

Charity Victim Support and Witness Service Guernsey celebrates 25 years of growth



PRIDE and grateful smiles filled the Royal Court on Wednesday evening as the independent charity Victim Support and Witness Service Guernsey celebrated its 25th anniversary.

The charity launched in 1998 as Guernsey's first 'Victim Support Scheme' and has since grown both in numbers and in its impact on the community.

Over the last 25 years, the charity has seen notable milestones such as its expansion to include support for witnesses of crime in 2006 and receiving the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2009.



The charity provides free and confidential, emotional support, practical help and information to victims and witnesses of crime, and to their families and friends. Last year, the service supported 422 victims of crime, 453 witnesses in court, with a team of 22 total dedicated volunteers.

Janet Campbell, who has been volunteering since 2007, said: "What a lot of people really need is someone to listen to them.

"People are definitely needing more support now, and we are going to continue to be needed."

In attendance at the event was the Bailiff Sir Richard McMahon, who said the charity "really makes a difference."

"Having a service that helps people become acclimatised to the courtroom, learning what's going to happen, is an important role to play because what we want in the administration of justice is to have the best evidence possible that is available from that particular witness.

"The victims of crime need help from independent people who can provide assistance in an ongoing way from the first contact right through to possibly many years after the incident."

Charity Chairman Peter Harwood delivered a speech at the 25th anniversary event and said: "We have come a long way, from humble beginnings in a room in a private house through a modest office in Vauvert to our present offices in this magnificent building.

"Such a progression owes much to the foresight, dedication and enthusiasm of a great number of people." He praised the countless number of volunteers who, throughout the past 25 years, have generously given their time and efforts to supporting victims and witnesses of crime in the community.

Looking ahead, he added: "We remain committed to advancing and will continue to campaign for the needs of victims of crime within our community."

Mr Harwood said the charity would welcome the final-



isation of a Victim's Code, as well as the implementation of the 'long overdue and much needed' statutory Victim's Compensation Scheme.

Jurat Marilyn King, who held the position of Manager from 2006-2017, said: "More people certainly know about the service now and aren't afraid to come forward and ask for help.

"The team do a brilliant job."