



# Guernsey utilises *Novoville chatbots* to consult with citizens about road safety

## About the States of Guernsey

The States of Guernsey is the Local and National government of the Bailiwick of Guernsey, a British Crown Dependency within the Channel Islands. The island covers an area of 78km<sup>2</sup> and serves a population of over 60k.

One of the government's top priorities is to include residents' needs and aspirations in the shaping of its policies, aiming to keep Guernsey a beautiful, vibrant and safe place to live in. Part of the challenge is that the States of Guernsey offer both local and central government services.

To succeed, it's imperative to get a deep understanding of what the local community thinks about certain issues, and take them into account when drafting legislation, assigning budgets, and developing policy or local plans.

Public consultations are an effective way to give residents a voice and an opportunity to influence decisions. However, traditional methods, such as using the post or face-to-face meetings, are often costly and time-consuming, while participation rates remain low.

Social networking platforms and chat applications is where people connect and have discussions with each other daily. By harnessing the power of such platforms, Novoville helped the States of Guernsey drive citizen participation and reduce costs.

*"The team at Traffic and Highway Services monitors data from various sources to assess road safety, including recorded accident statistics. However, statistics don't tell the whole story. For example, the Police do not attend many of the more minor traffic accidents, so the details of these incidents are not recorded. Similarly, near misses or incidents where a road user (particularly a person walking or cycling) has felt vulnerable are rarely reported, even though experiences like that can have a profound effect on how safe people feel."*

*Deputy Barry Brehaut, President of the Committee for the Environment & Infrastructure, States of Guernsey*

## Executive Summary

By carrying out their consultation using Novoville chatbots, the States of Guernsey achieved the following results compared to traditional consultation methods in 3 weeks:

- 200% more traction
- 80% reduction in cost per answer
- 60% higher re-engagement

## The Challenge

The States of Guernsey wanted to get residents' thoughts on road safety, a concern for everyone on the island. They looked for a way to get as many people as possible to share their views and identify their priorities, while reducing the costs usually associated with this process. In addition, they wanted to get a representative sample of all demographics on the island.

They were particularly interested in the views of vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians, cyclists, children and older generations. Understanding the specific safety issues that affected different groups would help them focus their work to improve safety for all, and offer a range of safer transport options for islanders and visitors alike.

As Deputy Barry Brehaut, President of the Committee for the Environment & Infrastructure, said: "Road safety is the highest priority for the Committee for the Environment & Infrastructure in terms of key transport policy aims and objectives over the next few years. That's why we want to collate public feedback about some of these important road safety issues".



## How Novoville Helped

Novoville chatbots are a powerful consultation tool. These AI-powered conversational interfaces allow local authorities (cities, districts, regions) to reach a wide number of citizens quickly in order to raise awareness or capture their opinions on any local issues – from environmental policy to transport planning. Consultations suddenly feel like a chat with a friend on your favourite app.

The first step is to create, in collaboration with the local authority, the discussion script of the consultation. Photos, videos and sound can be added as required. Consultations are then made available on the Novoville app, most chat applications (e.g. Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp), or a chat-popup on a web page.

Novoville then automatically creates engaging social media campaigns to raise awareness regarding the consultation, gain traction and boost participation rates.

Local authorities have access to real-time conversation analytics, demographics, localisation and qualitative data (e.g. sentiment analysis, tag clouds), which allow them to evaluate their strategies and make better decisions for service delivery. Consultations themselves can be reviewed while on air.

Results can be effortlessly published back to citizens on their preferred medium, increasing re-engagement rates and encouraging further action by residents following the consultation.

The States of Guernsey ran a chatbot consultation for 3 weeks, deployed on Facebook Messenger and a standalone

chat window on their website. Islanders simply clicked on a Facebook banner ad to join the interactive conversation, which took around 3 minutes to complete, giving them a quick and easy way to add their voice to shape the future.

Citizens were able to share their views on road safety anonymously, compare their answers to others', learn about proposed changes, and leave any comments they had on specific issues. In just 3 weeks, the Committee for the Environment & Infrastructure gathered 2,300 responses, achieving 200% more traction compared to traditional consultation methods, at 20% of the cost. Proof of residents' increased re-engagement is that 60% of respondents specifically sought to access the results of the consultation.

More importantly, feedback provided through the consultation was integrated in the States of Guernsey's local policy plan focused around increasing pedestrians, cyclists and drivers' sense of safety on the island. For example, the Committee for the Environment & Infrastructure reviewed the Island's speed limits in densely populated areas.

## Consultation Results

One in two respondents stated that road safety affects how they choose to travel around the island. This was particularly true for respondents aged 26-45 years old (41%).

Motorists felt the safest in Guernsey (64%), both in terms of general perception and with regard to the road infrastructure. However, they believed that creating more cycle paths to keep vehicles and cyclists separate and repairing potholes faster should be a priority in order to improve safety conditions further.

Pedestrians felt mostly safe, however, half of the participants were dissatisfied with existing pedestrian infrastructure. They cited the quality and quantity of pavements as inadequate.

Finally, cyclists were the least satisfied with the island's infrastructure among all respondent groups. Even though 65% of respondents cycled on a regular basis, they perceived potholes, and the relative lack of cycle paths and segregated crossing points as a major issue for cycling safely in Guernsey.

*"We keep a database of specific concerns that people write, phone or email us about, but what we want is a well-informed understanding of the bigger picture when it comes to people's perception of road safety in the island. Novoville is a good tool for obtaining this qualitative data".*

*Deputy Barry Brehaut, President of the Committee for the Environment & Infrastructure, States of Guernsey*

