



Surname: **Matthews**

First Name: **Aidan**



Telephone: 01481 235221

Email: aidan.matthews@gmail.com

Website: www.aidanmatthews.com

Social: www.facebook.com/DeputyAidanMatthews

Twitter/X: [@AidanDSMatthews](https://twitter.com/AidanDSMatthews)

Manifesto Summary

If you're struggling with the number of candidates in this election you're not alone. How to choose from amongst so many? I stand on the same values and my record since being elected as a new deputy in 2020. I've kept my commitments and voted according to my principles, and I'll continue if re-elected. I've brought some fresh thinking to the States, but I want a more open government with greater accountability. Maintaining our competitive position is key for business, but I support islanders who struggle with rising costs of living and housing. We must not lose Guernsey's unique identity.

Personal Statement

I am proudly standing as an independent, with my own ideas. I have lived in Guernsey most of my life, building a 27-year career as a software developer. My partner Natasha and I live in St Martin's with our 9-year-old son Ted. After being elected, I decided to work for **you** full-time as a States member, to concentrate on issues that matter to islanders. 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.

Education issues inspired me to seek election for my first term. All parents want the best for their children, and many share similar concerns about the direction of education. This political term has seen divisions open up in the assembly, and our island feels more divided than ever. Cutting short the education review and pushing through with the worst of all options was a low point of this States. With pupil numbers falling it's clear that a more considerate approach to education is needed. My deepest concern now is how the shortage of housing has developed into a serious crisis. Young people wonder if they have a future in the island, and the high cost of living affects people of all ages.

I had seen politics close up when my father was Deputy in St Peter Port for many years (Rhoderick Matthews for those that remember) but this States has been the most divisive. I believe in working together to find common ground. We need a way through that allows young people to stay on the island, and the retired to have the support they need. Families should be able to afford to stay on the island where they grow up, but our services and business need skills from outside too. The balance isn't right at the moment, change is needed if Guernsey is to remain a great place to call your home.

Housing

Guernsey has a serious housing crisis. It's always been difficult here, but now it's worse than it's ever been. The States has the tools to help islanders but hasn't worked effectively or together as a unit to get results.

- Planning needs to allocate areas for development that can go ahead quickly. Brownfield should always come first before losing more of our precious green spaces.
 - The North of the island has taken too much recent development and too high proportion of recent housing proposals, it's time to find other locations around the island, our land use policy shouldn't stand in the way.
 - A new housing commission using local construction industry know-how could help deliver more homes and suggest improvements to States policies.
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- **Modular buildings and other new technologies should be part of the mix to get homes completed more quickly, and provide emergency housing needs.**
- Set up States-run schemes to help first time buyers save up for a deposit with tax deductions for young people trying to get on the first rung on the ladder.
- Savings schemes will help some, but the States Loan scheme helped many islanders in the past with low deposits, we should set up a new scheme for today.
- The rental market needs fair housing standards, protections for tenants, and help to stabilise the very high rent increases and availability shortages.



Population

As much as we need new housing, we can't out build the housing crisis. States population policy isn't working. The guide number for net migration is already high at 300 per year but during 2023 actual net migration was higher at 1064.

- The Population Management Law needs an overhaul.
- High net migration leads to price increases and lack of availability, especially in the rental market.
- **The new Housing Committee should take responsibility to manage migration, and aim for better balance with house building. The rule should be licences are limited relative to new builds.**
- Rules which limit subsidies and key-worker accommodation only to States recruits from overseas need to be reconsidered, it's not fair to locally qualified residents who also struggle with these costs.

Education

Our State secondary schools have been through too much turmoil during the last few years. I opposed closure of the previous Grammar School and La Mare de Carteret schools, creating the school at Les Varendes. The task ahead will be to improve education services for all ages from pre-school through to 16+ and adult education.

- Expanding pre-school provision supports working parents, a review of Primary schools needs to consider innovative solutions, not just closures to save costs.
- Secondary schools should be able to make their own decisions, not be run centrally by the Education Office.
- We should be inspired by top performing schools in the UK yet develop solutions suitable for our small island.
- **All schools should be able to create their own identity, not merge toward one standard. Parental choice and competition drive up individual school standards.**
- Education needs to repair its relationship with the independent Colleges. The old scholarship scheme should be brought back but in a new format. Means tested bursaries, for parents who can't afford fees would deliver greater social mobility.
- The current Sixth form centre should not be used for office space for civil servants. Instead keep options open for a return to its use as an 11-18 school.

Health

Guernsey has high quality healthcare but there are many improvements needed. Having served on the committee for HSC, I can vouch for the efforts made to keep services at the standards we expect.

- Waiting times must be brought down, especially in areas such as orthopaedics.
 - In the UK we can see the NHS is struggling from underinvestment, we must expand our services to cope with increasing demand, we only have one hospital.
 - **The first phase of the PEH modernisation has been progressed, now the next phase is needed to provide for increases which come with an ageing population.**
 - Recruitment is needed to cope with rising demand, but housing is the biggest challenge. Accommodation is desperately needed to avoid dependence on relocation allowances.
 - Safeguarding standards in all areas have improved but more needs to be done to address concerns.
 - Locally qualified nurses and healthcare workers should be encouraged, including help with housing and the cost of living.
 - Mental health and increasing provision for neurodiversity are high among my priorities. We know demand is growing and attitudes are changing.
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Tax

I voted against the GST+ package, but it has now been voted through. Inflation caused price rises that shocked everyone, and GST will add to this, but the package does protect those on low and middle incomes. I will vote for viable alternatives that come forward. If GST cannot be stopped, an important task ahead will be to keep the lowest rates possible.

- Guernsey has had a shortfall in its tax revenue since the “zero ten” tax changes were introduced in 2008. This is the point where our problems started, it’s time to look again at corporate tax reform.
- Our tax system remains unbalanced, companies and some of our wealthy residents are able to pay little tax by using the 0% rate for corporate tax. Tax fairness is needed.
- Raise the rate of corporate tax to 15% and close loopholes to achieve greater balance and fairness.
- Official estimates of revenue from “pillar 2” were found to be too low once before, they could be again. There is too much uncertainty in our revenue projections.
- Spending control is needed to achieve a balanced budget. The budget must be balanced, we cannot continue to spend more than we take in.
- **Preventing the need for GST is a priority but may not be possible. Some of these steps can keep GST at a lower rate, and it should never be applied to essentials like food.**
- The tax office needs to revise its processes and improve customer service, such as making paper forms easily available for anyone who struggles with the online page.

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 and our competitive position.**
- Our visitor economy needs support with improved connectivity.
- The digital economy is developing, AI brings opportunities and challenges.
- Regulation can be a strength for the island to protect our reputation on the world stage, and at the same time minimise the cost of compliance.



Environment

Protecting our island’s natural environment is of vital importance for future generations here, but so is the global environment. Our impact may be small, but we still need to play our part and encourage others to do so too.

- Keep green spaces in areas where people live, work and enjoy, and protect our unique biodiversity protected.
- Our energy strategy and net-zero policy is much less costly than for other countries, due to our lack of heavy industry and planned improvements to our links with the electricity grid in France.
- **We can move forwards with renewable energy generation, through offshore wind which shows real promise of delivering results and revenue earnings.**
- In the future, tidal energy too, though technology in this area is not as production-ready as offshore wind power.
- Our drinking water must stay clean and free of pollution from “forever chemicals” like PFAS, and pesticides.
- States decisions must balance the environment with the economy and community in ways that create benefit for all of us, and minimise any downsides.

Transport

Getting around the island and traveling off it is becoming more difficult, with responsibility is divided among many committees making decisions complicated.

- Air and sea links remain poor. Public ownership of Aurigny provides stability and routes have expanded, but if problems persist and costs remain high a new approach will be needed to remain competitive.
- Harbours and the airport should be run separately to improve efficiency and stand on their own. Boat owners should not be made to subsidise the airport.
- **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 unless fair and convenient schemes come forward. Innovative solutions such as congestion charging are more efficient. Parking fines must not become a profit centre.

Political Experience

I have been a hard-working deputy, playing a full role on two principal committees: Health and Social Care (HSC) and Environment and Infrastructure (E&I).

I have taken on constituency work and helped to bring changes to the way the States approaches business on behalf of individuals who have contacted me for advice. One of the most challenging areas of work as a deputy as little support is provided to members, but very important.

Assembly Achievements

Some successful amendments I proposed and were passed:

- ✓ Enable the use of modular homes as emergency accommodation, alongside future construction worker village development. We must do everything we can.
- ✓ Preventing school fines from being introduced for parents when children are absent from school, in the form of fixed penalties. These fines have no place here, parents need help not penalties. This idea was copied from the UK where they have been a failure, and only led to parents feeling more victimised by authorities.
- ✓ Kept mortgage income tax relief, rather than phasing it out. Homeowners are under pressure from high interest rates, some mortgage holders rely on this tax relief.

Accountability

Finding out what the States is doing on your behalf is of vital importance in a functioning democracy.

- I support a Freedom of Information Law to bring full transparency. It's our information, it should always be made available to those with a legitimate interest.
- A return of the Public Accounts Committee, or a new Audit Commission, will help build trust in how the States spends money on your behalf, with outside eyes to review the details of work being done.
- I will press for a 'duty of candour' for all public employees. Backed by law to prevent the withholding of important information from those who need to know, something that unfortunately does occur in the States. The UK government is progressing this, to help combat high profile scandals where information was not passed on to those who could act on it.

Law & Order

We're lucky to live in a safe island, but important issues made little progress as Brexit and the Moneyval assessment took priority.

- Sentencing policy appears too lenient for crimes such as for child sex offences, whilst harsh for others such as drug offences. A justice review must address this.
- I support Canadian style regulation of legal cannabis.
- Complaints should be handled more efficiently.
- Our narrow roads can feel dangerous, safety standards need enforcement to keep walkers and cyclists safe.



Reform

Our current system depends on 'consensus' so deputies have to work together to get results. Unpopular or poorly thought through proposals, brought with little support, cause division and can lead to 'deadlock' where nothing moves forwards. The system delivers stability, but with the wrong approach can also make changing direction difficult to achieve. It's not fair to place all the blame for slow progress with the committee system. Lack of internal resources makes sweeping change slow to start and get moving too.

- **Successful candidates in this election will go into the current system. Those who co-operate and look to find common ground can deliver change and progress.**
- Improvements need to be designed and thought through properly, not just rushed in.
- Executive government could deliver more decisive change if designed well, but if not then could be worse for the island's democracy.
- I support changes that bring more democratic accountability, but not those that make matters worse.
- Changes to our island wide elections and voting system should be included, not dealt with separately.
- I will support a reduction in the number of deputies if it can be shown that there are proper checks and balances.
- We shouldn't try to copy ideas from other democracies if the ideas won't work well for Guernsey. We need to find our own solutions that work for our unique island.

With thanks to my proposer Advocate Chris Green and seconder Douzenier Jill Bray.
