

The Chief Pleas Government of Sark

The Colin Kniveton Papers

Produced as a background for the Chief Secretary during his period of consultancy November 2012 until February 2013

Sark Island-Wide Opinion Survey

SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats)

A document produced as guidance indicating the views of those Islanders who responded.

Re-Posted on the Website 14th March 2013

Sark SWOT Analysis undertaken by the Chief Pleas

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity/brand – through its history, links with the Crown; rugged natural beauty, • Quality of life - good work/life balance, no cars or other forms of mechanised transportation, self reliance • Environment - beautiful, nice climate, not much pollution, dark sky • Location – isolated, but close to France and Europe, in control of own life line services • Strong Community - a willingness to volunteer and support others, looking after others through informal social support which is kept confidential, people are not overly reliant on the State • Governance - its new democracy enables it to have a ‘clean sheet of paper’ in determining its own future and it is self governing and independent and has loose legislation, lack of bureaucracy • Participation there is a high turn out at elections and a high representation ratio on the Chief Pleas • Cost of administration, with low taxation – which people are willing to pay, the budget runs at a surplus and there is no debt • Economic potential – fishing, tourism (quality hotels, unique selling points, sailing, scuba diving). Has natural resources in the form of fishing and land • Good communication links –good internet connectivity (though not for everyone- see weaknesses) • Strong work ethic – with individuals working in multiple jobs • Size – it is easy to consult the population • Good school – strong primary education, which has been independently verified • Quality health care • Good Island facilities – such as the Island hall, which show the ability to deliver projects on the Island • Safety – low crime rate, strong emergency services • Many of the problems Sark faces are generic problems – other jurisdictions face them to and Sark is able to learn from them • Demographic – good mix of ages live on Sark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reputation – through things such as the Sark Lark • Isolated – lack of accessibility and it takes a long time to get to and from. • Governance – voluntary services mean depending on good will often of the retired population, this causes a lack of consistency, pressures on people’s time, high work loads, people in the community have multiple roles and this can lead to conflict and perceived lack of transparency and openness • Lack of a civil service – no professional support to help with policy making and support the Chief Pleas, often needing to rely on outside help which slows the process, decisions are not made efficiently • Lack of ability to generate on income – through taxation or other means • Lack clear leadership • Lack of regulation – which means lacking the ability to enforce decisions, wealthy individuals can have undue power • Lack of data – on population, evidence base for decisions • Laws need updating – risk of laws being petitions, causing delays in legislation, lack of employment law • Informality of process – causing confusion and the inability to communicate how things should happen, such as with social security, policing • Conflict of interest – lack of clear code of conduct for Chief Pleas • Consultation – lack of ability of the Chief Pleas to understand the views of the public • Lack data – lack of information on the population, is there an aging population? • Inhibition of free speech – no free press, risk of litigation, a lack of a defamation law/ cost of regulation, personalisation of politics • Communications – International community lack an understanding of Sark, promotion of tourism not joined up, no communication engineer (internet coverage inconsistent) • Size – everyone knows everyone’s business and it can feel like a Goldfish bowl • Economy – lacks diversity, tourism to niche (not enough family tourism) – lack of a policy enough information, ability for outside interest to distort • High cost of living – in terms of travel, freight, dealing with rubbish, Importation of key resources – food, gas, fuel – lacking economies of scale, health insurance costs • Customs/Boarder entry – not possible on Sark at the moment • Infrastructure – issues with sewage, cost of electricity, fuel • Education – need to go off Island for education beyond 15 years causing a brain drain • Land reform – tenure issues, need independent advice, causing economic dominance from groups, individuals; problems with land use and ability for people to get a mortgage, a lot of empty houses • Limited back up to services – such as doctor, policing
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To control our own destiny as a new democracy • Sell a vision for Sark – both within Sark and externally, which enables the Chief Pleas to think strategically about issues such as the economy and the services it provides, instead of fire fighting • Belinda Crowe’s Independent Report – provides an opportunity to provide leadership • Economy – need to create an economic strategy to exploit low impact industries such as internet, working from home and other high quality cottage industries • Potential for specialist tourism – dark skies, short breaks, links to cruise liners, activity based tourism • Pan Channel Island links - ensuring better links and coordination with Guernsey, Alderney and Jersey on tourism and other issues • Renewable energy – the creation of an energy strategy to help exploit potential new forms of energy such as tidal power • Protect environment • Improve self sufficiency • Better links with the French – economical and potentially on other areas too • Reviewing customs links with other Crown Dependencies • Expand educational links – with schools on other islands and university for things such as marine biology • Learn from other small islands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of long term planning – means that external pressures cannot be dealt with effectively • Perception of Sark - that Sark is damaged economically by the perception it is a war zone and the media does not understand what is happening on Sark • Collapse of Government – lack of people are willing to stand at the next elections and the need for intervention, unable to attract the right skills and resources to govern effectively • Legal intimidation – that all new legislation produced by Sark is challenged • Economic control – that one group or company takes control of the Island for economic gain • Key employers pull out of Sark • Requirement to sign up to international obligations in its own right and come under OSCE regulations, which would be very burdensome for such as small Island • Healthcare on Sark becomes unsustainable • Breakdown of rule of law – the voluntary system can no longer cope • Services – population changes mean the services provided are no longer sustainable • Cost of importation – electricity, oil and other costs become prohibitive • Shortage of water • Demographic shift – the young leave the island as they cannot find work, get affordable housing or too many people want to live on Sark • Lack of outside support • Environmental threats –arable land is destroyed through over use or change of use • External decisions adversely effect Sark – such as Guernsey, UK and European (French) legislation that effects Sark businesses

Following the SWOT analysis a vision for Sark for 10-15 years in the future was discussed, which participants felt could be described as:

- Freedom and independence
- Maintaining the Sark way of life
- A community spirit based on trust and respect
- Preserving and protecting the environment and ensuring it remains unspoilt
- An effective transparent government that lack of bureaucracy and engages/is accessible to the community to produce evidence based policy and a joined by strategy for the future of Sark
- A safe place to live, where the community is supported and healthy and where children and individuals are able to gain the qualifications they need
- A sustainable and balanced economy that provides stable employment opportunities to the population
- A sustainable population