ethos of our campaign which is to encourage everyone to have their say, and to support more people with good experience and leadership qualities, to stand for election.

In the last few days, we have witnessed some of the uglier side of politics with the Vote of No Confidence in the Chief Minister. We do not wish to make any comment on the reasons for or against the VONC being called – or the individuals involved - it is a political tool that can be used by our elected representatives. However, some of the comments before and during the debate, were not related to performance and skill set, but were attacks on personality or driven by personal gain (on both sides of the argument). There should be no place for personal attacks, what other work place would tolerate such behaviour? Instead, let's focus our energies on taking steps to change the mindset and culture and build a "Team Jersey". Let's encourage more candidates to stand for election and not denigrate them for doing so.

Ultimately, we ALL have the opportunity to decide on who we want to lead us, by using our democratic rights and voting in the next election.

Why vote?

The decisions our elected representatives make affect us all. If we do not vote, then we lose the opportunity to have an influence on those

decisions. Now, more than ever, with the impending Brexit separation of the UK and Europe, we have to make the right decisions for our Island. Whether you are concerned about our health system, environment, economy, education, jobs or diversity and inclusion, to name but a few, all of these affect us all and are ultimately influenced by our votes.

Most of our representatives stand on their own manifesto and mandates, which means we have clear choices as to how we wish for Jersey to be governed. If you do not vote for the candidate who represents how you would like to see your Island run, then you are giving a vote to the candidate who you do not wish to win. We have a first-past-the-post electoral system – the same as the UK – which simply means that the candidate with the most votes wins. Your one vote might seem just a drop in the ocean, but it isn't – it could be the one vote that pushed your chosen candidate over the finish line.

If your elected representatives do not do what you want them to do, then you have the option of voting them out four years later. That opportunity is coming in 2022.

In the interim, we do hope that you can join us, as we welcome news presenter, Jess Dunsdon, leading a live debate with the Chief Minister, John Le Fondre on Monday, 23 November at 12.45pm. Due to present restrictions, the debate (which is kindly sponsored by HSBC) will be live-streamed from a pop-up TV Studio at the Royal Yacht where the Chief Minister will be answering your questions on how the Island has fared in response to the Covid outbreak and discuss the government plans on how to “build back better”. Complimentary tickets can be booked on [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) or via our website [iod.je](https://www.iod.je)

If you're new to Jersey politics

- Jersey has been a self-governing Island since 1204, although there have been a few changes over the years! We now have our own legal and financial systems, and courts of law.
- We are a part of the British Isles (but not the UK) as a British Crown Dependency. The people of Jersey chose to align with England.
- The UK government will defend Jersey and represent the Island internationally, but Jersey's Government will also represent the Island on the global scene, particularly in trade talks
- Our 'government' is made up of a Council of Ministers who come from Jersey's 'parliament' the States Assembly.
- The States Assembly is made up of 49 elected members. That is 8 Senators, who the whole island can vote for, 12 Connétables or Constables, who represent each Parish and can only be voted in by their parishioners, and 29 deputies, who – like the Connétables – represent and can only be voted for by their respective parishioners.
- The States Assembly is responsible for making new laws and regulations, approving taxes and how much public money should be spent each year.
- Once voters have chosen their 49 elected members, the States Assembly chooses its Chief Minister and 10 other Ministers who form the Council of Ministers (similar to the UK's Cabinet) and lead the government. Ministerial government replaced the old committee system in 2005.
- Because Jersey is generally not a party political system, ie most members stand on their own individual views and not those of a party, there is no ruling party and opposition and the Council of Ministers retain the right to represent their own views.
- In 2014 Reform Jersey was formed and is Jersey's only 'political party'.

- The Government and its decisions are reviewed and held to account by a series of Scrutiny panels and the Public Accounts Committee, made up of backbench members of the Assembly. Members of the public can submit evidence to these panel reviews and they also sit on the Public Accounts Committee with States members.