



## Press Release from the Sark Tourism Committee

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## **Sark is Open for Business**

Visitor numbers to Sark for the 2014 season are up compared to last year and the indications from many accommodation providers and businesses are that enquiries and bookings for next year are also looking very promising. Despite this the Sark Island Hotel Group announced earlier this week that it will not be opening any of its hotels.

Sark's Tourism Committee has yet to be officially notified of this but Committee Chairman Sandra Williams remains optimistic. "Although this is unfortunate, Sark is still able to offer an excellent range of accommodation from top quality bed and breakfasts and self-catering lets, to campsites and two award-winning hotels. We are perplexed about the decision to close their hotels when this season has been so successful. Lots of people here have had a bumper season and I'm thrilled with the positive feedback from a range of businesses on the island. I believe that visitors will still want to come and experience what I can only describe as a taste of heaven. Sark is still very much open for business."

Karen Adams, Sark Visitor Officer, is also delighted with last season's figures. "The combined impact of 'An Island Parish' TV series and the long hot summer resulted in a very busy year for the Sark Visitor Centre, with extra staff employed to deal with brochure requests and visitor enquiries"

Claims of the success of last season are supported by a variety of tourism related businesses. This is what some of them have to say.

*Elizabeth Perree, La Sablonnerie Hotel*

"As last year, I was delighted with the season. It has been a wonderful year. The weather made people want to come and dine in the garden. It has been equally as good as last year, if not better."

*Linda Adams, La Valette Campsite*

"I've certainly had a good season this year on the campsite. The weather was on our side of course, and Folk Festival and Sheep Racing weekends help. This year I've had a lot of one-nighters, who will hopefully come back and stay longer next time."

*David and Hilary Curtis, Clos de Menage Country House (self-catering)*

"We have been happy with the level of bookings for the 2014 season and are feeling very positive for 2015 onwards, as many visitors are planning to return having enjoyed Sark even more than they anticipated."

*Sarah La Trobe Bateman, The Den (self-catering)*

"Our self-catering has had another successful year with our guests booking up for 2015 before they depart. Our regular visitors enjoy Sark's natural beauty, and the island where they can truly relax."

*Sharon Boerenbeker, Island Hall (café, sports facility, community centre & bar)*

"We've had a good season with lots of visitors and the support of many locals which we hope will continue through the winter months. Thanks to the lovely sunshine and settled weather, the season was extended through October and half-term"

*Peter Cunneen, Stable Cottage (self-catering)*

"Once again Stable Cottage has enjoyed another great season having been fully booked from April through to early October. What has been particularly reassuring is our level of repeat bookings which gives us a solid foundation for next year."

*George Guille, boat trips*

"I have had my best season this summer 2014 for many, many years due in part to the excellent weather conditions and the presence of the dolphins which created yet another attraction for my 'Round the Island Boat Trip'. I've had lots of new people as well as regulars who all expressed their pleasure and delight with the peace of Sark."

*Sue Guille, Sue's B&B*

"I have had a very busy season for my Bed and Breakfast and Tea Garden. Many of my guests have said that they wished they had planned to stay longer on Sark as they had found it their favourite Island with the excellent walking on the island's footpaths and lanes ... particularly walking back to their beds at night after a good meal, under the starlit sky."

*Andy Cook, Chairman Sark Shipping Committee*

Passenger numbers on Isle of Sark Shipping Company boats for the 2014 season are almost two thousand higher than for the previous year, from 48,655 to 50,521. (An exact increase of 1,866.)

*Paul Armorgie, Stocks Hotel*

"Stocks Hotel has experienced a record-breaking year. We have enjoyed an increase of over 40% for our accommodation and demand for our 2 red rosette fine dining room has been exceptional. In addition our popular poolside bistro & bar remained open and busy for much longer and similarly our horses and carriages have been busier than ever throughout 2014. Our reservations for 2015 are currently 25% ahead of this time last year and we have seen a huge surge in the demand for weddings, parties, events and group bookings."

ENDS

*For more information please contact Mrs Sandra Williams [sandra.williams@gov.sark.gg](mailto:sandra.williams@gov.sark.gg)  
Tel: 07781 412043 (not available between 12 pm and 2 pm)*