

Jonathan Renouf (via email)

June 5th 2026

Dear Mr Marett-Crosby,

I am writing because I am one of a number of candidates in the election who remain troubled by aspects of campaign financing relating to Value Jersey and Value Jersey-aligned candidates.

Jersey's campaign finance law (2014) is well-drafted and designed to capture all spending deployed to influence an election, whenever the spending occurs. However, it operates retrospectively, which limits visibility on key funding questions during the campaign itself. This makes thorough investigation after the election all the more important. There is a real concern that the JEA may lack either the teeth or the resources to investigate thoroughly whether the law has been circumvented.

A concern shared by many candidates is that the complex relationships between individual candidates, the Messina Group, Value Jersey, and third parties may enable candidates to effectively circumvent spending limits, by exploiting loopholes in the legislation. After the election it will clearly be important to establish - in the usual way - whether all funding has been properly declared in line with legal requirements. But it will be equally important to establish if there are loopholes that need to be closed to ensure that the intent of our laws - to ensure equality of arms and provide reasonable spending limits - is maintained.

### **The Terry Le Main poster**

The campaign poster funded by Terry Le Main — as reported in the JEP on 3rd June — raises serious questions. The JEP reported that an unnamed candidate initiated the contact between Mr Le Main and Mr Lines, the Messina Group's senior operative on the island. If that is accurate, Mr Le Main's spending may fall within that candidate's election expenses and would need to be declared as such.

The 2014 law defines election expenses as expenses incurred at any time before the poll:

*by the candidate, or with the candidate's express or implied consent...*

If a candidate introduced Mr Le Main to Mr Lines, expenditure flowing from that introduction occurred as a direct result of that contact and there is a strong case that it therefore occurred with the candidate's *express or implied consent*. I would respectfully ask that the JEA investigate closely the nature of that contact. The critical question would be whether the candidate encouraged Mr Le Main to undertake the leaflet campaign.

If the JEA determines that the spending did not occur with the unnamed candidate's consent, Mr Le Main would be required to declare it as a third-party expense (under Part 3 of the law). That declaration should not be confined to printing and distribution costs. It must surely also include Mr Lines' time, both in discussions with Mr Le Main and in designing the poster. Mr Lines' involvement in the design appears highly likely, not least since the word "Centre" was misspelt using the American spelling "Center". The declaration must also address whether Mr Lines' work was carried out under his contract with Value Jersey (which would make Value Jersey a third party in this matter), whether it formed part of the support package purchased by the unnamed candidate, or

whether he was working independently. (Those familiar with the Messina Group's commercial arrangements indicate that a typical day rate is in the region of £3,000.)

### **Value Jersey's support packages**

A related concern is that the "support packages" purchased by individual Value Jersey-aligned candidates will not reflect the full value of support being provided by the Messina Group - not least because of the scale of the Messina Group's involvement in the campaign.

Just in terms of flights, accommodation, living costs and on-island transport, this is likely to have cost more than £10,000, never mind the price of consultancy advice. Given that the 9 Value Jersey aligned candidates will not be able to declare much more than £25,000 in total in support packages without breaching spending limits, there are legitimate concerns as to whether the total value of Messina Group support will be captured in those declarations.

This concern is amplified because Value Jersey has declined to disclose the value and structure of its contract with the Messina Group. However, sources in the political lobbying world indicate that the Messina Group does not take contracts below £50,000, and suggest the Value Jersey contract is likely to exceed £100,000. My concern is that a contract agreed well before the election may be being used to subsidise the cost of packages offered to Value Jersey candidates, and that — because the contract pre-dates the regulated period — an attempt may be made to argue that the bulk of the spending falls outside the definition of election expenses. However, the law does not permit that argument. It is explicit that expenses incurred "*at any time before the poll*" are captured if the goods or services are deployed during the regulated election period. A support package that offers candidates subsidised access to Messina Group services — subsidised because Value Jersey has already met or is meeting a portion of the cost — would require those costs to be declared as part of that candidate's election expenses.

### **Concluding remarks**

It is very much to be hoped that the funding arrangements for every candidate are entirely legitimate and that the fears outlined above prove unjustified. Unfortunately, the lack of transparency around the relationship between Value Jersey, the Messina Group, and Value Jersey-aligned candidates leaves many questions unanswered. There are also reports that at least one and maybe more Value Jersey-aligned candidates are among those who have donated to Value Jersey, further emphasising that the financial relationships between these parties is a matter of legitimate scrutiny.

The refusal of Mr Lines to answer media questions about his role in the election further raises the question of whether the JEA will be able to obtain the answers it needs about Messina Group activities and funding.

I am therefore asking the JEA to confirm that, once election expenses have been submitted, it will:

- thoroughly investigate the questions raised above;
- make the results of those investigations public; and
- make recommendations to ensure that future Jersey elections are conducted with full transparency around candidate alignments, funding arrangements, and adherence to statutory spending limits.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Renouf (candidate for Deputy in St Brelade)