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'We are all just humans and we don't need yet another subcategory to define and divide us'

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£120k could be spent on safety railings near a primary school

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YOUR COMMENTS@Jersey Evening Post **COM** 'Why the difference between Jersey and Guernsey? They have no GST and their deficit has nearly disappeared'

Same-sex marriage plan goes before the States

By Jack Maguire

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SAME-SEX couples could soon be allowed to marry in Jersey after the Chief Minister brought forward a proposal to the States yesterday.

It follows a three-month public consultation, launched last August, to investigate whether it was appropriate for same-sex marriage to be introduced in the Island. Only 1.5 per cent of Islanders responded to the survey.

The Chief Minister Ian Gorst, writing in the proposition, said: 'It would be unreasonable, and inappropriate, to continue to deny same-sex couples the opportunity to get married.'

Equality charity Liberate said that they were 'heartened' by Senator Gorst's comments and welcomed the proposal.

If the proposition is approved by the States, same-sex couples in civil partnerships would be allowed to convert their union to a marriage and the terms 'husband and wife' and 'mother and father' would be retained for couples where appropriate. There are also recommendations

to agree to change the current divorce law to place a heavier emphasis on 'reconciliation and mediation'.

The proposition does not include any plans to introduce a so-called 'spousal veto', which is currently in place in England and Wales. The law can stop transgender people from having their gender legally recognised if their spouse does not sanction it.

Vic Tanner Davy, founder of the transgender support group Trans Jersey, said he welcomed the absence of a spousal veto: 'There are a number of problems that exist currently for transgender people in Jersey looking to recognise their gender legally and we look forward to seeing more detail on this aspect of the proposal.'

However, included in the recommendations are a number of 'safeguards' that mean a religious same-sex marriage will only be granted if the organisation has agreed to it, and no religious institution or leader will be compelled to marry gay or lesbian couples. If the plans are approved, same-sex marriage could be introduced in Jersey by the start of 2017.

• JEP opinion: Page 10.



Vic Tanner Davy, founder of transgender support group Trans Jersey

In brief

Pedestrian hurt by bike

A MAN was treated in hospital after a cyclist collided with him on Monday. Police said the cyclist was going the wrong way down Kensington Place and ran into the pedestrian, who was crossing the road. Officers said the pedestrian suffered minor injuries. Anyone with information is asked to call the States police on 612612.

JT to switch off OAP deal

JERSEY Telecoms is scrapping a service that offers pensioners a cheap home phone line. From 31 July JT will close registration for its PrimeTalk line for elderly Islanders, which gives them line rental at £1.90 per month. It will be replaced with a new Senior Home Service, which gives a home phone number but over the mobile network, using a special handset. JT says the introduction of competition in the home phone market made the subsidy unsustainable. Call costs will also increase as PrimeTalk customers paid 7p for half an hour, the new charge will be 2p per minute.

Less detailed exam data

EXAM data released by the Education Department on GCSE results day will be less detailed than in previous years. Results for this year's students, which are to be released on 20 August, will not contain a breakdown of the percentage of students achieving five A* to C grades including English and maths. The full statistics will instead be published in the early part of next year. A spokesman for the Education Department said that the decision had been made to ensure that the information that is released is 'statistically robust'.

Correction

A SUB-HEADLINE on the Medium Term Financial Plan, published on yesterday's front page, stated that public sector pensions would be frozen. In fact, it is public sector pay which will be frozen. The error is regretted.

£145m cuts 'target old people'

(Cont from page 1)

without because of the few who do not need it?'

Social Security say that of the £1.5m they are saving from the Christmas bonus payments, £200,000 will be paid towards a private health scheme for the elderly. But Mrs Minihane said that the scheme was only for people below a savings threshold and was not published enough.

The Age Concern chairman said that many elderly people volunteered for charities and also looked after their grandchildren while the parents went out to work to make ends meet.

'Age Concern gets no money from the States,' she said. 'I have to head up committees to help older people, give them a hot meal, make sure

they see a chiropodist, have their hair done, with not a penny from the States. Why do they target us all the time when so much money is being wasted in this Island?'

As part of the proposals outlined yesterday there will also be a new health charge bringing in £35m to the States Treasury and a user-pays charge applied to liquid and solid waste disposal, if the proposition is approved by the States when it is debated in October. The ministers also propose a freeze on Income Support benefits and a cap on the States grant paid into the Social Security Fund.

Unite the union spokesman Nick Corbel said all of the unions, including teaching unions, the Royal College of Nursing, the uniformed

services associations and Prospect, would be issuing a joint response following a meeting this afternoon.

Speaking for Unite members - many of whom may be affected by the extensive job cuts and reorganisation of the public sector - Mr Corbel said: 'It's alarming, in that the government are not prepared to look at alternatives to what they are proposing. We have put forward alternative proposals, but the States Employment Board have turned them down.'

'We feel that the zero-ten tax system was a mistake, and at that time Unite did put forward its own proposals on future taxation, but these were rejected. Now those who can least afford it have to pay for the mistakes of the past. Those with

broader shoulders should pay their share.'

'Although members of the public may not realise the effect on them, there will be a rise in stealth taxes, health and user-pays charges, and we do not know where it will end. States services will be severely cut and families will not only have to endure the prospect of rising prices, but also job losses and redundancies.'

'We don't believe there will be alternative employment in the Island. What kind of jobs will they be - zero hours, minimum wage, not even a living wage, no decent terms and conditions, no sick pay.'

• **Medium Term Financial Plan - cuts and spending:** Page 4.
• **JEP Opinion:** Page 10.

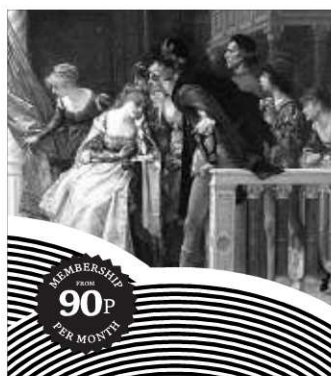
Smothered pensioner: 'I thought I would die'

(Cont from page 1)

to the victim. He said that Hawkins's use of prescription drugs had 'spiralled' after he separated from his wife.

Commissioner Michael Birt, presiding, said he was 'pleased' and 'impressed' at the progress that had been made by both men while they were in prison.

Sir Michael was sitting with Jurats Geoffrey Fisher, Jill Clapham, Peter Morgan, Jurat Suzanne Marett-Crosby and Sally Sparrow.



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