

L'Ecume II and Haut du Mont Memorial Service Speech - Thursday 7th December, 2023

Chief Minister, Dr Kyd, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Each of us knows why we are here. We have either suffered a great personal loss, are supporting those who have, or we are responding as a community, showing solidarity with our friends, neighbours and fellow islanders who were hit by two tragedies in December 2022.
2. It is hard, perhaps, to comprehend that almost a year has passed since the terrible news of a maritime collision reached us and, so quickly after that, a devastating explosion took life and property in St Helier.
3. These two incidents were, of course, very different events but they were close together in time and it seems to me to be entirely appropriate that we come together on this single act of commemoration and stand as an island community to remember the victims who lost their lives on both land and at sea.
4. Each of these incidents alone would have been shocking but together they stunned our close community. Jersey felt the pain of the families and friends of those who lost their lives and rallied

around those who lost so much. We mourned together in the wake of such tragic circumstances.

5. By long tradition, we are a people of the sea and our fishing community suffered an incredible sense of loss with the sinking of the L'Ecume II on the 8th December, with Skipper and crew. At the time of the incident our island fleet went in search of [INSERT NAMES] without hesitation, a testament to the closeness of this small and resilient group.
6. Days later the residents of Haut du Mont would very shortly suffer a catastrophic life changing event. The report of the explosion in the early hours of 10th December shocked us all. Unexpected. Without warning. The explosion took hold of us all and we came together to do what we do best and look after one another.
7. This evening we are all here for different reasons – a son, daughter, a family member, an emergency responder, an old friend, an islander. By coming together, we remember those tragically lost and those deeply affected by the events of 2022.
8. Even after a year.... the loss of family members and friends may continue to be a struggle, especially as we get closer to Christmas, which is for many, a time to spend together with family.

9. For those who have lost, we are deeply sorry that you are suffering this pain. However, I hope you find some comfort in knowing that this island, our community is behind you, to support you at this difficult time.