

Mrs Helen Wilson
Field 622 Inquiry Programme Officer
Department of the Environment
South Hill
ST HELIER
Jersey

8th June 2013

Dear Mrs Wilson

I am writing to you today with serious concerns that field 622 could be lost to agriculture and the impact this will have on the area of land that surrounds the field.

The Houguez family have farmed at Goodlands, on the Route du Marais for many years. My grandfather Albert George started the farm and grew about 60 verges of Jersey Royal potatoes. He rented field 622 from the Parish of St Ouen. He often described the field as good growing land, early planting mid-February. With the land properly maintained, it produced a high volume crop of potatoes.

Since fields 623 and 702 are rented from members of the Le Maistre family, it makes for a serious situation which I have no control over, for both these fields in future could be used as in-fill areas. The loss of just one these fields would result in the closure of the farm.

Since 2001 I have been the last dairy farmer in St Ouen, with the farm also been the last mixed farm, because I grow Jersey Royals for export, and Main Crop potatoes for the local market.

As the Jersey Royals are dug, the fields are then cleared and prepared to grow crops for the winter to feed my cattle. I grow mangles, fodder beet, kale, maize and white carrots. I have no other option for this process, as I am restricted by the area of farmland in my possession.

The proposed sheltered housing in field 622 would see a broken field. The size of the sheltered housing would occupy half of the field, the east side. This would leave the

remaining part of the field to the west. Due to the contours of the road, La Rue de la Croute, this would leave the west side a lot harder to work with tractors because of the short rows in the field and the much reduced size of the field could make it unviable to the Carre family who currently work the field. This would render the field unusable for big machinery, which is currently in use today. Then this part of field 622 could then be put forward as not suitable for agricultural use, and could then become vulnerable for use as in-fill.

This clearly would start the process of creeping into the Green Zone. The parish should have sought a much smaller field to accommodate the proposed sheltered housing.

I am aware that there is an alternative site at least one field which could be used for the proposed sheltered housing situated along La Rue du la Croix (B53) As mentioned in my last letter dated January 2013. The line was drawn on the eastern boundary of field 622/623 to stop St Ouen's Village escalating to the west, to form a buffer zone to protect the marsh and wetland areas and the loss of an area of open land which would be harmful to the natural character of the immediate vicinity.

Another issue that should be mentioned is the protection of our future food security. It is paramount that we produce as much food on island as we possibly can. We have an ever-increasing population that will need food. Locally produced food will also help with environmental issues, reducing our carbon footprint by importing less. Just one field here and another there may be given over to development, but this is the thin end of the wedge. Where will it end?

Agriculture is the one thing that all governments should take more seriously. Jersey relies to great extent on the green and pleasant countryside and on the farming industry that keeps it that way. A great achievement that should not be taken for granted and is achieved to the resilience and determination of the farming industry. Farming shapes the countryside and represents a vital part of the island's landscape and cultural identity. Yes we have the Jersey Cow and the Jersey Royal, which are icons of rural Jersey, but in St Ouen should field 622 be used for sheltered housing, one of these important icons could disappear for good. Please make sure that what we have, we hold onto. People want to visit here and live here for a reason – it is a beautiful place to be! Lets keep that way!

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns.

Yours Sincerely

Mr P G Houguez