

ISLAND OF SARK

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING of the CHIEF PLEAS to be held on
WEDNESDAY 17th MAY 2017 at 7.00 PM in the ASSEMBLY ROOM.

AGENDA

1. To CONSIDER a Report with Proposition from the POLICY & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE entitled “**Future Shape of Chief Pleas**” (copy enclosed).

26th April 2017

Arthur Rolfe
Speaker of Chief Pleas

NOTES:

This Meeting has been called in accordance with Rule of Procedure 1 (1) (c).

Anyone wishing to see any of the Reports and Supporting Papers may do so at the Committee Offices, Monday – Thursday, between 2.30pm and 5.00pm and at other times when the offices are open; copies may be obtained from the Committee Office. The Agenda, Reports and Supporting Papers may also be seen on the Sark Government Website at www.sark.gov.gg

POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE
Report with proposition to Extraordinary Chief Pleas, 17th May 2017

FUTURE SHAPE OF CHIEF PLEAS

Chief Pleas, and indeed much of Sark has been concerned for some time about how many people stand and serve in Chief Pleas. People will have reasons for standing and not standing, it is a matter of personal choice.

Chief Pleas wants contested elections. Contested elections are just one of the indicators of a healthy democracy. Currently all Conseillers of Chief Pleas are elected unopposed. Members of Chief Pleas are in this position because others did not stand for their own reasons. All Conseillers rightly want contested elections in December 2018.

People of Sark serve their community in many ways. Chief Pleas is demonstrably the foremost part of that service. As many others have said elsewhere it's what you do in a small community, you take part, you do what you can and you support others to do what you cannot.

In 2008 Sark voted to change from its tradition of 450 years of Feudal Government to a fully democratically elected assembly. Chief Pleas has come a long way in the almost nine years since, but it could only be a best guess then as to how many would serve, how many had the time, how many could afford the time and what abilities and skills we had available to change from Feudal to Democratic.

Sark is not alone, just as in other jurisdictions fewer people are willing and able to serve their communities by sitting in government, whether that is local or national.

Sark is a self-governing jurisdiction, with a degree of independence. We are uniquely a Crown Fief, with a direct responsibility to the Crown. This position is something that Sark rightly wishes to continue.

It is for Sark to decide how to go about shaping its future provided it follows and meet the acceptable standards of Good Governance, that our relationship to the Crown is based upon.

We cannot currently yet say how many Conseillers should constitute Chief Pleas in the future, nor how we should make the transition to the newly constituted Chief Pleas. That is a matter for consultation, research and debate. Conseillers through the Committees have been preparing information on workload and skills and abilities. Consultation with the residents of Sark is underway, with the closing date for the questionnaire on Monday 22nd May 2017. In legislative terms, a *Projet* amending the Reform (Sark) Law, 2008 is likely to be required, meaning that the Law Officers must be instructed in good time.

Whatever the results of the collation of the information, we must look to the foreseeable future and through debate decide on the best way forward, to ensure Sark has a sustainable government, and with the immediate aim of ensuring that there is a contested election in December 2018. The

purpose of Government is to take Sark forward and is a balance of policy work and operational matters, no matter who is undertaking the work. Chief Pleas must find that balance based on evidence from consultation and its own research. The Government of Sark has to be demonstrably sustainable.

Proposition –

That Chief Pleas requests the Law Officers of the Crown to draft the necessary legislation to amend the Reform (Sark) Law, 2008 to enable Chief Pleas to stipulate the number of Conseillers to constitute Chief Pleas, instruction on that number will be made in time for the necessary legislation to be in place for the December 2018 elections.

**Conseiller Charles Maitland
Chairman, Policy and Performance Committee**