



JERSEY RAMSAR MANAGEMENT PLAN AND SITE STRATEGY 2025-2029

South East Coast

Ramsar site reference number 1043



Credit: Jersey Heritage, 2024

Prepared by:

Government of Jersey
Jersey Ramsar Management Authority (Natural Environment)
Howard Davis Farm
Trinity
JE3 5JP

Email: ramsar@gov.je

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1. Purpose of the document

The main purpose of this document is to describe the Ramsar five-year management strategy for South East Coast and define the management objectives of the Jersey Ramsar strategy.

The previous management plan was published during 2012, so this document aims to reset our vision for the site and set out our management objectives for the period 2025-2029. Setting management principles for five years allows for adaptive management, alignment with policy and funding cycles, addressing emerging threats, stakeholder engagement and the maintenance of ecological character. It will also align with the Alderney framework which sets out an excellent standard for Ramsar site management.

2. Introduction and location of the site

The site is located on the South East Coast of the Channel Island of Jersey, which is situated in the 'Golfe Normano-Breton' approximately 22km west of France and 136km south of the UK. The site comprises various habitats; reefs, boulder fields, mud, sandy and shingle shores not covered by water at low tide, combined with shallow tidal lagoons, seagrass beds and a constellation of outlying reefs. Measuring 32.1km², it is amongst the largest intertidal reef sites in Europe. To the north of the site lies Gorey Harbour, a small port used principally for recreational boating. To the south west of the site lies St Helier, Jersey's capital and principal port with associated facilities and shoreline development.

At low tide various habitats are exposed, including reefs, boulder fields, sandy beaches and shingle banks. On the low tide of a maximum spring tide (with a range of almost 12 metres), in excess of 17.5 km² of wave-cut rock platforms, extensive areas of reef at varying elevations, expansive rocky shores and a complex system of soft substrate gullies are revealed. The area also features a large, shallow, depositing, soft sediment bay.

The flora and fauna are characterised by a number of limit-of-range species at both the northern and southern margins of their distributions, and because of the enormous exchanges of water and variability of substrate, a wide diversity of fish species at varying life history stages are present.

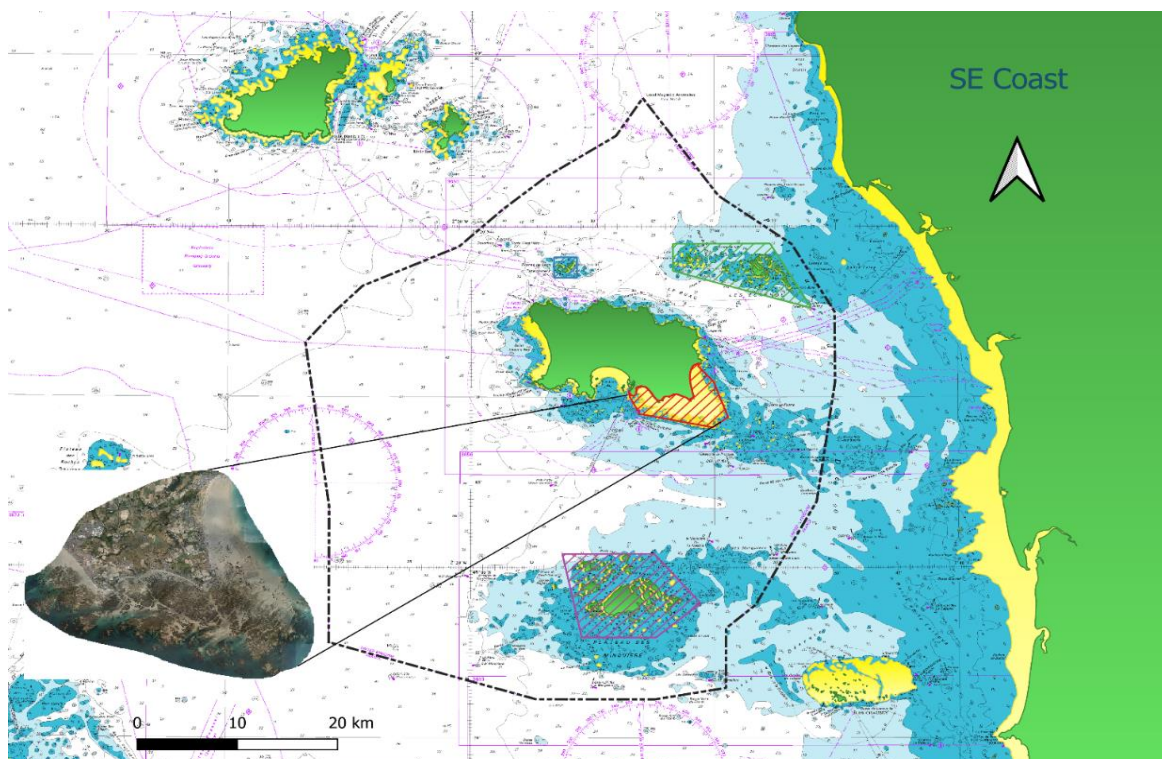


Figure 2.1 Location and extent of the South East Ramsar site

3. Biodiversity within the site

The site is rich in biodiversity. The extensive mudflats and sandflats found in the site are considered of significant value at a European level. *Zostera* seagrass beds found in the embayed shallow waters are of great importance to a wide range of vulnerable species in their early life stages (Jackson, 2003). Adjacent to the Baie de Mont St Michel (a 620km² Ramsar site designated in 1994), the site represents the last vestiges of a former land bridge to continental Europe and plays a major role in the continued ecological functioning of the 'Golfe Normano-Breton' with many species of wintering shorebirds visiting the area during annual migration passages. One of the largest breeding groups of bottlenose dolphins in the British Isles is regularly sighted within the boundaries of the site.

Jersey is located on the convergence of Boreal (cold temperate) and Lusitanian (warm temperate) marine biogeographical regions. Overlap of these regions promotes increased species richness and allows species to exist at the northern or southern limits of their distributions. This enables the site to support some species which are rare or absent from British coasts as they are normally associated with the warmer waters of southern Europe, e.g. Green ormer, as well as species that are normally associated with the colder northern waters of the United Kingdom, e.g. Beadlet anemone. The overlap of the Boreal and Lusitanian biogeographical regions produces many limit-of-range populations. It has been hypothesised that such limit-of-range populations contain genetic characteristics that have arisen through adaptation to local, more extreme environmental conditions than core populations. The Golfe Normano-Breton experiences huge movements of water diurnally with a relatively closed anticlockwise current around Jersey. This factor, when combined with the warming influence of the Gulf Stream and the physical characteristic of the site, assists in enhancing the local recruitment and subsequent offshore migration of many animals that have planktonic, early life stages, especially commercially important Crustacea (eg. crabs and lobsters).

The large areas of rocky shore are important to many species, providing shelter, protection and food for both larval and adult stages. Similarly, the rich infaunal communities of the sand and mudflats are important for their range of mollusc and worm species. These areas are important nurseries for a wide variety of organisms. *Zostera* beds and wide, shallow gullies dividing the rocky platforms also provide critical habitat for many other forms and stages of life, as do the extensive and diverse algal communities found within the site. The extensive areas of shallow water and huge number of intertidal pools found within the site provide habitat for many species of fish. To date 107 species of fish have been recorded from the site and adjacent waters. The enormous water exchanges and consequent strong tidal streams combined with high and low energy wave conditions and substrate variability mean a wide diversity of species and life history stages are present. The biogeographic location of the site allied with the surrounding oceanographic circulation and physical features serve to enhance species variety and abundance. The site contributes much to the continued viability of the Golfe Normano Breton ecosystem, which undoubtedly plays a major role in the functioning of English Channel fisheries and biodiversity. On the south coast, several headlands of varying elevation extend into the residual inshore anticlockwise current, creating sheltered areas on their leeward side. Here, recruitment of planktonic larvae onto extensive areas of rocky shore and water-filled soft sediment gullies occurs. Many species of fish take advantage of elevated summer water temperatures to feed and grow on the rich food supply in these fertile, shallow waters before making an Autumn migration to spawn in offshore waters. Conversely, other species are absent in summer but present in winter for similar reasons. A range of small fish species spend their entire life within the site. Adjacent to the site is a sandbank known as the Banc du Chateau where large rafts of seabirds and bottlenose dolphins often feed on a plentiful supply of Sand eels and other pelagic fish.

Despite its small size, Jersey plays an important role with its wide variety of habitats critical to migratory birds. It provides an important stop-over for our winter and summer visitors as well as essential habitats for critically endangered species. There are a number of important locations for birds on the southeast coast, such as the rocks at Le Hocq. At high tide a wide variety of roosting shorebirds and waders can be found.

Roosting birds include Great black-backed gull, Lesser blacked-backed gull, Herring gull, Common gull, Sandwich tern, Black-headed gulls and now more commonly Mediterranean gulls. Wading birds include Grey heron, Little egret, Curlew, Bar-tailed godwit, Redshank, Grey plover, Turnstone, Sanderling and Dunlin. Dark-bellied brent geese, Red-breasted merganser, Shag and Cormorant can also be seen feeding in this area. Oystercatcher and Shag regularly breed out at Icho Tower. Both Dark-bellied brent geese from Siberia and Pale-bellied brent geese from Northern Canada and Greenland are famous for their annual migration from their summer breeding grounds in the arctic tundra to their winter-feeding grounds in northern Europe. Jersey's rich shores and extensive inter-tidal zones provide ideal shelter and foraging grounds for this small species from mid-September to mid-March.

A full and detailed account of all animals, plants and ecological communities whose presence relates to the international importance of this site can be found on the Ramsar Information Sheet (Ramsar (2024) *Ramsar Information Sheet: Les Écréhous and Les Dirouilles Reefs, Jersey*. Available at: <https://rsis.ramsar.org/ris/1043>

4. Strategic aims in the context of Ramsar

The strategic aims are designed to meet the Ramsar obligations set out in Section 1.7 of the Jersey Ramsar Management Framework.

The main strategic aims for this 5-year cycle for the Jersey Ramsar Management Authority are:

Strategic aim 1: to monitor and improve the ecological health of the four Ramsar sites

Strategic aim 2: to support and encourage Marine Resources in the delivery of the recommendations set out in the Jersey Marine Spatial Plan, in so far as those recommendations are relevant and deliver positive outcome for the Ramsar sites. The Jersey Marine Spatial Plan is a once in a generation piece of policy being delivered by the Marine Resources Team within Natural Environment and will bring significant benefits in terms of site protection to the Marine Environment, and very specifically to the Ramsar sites [Jersey Marine Spatial Plan – Priorities and Actions Plan \(gov.je\)](#)

Strategic aim 3: to encourage research, education and data exchange both within Jersey and the other Channel Islands relevant to Ramsar sites and their management.

5. Management objectives

To meet our Ramsar obligations, the following specific management objectives and actions have been set for this site, which will give direction to the management of the four sites and inform the annual action plans.

The management objectives for all four of Jersey's Ramsar sites will be the same at the outset but it is envisaged that, as the monitoring programme develops, and as more data become available, tailored management within each site will be refined over time.

Strategic aim 1 – to monitor and improve the ecological health of the four Ramsar sites

Management objectives to meet this strategic aim:

- **Objective 1** - to conduct a threat/risk assessment of each site through stakeholder engagement with the Jersey Ramsar Advisory Group (JRAG). See section 6 for an overview of the risk assessment framework.
- **Objective 2** - to use the status outcomes of the assessment to establish the monitoring priorities for the sites.
- **Objective 3** - to baseline and maintain datasets relating to the biodiversity of the Ramsar site, in accordance with scientifically accepted best practice.
- **Objective 4** - to work in partnership with NGOs, professional bodies and organisations where they can assist in supporting or delivering monitoring activities to a scientifically accepted standard.
- **Objective 5** - to produce a short annual report on the monitoring progress each year for 5 years to be delivered at the end of March in the following year. The report at the end of year 5 (March 2030) will be more in depth and comment on the ecological condition of the site, with a discussion topic around the limits of acceptable change and potential for reviewing tolerance limits in the future.

It is important to note that the monitoring programme for each site is tailored according to the site-specific risks, as identified during the stakeholder workshops held as a part of preparing the Management Plans.

Strategic aim 2 - to support and encourage Marine Resources in the delivery of the recommendations set out in the Jersey Marine Spatial Plan, in so far as those recommendations that are relevant and deliver positive outcome for the Ramsar sites

Management objectives to meet this strategic aim:

- **Objective 1** - to facilitate the implementation of policy recommendations from the Marine Spatial Plan with respect to the Ramsar sites

Strategic aim 3 - to encourage research, education and data exchange both within Jersey and the other Channel Islands relevant to Ramsar sites and their management

Management objectives to meet this strategic aim:

- **Objective 1** - to improve public knowledge about Ramsar site designation, facilitating the positive management and wise use of the Ramsar sites.
- **Objective 2** - to encourage information sharing between user groups of the sites.
- **Objective 3** - to promote knowledge-sharing and scientific best practice for monitoring activities between the Channel Islands Ramsar stakeholder groups, holding quarterly meetings where possible.
- **Objective 4** - to promote Ramsar research topics for students locally, through appropriate channels such as the Jersey Community Foundation.
- **Objective 5** - to encourage community involvement in data collection, through data collection and the use of citizen science applications.
- **Objective 6** - to develop a Channel Islands Ramsar network, and thus work with other site managers to unify the approach to the management of the Ramsar sites.

6. Risk Assessment framework

A risk-based approach to management is a beneficial tool to apply to Ramsar sites because it enables managers to identify and prioritise the most significant risks and threats to the site's ecological character and functions. It involves assessing the likelihood and potential impact of these threats and conflicts and helps to determine which are the most significant. By prioritising the most significant risks and threats, it ensures that resources are used efficiently and that the most pressing issues are identified, monitored, understood and addressed first.

The risk assessment matrix (see Matrix 6.1) formed the basis of discussion during a series of JRAG stakeholder engagement workshops in 2023, where each of the Ramsar sites main conflicts and threats were assessed and scored accordingly by the membership of JRAG. The outcome of the risk assessments can be found in Appendix 1.

The risk assessments were approved by JRAG in January 2024.

| | | IMPACT/SEVERITY | | | | | |
|--|---|-----------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| LIKELIHOOD | | Not relevant | Insignificant | Minor | Moderate | Major | Catastrophic |
| E Very Likely/ Almost Certain | Could happen or has happened in 1 month | NO IMPACT | 1E RMA | 2E GoJ NE | 3E UK | 4E Ramsar | 5E Ramsar |
| D Likely | Could happen or has happened between 1 & 6 months | NO IMPACT | 1D RMA | 2D GoJ NE | 3D UK | 4D Ramsar | 5D Ramsar |
| C Possible | Could happen or has happened between 6 months & 1yr | NO IMPACT | 1C RMA | 2C GoJ NE | 3C UK | 4C UK | 5C Ramsar |
| B Unlikely | Could happen or has happened between 1yr & 10yrs | NO IMPACT | 1B RMA | 2B RMA | 3B GoJ NE | 4B UK | 5B UK |
| A Rare | Could happen or has happened beyond 10yrs | NO IMPACT | 1A RMA | 2A RMA | 3A RMA | 4A GoJ NE | 5A UK |

| Ref | Significance | Description |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| 1A,2A,3A, 1B,2B 1C,1D,1E | Accept | The risk is acceptable, RMA sign off |
| 2C,2D,2E 3B,4A | Tolerable | Consideration should be given to further reducing the risk. If the risk remains AMBER, it may be accepted by the GoJ Natural Environment Department. |
| 3C,3D,3E 4B,4C,5A,5B | Undesirable | The risk is high and immediate action may be required. Further control measures to reduce the likelihood/severity of the risk should be introduced. If the risk remains RED, it may only be accepted following a review and approval by UK. |
| 4D,4E 5C,5D,5E | Highly Undesirable | The risk is high and immediate action or cessation of the activity may be required. Further control measures to reduce the likelihood/severity of the risk should be introduced. If the risk remains PURPLE, it may only be accepted following a review and approval by Ramsar Secretariat. |

Matrix 6.1. A risk assessment framework for assessing risk or threat levels within the Ramsar sites.

7. Monitoring

The Jersey Ramsar Management Authority will maintain an up-to-date monitoring schedule, detailing the monitoring being undertaken, the frequency, who is completing the monitoring and who is responsible for reporting on that activity. The document is a living and dynamic document and will be updated as and when appropriate.

The monitoring programme consists of:

- monitoring that routinely occurs within the Government of Jersey's Natural Environment department through business as usual.
- additional monitoring activities that have been recommended or identified as necessary and relate specifically to Ramsar e.g. time lapse cameras at the Écréhous.
- additional monitoring in partnership with NGOs, professional bodies and organisations.
- monitoring that is conducted by other professional bodies but where we have access to the data set or reporting.

JRAG can request an up-to-date monitoring schedule at any time.

8. Resourcing

The Government of Jersey will ensure sufficient resource to meet the management objectives on an ongoing basis.

9. Annual report production

An interim verbal mid-year report will be given to JRAG, with a written report annually. The written report will highlight any issues that have arisen during the year and will provide any recommendations for the following year. The recommendations will form the basis of an annual action plan which will be appended to the annual report.

10. Record of Review and adaptive management

It might be necessary to update the Ramsar Management Plans from time to time. Wetlands are dynamic ecosystems that can undergo significant changes over time due to natural processes, climate change, and human activities. A five-year review cycle allows managers to adapt strategies to these changes and ensure that management practices remain effective, but we may update the management plans on a more regular basis to ensure the plans stay relevant and responsive to each site's current ecological needs.

Any updates will be recorded in the below table.

| Review Date | Reason for Review (Incident, Annual) | Risk reviewed / Comments Comments | Reviewers |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| 27/08/2024 | DRAFT | First draft available for review | Natural Environment |
| 27/08/2024 | DRAFT | Second draft available for review | Natural Environment |
| 31/10/2024 | DRAFT | Draft available for final review by JRAG | Natural Environment |
| 04/11/2024 | Approval | JRAG Executive committee (on behalf of JRAG) provide approval for document | JRAG |
| 18/12/2024 | Approval | Document approved and signed | Minister for the Environment |

Appendix 1 – Risk assessment outcomes

The following risk matrix was developed during a series of workshops conducted by the JRMA (now JRAG) in 2023. The risk ratings reflect consensus reached among approximately 20–25 stakeholders. While every effort was made to achieve balanced and representative outcomes, the agreed ratings may involve compromises and are inherently subjective. Users should consider these factors when interpreting the matrix and apply their professional judgement when using it as a decision-making tool.

Risk Assessment outcome

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Name of Assessor(s): | Natural Environment, Government of Jersey |
| Approved By: | Ramsar Management Authority (now JRAG) |
| Location: | South East Coast |
| Activity: | Ramsar Conservation, Wise Use |
| Review Date: | Annually or following an incident, complaint or change in legislation |
| Workshop Date: | 24th October 2023 |
| RMA Attendees: | Refer to minutes published gov.je |

| Threats | Inherent Risk Rating | Current mitigations (legislation, processes, studies etc) | Current Risk Rating | Potential future mitigations (suggested in workshops) |
|--|----------------------|--|---------------------|--|
| 1. CONFLICT OF USE (Human) | | | | |
| a) Commercial (fisheries) and tourism | 1B | Infrastructure and Environment Planning Application Process Sea Fisheries regulations Licence conditions Recreational fishing regulations Aquatic Resources regulations Food and Environmental Protection Act (1985) and pebble law Wildlife Law 2021 (+ Areas of Special Protection) Ports of Jersey charter code of conduct General harbour regulations Policing of beaches (parishes) – vehicles and dogs on leads etc Collision Regulations Aquatic Animal Health (Jersey) Reg 2016 | 1A | CI Ramsar website and future collaboration (high priority) Recreational permit scheme (future) Jersey's Marine Spatial Planning (JMSP) 2024 Extension of No Mobile Gear Zone (NMGZ) to Ramsar boundary Requirement for improved information on website for visitors/tourists Commission study to assess tourism on the site – an environmental and societal impact assessment Develop communications strategy Regulations for Moorings outside harbour limits Examination of law governing commercial charter access/process |
| b) Commercial (fisheries) and recreational (fisheries) | 1B | | 1A | |
| c) Recreational (fisheries) and visitors | 1B | | 1A | |
| d) Residents and visitors | 1B | | 1A | |
| e) Residents and commercial (fisheries) | 2B | | 1A | |
| f) Aquaculture and tourism | 0A | | 0A | |
| g) Dog walkers and Commercial (fisheries) | 3D | | 1A | |
| h) Dog walkers and recreational fisheries | 3D | | 1A | |
| i) Dog walkers and visitors | 3D | | 3B | |
| j) Dog walkers and Aquaculture | 2C | | 2B | |
| 2. CONFLICT OF USE (Wildlife) | | | | |
| a) Commercial (fisheries) | 3C | Infrastructure and Environment Planning Application Process Aquatic Resources regulations Sea Fisheries regulations Licence conditions Recreational fishing regulations Food and Environmental Protection Act (1985) and pebble law Wildlife Law (+ ASPs) Ports charter code of conduct General harbour regulations Policing of beaches (parishes) – vehicles and dogs on leads etc Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) (Signage / Codes of Conduct) Customs and immigration regulations WiSe courses | 3C | CI Ramsar website and future CI collaboration (high priority) Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) – delivery 2024 ASP for seals in Wildlife Law Extension of No Mobile Gear Zone (NMGZ) to Ramsar boundary Recreational permit scheme (future) Requirement for improved information on website for visitors/tourists Develop communications strategy Regulations for Moorings outside harbour limits |
| b) Visitors | 3D | | 2D | |
| c) Residents | 3D | | 2B | |
| d) Recreational fishing activity | 4E | | 2D | |
| e) Aquaculture | 3E | | 2D | |
| f) Tourism | 3D | | 2D | |
| g) Dog walkers | 3E | | 3D | |
| 3. INVASIVE SPECIES | | | | |
| | 3C | Wildlife (Jersey) Law 2021 covers invasive species | 3C | Implement marine monitoring plan and hirozon scanning using recent Natural Environment (Biosecurity) reports 1) Non-native marine species in the Channel Islands (2017) 2) Rapid Risk Assessment for Marine Non-native Invasive Species in Channel Islands (2023) 3) Horizon scanning of new non-native species in Guernsey (2022) |
| 4. CLIMATE DRIVEN MARINE CHANGE | | | | |
| a) sea level rise | 4C | Shoreline Management Plan 2020 (feeds into Island Plan) Voluntary Carbon offsetting by site users Ongoing environmental monitoring eg Marine Resources sea surface temperature monitoring Carbon neutral roadmap (2022) | 4C | Jersey's Marine Spatial Plan (JMSP) 2024 Commission study and Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) of climate change on bird nesting sites (reproductive behaviour) Undertake habitat mapping granite/soft sediment (erosion) |
| b) sea temperature rise | 4C | | 4C | |
| c) Storm impact (coastal erosion/ Suspended sediment) | 4C | | 4C | |

| 5. WATER QUALITY | | | | |
|---|----|---|----|---|
| a) Nutrient inputs (runoff and sewage) | 3C | Monitoring toxic algae and biotoxins (Public health) Heavy metal monitoring Agricultural regulations Pollution regulations | 3B | Review of pollution control measures Understanding water movements and tidal flow into the area - impact (commission study) |
| b) Pollution events | 5B | | 5B | |
| 6. KNOWLEDGE LIMITATIONS | | | | |
| a) Carbon stores within sites and their value | 3C | Blue Carbon report (2022) Société Jersiaise ornithology department Sea Search data (JNCC) Seagrass monitoring through aerial imagery | 2C | Expansion of Sea Search data Jersey Marine Spatial Plan (JMSP) delivery 2024 Blue carbon PhD study Continued strandline surveys Continue engaging volunteers/citizen science and outreach campaign Seagrass monitoring Improve signage |
| b) Abundance, distribution, composition, condition of the priority species, species interactions, ecological communities and habitats | 3B | | 2B | |
| c) Sea bird breeding success | 2B | | 2B | |
| d) Understanding use of the site (% composition usage) | 3C | | 2C | |
| 7. COMMERCIAL SHIPPING | | | | |
| | 1D | Vessel Traffic Organisation service Harbour Regulations | 1D | Update lead line surveys to map uncharted rocks (commercial shipping) New bathymetry survey needed Exclusion zones for large vessels Explore research (hydrophones) to understand Study impact of noise pollution on marine life from passing vessels/monitoring |
| 8. NEW RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES | | | | |
| | 3B | Permission required from Parish for any large group activities | 3B | Highlight any new activities at regular JRMA meetings |
| 9. ARCHAEOLOGICAL, GEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL ARTEFACTS (Non biological) | | | | |
| | 4B | No planning application process | 4B | Create inventory and map location of artefacts, bones, geology, shipwrecks, burial sites or other cultural sites/features Fish trap (Iron Age) SE corner of current concession - would not like to see further expansion Establish what can be done to prevent artefacts being removed/disturbed or taken off island (and removed from context) |
| 10. DEVELOPMENT **new** | | | | |
| a) New commercial development | 5B | Infrastructure and Environment Planning Application Process | 5A | Continue to review large projects such as Harbour Master Plan and Coastal Defence Strategy |
| b) New residential development | 3C | | 3C | |
| c) Changes of use (existing) | 5B | | 5A | |
| d) Coastal defence | 3E | | 2E | |
| e) Water course mgmt | 4E | | 4E | |

