

NEWS

3,000 march with Pride

By Ian Heath

iheath@jerseyeveningpost.com

Three times the number expected turn out to first parade

MORE than three times the expected number of marchers turned out for the Channel Islands' first Pride parade this weekend.

Organised by the equality charity Liberate, a sea of marchers sporting rainbow flags, wigs and costumes snaked through the streets from West's Centre to the Weighbridge on Saturday.

Following the march, entertainment went on throughout the day and continued into the evening with bars and clubs in the area putting on specially themed nights.

Shops put rainbow flags in their windows and a rainbow zebra crossing was laid out on the road between Wildfire and the Royal Yacht Hotel for the occasion.

Liberate chairman Christian May said that the turnout for the event was 'absolutely fantastic'.

He said: 'We have had a great response from the community. We were expecting about 1,000 marchers, but I think we got more than 3,000 - I think it's because this event has been so long-awaited.'

'Everyone we speak to - from corporate sponsors to the police, from the Parish of St Helier to retailers, and from community groups to clubs and bars - they all want to be involved and to support the event.'

'It has been an overwhelmingly positive response from the Island and affirms the commitment, led by the States Chamber, to embrace the Island's diversity and ensure equality for all.'

Guests for the event included the Chief Ministers of both Jersey and Guernsey, actress and musician Heather Peace, pop artists Bother, and Shirley Bassey impersonator Paula Randell.

Politicians including St Helier Constable Simon Crowcroft, and Deputies Montfort Tadier, Sam Mézec and Geoff Southern of Re-



Rainbow-clad marchers stream through the streets of St Helier Picture: DAVID FERGUSON (10635120)

form Jersey, all took part in the march. Chief Minister Ian Gorst said he was pleased to welcome the Channel Islands' first

official pride parade and he looked forward to raising the rainbow flag to 'symbolise the diverse community' in Jersey.

He said: 'I support equality in all areas of our community and I am proud that the States Assembly voted unanimously to outlaw

discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation.'

'The next important stage in promoting equality will be the States debate on same-sex marriage, which I will be leading later this month.'



Imaginative costumes made the parade a colourful sight (10635180)

PICTURE VALUATIONS

29 & 30 September
Jersey

APPOINTMENTS AND ENQUIRIES

01534 722441
angela.peel@bonhams.com

Bonhams
La Chasse
La Rue de la Vallee, St Mary
Jersey JE3 3DL



Bonhams

bonhams.com/jersey

What people said



Suzanne 'Spiky' Kirton (30) from St Helier said: 'It's the first ever Jersey Pride and I'm here with my sister, who's also gay, and my friends and it's been a brilliant, brilliant atmosphere. I couldn't have asked for a better day. I didn't think there would be that much support but it's being so good. I've never been to a Pride event before. With holidays and time off work I couldn't really make it to the Manchester and Brighton Pride, so it's nice to be part of the Jersey Pride. I'm so glad that everyone came along and the sun is shining and there's loads of rainbows around. I'm going to be dancing and singing along today - there's some great bands from Jersey and the UK on.'



Jonathan Beaty (52) from St Helier said: 'I never ever thought I would see this in Jersey - walking along King Street I was almost crying, it was so emotional. I grew up here and as a youngster, you kind of think you are the only one. But now anyone who is young can see - they're not the only one. There's massive support from everybody - what's pleased me most is seeing all my straight friends here lending their support.'



James Prouten (40) and Mikus Eglitis (25) from St Helier said: 'The turnout has been amazing - I wasn't expecting this amount of people to turn up at all. It's Jersey's first Pride, so I think it's quite an achievement to get this many people out to celebrate with us. I have been to London Pride and we have both been to the Mardi Gras in Sydney as well. It was fantastic. It's important to have a Pride march to support equality on the Island and to encourage the States to keep up to date with the rest of the world. We are looking forward to a time where gay marriage will be possible on the Island.'