

Conseillers Designate - What They Stand For

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Below is a statement provided by each Conseiller Designate about what they stand for.
Their statements appear in voting form order, i.e. alphabetically.

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(Tuesday – Thursday, 2.30pm – 4.30pm)

BAKER: Diane

Years ago I realised there were matters on Sark which I would have preferred were different, but I chose to live here so accept it. I wouldn't try to change things. We have moved on, some changes I didn't want some I did. So looking forward I ask, is change such a bad thing? It depends on what it is, do the majority want it, and is it good for the community. Land reform is I believe has to be looked into, done in the right manner and attitude; it could be good for Sark. It will be good for families who have a lease and want to own their piece of land to pass on. A Tenement is out of the reach of many Sark residents so Land Reform could mean your own little piece of Sark.

Medical costs are enormous, Sark people look after themselves (generally), look at the spiralling costs in Guernsey and the UK; they cannot afford to continue as they are, so what could Sark do? We cannot afford our own system, 600 people cannot pay in sufficient money to afford health or social care for all. It is fine to shout about what we should do, but do you really want to pay the costs associated with this? Taking responsibility for your family isn't easy but then you cannot blame anyone else when things go wrong.

Shipping, it is expensive to go to Guernsey but it is what it costs. Why shouldn't we pay the true cost? Who do you think should pay, the tax payer? The problems Sark shipping has with finance are costs that have been inherited, in another few years and I believe they will debt free. I would like to see the cost of cargo come down, we suffer with the high amount we pay to ship goods to Guernsey, but it is the true cost for users not a taxpayer subsidised cost. Where else would you find people to work in a company in difficulty without pay for some considerable time and do a great job? Sark residents are good at working for the benefit of all.

Sark has always been a seasonal island, working and saving hard in summer to get through the winter; it is no different today to what was in the 1970's. We struggled as a young family. Families in Guernsey and the UK are struggling, Sark is no different, but we do not have the services to fall back on when times are hard; think carefully, is that what you want, because we, and that includes you, are going to have to finance that.

The education of Sark children comes out of the tax pot, isn't that a good return for a young family, good housekeeping says we can't have things we can't afford so just as you look at your own housekeeping so we must look at Sark's purse. If something sounds too good to be true, surely it is.

BAKER: Edric

I am offering myself to the electorate of Sark for another term as Conseiller of Chief Pleas.

I will, if elected continue working to the best of my ability for the community of Sark its traditions and customs, I will respect the authority of The Reform (Sark) Law 2008 as supported by The Supreme Court of the U.K. in December 2009 In its decision the Court states: "*The electorate of Sark consists of fewer than 500 voters, who choose 28 elected Conseillers by a process of casting 28 votes each and electing the 28 candidates with the largest number of votes. There is therefore one Conseiller for every 17-18 persons in the electorate. It is not easy to envisage ...conditions which are more likely to ensure the expression of the opinion of the people in the choice of the legislature*"

At the moment I serve on G.P.& A., Douzaine, and D.C.C. committees, according to the Belinda Crowe report it would appear that I spent over 700 hours in committee meetings in 2011. I simply say that to illustrate that I am not afraid of hard work, commitment, and the willingness to give freely of my time for the community of Sark.

I am looking forward to the workings of the new committee structure that will be introduced in 2015, and if elected I will have to demonstrate to my fellow Conseillers which committees I am most suited and qualified to serve on.

I believe Sark will have to work through a period of hardship in the next few years, however if we help each other, and particularly those in desperate need, (and this community is good at that) we will get through. Had we had employment /work permits laws adopted several years ago, todays problems might have been avoided, or lessened, but as so often happens other issues take priority Sark perception survey" and "A Vision for Sark" are examples of work for the new Chief Pleas

My family and I have over many years invested our lifetime earnings into property, well before Sark introduced a property based tax, we therefor pay a large amount of tax, and have done so for many years, we realise how difficult it is to find the money when the tax bill arrives The way the tax is spent is arrived at in a democratic way by Chief Pleas and after all it is for the benefit of the whole Island.

I love this Island, and feel passionate about some issues

I support the policy of preserving the coastline of Sark in its natural state.

I

am against the use of good arable land to grow vines.

I am also against the introduction of a commercial helicopter service to and from Sark.

BURGESS: Paul David Mitchell

BYRNE: Peter Gabriel Paul

My name is Peter Byrne and I have lived and worked on Sark for almost ten years. In the last three years I have been working as one of Sark's Harbourmasters for 40% of my time and 60% as a songwriter and builder. I have a small recording studio and a bed and breakfast at home.

In the last year I have been very proud to serve Sark as a Conseiller both as a member of the Douzaine and as a member of the emergency services. Due to my position as Harbourmaster I am also an ex-officio at Harbours and pilotage meetings. I hold great hopes for Sark and can see the Sark community lasting long into the future, but only if we keep things simple. I believe that Sark can continue to thrive as the relaxing, timeless place which has proved its charm for our visitors time and time again. Sark is a very special place for me and I feel very passionately about protecting it from the wrong kind of development. I think change and adapting for the future can be a good thing but we must not kill Sark in the process. Sark is not for one or two people to change but for the community to change or preserve. I have every faith in the new system of Government and believe it will allow Sark to be the most democratic place on earth. It will allow every Conseiller to have a direct input into all the major issues that face Sark.

I have two small children aged 8 and 6 to care for and feel very strongly that all the children on Sark receive a good education. I have very much enjoyed my time as Conseiller as it has given me a wonderful insight into how Sark works. All the Conseillers give their time for free and some give over and above what they signed up for. This helps me to believe that Sark is a place with a very strong community, and a place where neighbours care and look after each other, sadly lost in bigger cities and towns across the UK.

We have had many tests in the last 7 years, and in my view we have come through them stronger than ever.

Lastly I stand for a peaceful and strong Sark. It is a paradise and lets work hard to keep it that way.

COURTNEY: Elsie Grace

My name is Elsie Courtney, nee Guille, my family have been here since 1565, deep roots.

My reasons for standing for Chief Pleas are.

I am a Sark person and love my Island, and over the years I have seen elderly people having to leave their homes and their beloved Island to go to a nursing home in Guernsey, where they know the only way they are coming back is in a coffin, that to me has always been horrendous.

When I was Procureur De Pauvre, I realised that this was something that could be addressed, so I organised a petition to see if the people wanted this, I had over 200 signatures, so considering the population, this was an excellent result, but so far nothing has happened and the elderly are still being sent to Guernsey.

At the moment we don't have many, but that's not to say we won't have more in the future.

So I would like to see something being seriously looked at, as we now have a very good carer system in place, they are amazing, if we could incorporate all these things together, we could have a great system for the elderly and ill.

I am also interested in our Emergency Services, I think they do the most amazing job, and will turn their hands to anything, cliff hanging in some cases.

Being in the Tourist industry, I would like to see more B&Bs, Guest houses, as I believe this is more along the lines that people want, we already have two very good Hotels, Stocks Hotel and La Sablonnerie Hotel, so it would be advantageous to encourage more people to maybe add a room on to their existing house, or convert a room/s if they have any spare, maybe children have left home or they just need a little extra income, and it would also be good for the economy of the Island.

People here on Sark are always willing to try something new, but don't always have the funds to do it, so maybe a scheme could be put in place whereby they maybe able to borrow or loan from the Island, just a thought, may not be viable but worth looking into.

I would also like to see more land available to people who have either horses, cows or sheep, if no land is forthcoming, all of these things will disappear, and that would be very sad, there is nothing nicer than having your own local meat or milk/cream etc:

What a great shame if this should happen.

GOLDS: Colin Matthew

i Colin Matthew golds put my name down for election because i care for this island a great deal.

i first stepped on this beautiful island for a day trip about twenty years ago and immediately fell in love.

been here working now for over 14 years, i don't want to change the island but help to improve how we all live and work here.

i think i can do this with help from the committees that i will be on .

i am very passionate about what i do and will try my hardest to get things right.

as a member of chief pleas i will be happy to nurture the islands running so it will be a place in which we all love residents and visitors alike.

we all need tourism if we stop tourism the island will become a rich playground.

i know that all members that are in chief pleas do not want that to happen.

MAITLAND: Charles Noel Donald**MOLONEY: Nicolas John Patrick**

NIGHTINGALE: Christopher Robert

My lifelong involvement in agriculture makes it I suppose my specialist subject and I will do all I can to find a way forward because it is really struggling at the moment and there are no obvious answers. We are facing more restrictions from Guernsey who do not seem to understand how small our market is and (any) investment in any industry requires confidence, a commodity in very short supply. Also we face high freight costs in and out of the island.

I would like to see mature trees and banks protected so they are only felled because of age or disease and only the roadside banks are protected now. I cannot support Heritage as we have a working island and I think that it would turn us into little more than a theme park with many restrictions.

Should we tax empty houses?

I think that would bring down rents which would help young families.

Education

4 teachers and 3 part-time assistants for just over 30 pupils. Surely we could offer free full time education to children who take GCSE's as some of the children who stay on are from parents who are less well off and struggle to find what they need to fund what is a basic right anywhere else.

Sark Shipping should only run boats that pay and those sailings that regularly do not pay should be dropped. We live on an island so that is how it has to be and with 3 of the 4 boats over 30 years old surely we need to get into a better position financially otherwise we will have to find money for a replacement as well as subsidizing the day to day running of the company.

Land reform – can we afford to wait? As it seems to me it is holding almost everything up. The laws need updating and we must move soon but slowly and carefully as people who have built houses on leased land should be entitled to the value of the house at the end of the lease. The current law was made for portable houses that were moved on at the end of the lease.

As far as Sark's future is concerned everybody says something needs to be done. We all know that. It is ideas that we need.

NORWICH: Elizabeth Jane

I first visited Sark some twenty years ago and have lived here for seven. I am one of the many visitors that fell in love with the beauty of Sark in all its seasons and got hooked.

Having grown up in a small rural community, very similar in size to Sark, I started work on my parent's small-holding at an early age which gave me practical experience in small scale agriculture, and an understanding of the fickle nature of the market place, as well as the hard work and long hours it takes to make an enterprise a success.

I qualified as a Chartered Physiotherapist and have over thirty years' experience in both the NHS and private sectors. My particular areas of interest are in the care of the elderly, rehabilitation in the community and pain relief.

I volunteered to stand for Chief Pleas because I care about Sark, its people, its environment, its history and because I was brought up in an environment where public service matters and everyone was expected to play their part.

Sark cannot change the seasons, the moods of the sea and the economic pressure of the outside world. Likewise we cannot fund education for all ages, let alone a social welfare and pensions system like the UK. To pay for such services would require everyone to pay exorbitantly higher taxes. Joining Guernsey will not give us instant cheaper healthcare and education, we would all have to pay for it. We have to make the very best of what we have, doing the work ourselves, whilst showing the outside world that we are meeting the standards expected of a small government.

I am prepared to take part in undertaking that work, to help implement the changes that the people of Sark said they wanted in the 'Vision for Sark'. Amongst many of those aspirations and plans in that document, I want to see more use of green energy, diversifying our main energy source. I do not think dependency on diesel alone is a sensible option. I want to see faster dependable broadband to support on-line businesses. I want to support a variety of new businesses that fit the skill mix we have. I believe we should support our traditional agriculture, especially our dairy, sheep and vegetables. I would like to support the exporting of Sark produce to Guernsey, something that seems to have reduced in recent years.

I will try to listen and to explain to Sark residents what is happening, whilst ensuring that those things that make Sark special are protected and passed on to future generations.

NORWICH: Roger Peter

Sark has a history of independence and self-reliance and despite its diminutive size has to provide services and deal with obligations which are disproportionate to its size and its economy.

Sark cannot fulfil its obligations without volunteers who will stand as Conseillers and hence my interest. I can offer my experience in medicine and business including renewable energy to any area of the Sark Government which would find those skills useful.

Sark is a beautiful place to live in and to visit, but has challenges from within and from outside the island, including the cost of fuel on world markets which makes every item imported to the island expensive, as it does travelling to and from the island. Weather can affect tourism levels significantly and the tiny island population has disproportionate costs of living within, and complying with, rules, laws and expectations of our neighbours, such as Guernsey, the UK and Europe. Not least is the challenge of the world economic crisis since 2008, the effects of which Sark has not, and cannot be, immune.

Internal challenges include excessive electricity prices which stunt business and adversely affect household budgets, issues concerning the disposal of waste and not least the appetite of some to present to the world a distorted, economically damaging and dark vision of Sark, as a socially and financially bankrupt society.

I will serve the island in whatever capacity I can. I have a particular interest trying to help to give Sark a clean, dependable, independent and affordable power supply. I am strongly against unnecessary expenditure in areas such as border control and external policing and any pretence that a full service welfare society is possible based on a permanent population of 550-600 people.

I have a number of ideas regarding businesses which can create jobs and wealth within the island. I believe that Sark's tourism has a strong place in a mixed economy, but due to its weather and geographical position it can never compete with other places as a year round tourist destination of any size. Like other small islands it needs to diversify as best it can and needs to remain realistic about what it can and cannot do. Sark should be seen as being very firmly open for business, but it should also retain its charm and the very essence of why it is such a popular Spring and Summer tourist destination. Sark is unique and should maintain 'light touch' governance to ensure that it remains so and so that its inhabitants can retain the independence they have had for most of its 450 year history.

PLUMMER: Helen Mildred

My name is Helen Mildred Plummer. I am Sark born.

I served as a Deputy before being elected a Conseiller in 2008 and have continued to be one ever since.

I currently sit as Chairman of the Emergency Services Committee and the Sark Influenza (Human) Pandemic Committee (SIPaC), am Deputy Chairman of the Sea Fisheries Committee and a member of the Medical Committee.

I am looking forward to continue serving the Island and am available to listen to any concerns Islanders may have.

RAYMOND: William George

My first trip to Sark was in 1966, when I met Annabel my wife. We moved to Sark permanently in 2002.

After our move I was involved in the process of Chief Pleas and I was part of the team that designed the present personal tax system (after giving Chief Pleas a multiple choice of alternative methods), and also the Property Transfer Tax regime.

Sark is unequalled in the western world, and has a huge appeal to its residents and also to the returning visitors, all of whom love its unique environment. Chief Pleas and the residents need to join together to preserve the uniqueness. However, that said, there are areas where changes can be made which will in no way prejudice this, but which will enable the Island to prosper and attract new residents, some commerce and thereby employment.

In 1565 the Fief was granted to Helier de Carteret. He subdivided the island into Tenements in order to enable a resident garrison to be established. As the original tenements became mortgaged and subdivided by sale so the integrity of the garrison was put at risk. In 1611 this practice was prohibited. The garrison is no longer an issue and so the restrictions of 1611 can now be safely removed, in fact the prohibition on mortgaging has already been repealed and the removal of the prohibition on division should enable more people to acquire a long-term interest in their homes and properties. This is one area where Sark differs from other jurisdictions, and it is to Sark's disadvantage.

Unlike many other Governments Sark has a cash surplus, and this needs to be preserved.

Much is spoken about the need for Chief Pleas to stimulate the economy. In my view Chief Pleas can only do so much as individuals are the best catalyst for business, Chief Pleas can only act as a facilitator to produce an environment which is attractive to commercial interests. The tax revenues of Sark are derived primarily from property ownership, there is no tax on incomes or profits of businesses. This of itself produces no incentive for Chief Pleas to lay out funds to stimulate business as there is no payback. Creating a more attractive property ownership environment would be beneficial, and the absence of income and profits taxes provide a further incentive to entrepreneurs. I have spent much of my working life with Income Taxes, and I do not favour introducing them to Sark.

Whilst moving towards any form of change we have to take real care of what is already here and what we, and our visitors, value so much. In addition we need to have a robust planning system, we need to have a fair system of taxation, we have to have environmental controls to preserve the appearance of the island, we need to have a compassionate support for those who fall on hard times, we need to organise 'extra care' on an Island basis, and we need more commerce.

ROLFE: Arthur James

I retired in 2014 after spending 45 years as a consultant in the Oil Industry during which I worked as a senior member of a number of project management teams worldwide. Retirement now allows me the time required to spend as a Conseiller in Chief Pleas. I am honoured to serve the people of Sark in this way but regret that, because the number of candidates matched the number of vacancies, the electors of Sark have not had a proper election.

I have previous experience of public duty having served between 1968 and 1986 as a councillor on the London Borough of Greenwich, the last seven years as Leader of the Conservative Group. I was also a member of the Greater London Council between 1980 and 1986 during which time I sat on the finance, arts, planning and transport committees. I contested the Greenwich constituency in the 1983 General Election as the official Conservative Candidate and lost by a narrow margin.

My main interest in Chief Pleas will be finance. Over a two year period taxes will have increased by 13% and 11%. A compound increase of over 25% over the two year period is not acceptable particularly at a time of international financial crisis which is correctly being met elsewhere by fiscal constraint.

As I see it, the problem with the finance function of the current Finance and Commerce Committee is that, whilst it raises the income required by the spending committees, it does not seem to have effective powers to exercise control over expenditure. This is not a criticism of the members of that committee who are exercising the powers vested in them. However, I will endeavour to ensure that, in future, the new Finance and Resources Committee will take a lead in determining an affordable overall level of expenditure for Sark and indicate to each individual spending committee what expenditure is available to them, and do it in plenty of time before they embark on their budgetary process.

It has always puzzled me why Sark Chief Pleas has more standing committees for its 550 residents than the Greater London Council had for 7million. I do not believe the new committee structure will prove effective and I will urge that we scale down the number of committees to a more efficient number. Some of the committees should be sub-committees of the main committees only constituted on an ad-hoc basis when required. In time, this should lead to fewer Conseillers required to run our affairs.

Finally, when I was first elected as a borough councillor in 1968, members of the public were allowed to attend meetings for matters of public interest, the exceptions being mostly matters of a personal or commercially sensitive nature. I strongly believe in transparency in the way we are governed and will strive to open our democracy to public scrutiny.

TAYLOR: Stephen Treweek

I have known Sark for most of my life, as a child on family holidays and at seventeen living here for three years. After twenty five years living in England I returned to Sark nine years ago and have been fishing for a living for the past five.

In England I worked mainly for the National Health Service in Strategic and Organisational Management, spending five years as a Manager in General Practice.

I believe passionately in Sark and would be honoured to continue to serve on Chief Pleas. I would like to continue to develop a more strategic approach aimed at promoting a united community with a vibrant economy, whilst maintaining the essence of Sark and what it represents.

If you wish to discuss my views my number is 07781 128623.

VENTRESS: Anthony Granville

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