



GENERAL PURPOSES & ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A COMMITTEE OF THE CHIEF PLEAS OF SARK
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Have you ever thought about standing for election?

Do you feel that views from across the community aren't properly represented at Chief Pleas and that you'd like to take on this role? Do you sometimes think you might make a good Conseiller? Well, now's your chance to put your name forward. Don't moan – just do it! As you probably know the 2014 Election is to take place on the 10th December.

None of us are professional politicians. We're a group of people of different ages, backgrounds and life experiences, many of whom felt extremely nervous and inadequate about standing for election the first time. We're all trying our best to contribute what we can to look after this beautiful Island. The perks? To be honest, none! No, that's not strictly true – it's fascinating and rewarding to be a Conseiller. We're all very aware of the honour it is to be elected. Also, we get to interact with people in a completely different way and build up a great deal of trust with each other.

If you're interested in standing, nomination forms may be collected by calling on the President of Chief Pleas (Returning Officer) or Greffier (Deputy Returning Officer) during their office hours. If you can't make it, ask someone else to collect one for you. **Please note that the latest a completed form can be returned is before noon on Friday 21st November.**

Attached is a leaflet setting out the duties and commitment expected of Conseillers and details of the new Committee arrangements. It also lists the six principles of good governance and seven standards in public life. We all want Sark to be well governed. To quote the Vision for Sark, our aim is:

“To maintain and enhance the well-being and prosperity of a community that upholds the virtues embedded in the Sark way of life while striving to meet international expectations”

Yours sincerely,

The General Purposes & Advisory Committee
14.11.14



INTERESTED IN STANDING FOR ELECTION TO SARK CHIEF PLEAS?

This leaflet is to help you get a better understanding of what the new Committee arrangements mean for you, if you choose to stand, and then get elected.

HOW YOU'LL BE APPOINTED TO COMMITTEES – All Conseillers will have a say in who is appointed to which committee (other than the Policy Development Group where all Conseillers are members). As Chief Pleas works very much on a voluntary basis, and chooses to complement its employees' expertise with input from volunteers and others, it will be important that at the start of the allocation process you set out what expertise and experience you can offer to any committee. Whether you feel you have lots to offer or are not sure what you could do, you'll be able to contribute to committee work by reading the relevant laws, asking questions, seeking inhabitants' views and researching how other jurisdictions handle issues.

WORKING TOGETHER – Whichever committee/s you are a member of, you will be expected to make sure you prepare for each meeting by reading the papers provided and having any questions, queries and input ready to share with your fellow committee members. The purpose of meeting will be to take decisions on issues identified on the agenda and identify any other business you think needs discussion and/or decision within the committee's mandate. The mandate for each committee determines what decisions can and can't be made by that committee.

PROVIDING CHALLENGE – If you've never been a Conseiller before, or worked in similar groups, it's quite easy to choose to stay silent when you are new to the role – this is natural. However every Conseiller is responsible for ensuring they understand what's being considered and this means at the very least asking questions. To ensure any decisions that are made in any committee or in Chief Pleas itself, constructively challenging others' views

and thinking is essential. This will lead to decisions being more robust and relevant to Sark's needs for longer.

YOUR COMMITMENT – All Conseillers have a commitment to attend and contribute to the four Chief Pleas meetings each year, plus any extraordinary Chief Pleas meetings that may be called. In addition to that all Conseillers have a commitment to attend and contribute to the Policy Development Group (PDG) meetings, these will be held once a month, usually in the evening.

Depending on which committee type you are nominated for you can expect –

- Policy & Performance Committee (P&P) meetings once every three weeks
- Finance & Resources Committee (F&R) meetings once every three weeks
- Operational Committees have a meeting about once a month depending on how much there is to do.

If you serve on either P&P or F&R you can't be a member of any other committee. If you serve on Operational Committees you can't be a member of either P&P or F&R, but you are allowed to be and will most probably be a member of more than one Operational Committee. You may also be asked to run public meetings as part of a consultation process, or asked to present information to the public and the media.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT – this is essential if Chief Pleas is to achieve the Vision for Sark:

“To maintain and enhance the well-being and prosperity of a community that upholds the virtues embedded in the Sark way of life while striving to meet international expectations”

The Policy Development Group (PDG) is where policies are identified and prioritised. Policies are broad reaching decisions that would usually include changes to rules, procedures and legislation. Any Conseiller may put an issue forward for discussion at this meeting, and if it is to turn into a policy that gets prioritised it must set out how it contributes to achieving the Vision for Sark, and if not why not. There are a number of tests that will be applied to any issue that is put forward. These tests help Conseillers determine if the issue should be put forward as a policy to Chief Pleas for debate and decision and

what priority it should have. If the issue doesn't get to go to Chief Pleas as a policy priority then the report to Chief Pleas will explain why.

Each issue that is identified as a potential policy is progressed by a Policy Development Team. If you put an issue forward and there's enough interest in developing it into a potential policy for Chief Pleas to debate and vote on, you'll have to set out your case for it clearly to your fellow Conseillers at the Policy Development Group. You can be assisted by any other Conseillers that are willing to help and you will then be known as a Policy Development Team. Some issues Chief Pleas has to address are Bailiwick wide or international in nature.

OPERATIONAL TASKS - If you are serving on operational committees you'll be carrying out tasks that in other jurisdictions a civil servant would do. This is where the voluntary nature of civic duty in Sark comes to the fore. Each operational committee meets when necessary and works within its mandate. Some operational committees work closely with colleagues in Guernsey on Bailiwick wide issues or issues of mutual interest e.g. Fisheries and Public Health.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO NEXT – If you are interesting in standing, nomination forms for the elections may be collected in advance by calling on the President of Chief Pleas (Returning Officer) or Greffier (Deputy Returning Officer) during their published office hours commencing Tuesday 4 November and until before noon on Friday 21 November. Forms of nomination may not be returned until Monday 17 November. Returned forms will be accepted by the President of Chief Pleas between the hours of 1 – 3 pm Monday 17 November to Thursday 20 November and between 9 am and 12 noon on Friday 21 November, alternatively forms may be returned to the Greffier on Tuesday 18 November and Wednesday 19th November between the hours of 2.30 pm and 4 pm. The latest a form can be returned is before noon on Friday 21 November.

WHAT YOU STAND FOR – Chief Pleas will be arranging for the main hall at the Island Hall to be available for all candidates on a weekday evening and a weekday afternoon. A table and chairs will be provided for each candidate around the room so that the public can come and speak with you if they wish. This does not preclude any candidate from conducting any other type of engagement with the community in relation to the election. If you wish you can provide a 500 word summary of what you stand for, to be published with other candidates summaries (in voting form order) on the government website. We'll also make hard copies available by putting up notices in the public boxes letting people know they can get them from the Committee Office. The deadline for the Committee Office receiving these will be notified to you if your nomination is accepted.

AND FINALLY....DECLARATION OF INTERESTS, GOOD GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE - A lot is said about these and it's often quoted in general terms, but what does it actually mean for Conseillers, Chief Pleas, its committees and the decisions they make in governing Sark?

Declaration of Interests Form:

At Michaelmas Chief Pleas 2014 the following proposition was voted through - ***Conseillers shall submit a declaration of interests form to the Greffier on or before the 10th January 2015 and any person being elected as Conseiller after that date shall submit a declaration of interest form on or before, or within two days of being sworn in to the office of Conseiller.***

The six principles of good governance are:

- focusing on the purpose of Chief Pleas and on outcomes for all inhabitants of Sark and any service users
- performing effectively in clearly defined functions and roles on committees, in Chief Pleas this means understanding the constitution, rules of procedure and committee mandates
- promoting values for the whole government and demonstrating good governance through how you behave i.e. declaring an interest
- making informed transparent decisions in Chief Pleas and managing risk (and reputation) i.e. making sure you base your decisions on the available evidence
- developing the capacity and capability of the government to be effective i.e. researching how others deal with the issues we also face
- engaging stakeholders and making accountability real, i.e. conducting consultation and holding public meetings

The Seven standards in public life are:

- **Selflessness** - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends
- **Integrity** - Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties
- **Objectivity** - In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit
- **Accountability** - Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office
- **Openness** - Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands it
- **Honesty** - Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest
- **Leadership** - Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example

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