



OFFICIAL REPORT

OF THE

EASTER MEETING

OF CHIEF PLEAS

OF THE

ISLAND OF SARK

HANSARD

Assembly Room, Sark, Wednesday, 30th April 2025

*All published Official Reports can be found on the
official Island of Sark Chief Pleas website www.sarkgov.co.uk*

Volume 11, No. 4

Present:

Seigneur

Maj. C M Beaumont Esq.

Speaker of Chief Pleas

P M Armorgie Esq.

Deputy Prévôt

J Godwin

Greffier

T J Hamon

Treasurer

S Hudson

Constable

P Burgess

Assistant Constable

J Burton

Conseillers:

Jolie Rose
John Guille
Christopher Kennedy-Barnard
Helen Plummer
Marcus Barker
Scott Sullivan
Benjamin Harris
Carol Cragoe

Michael Locke
Natalie Tighe
Christopher Bateson
David Curtis
Edric Baker MBE
Mary Nicolle
James Martin
Steven Lord
Frank Makepeace

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Easter Meeting of Chief Pleas

Chief Pleas met at 5 p.m.

[THE SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRAYER

The Greffier

ROLL CALL

The Greffier

The Greffier: There are 17 Conseillers, the Seigneur and the Speaker of Chief Pleas present.

The Speaker: Thank you, Greffier. Thank you very much indeed.

Lieutenant-Governor absent

5

The Speaker: Firstly, this evening, I have to present apologies from His Excellency the Governor of the Bailiwick. He is not able to be here with us today and he sent his apologies.

Apologies

10 **The Speaker:** I have also received apologies for absence from Conseiller Miller, who cannot be with us this evening.

Information statement made at Christmas meeting of Chief Pleas on 22nd January 2025 — Statement by the Speaker

The Speaker: Just before we get on to the Business of the Day I have a couple of statements that I would like to read, and we have one statement also from the Douzaine. I will come to the Douzaine statement in a minute.

15 Firstly, in response to the information statement that I made at the Christmas meeting of Chief Pleas on 22nd January 2025, I would like to clarify and address any concerns that may have arisen. The statement was intended to uphold the standards of conduct expected within Chief Pleas and to ensure a respectful and constructive environment for all Members. If the content of the statement was misunderstood or misinterpreted by a small number of people, I sincerely apologise for any unintended offence or confusion caused.

20 That is the first statement.

**Conduct and behaviour at the Extraordinary Meeting of Chief Pleas on 19th March 2025 —
Statement by the Speaker**

The Speaker: The second statement is the conduct and behaviour of certain Conseillers at the Extraordinary Meeting of Chief Pleas on 19th March, 2025, chaired by the Deputy Speaker, fell significantly below expected standards. The tone of the meeting was rancorous and ill-mannered, severely restricting proper, fair, reasonable or constructive debate. It has been described as the most acrimonious Chief Pleas meeting in living memory. The atmosphere was regrettably intimidating and deeply unpleasant and restricted certain Members from feeling able to contribute to the critical matters on the Agenda. I have received a number of complaints to that effect.

However, the fractious atmosphere reflected these deep disagreements and heightened tensions contributing to the breakdown in decorum and professional conduct. This has underscored ongoing challenges in Sark's governance, particularly regarding transparency, communication and respect among Members during critical decision-making processes.

As public servants, we have a responsibility to maintain a level of decorum and respect in our interactions, both public and private. Disagreements are a natural part of the democratic political process, but they should never descend into personal attacks or false accusations. I call on Chief Pleas to reaffirm our commitment to civil discourse and ethical behaviour. We must set an example for our constituents and work together to address the real issues facing our community, rather than engaging in destructive personal attacks.

That is my second statement.

STATEMENTS

**Douzaine —
Statement by Conseiller Locke**

The Speaker: At this point I would like to invite Conseiller Locke to make a statement on behalf of the Douzaine.

Conseiller Locke, thank you.

Conseiller Locke: Thank you, sir.

Members of the Douzaine have been working, as directed by a number of the propositions carried at the Extraordinary Chief Pleas on 19th March 2025. As part of that work, we have brought a number of things to the attention of the Law Officers. A meeting was held with Simon Hodgett of their Civil Advisory and Legislation Department yesterday, 29th April, attended by Conseiller Cragoe, myself, and the Senior Operations Officer William Spooner. More work is yet to be done to fulfil the tasks with which we have been tasked, but in brief, as for Proposition 5, which said:

That Chief Pleas directs the Policy & Finance Committee to instruct the Law Officers of the Crown to prepare the necessary legislation to effect the transfer of the Trustees' functions.

As to that, the Law Officers have been instructed to explore the necessary legislative changes to the Reform Law 2008 to effect this transfer. It is proposed that sections 56, 57 and 58 are updated to remove the role of the trustees in regard to Island property. The acquisition, management and disposal of property, section 57, will be vested in the Douzaine. The signing of contracts, section 58, is proposed to rest with Policy and Finance.

As to Proposition 6:

That Chief Pleas directs the Douzaine to inform Chief Pleas of any lease over property vested in Chief Pleas in advance of that lease being agreed.

65 The Douzaine has agreed that Conseillers will be informed by email when a lease or sale of property has been agreed in draft. Copies of any leases or sale agreements will be available for inspection in the Committee office before they are signed.

Proposition 7:

That Chief Pleas directs the Douzaine to draft and publish on the Chief Pleas website —

70 Excuse me. To repeat Proposition 7:

That Chief Pleas directs the Douzaine to draft and publish on the Chief Pleas website a guidance note, to include policies and procedures surrounding the rental, leasing, use and disposal of properties vested in Chief Pleas.

Work on this is ongoing, but initial discussions have taken place with the Douzaine about standard leases, and initial consultation with the Law Officers has also taken place.

75 Further statements will be made in due course.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Locke. And I apologise for the interruption mid-course. Thank you for carrying on with that.

Procedural – Electronic devices

80 **The Speaker:** Before we move on to the Agenda, I would just like to say that in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, I would remind all present that mobile phones, cameras, recording devices and other electronic equipment must be switched off now, save for those allowed to Chief Pleas Members in accordance with Rule 19(2) of the Rules of Procedure.

Thank you for that.

Point of Order - Conseiller Makepeace

85 **Conseiller Makepeace:** Sir, I rise on a point of order.

Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order concerning a serious breach of procedure and the violation of my rights as a Member of this Assembly. I request to be heard immediately.

90 This concerns the public statement you made in Chief Pleas on 22nd January 2025. At that meeting, without any prior notice to me and in my absence, you publicly named me, accused me of verbal abuse and described me in language that was frankly vile, calling me rude, obnoxious, paranoid and making reference to wild and entirely unfounded allegations.

95 You further claim that these alleged events were witnessed by Mr Michael Bertram, who has since made it absolutely clear he was not consulted, did not support your version of events and did not consent to being named as a witness. Despite multiple written requests from me for either a retraction or to provide evidence, you have provided neither.

Mr Speaker, I must put on record, your conduct represents a grave abuse of your position. You use the authority and prestige of the Speakership to attack a Member of this Assembly without justification, without evidence and without affording me any basic right of reply.

100 Moreover, your actions constitute a breach of my fundamental rights under article 6 of the
European Convention of Human Rights, which guarantees every individual the right to a fair
hearing. By publicly accusing and condemning me without warning, process or defence, you
denied me that right. It was a profound violation of natural justice and democratic principles.

105 Your behaviour on 22nd January was deeply damaging, not only to me personally but to the
impartiality and dignity of this Assembly. I therefore formally demand that you fully and publicly
withdraw your statement on 22nd January, that you issue an unambiguous apology to me for the
unfounded and defamatory remarks you made. Failure to do so will leave me with no alternative
than to pursue further formal action to defend the standards of justice, fairness and respect that
Chief Pleas and the people of Sark are entitled to.

110 Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace, for that very robust statement, and the
contents have been noted.

Thank you.

115

Business of the Day

**Procedural —
Reordering of business —
Motion carried**

The Speaker: Before we proceed actually with Agenda Item 1, I propose, in accordance with Rule of Procedure 11 that Item 20 from the Addendum be debated now. In order to do that, I would like to have a show of hands in favour of debating Item 20 from the Addendum now.

120 Those in favour?

Conseiller Lord: Can I speak?

The Speaker: Is this to do with this?

125

Conseiller Lord: Yes, it is to do with that. It is a point of order.

The Speaker: Okay, thank you.

130 **Conseiller Lord:** Mr Speaker, I would just like to point out that there are several items that — well, the decision to move things to the start would potentially bring the House into a state where it is not complying with law. Section 59 of the Reform Law requires us to read the financial statements. If we were to debate the vote of no confidence first and Policy and Finance were to be reconstituted, due to the time constraints there would not be anybody to present the Items.

135 I propose that, as a counter-proposition, we read the financial statements. There is another Item, Item 11, which relates to prescribed persons, and there is a small remit change. If we were to do Items, I think it is 10, 11, and 12, and then move on to the vote of no confidence, that will ensure we avoid the situation that we had last year with the Douzaine vote of no confidence, where the Douzaine was reconstituted and faced with propositions that it could not. It would also
140 ensure we stay within the Reform Law.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Lord.

145 Your comments are noted. I have taken advice on this from the Law Officers as to what is the correct procedure, and it was suggested to me that we should do it in the manner that I have proposed, that we should deal with Agenda Item 20 because it is a major Item, deal with that first and then move on to the rest of the Agenda.

150 I understand what you are saying. If we dealt with it at the end of the meeting, you effectively would be bound by the existing Policy and Finance Committee rather than a potential new Policy and Finance Committee. There are two arguments to this really, as I see it. We can go to the vote on either. I am happy to go to the vote on either to keep it democratic.

155 The Seigneur is quite right. The proposal, as you will have seen on the Addendum, was after Agenda Item 20 was — and if that was successful, then was to immediately introduce Agenda Item 18, the committee elections. Effectively the committee elections would come immediately after Agenda Item 20. So the Policy and Finance Committee could be populated, albeit with four Members, not the chair or the deputy chair because that has to be done via a separate process later on. Therefore, the Committee would be quorate in terms of being able to present Items 10, 11 and 12.

160 **Conseiller Lord:** I would ask if it is normal for the Policy and Finance Committee's regular members to introduce a financial statement Item?

165 **The Speaker:** I think it is their responsibility. I think it falls under their Mandate, as I understand it. If there is a strong held opinion on this, I am very happy that it should go to the vote. There are two choices really. Do we debate it and introduce it at the very start of the meeting or do we leave it to the very end of the meeting? Or the other option would be to start the meeting with Agenda Item 10 and then go.

170 **Conseiller Lord:** It would make sure that that gap is filled. It was a problem with the Douzaine vote no confidence last year, so I just thought it would be good, given we have the legal requirement.

The Speaker: Okay, I hear what you are saying, Conseiller Lord. Let's go to the vote on that then. Just one second.

175 Conseiller Tighe, thank you.

Conseiller Tighe: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I am happy to go with what the advice of the Law Officers is, and I am happy to proceed with Item 20 taking the first spot if other people are in agreement.

180 **The Speaker:** We have one person in favour of doing as I proposed and as supported by the Law Officers.

Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard first, thank you.

185 **Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

What was the exact advice of the Law Officers in the reasoning?

Thank you.

190 **The Speaker:** It was a verbal conversation with them yesterday via Teams and it was in terms of — because it is the most, in my opinion, important critical issue on the Agenda to deal with it first and then find a solution, and then move forward with the rest of the Agenda. Otherwise, if we leave it until later, it is hanging around without conclusion. If we can conclude it as early as possible in the meeting — you are rolling your eyes at me, Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard.

195 **Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard:** I think that is a side issue.

The Speaker: That was an eye roll, sir. Okay.

Their suggestion was that it should be dealt with at the beginning of the meeting, but I am happy to go to the vote on this if there is a strongly held opinion in any direction.

200 Conseiller Locke, you had your hand up.

Conseiller Locke: Thank you, sir.

205 I am of the opinion we should go with what the Law Officers advised. There have been enough things being thrown around at Chief Pleas for not consulting the Law Officers. Now that we have, let's do what they say.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Locke.

Conseiller Makepeace.

Conseiller Makepeace: What difference does it make? I am really not sure of what is going on at the moment, I have to be honest. What is the actual difference if it is now or later? I am not clear about it.

215 **The Speaker:** No, it is a good question. I think specifically, Conseiller Lord has made the point, it is how do we deal with Agenda Item 10, Agenda Item 11 and Agenda Item 12, which obviously reports from the current Policy and Finance Committee, and the proposal from Conseiller Lord is to deal with those three Items first while the current Policy and Finance Committee are in place, and then perhaps after that to deal with Agenda Item 20. That is what is being proposed by
220 Conseiller Lord. Am I correct?

Conseiller Lord: Yes that is correct although I am not too precious about it. If it is easier for everybody, in the interest of decorum, I am happy to go the other way.

225 **The Speaker:** Okay. I can make an executive decision or we can go to the vote and do it democratically. I am going to take an executive decision. I took advice — deliberately yesterday took advice — and the advice that I received was to deal with it at the beginning of the meeting rather than — the other option, I can say, was the end of the meeting. But I think on balance I would like to proceed as I suggested, and to therefore propose to deal with Agenda Item 20 first
230 now, and then move on to the rest of the Agenda. Possibly introducing Agenda Item 18 if Agenda Item 20 is successful. In other words, to repopulate the Policy and Finance Committee albeit with four members initially and then with a chair and deputy chair later on.
Conseiller Nicolle, thank you.

235 **Conseiller Nicolle:** Could I just say, Mr Speaker, that I do feel it is very important that we acknowledge that this is the Easter meeting of Chief Pleas with the Budget and the financial records? I feel that is an extremely important matter that we are discussing for the Island.

The Speaker: I think we concur with that, Conseiller Nicolle. There is no dispute about that.
240 However, as I say, we have got a proposal, we will go to the vote, and if you have a preference that you would prefer not to have it at the beginning of the meeting rather than at the end of the meeting, then I am happy to accept that. I think you understand the consequences in either direction. It is fairly open-ended, but my executive decision is to propose as I have, but we will go to the vote on this.
245 I am being encouraged by the Seigneur to go with it, so therefore we are going to have a show of hands.

The Seigneur: No, we are going with the proposal. We are going with Item 20. It is already decided.
250

The Speaker: The proposal is to go with Item 20 at the beginning of the meeting. That is the proposal. But in terms of doing that, I have to ask for a vote. Under Rules of Procedure 11, I have to ask for those in favour. Those in favour of — it has got very complicated. Those in favour of dealing with Agenda Item 20 now at the beginning of the meeting, please raise your hands. Okay,
255 keep them high. That is carried. That is not quite unanimous but it is a majority.

**20. Motion of No Confidence in the Policy and Finance Committee –
Letter from seven Conseillers —**

To consider a 'Vote of No Confidence in the Policy & Finance Committee' from Conseillers Sullivan, Nicolle, Lord, Makepeace, Kennedy-Barnard, Harris, and Barker.

The Speaker: In which case, having got to that point, let's proceed with Agenda Item 20, which is from the Addendum and it reads as follows: to consider a 'Vote of No Confidence in the Policy & Finance Committee' from Conseillers Sullivan, Nicolle, Lord, Makepeace, Kennedy-Barnard, Harris, and Barker.

260 You all had copies of that with your papers and I would like to ask one of those seven Conseillers to introduce this. Who would like to introduce it?

Conseiller Kennedy Barnard, thank you.

Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

265 In the spirit of your opening statement tonight I just want to follow up on that. Can I ask that we allow the person with the microphone to speak and that there are no interruptions from other Conseillers? The reason is last session our Greffier had a very difficult job making sure the audio was in usable condition. I know the audience is passionate, and I thank them for coming tonight. Could I ask that they too offer silence when Conseillers are talking for the same reasons above?

270 Thank you.

The Speaker: I think it is a very reasonable request and thank you for supporting that, and I would absolutely concur with that.

Thank you.

275 **Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard:** Let me start by saying we have been deeply saddened and disappointed by the actions of a minority of Conseillers since the last Extraordinary Chief Pleas session in March. One or two Conseillers have been defamed, maligned, smeared by others through gossip, which amounts to reputation destruction. I know this because members of the public have reported it to me and others.

280 There has been an inversion of reality, a misframing of the situation, a campaign of vitriol has attempted to weaponise the public against those who have signed this no confidence motion. The slurs and characterisations have sought to intimidate and make people feel uncomfortable in their Island homes. The primal wickedness should not be accepted by any standards.

285 Those of you who are familiar with history will understand how communities end up in bad places. Between the 15th and 17th century, we had the persecution of witches, where malicious gossip began and ended up with the torture and murder of some 60,000 women. Bright women were punished, their crime was speaking up and knowing a little more than the average person. There is probably not a soul in the House tonight who does not know what happened in Germany in World War II, so I need not go into detail. We just know where it started, with ordinary people gossiping about their Jewish neighbours who are a little different and appear to have a little more than them.

290 When you dehumanise people the story is always the same. It has the same pathology and outcomes. Wicked, spiteful behaviour takes a society to dark places. We all have a responsibility to treat each other fairly. As Conseillers, it is part of our code of conduct rules. It is one of the key tenets of having a cohesive, functioning society. Treat others as you wish to be treated yourselves.

To correct the record, the reason seven Conseillers have signed this motion has nothing to do with personalities, ego, vendettas or anything else. I only wish to debate the facts. The facts that are appurtenant and integral to Sark's future. We all love Sark and want the best for the Island.

300 We will not always agree on everything, but scrutiny and debate are vital in any functioning democracy.

When I first came into Chief Pleas, I immediately saw that there was too much emotion in the House. An emotional mindset impairs clarity of thought and decision-making. Nothing should be about personalities or grudges.

305 In previous sessions, there has been unparliamentary behaviour and unparliamentary language. It would not happen in Guernsey. It would not happen in Jersey or the UK. We need to set a good example. We need to do better. Can we return to decorum? Can we again please treat each other with respect?

There is no designated leader for this vote of confidence motion. We all have strong views about how Policy and Finance is managing its critical task of taking the Island forward. Firstly, it is worth pointing out that a vote of no confidence motion is a standard practice in Jersey and Guernsey. It is an important democratic process. It does not cast shame on any government or community. It shows that democracy is working. At the end of the vote, P&F will either have a new Mandate to lead or the Committee will be repopulated.

315 Tonight's vote is not about winning or losing. It is about having voices heard and a constructive, free and open debate. Informing people is never a bad thing. Our intelligent community is bright enough to make their own minds up. As most of you know, I have been serving on the Policy and Finance Committee for around a year and a half. I have made my voice heard in the Committee as much as just about anybody in that time. Those of you who know me understand how passionate I am. I do not want to see the Island become a footnote in history. It must not depopulate. We must do everything to avoid life becoming too hard to live.

320 Last week a PDG member of P&F's leadership said we have three to five years before we are bankrupt. I think Sark deserves a better future than that. Many generations of Sarkees and the influx of people from elsewhere through the ages have made the place what it is today. The Island needs to have a future and maintain a critical mass and it desperately needs to revive the economy quickly. There must be social mobility. People need to have money in their pockets. They need opportunities.

The Policy and Finance Committee has the essential job of managing economics and creating policies that ensure that we have a future. I will ask a rhetorical question. How long should a failing committee, a Government, a Prime Minister or a President have before there is change?

330 Our reasons for signing are as follows. We have no economic plan. This has rumbled on for years largely unaddressed and, despite a letter from His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor months ago, we have not acted or taken one significant step towards this.

335 There is nothing more urgent or pressing than reviving the failing economy. It is the shared responsibility of Policy and Finance. Revenue generation must be at the forefront of our tasks, and yet we are thinking about taking on debt. It is analogous to a person on the verge of bankruptcy taking a payday loan. I am deeply concerned that we have lost three civil servants in three years. If it happened once it could be bad luck, but three times is a correlation. We do not know how to manage the staff or have little experience across the Committee in this field. If any company was losing a chief executive once a year, you would be asking questions of those who hired them and handled the situation. It is not good enough. There needs to be a change.

340 For those of you reading the news, we lost a case earlier this year, which could end up costing the Island a fortune. It could be crippling to the Sark Government. The court papers indicate that we were not looking for a fair outcome. Following that, we have a huge risk of legal action against us from our energy provider. Will the situation cost us dearly? What I can see repeatedly is a failure of diplomacy, a failure of negotiation, a failure to seek fair and equitable outcomes, a failure to forecast where decisions take us. It does not matter whether it is chief civil servants, doctors or our energy provider, the job we have done is not at the expected levels. There has been a litany of errors that, in the final analysis, form a pattern. A wise man once said, an error only becomes a mistake when you fail to correct it.

350

I would like more transparency, openness and accountability from P&F. Things have gotten worse since Christmas. I worry that our democracy is failing because the values and spirit of such a system are not being adhered to. Some may be stuck in the feudal era and others are trying to support democracy. Are we still in the feudal era? Perhaps this is a failure of understanding of political systems, but the system is not working well at present. I have heard members of the public talk about returning to the feudal system, saying it was better. If that is the sentiment of the people, perhaps we should have a vote on that.

Personally, I think most of our problems are economic. A system is only as good as the people in it and their desire to follow its principles. The atmosphere would change if we were taking steps in the right direction and people could see their lives getting better. P&F is the Government's lead Committee. A proper example of leadership needs to be set from the top. I would like to see us do much better. We need high morals and high ideals. We need to be the best we can be.

In my final note to the Committee, we are failing. Forget the words. Economics and mathematics paint a clear picture. I will now defer to Conseiller Harris.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Kennedy Barnard.
We will proceed next with, I think, Conseiller Harris.
Thank you.

Conseiller Harris: Thank you very much, sir.

My loyalty as a Conseiller is to Sark, not to a person, a group or a committee, and to protect and stand up for the interests of Sark, as I understand them. It is my duty to communicate the lack of confidence that I feel in the Policy and Finance Committee at the current time.

I agreed to support this motion for four main reasons: the economy, governance, the electricity problem, and constitutional questions. The first two being more significant and all of them at the core relate back to the economy and living standards.

I would first remind colleagues and our bosses — the electorate — that a motion of no confidence is a legitimate and in some ways essential democratic mechanism. I know there have been some accusations of bullying. This is not bullying. I do not think I have bullied someone since I was a teenager. It is not my style. But I must stand up and say when I think our Government is failing.

I was elected on the basis of my manifesto and from that I have a Mandate. It is on the basis of that Mandate that I am speaking this evening. I hope that this discussion will be a temperature check in our system, perhaps an essential one. I think to pretend otherwise is to support a lack of discourse in the political culture and feedback for those who exercise power. Blind allegiance is not really compatible with democracy.

On the question of tax spending in the economy, I do not really think it is about greedy rich people not wanting to pay tax, which is how I have heard it presented by some. I, myself, am a psychotherapist and you do not become a psychotherapist in order to make loads of money. Taxation is a deadly serious issue that requires carefully thought-out responsive handling. Any jurisdiction's taxation system needs to strike a careful balance between the revenue needed and what residents and businesses are able and willing to pay. The danger, I think, is always in what we end up incentivising and disincentivising.

I feel the P&F Committee seems perhaps not to recognise the difference between first and second order consequences. A first order consequence is that that we intend. Second order consequences are unconsidered or unintended consequences. For instance, you increase taxes, you expect an increase in revenue and then you do not receive it. Government revenue has barely changed between 2022 and 2024; £2,035,000 to £2,036,000. People react in their own lives by leaving or otherwise adjusting their behaviour. The Laffer curve shows us that raising taxes is very capable of reducing tax take as people behave differently in response to pressure. There have

been, as far as I am aware, 30 tax rises since 2019. The minimum Personal Capital Tax has risen by 57% in that time. That is paid by those on low incomes.

405 The problems about fiscal leakage I think are particularly likely in small jurisdictions that have little geographical reach or economic heft. Put simply, no one has to live on Sark or run a business on Sark or start a business on Sark. Some colleagues have scoffed at my previous suggestion that people do not like paying taxes, but human nature is what it is. Most who are here, apart from the very poorest stuck paying that rising minimum Personal Capital Tax, can choose to leave. Social scientists understand that people react to incentives and disincentives. I think Property Transfer
410 Taxes is a good example. Takings collapsed from £227,000 to £29,000. That is an 87% drop since it was increased from 4% to 7.5%.

I, like the rest of the Chamber, voted for this and I can see now that it has been a mistake. That has been a lesson for me. I would hope for P&F to also take that learning and show some responsiveness to it. That, for me, would indicate responsible stewardship of Sark's fiscal
415 situation. But P&F, unfortunately, has disclaimed responsibility and ignored that second-order consequence, saying that the drop has nothing to do with the tax increase. It seems that the answer for them is always higher taxes even when it has a direct negative consequence for the Island's revenue.

I have even heard some live talk about Income Tax among colleagues close to the powers-that-
420 be despite, as far as I am aware, not a single person in this Chamber putting that in their manifesto.

We have a falling population interrupted by the Sven Lorenz influx, but it is clear that figure has resumed its downward trend. Higher taxes will further exacerbate this trend. This way, in the end, you get an empty Island that finds it hard to service its infrastructure. Perhaps the end result is that we end up as a dignified Parish of Guernsey with some sheep.

425 If we want an Island with less money in the economy and a decreasing population, thoughtlessly raising the wrong taxes is a good way to get it. That will mean less available work, fewer customers, less money for local businesses, and lower living standards on the Island. That is what we are facing if we carry on down this path, and I, for one, find it frustrating and upsetting.

We should be taking advantage of our unique fiscal and legal situation to encourage high-net-
430 worth individuals, young families and skilled workers to move here, not torturing our position on a baseless dash for cash. We need a Locate Sark programme, as Jersey and Guernsey have, to encourage new residents. We need to explore a tax residency programme or amend the Direct Taxes Law 2002 to nationalise some of the benefits from residents who are here for less than about 100 days, say, but who are tax resident. We need to change the housing law to encourage
435 new local and open market housing and the taxes and licensees for buildings that will come with that. I know that work is ongoing from the PDG, but it will not happen if we cannot generate new residents. We need people to want to move here.

There are some ways perhaps to raise some tax carefully that do not unduly damage the Sark economy. I will offer my thoughts on that irrespective of the result this evening, as I have done
440 before.

On electricity, our grid is in a dangerous state, it needs repairing and replacing, but in the midst of this fiscal crisis we have got a plan that is really an unfundable white elephant. Costs, when we approved £175,000 to spend on the design work in January 2024, were estimated at £8.6 million and some of those costs are now expected to be £11.6 million. I think if the Douzaine came
445 forward with an extravagant proposal like that it would be laughed out of the room. We need to make our plan simple so it is actually affordable because that way lies resilience and a plan we can execute.

We spent a lot of money on energy since 2019, a lot of it on reports, plans and legal conflicts. I think the total is over three quarters of a million, but that includes the subsidy for the houses up
450 north. But in any case, a significant portion of that did not need to be spent and it will have been wasted on a set of plans that will not actually come to fruition. It is obvious to me that we should put these plans on ice indefinitely and focus on making the grid safe and secure while maintaining a diesel system for now. We cannot afford to get caught up in wasting time, money, resources

and effort on trying to secure a scheme which is, to all intents and purposes, unachievable. We need to go back to the suite of options presented by the Energy People Report in 2022; keep it simple.

I know my interest in constitutional affairs may seem esoteric to some, but I believe that the majority of Conseillers and Islanders wish to retain the broad degree of autonomy that Sark enjoys and has enjoyed throughout its history, albeit perhaps a tad reduced in the last couple of decades. This interest is fundamentally about opportunity and living standards. Sark's participation in the Constitutional Commission has been set as a condition for our loan from Guernsey for the acquisition of SEL. It is P&F's apparent attitude towards this commission and the concerns that have been raised about it that I find disturbing. This is evidenced most recently in the energy FAQs, where mollifying claims are made about this process that are, unfortunately, empirically unjustified. I do not feel that the public are being treated like adults. Of course, there may be benefits to taking part in such a commission. There could equally be pitfalls or dangers.

Our interests in Guernsey and Sark are often in common, but they do not always align. Guernsey might not want us, for instance, to develop a shipping registry or a corporate registry; potentially sources of revenue. Various revenue streams that we might wish to explore as an Island might rely on our capacity to act independently as a jurisdiction. It does not mean we cannot work to negotiate better healthcare terms with Guernsey, for example.

In fact, we must have good relations with Guernsey, and we should not embarrass them. We are all in the same Bailiwick boat, but it is vital for Sark's future that we do not sleepwalk into agreeing any constitutional changes that leave us disempowered.

I think from my perspective, in terms of my confidence and trust, it is important to note that P&F has form in terms of letting things slide. It was only 18 months ago that they were forced by Chief Pleas to remove from the job description for our then new SEO the stipulation that they would receive managerial oversight from Guernsey. It is so manifestly at odds with any conventional understanding of Sark's constitutional position that it hardly needs me to state it. P&F is ready to bring that to the House for approval with apparently no concern about the setup.

I think we should always aim to retain maximum headroom for manoeuvre on our policies and capacities. Conseillers, as a whole, should have been engaged by P&F in a discussion on what this loan proposal and the constitutional convention meant and what our negotiating asks might be. Instead we found out about it in a press release from a separate Government. We are told in the energy FAQs that this is because P&F was worried about leaks. I have to say I find this justification weak and unacceptable and it leads me to my final point about governance and engagement.

The leadership of P&F's approach to good governance and scrutiny is concerning to me. Policy and Performance and Finance and Resources merged in 2018. It was understood at that time that this represented a major concentration of power and so Chief Pleas voted to approve the creation of a scrutiny committee, which has never come into being.

Early last year P&F proposed to split once more into two separate committees. That was approved by Chief Pleas, in fact I welcomed it, but it has not happened. There is a systemic problem there, a governance failing when an Assembly directs an action to be taken only to see it disappear. It is a problem but maybe it would not present such an urgent concern for me if my sense was that P&F was open to having its significant and overarching power scrutinised. However, I really do not find myself believing that is the case. It was and remains my hope that PDG can take some of the strain, for Members at least, although that does not include the public, but P&F blithely failed to discuss the loan terms with us or even inform us about them.

My continuing experience is that Conseillers are kept in the dark on important matters in order to be managed, and that the attitude displayed by the leadership of P&F towards Conseillers, and indeed the public, is managing and controlling. I believe, personally, that the Energy FAQs are simply the latest example of this, which, to my reading, are more of an exercise in spin and presenting a politically disputed line than an impartial attempt to inform.

These are all individual concerns, but they are interconnected. The fiscal crisis is a function of spending and taxation decisions but the way we get out of it is connected to our ability to act

autonomously and have governance structures that promote accountability. Together we have what I experienced as a vortex of high-pressure sales tactics towards a rather uncertain end fiscally and structurally.

510 In the end all of this is about the Island's capacity to sustain its living standards and a robust community. I feel that we need a relentlessly pragmatic policy function and a finance function, and I think perhaps Policy and Finance finds it hard to combine the two of them, that works with reality and takes responsibility in its decisions. We need creative thinking for new revenue streams, but we also need caution where caution is demanded, where there are potentially significant downside risks.

515 The Island is going in the wrong direction, and I am worried that we are moving, I suppose, at a steady clip towards unsustainability and that is why I think we need a reset. It is not about individuals. I see no reason why some of the current members of the Committee should not come back on to the Committee if they should wish to stand.

Thank you, sir.

520

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Harris.

One second, Conseiller Lord and Conseiller Sullivan. Thank you for those two introductions. Apropos the motion to no confidence, where a motion of no confidence is brought against a committee, the chairman of that committee, shall have the right to reply to the debate

525 immediately prior to the introduction by the proposers.

Conseiller Guille, would you like to make a response now, or would you like to...?

Conseiller Guille: Let the proposers carry on.

530 **The Speaker:** You will wait. Okay.

We have heard from Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard and Conseiller Harris. I think Conseiller Sullivan, Conseiller Lord, and then Conseiller Makepeace. Thank you.

Conseiller Sullivan, thank you.

535 **Conseiller Sullivan:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I have always approached my role as a Conseiller with fairness, balance and a sense of responsibility to the community. That is the spirit which I want to explain why I signed the vote of no confidence in the Policy and Finance Committee. I was the last person to sign. Two years ago I signed a similar motion but withdrew my name. This time, after reflection and discussion across

540 the community, I have left my name on. Not because I have made up my mind on the outcome, but because I believe this debate needs to happen. Without it, I fear dissatisfaction will continue to simmer beneath the surface. These concerns must be acknowledged to the House so we can move forward together.

In many ways, this could just as easily be called a vote of confidence, a chance to reaffirm the Committee's Mandate and bring clarity and direction to the work ahead. I want to be clear, I have

545 no interest in joining the Policy and Finance Committee myself. I have worked with many of them and have seen their commitment first-hand. This motion is not about individuals. It is about process, clarity and, if needed, a renewed Mandate.

Since signing, I have spoken to a range of people, particularly outside of my friendship group.

550 Their views have not strengthened support for a no-confidence vote specifically, but they have made clear the need for discussion, for transparency, and for this matter to be properly addressed and put to rest. It has been good to see the community engaged, but I am also very mindful of the emotion involved. I regret if this situation has caused upset. That was never my intention. I want to assure everyone, especially those who feel disillusioned, that this is not about division but

555 about helping the Assembly move forward responsibly and respectfully. I want to be clear that I have not decided how I will vote. I will listen carefully to the debate and make my decision in the

Chamber, while also reflecting on the feedback I have received through my discussions with the electorate.

On broader policy direction, I want to repeat comments that I made during last year's tax meeting. I remain concerned about relying too heavily on raising taxes for residents. I believe we must also look to limited residents, taxpayers and business registering here to also contribute. I feel these kinds of policies should have been prioritised earlier to help ease the pressures we are now facing.

I am encouraged that PDG is now actively exploring these ideas, and I hope that this leads to more balanced long-term solutions for Sark. There is also, in my opinion, a mistaken belief that Sark has a large number of wealthy individuals. In my opinion, that is not the case. If we push too hard, those with options will leave and the burden will fall on those least able to carry it. What we need is a diversified tax base, not simply more taxes on the same residents but a broader contribution from different types of stakeholders. That is a more sustainable path forward and one that recognises the full spectrum of those who benefit from Sark's unique position.

Whatever the outcome of this debate, it will give the Committee a clear Mandate and help us to better understand the direction the Island wants to go, and that is a good thing. This debate is not about division, it is about strengthening us. Let's all move forward together with respect for each other and for the future of Sark.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Sullivan.

That is three of the Conseillers we have heard from so far. Conseiller Lord, if you would like to go next, thank you.

Conseiller Lord: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I have noticed that this has been portrayed as a battle for the soul of Sark and now that we are all here we can finally see the true horror of it all, which is listening to seven Conseillers each read a statement on why they signed a piece of paper. I am going to start with a little no-co history, and I am going to try and keep mine a bit short because Conseiller Harris has said much of what I would have said and Conseiller Sullivan said most of the rest.

In 2025 we have this vote of no confidence in Policy and Finance. The structure of our rules and regulations provide very few vehicles to bring a debate to a House independently of a committee or PDG. This is one of the only ways that we can do this. Indeed, Mr Speaker, there is a vote of no confidence that has been circulating around regarding yourself and the information that was spoken by you at the January meeting. I actually signed that before I signed this one and I think, on the basis of the discussion that happens today and on the basis of Mr Makepeace's statement, I shall be reconsidering that signature when I go home tonight.

This is not about individuals. It is not even really about confidence. It is about the venomous state of the House and the divisions within it for me. It is about resolving these issues and drawing a line under a lot of things that would otherwise fester. If we go back to 2024, last Easter, there was a vote of no confidence in the Douzaine. That had nowhere near the kind of disruption that this seems to have caused. For that, I do apologise for my part in it. It was never my intention to cause so much upset.

In 2024, there was also a vote of no confidence in the Cabinet in Jersey in January, which was the equivalent of P&F. In 2023, in December, there was a vote of no confidence in Guernsey's P&R. These votes of no confidence are not particularly unusual, although I will admit that our vote of no confidence is, in that it is not necessarily a singular specific issue but different things for different people.

Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard mentioned that part of the P&F leadership said we had three to five years left before going bankrupt. But I believe that if we looked at our infrastructure spending needs, you would see that our solvency is already questionable. The merger of two committees of five people each, Policy and Performance and Finance and Resources, into a single six-person

committee, in my view, was a mistake. This House acknowledged this in 2024 when it agreed to split it up.

When P&F was formed, the House recognised Chief Pleas needs a scrutiny function to guard against any possible abuse of power by a single policy committee. In this context, abuse does not mean malfeasance. It is not necessarily malicious, but I believe that we have seen this arise systemically. We have seen this arise in the way that people are going out with the best efforts to try and do what they believe for Sark. But as we saw in the McCullough Report, they are not necessarily getting guidance from the right people. Because they are doing things sometimes in secret, for sometimes understandable reasons, they are not able to get access and support to other Members of the House who may be able to help them.

Scrutiny is not a four-letter word. It is not about assigning fault, guilt or blame. It is about learning lessons from things that do not work out. But to learn the lessons, we must acknowledge them.

In 2023, a tender process was run to invite contractors to work on a new energy system. There were issues with the structure of that tender. There were issues with the way that it prescribed a particular style of system. It was not something that I would blame leadership for. But if we had a scrutiny committee, it would review that process afterwards and we could learn lessons from that, that would inform future tenders.

We spent £45,000 last year to earn £15,000, powering 19 to 20 homes for a landowner. That followed an emergency incident some years earlier. The emergency was definitely valid and we needed to deal with it urgently. I thank Policy and Finance for their part in doing so. There was not a follow-on process to determine a long-term solution. Costs rise over time and we should be crossing around £50,000, I believe, this year or next. With the departure of our SEO, I believe that we cannot afford to hire a new one. I believe that we would need to resolve the North End funding gap to be able to afford to replace them.

Our financial controls are not sufficient for our needs. The Lieutenant Governor himself has raised concerns around financial audit scope, in particular the level of substantive testing, internal control testing, and value-for-money reviews. A six-person lay committee with a continuous flood of policy work is not well-constituted to deal with these requirements. We do not appear to have a reserves policy or a property capital reserves fund. There is an accrued fund, but around 70% of this are assets we may not be able to easily liquidate.

Our actual assets that are available and already liquidated, i.e. net cash, is under about a million. This is why we need a fundamental change to Policy and Finance. I was told that after the proposition was passed to split P&F. The Law Officers said that it would be too hard for them to do so but nothing has come back to the House. It is not uncommon for us to pass propositions and have them fall by the wayside.

In Guernsey, as in other jurisdictions, people have a work plan. I believe that Sark committees also used to have three-year work plans. But we do not. That means that it is easy for these things to be missed.

What I would like to see is that we structure Policy and Finance, if we are unable to break it up, with a portfolio for three members for Finance and three members for Policy, and that they agree to take on specific tasks relating to the establishment of a scrutiny committee on the policy side, the establishment of an economic development plan on the financial side, and the establishment of a reserves policy and a capital reserve on the final side.

In addition, the Scrutiny Management Committee should follow the original Christmas 2019 Chief Pleas Appendix 1 Constitution.

A President who shall be a Conseiller of Chief Pleas, provided that the President of the Scrutiny Management Committee shall not be the chair or a member of the Policy and Finance Committee or the chair of any other committee of Chief Pleas, and two members who shall be Conseillers of Chief Pleas, provided that a member of the Scrutiny Management Committee shall not be the chair or a member of the Policy and Finance Committee or the chair or deputy chair of any other Committee of Chief Pleas, and two voting members who shall not be Conseillers of Chief Pleas and who shall be elected by Chief Pleas.

The final point I would like to make. If you were to cost up our outstanding infrastructure investment needs over the next year, you would probably conclude that our solvency is questionable. If I were a Guernsey Deputy, I would look at Sark and I would say that until a reserves policy is implemented, until an economic development plan is put in place, until Sark's spending and income is brought under control, we must not do anything that puts Guernsey's reserves at risk or attaches any liabilities or potential for the appearance of collusion when it comes to any financial matters. To attempt to buy a company with a hidden beneficial owner using money from the States of Guernsey could bring their own financial controls and, by extension, Moneyval status into question. Any competent auditor would ask: what was the business case presented to the Guernsey Treasury? Did they talk to Guernsey Finance? Did Guernsey Finance stress test the business case?

When I asked for the business case sent to Guernsey, our own Civil Service informed me that none was presented. The funny thing is, I do believe that there is an investment case that could exist for buying SEL. It is just that many Conseillers are shut out of the room to discuss it.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Lord.

We have heard from four members so far. Conseiller Makepeace next, thank you.

Conseiller Makepeace: Thank you, sir.

I would just like to say that we have heard a lot of criticism tonight of our system and our government, but parts of it must be working because we are actually having this vote of no confidence. I am grateful for the chance to have this, to say my bit, but I must say that I would hope that whatever the result tonight, that we can unite tomorrow and we can get together and forget it. Whichever way this goes, this is the equivalent of a straightener, I suppose you might say.

In recent days, much has been said about the upcoming vote of no confidence in the P&F Committee. Some have sought to paint this as negative or divisive, as if raising concerns about governance are somehow shameful or disloyal. I would ask you to see it differently. A vote of no confidence is not a betrayal, it is a vital part of healthy democracy, a legitimate responsible mechanism by which elected representatives can hold leadership to account. It is a chance to ask ourselves, honestly and without fear, are we absolutely confident that the current leadership of Policy and Finance is the right team to guide us through the challenges ahead? Challenges such as managing our dwindling reserves responsibly, finding sustainable new revenue streams, navigating the scrutiny of the Bailiwick Commission, addressing the long-running uncertainty and risks surrounding our electricity supply.

This is not about personal animosity. It is not about division for its own sake. It is about protecting Sark's future, ensuring that those at the helm are capable, transparent and have the full and renewed confidence of Chief Pleas at a critical time. If, with hand on heart, you are able to say you have complete faith in the current leadership to meet these challenges effectively and openly, then I wish you well in your decision. But if there is even a shadow of doubt, even a quiet sense that we owe the Island better, then this vote is your opportunity to act constructively, wisely, and in the long-term interests of those we are here to serve.

Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace.

We have now heard from five of the Conseillers who have brought the motion. Out of fairness, I would like to offer Conseiller Nicolle and Conseiller Barker the opportunity to add to that debate. Conseiller Nicolle first, perhaps.

Conseiller Nicolle: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I am very sorry, I am new in the Chamber, I do not know all the rules. I hope it is appropriate that I send my very best wishes to Conseiller Andrew Miller, who I know is not here tonight.

710 I stood for Chief Pleas as a way of serving fellow Islanders. I have been proud to call Sark my home for the last 45 years. I am extremely concerned that the less well-off on Sark are paying far too high a proportion of our taxes. The costs of running the Island are getting completely out of hand. I am not clear on what policies Policy and Finance are bringing forward to increase income and decrease, wherever possible, the significant financial pressure on lower earners. The only
715 approach seems to be to keep increasing the taxes. For Sark to once again thrive I believe we need to maintain a balanced community, all of whom matter to the Island so many of us call home.

I am concerned that regarding the merger of Policy and Performance and Finance and Resources we now have a workload on six people, which is far too onerous. The performance is bound to be impaired if the workload is too great. I am also extremely concerned that they have
720 not got the time to create policies to bring forward to the House regarding other income generation schemes, which I believe are so important.

Financial resources are in a very weak state. I feel very offended that, as a Member of this House, not all of us receive all the information in a timely manner. That, to me, is not acceptable. There is only one ray of light that I have, and I am so proud, it is section 9 of our Agenda tonight,
725 the Education Committee. It is a good example to me of what I feel happens if the whole House are not involved.

The REAch2 report that was done some years ago for education was never brought to this House. The Education Committee of the day pursued it without bringing it to the House, so all Members were not given a chance to debate. This led on to an incredibly expensive period in
730 Sark's financial history and you will see when you get to — well, obviously you all know but Item 9 tonight, through an enormous amount of work conducted by chairman Jolie Rose, deputy chairman Scott Sullivan, Conseiller Carol Cragoe, Conseiller Ben Harris and Conseiller Edric Baker MBE, who served throughout the time. I took his place but the work had already been done. They have reached a magnificent arrangement whereby the youngsters, the
735 children, the important people for the future, have great choices, and that is Sark at its best. That, I believe, is why it is so important that the House, as a whole, handles these things. Debate is never a bad thing.

Thank you.

740 **The Speaker:** Thank you, Conseiller Nicolle.
That just leaves Conseiller Barker, would you like to present?

Conseiller Barker: Yes, thank you, Mr Speaker.

I think the Conseillers who have spoken before me have spoken very sensibly. I do not wish to
745 repeat because I will end up repeating a lot of what they said, so I thank them for that. If it is possible, Mr Speaker, I would like to ask a question for the Treasurer, if that is okay.

The Speaker: Is it relevant to the motion?

750 **Conseiller Barker:** Yes, it is, sir.

The Speaker: Okay, ask the question and then we will make a decision.

Conseiller Barker: Our latest financial statement showed a surplus in 2024. May I ask, sir, what
755 is our situation as of now? Do you know if we have a surplus or a deficit?

The Treasurer: I know but that has nothing to do with it.

The Speaker: No, I hear the question, Conseiller Barker, but I think it needs to be brought in a separate way rather than part of this debate. But I do hear the question, I am not ignoring the question, but I think it is the wrong forum at the moment to deal with it. Obviously, we have got the financial statements coming up a bit later on the Agenda. Maybe then is the time to raise it. But I acknowledge what you are saying.

There we have all seven Members who brought the motion. Thank you.

At that point, I would like to pass it across to the P&F Committee for their response to what you have heard. A lot of information, a lot of detail. Who would like to present from Policy and Finance?

Conseiller Tighe, thank you.

Conseiller Tighe: I have prepared a statement, thank you, Mr Speaker.

Since being sworn in as a Conseiller and elected to committees in January 2025, I want to make it absolutely clear I am not afraid to stand up for change. Over the past 15 weeks I have made it my responsibility to attend every meeting, to voice my opinions, to raise my concerns and to advocate for full public and Conseiller engagement wherever possible. I have made the effort to read every report that I have received, often working many hours between public duties, committee work, paid employment and personal commitments. I knew the commitment required when I stood for election, and I seek no pity for it, but I want the public and fellow Conseillers to know that I have embraced the challenge wholeheartedly.

Throughout this time, I have realised an important truth; no matter how passionate, a Conseiller is but one voice within a committee. Yet I believe I have been able to make a positive contribution in every area I have been involved with.

Before the December election, some of my biggest concerns centred on governance within Chief Pleas. I am pleased to say that I see real and meaningful steps being taken to address these. Attendance registers are now being kept, public engagement is improving, the Revived Policy Development Group is functioning with a Revenue Generation Working Group and vital work is being done on Island planning. These were once concerns and now they are actions and I am optimistic about the future.

One area where I feel particularly positive is tourism. Sark has so many strengths, natural beauty, rich heritage and a unique way of life, and we are now building strong networks across Guernsey, Jersey, Alderney and France to help promote these assets. There are exciting times ahead.

That said, I must express my disappointment that so many key structures, policies and procedures within Chief Pleas are still not in existence, despite Sark becoming a democracy in 2008. This lack of foundational governance has a direct damaging effect. Conseillers are not supported in an appropriate or proportionate manner relative to the expectations placed upon them. There is precious little guidance, few policies and no clear framework to help those new to public service find their way. Where is the road map to help us do our jobs better? The result is a system where Members are left fighting fires rather than being enabled to focus on building the frameworks necessary for robust policy making and strategic economic planning.

I do not doubt that Chief Pleas current committee structure does not work. I have now seen its flaws first-hand, but that does not justify this vote of no confidence in the current Policy and Finance Committee. Only once since being sworn in have any of the signatories approached me personally with a query regarding Policy and Finance's behaviour or actions. There has been no other attempt to constructively address any perceived failings of the Committee, not individually, not collectively and not within the PDG, which I believe to be the appropriate forum for such matters. There have been several meetings, the opportunity for open dialogue has been there, but it has not taken place.

I believe that several Conseillers, I regret to say, have acted in the very manner they accuse others of in circumventing committee structures and acting individually. While our current system

810 may not be perfect, it is the system we have and we have a responsibility to work within it while seeking to improve it.

Before joining Chief Pleas, I held great faith in the Policy Development Group as a tool for cross-committee communication. However, even I have tired of being the only one to update the group with news of tourism and cannot recall another committee updating the PDG as to their
815 workstreams. I believe that communication is a two-way street.

It would also be dishonest of me to not speak of the personal challenges too. I believe that we should be focusing on building a strong foundation for future Conseillers, ensuring that those who serve Sark can do so with the structure, the tools and the support that they need. This is how we preserve Sark's independence and its way of life, by strengthening the very institutions that hold
820 it together.

I am committed to positive change, to working collaboratively and to ensuring that all Conseillers, current and future, can serve with dignity, respect and the resources they deserve. Over the past few days I have been deeply moved by the many messages of encouragement and support I have received from members of the public. These voices have made one thing
825 abundantly clear, that this vote of no confidence is not what the people of Sark want. They want stability, progress and leadership. That affirmation from the community has reminded me why I stood for election in the first place: to represent, to serve and to help shape a future we can all be proud of and I will not be supporting this vote of no confidence.

Thank you.

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The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Tighe, on behalf of the current Policy and Finance Committee.

Would anyone else from the current Committee like to add to what you have heard from Conseiller Tighe? Any other Members like to respond?

835 One second, Conseiller Harris, thank you.

Conseiller Guille, thank you.

Conseiller Guille: I would just like to respond to — just ad libs to several of the points raised by different Members.

840 Conseiller Chris Kennedy-Barnard claims that he makes his voice heard in P&F, and the first thing we heard about his opposition to the electricity plans was through the press, which has been happening a lot recently. There are constant references to a failing economy. Sark is solvent.

We had a criticism from Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard about failing to manage the staff, particularly the senior staff, and then we had a criticism from Conseiller Harris that when we sought to find a solution to manage the staff in 2023, with some assistance from Guernsey, that
845 was the wrong thing to do. We recognised at the time that the wording of that was incorrect but we were trying to do it in the best spirit. Conseiller Harris keeps referring to the £8.6/£11.6 million electricity projects. We have been absolutely clear recently that that is not the plan, although these numbers repeatedly keep getting bandied about.

850 We have said that the plan is exactly as Conseiller Harris has suggested to secure the grid, secure the safety, carry on with the diesel generation, and take stock of where we are. Interestingly, electricity seems to be the third or fourth priority of Conseiller Harris. I know the safety of electricity provision on Sark is a priority for many residents.

Fifty seven per cent rise in the Personal Capital Tax; well, it has risen by less than £200 in the
855 last five years. The reference to the Energy People Report, it was the Energy People Report that suggested we should investigate a complete replacement of the system.

Both Conseiller Harris and Conseiller Lord have referred to the votes, the direction of the House on the splitting of the Policy and Finance Committee. It was not a proposition that was voted on in the House. It was not a direction of the House. It was a suggestion by the Policy and Finance
860 Committee that we would investigate that, which we have been doing. We have asked the Law Officers to look at it. As we have previously replied to Conseillers, they have said it is a big piece

of work and they do not have the time for it at the moment. But it is something that Policy and Finance suggested themselves.

865 Again, the supposed issues with the tender process that Conseiller Lord speaks about, we do not recognise that. We hired a professional company to assist us with that, which is often the criticism that Sark does not seek professional advice, but we did so in this case. The £45,000 for running the electricity system up north, that is not the annual cost. It includes purchasing generators, which are an asset for the Island.

870 Conseiller Lord mentions again the structure of the Committee and then gives some ideas of his own to look into that. Why is it a vote of no confidence, why have Policy and Finance or the PDG not heard from any Conseillers about their suggestions or unhappiness with the structure of the Committee?

I am going to leave it like that for the moment and let somebody else speak.

875 **The Speaker:** Thank you, Conseiller Guille.

We have heard from members of P&F. I have seen Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard's hand up, but the first person was Conseiller Harris, and then I will come to Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard in a second.

Conseiller Harris, thank you.

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Conseiller Harris: Thank you, sir.

I think Conseiller Tighe is very aware from my contributions to the Policy Development Group how shocked and unconscionable I find the fact that Members of this House found out about two of the conditions of this loan through a Guernsey Government press release. She is well aware of that because I expressed my discontent in PDG.

885 I find it surprising that Members of this House might think that I am shy about coming forward with my views because I do not think that I am. I do not think members of the public gallery who listen to me speak and say similar things over the last couple of years would — I think they might find it surprising that I am shy about coming forward with my views as well.

890 In response to Conseiller Guille — I think Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard may correct me, but I think he resigned from the Future Energy Committee in January 2024 because he did not agree with the scheme. I think they might have been aware from then. I wonder if Conseiller Guille could help me: are we going to get the money that has been spent on the design and scoping exercise back if we do not go ahead with the overall renewable scheme because my understanding is that that money has disappeared unless we choose to take legal activity about it? That is a bit of a big mistake, I think.

895 I will probably leave it there.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Harris.

900 If I just remind speakers — some excellent points being made here — but if you could avoid, if at all possible, tit-for-tat. I recognise that all the points that have been raised are relevant, but if you could try and keep it specific as much as we can to the debate, which is basically a motion of no confidence in the Policy and Finance Committee, okay?

Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard next, followed by Conseiller Locke, followed by Conseiller Lord, 905 followed by Conseiller Cragoe. We will go in that order.

Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard, thank you.

Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

910 Just on the first point which Conseiller Harris has kindly pointed out. Yes, I did leave the Future Energy Committee because I did not believe in what was going on, but actually that was not to be my response.

More recently we had a P&F Committee meeting with Jake Burnyeat, which Conseiller Guille did not attend — I do not know what other engagements he had — although I was very vocal in

that meeting about not believing in this energy plan, the way it was structured. I said that I did not believe that the person running this actually believed in their own pitch. I believe that the economics of it are fragile. I have some grave doubts about it. I was very clear in the Committee about my dissatisfaction with this energy plan.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard.
Conseiller Locke, your hand was up next.
Thank you.

Conseiller Locke: Thank you, sir.

I read the vote of no confidence with dismay. Even as a new Conseiller, I have been aware of politically-motivated rumblings for months, if not years. It is such a shame. Those being targeted are people who I know work long and hard on behalf of Sark. They live here, not just officially resident. In many cases, they are from respected Island families going back centuries and to the 40 tenor who settled this Island. They have Sark at their heart and are dedicated to it. I have every confidence in the current members of Policy and Finance, with one exception.

This vote of no confidence comes at just the wrong time. I do not think that is random timing. After years of work on resolving Sark's electricity problems by taking it into community ownership, and the recent months of consultations and negotiations, our Policy and Finance Committee has got Guernsey's Policy and Resources Committee to back a loan, which should have been debated at the States of Deliberation yesterday. I say 'should' because they made a last-minute decision to defer the item on the Billet until tomorrow, entirely due to the political situation here and this vote of no confidence tonight.

Can I remind ourselves that the issues to do with Sark community power and the electricity system have been debated many times and carried at various Chief Pleas. Those involved in creating this delay should recognise their adverse impact on the agreed policy of Chief Pleas. Sark could have been in receipt of a loan offer today, which would then have been debated as a special Chief Pleas in the future. Instead the actions of a few have now left us hanging over the abyss.

I might add that these actions are against the views of every Islander who has sent an email to all Conseillers, as a matter of record, and those who have spoken to me, and the vast majority of the views expressed at several public meetings. I would like, if I may, to quote from a few emails received in the past few days.

I feel that the Conseillers being attacked are hard-working, diligent, honest, loyal residents trying to do their very best for the Island, and indeed the future of Sark. They work tirelessly, as do many other Conseillers, working often very long hours after their normal jobs to try and provide a better future. The opinion that so much time is being wasted on in-house personal attacks, the actual committee work is taking a back seat. This should not be happening. Please reject the motion of no confidence.

A separate one:

Hardworking people who work tirelessly for Sark with no financial reimbursement and minimal thanks are being treated in a way that is not fitting or fair. The perceived bullying and cruel behaviour by some Conseillers would not even be tolerated in a playground environment and is beneath what is expected of Members of Chief Pleas, who are there to represent Sark as a whole.

Another one:

I would like to take this opportunity ahead of tomorrow's Chief Pleas to express my disappointment in the recent vote of no confidence against Policy and Finance. This vote is clearly a means to undermine the current Committee members and disrupt the products they have been working on, as it is certainly not an effective way to address issues of transparency, accountability and good governance, yet it is being sold as such.

955 And another one:

I am writing to express my profound disappointment regarding the recent motion that appears to target individuals who have been working tirelessly to secure the future of our Island. This action feels less like a constructive step forward and more like a personal attack on those who have demonstrated commitment and integrity in their efforts. The Policy and Finance and Future Energy Committees are currently tackling one of the most urgent challenges Sark has faced in decades of regaining control of our power supply. Years of neglect have left it dangerously fragile. Every delay in addressing this issue puts lives at risk. I am emailing out of a fierce belief that Sark is worth fighting for, and I hope that tomorrow night common sense will prevail and this vote of no confidence will be unsuccessful.

Hello, all. I am not in agreement with this motion and quite frankly dread to think what an alternative outcome would look like. I respect the experience, dedication and loyalties to the Island that John, Edric, Natalie and Jolie have and trust they have the best interest for the future of Sark and its people.

Dear Conseillers. I was disappointed to hear that there is a vote of no confidence against Policy and Finance. I strongly disagree with this being put forward and urge you to vote against it. Please vote against the vote of no confidence and get back to something more important, which is trying to make the electric grid safe for the future.

To whom it may concern. I would like to voice my concerns on the motion of no confidence against certain P&R persons. I am very saddened about this, as I know a lot of people on the Island are. I can honestly say I have not heard one person who has agreed with this. John, Nat, Jolie and Edric are very devoted to their roles in Chief Pleas, as well as working with their other jobs and helping with their voluntary duties too.

960 Lastly, or almost lastly:

Dear Mr Locke. Please will you support John Guille and his supporters in Policy and Finance against the forthcoming vote of no confidence.

The last one says:

965 Very best of luck tomorrow evening.

Then I cannot read out the last phrase, it says 'sort the people out'. This I stress are not my words. None of these were solicited. All of these, bar the last, were sent to all Conseillers. I have not seen a single against email to all Conseillers and I have had no Islander. I will be voting as these
970 Islanders wish, to defeat this vote of no confidence, to support the decisions of Chief Pleas and to follow the wishes of the Islanders for how we work. I hope that other Conseillers will do the same.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Locke.

975 I see the hands up from over here for Conseiller Makepeace and Conseiller Kennedy- Barnard and indeed initially from Conseiller Lord. But, in fact, Conseiller Cragoe was next and then to Conseiller Lord and then to Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard and then to Conseiller Makepeace. Thank you.

Conseiller Cragoe, thank you.

980 **Conseiller Cragoe:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

First of all I would like to thank Conseiller Locke for reading into *Hansard* some of the all-Conseillers emails that we had received, all of which were very positive and which was something I had intended to do, so I am very grateful for that.

985 I think I would also like to, before I make any comment, perhaps just point out to Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard that if he feels he had not heard about the Bailiwick Commission before he read about it in the press, perhaps he should read his emails, because that was in a draft letter that was sent to P&F and Future Energy well before it appeared in the press. I cannot remember the exact date, and there was quite a lot of correspondence about that letter.

I would also urge people to vote against this proposition. I just cannot even say how frustrated I am with this motion. By the barrage of — and I have got all sorts of words crossed out, and I finally come to the word “unpleasant” — email from some, not all, but some of the signatories. This is a Committee which in its present form has only been in place for three months. Three months. It is not a very long time. So we need to give them a chance.

I have said to a number of people after the election I thought things had improved, how positive it was, how the PDG shows that we can really work together. But it seems to me that this is really about a few people who are pursuing personality conflicts. But that is politics as well. You have to be able to work with people, particularly in a Chamber as small as this and where we do not have political parties. You need to be able to work together in groups. That is one of the things that is interesting about it, is that all the Committees are constituted in different ways, different people, different groups. It is one of the things that makes it interesting and very positive.

I think describing the venomous state of the House, I mean that is — I really can only say that the people who have signed, or some of the people who have signed this motion, have made it much more venomous than it was before. If you are not happy with that, I think you look to yourselves in the first instance.

I hope also that those who are bringing this proposition stick to promises which they have made in emails, and indeed here even, to accept the results and to stop talking about this and stop having a go at other people and to start working together. Really, that is all I want to say.

I think there are things we can do around scrutiny. I think there are things we can do. I think PDG is a very positive — the scrutiny committee as proposed, which is what happens in Guernsey and in the UK, probably will not work here, but PDG is, I find, such a positive forum. I think Conseiller Sullivan and Conseiller Tighe have done a great job chairing that, and everybody who has contributed in the working groups is a great thing. But give us all a chance, let's give ourselves a chance. In particular, let's give this particular iteration of P&F a chance to actually start making a difference.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Cragoe.
Conseiller Lord, your hand was up next.
Thank you.

Conseiller Lord: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I would like to respond to a few points. I think people are reading prepared statements. Can we have some quiet? I think people are reading prepared statements, perhaps expecting a different kind of debate. I am certainly not aware of anyone attacking anybody in this House right now and to hear Conseiller Locke's words and, to some extent, Conseiller Cragoe's words, it sounds as though there is a belief that we are. We have literally all spoken about financial matters, about scrutiny, about controls that we do not have, and we are broadly in agreement on the issues that arise from that.

I will respond to a point that Conseiller Locke made that none of the emails he read out were solicited. This is not true. In fact, if you cross-reference the sources of emails with the Facebook posts that you yourself liked, then you will find that that Facebook post, which I found incendiary and I found particularly vitriolic, and I appreciate that some people were more targeted than others, but I do not believe that I should be painted with that brush for signing a letter for my own reasons. It is going to result in people doing that. It is said to tell people to go and email all Conseillers and tell people how you do not want this to proceed. So it was solicited.

Another point I would like to make is in response to Conseiller Guille's argument or point that the proposition to break up P&F was an investigatory thing. It was not a direction. It was not something they were meant to do. They were meant to go off to the Law Officers and report back. Firstly, where was the report? There was not one. Secondly, I will read the proposition from the time:

The Chief Pleas approves the reinstatement of the Finance and Resource Committee and to instruct the Law Officers to make the necessary legislative changes.

1045 This is what we are facing in the House. Revisionist history. This happens all the time. It happens in PDG. We get gaslit constantly. It is not necessarily — perhaps gaslighting is a strong term, but we get misrememberings transmitted. They are always beneficial for people that are pushing an agenda. That needs to stop as well.

That is all I think I have to say about it, to be honest. But I will leave you with that proposition. I think you can all make your own choices about it.

1050 **The Speaker:** Thank you, Conseiller Lord.

Before I come back to this side of the House, I am just going to go with Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard next, Conseiller Makepeace, followed by Conseiller Guille, followed by Conseiller Locke.

Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard, thank you.

1055 **Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Just a couple of things, really. One, I realise Conseiller Guille made two points in his first retort. I responded to one of them, I did not respond to the other. I wonder if he could just repeat the one about the Chief Civil Servant for me.

1060 **The Speaker:** Conseiller Guille, thank you.

1065 **Conseiller Guille:** In fact, I was repeating Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard's earlier comment and Conseiller Ben Harris's earlier comments where Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard criticised his own Committee for the management of senior staff and said it should be better, and I said that that was the — that was the sentiment behind what was proposed at Michaelmas 2023. I recognise that the wording of that was not correct and it was constitutionally not as good as it could have been but that was the exact form of supervision Conseiller Harris was then criticised, and straight after Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard. There you go.

1070 Sorry, sir, while I am up I want to apologise to Conseiller Lord. That was a proposition but it was a proposition brought by Policy and Finance of their own vocation to the House.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Guille.

1075 Before I come to Conseiller Makepeace, Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard, do you want to respond to that?

Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

1080 Sorry, what was the criticism you were levelling at me, Conseiller Guille? Was it just that I criticised the management of the staff, was that it?

The Speaker: Just one second. I would remind you please, try and keep it in terms of generic conversation about the motion. We are getting bogged down — just one second, Conseiller Tighe. Conseiller Guille to respond to that, thank you.

1085 **Conseiller Guille:** It was not a criticism. I was pointing out two counterpoints from both the speakers, and Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard's point was one that we were trying to address in Michaelmas 2023, and it has been a repeated problem in Sark, is the management of — we are all volunteers and the head of the Civil Service effectively has no manager above them. That was an issue, along with HR matters, that we were trying to address. There was no criticism. I was just pointing out the different arguments that came on after.

1090

The Speaker: There is a hand up from Conseiller Tighe, but Conseiller Makepeace was next.

1095 **Conseiller Makepeace:** I would just like to say in response to Conseiller Locke that we are not really here to be swayed by what amounts of emotional anecdotes or selective hearsay. Quoting from unnamed emails to bolster a personal position is not evidence, it is just emotional blackmail. We owe it to the people of Sark to make decisions based on facts, not sentiments. If Members want to quote public opinion it should be on the record and open to scrutiny. Otherwise it is emotional pressure not parliamentary discourse.

1100 Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace.
Conseiller Tighe was next. One second.

1105 **Conseiller Tighe:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.
It was just to say I felt that it was becoming tit-for-tat and to stop it, but it has stopped now.

The Speaker: So you agree?

1110 **Conseiller Tighe:** Yes.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Conseiller Locke, first and then Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard.
Conseiller Locke.

1115 **Conseiller Locke:** Thank you, sir.
I would like to apologise to Conseiller Lord. I had not fully remembered the wording of that Facebook post. In fact I had forgotten it entirely, so I would like to withdraw my statement that it was unsolicited and replace that with unsolicited by me.

1120 In response to Conseiller Makepeace, I am perfectly at liberty to have these emails either read out in full from there and named or read into the record of Chief Pleas as they were sent to all Conseillers and are not in any way hidden, as far as I am concerned. I can read the names now or have them put into the record as you wish.

1125 **The Speaker:** Could I ask you one question? Is it the wish of the people who wrote those emails that their names should be shared in a public forum?

Conseiller Locke: No, they were sent to all Conseillers and not specifically approved or disapproved of being public.

1130 **The Speaker:** I would think it is probably a dangerous route to go down. I think the statements have been made —

1135 **Conseiller Locke:** In which case, I think the accusation from Conseiller Makepeace is a little unjust.
Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Back to Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard, if we may please.

1140 **Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.
Just to say thank you to Conseiller Guille for clearing that up. I made one point and I was not sure where the second one was going.

Just a quick response to Conseiller Cragoe. I do not believe I have ever referenced the Bailiwick Commission. My issue was actually with the conditions that were attached to the loan, namely the constitutional review. If I have missed that somewhere along the line, fine. But that was what I took particular exception to. Also, I would say it lacks perspective or is an inversion of reality to suggest that these arguments tonight are about emotions or whatever else. We have made economic arguments tonight. That has been the point of all of these other Conseillers around the room. I think we should stick to that.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you for that.

Conseiller Cragoe, would you like to respond to that?

Conseiller Cragoe: Yes, thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Bailiwick Commission and the Constitutional Commission are one and the same thing and they and the tax review and the use of the Impôt as a backstop are the three conditions of the loan, which is being hopefully — after tonight — being debated in the States tomorrow. That is what I was referring to; all three of those are mentioned in the draft letter that was circulated to the Committees before it was sent to the States, so that is what I am referring to. I think there is a bit of confusion about what things are called.

In terms of personal attacks, I have to say that not in this debate tonight necessarily but in my inbox, which I am happy to share with anyone, because most of them were sent to all Conseillers, there have been a lot of personal attacks, and that is what I was referring to.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Cragoe.

Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard, you have got your hand up.

Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard: Just to say, my article that went into the media was very clear about my thoughts and views, so if anybody needs to reference that in a timeline, I have got no issue with it.

The Speaker: Thank you for confirming that.

Conseiller Curtis.

Conseiller Curtis: Thank you.

I shall not be supporting this vote of no confidence. My reasons? Firstly, there is absolutely no public clamour, as we have heard, for such action. In fact, I have heard nothing but praise for the endeavours and dedication of the Chairman. The public, as am I, are very grateful to have the benefit of such a loyal, capable ambassador for Sark, working tirelessly for our Island, without self-interest, and he is homegrown too.

Secondly, changing the membership and leadership of our lead Committee will undoubtedly set back many aspects of Sark's relationship with those off Island. It takes years to position our tiny jurisdiction so favourably among our neighbouring islands and further afield. As such, a vote of no confidence in this important Committee will set us back considerably on the world stage.

Thirdly, I believe there is a great danger in using the vote of no confidence unnecessarily. I see it as the last tool in the toolbox to be used as the last resort, rather than in a situation such as this, which has come across to me as an unwarranted, disruptive, point-scoring, personal campaign that will surely have already undone all the credit Chief Pleas achieved from having a contested election after so many years without.

There is a real danger of external observers, such as the Ministry of Justice, seeing this type of proposition as indicating a malfunctioning Government, forcing them to react, to restore good governance by whatever means they — not us — feel is necessary.

1195 Finally, there are now just 18 Conseillers rather than the original 28. Just 18 of us. We simply must set out to support rather than destroy each other or we will be failing our Island and, as a result, our Island will fail.

Thank you.

1200 **The Speaker:** Thank you, Conseiller Curtis.
Conseiller Guille, thank you.

Conseiller Guille: Thank you, sir.

1205 Obviously, when I stood up earlier, I was reacting to the points that had been made by various Members who signed this vote of no confidence, to which the Policy and Finance Committee were not given any reasons beforehand. Neither were we communicated to. I think the debate tonight, unlike the vicious emails and the abuse that we get almost daily within Chief Pleas and not in the gaze of the public, has probably been measured because I think these Conseillers realise (a) they probably do not have the numbers in the House, and (b) they certainly do not have the support
1210 of the public.

The reasons given tonight, like I said, they were not given to us in advance, but I do not think this is — be in no doubt, this is no different to the hastily arranged attempted vote of no confidence in Michaelmas 2023. I have serious, serious concerns about the conduct of some Members, but I am not going to raise it tonight now because the debate has been not too
1215 fractious, but I will give them the right of reply in private before next Chief Pleas.

I would like to thank my fellow Conseillers and the public for their support but we cannot carry on like we have done for the last 18 months. It is personally wearing, it has been wearing on the Conseillers who have only been in Chief Pleas literally for three and a half months. It is not sustainable. A vote of no confidence is not a standard thing. This is another orchestrated tactic, in
1220 my opinion, and I am going to leave it there tonight, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Guille.

There were two other hands up. It was Conseiller Makepeace first, followed by Conseiller Harris.

1225 Conseiller Makepeace, thank you.

Conseiller Makepeace: I think it is quite hypocritical for Conseiller Guille to be talking about other people's conduct when we in Chief Pleas — all Conseillers — have received, what can I say, quite upsetting information about Conseiller Guille's antics in public, and I would be quite
1230 prepared to read that out but I will not.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Conseiller Makepeace, you are making it personal. I did ask that it should not be personal.
1235

Conseiller Makepeace: I do apologise, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you.

1240 Conseiller Harris, thank you.

Conseiller Harris: I will keep this short but Facebook views, I think memories may differ. I personally have never sent an abusive email to a colleague in Chief Pleas. If anybody thinks they have received one from me, please tell me now. Again, it is not my style.

I do think it is important to express when one is concerned. The reality here is that we cannot
1245 get out of our situation by taxing ourselves. That is not going to happen. While certain people might want to turn this into a story about bad naughty people being nasty to the leader who

apparently we cannot do without because he is the only person who can represent us internationally, but that sounds — I do not know how democratic that sounds. It sounds maybe a bit more authoritarian, but anyway.

1250 Democracy involves conflict. I probably gave the most detailed manifesto of anybody in recent times. I was put in here on that basis and I am just going to express what I think. I hope that people can find that of some use and if they cannot then I suppose I must offer my apologies for disappointing them.

1255 But the point is these are serious issues. It is not about personalities. We are in trouble. Not only are we in trouble, but I personally am very, very disappointed — as a Member of Chief Pleas, I am very disappointed to have been left in the dark over the terms of this loan and, indeed, not to have had a discussion about how we should respond in terms of what our asks are out of this commission. There has been no discussion, I do not know if there has been a discussion in the Policy and Finance Committee or not, but there has not been any from Members of Chief Pleas. I
1260 am very disappointed by that. What is the phrase Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard used? ‘Inversion of reality’ I think is his phrase. Well, I do not know about inversion of reality — maybe, maybe not — but I know what I think; this House has not been treated with respect by Policy and Finance over this issue, it is a pattern of behaviour and it needs to change.

Thank you, sir.

1265

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Harris.

Right, okay where are we up to? Conseiller Baker next, followed by Conseiller Lord.

Conseiller Baker, thank you.

1270 **Conseiller Baker MBE:** I think everything has been said that needs to be said. We received an email recently from a new Member of Chief Pleas and the subject was ‘Enough’ and I think that was good words. I think enough is enough tonight as well.

Thank you.

1275 **The Speaker:** Thank you, Conseiller Baker.

Conseiller Lord, thank you.

Conseiller Lord: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

1280 I would like to thank Conseiller Locke and Conseiller Guille for their apology, which I take on board graciously. I would like to echo Conseiller Harris’s words that we are failing economically. We are a failed state economically, in my view. We are in a very deep hole. It is not the fault of individuals. I believe that the merger of the two Committees resulted in a super committee that lacked the size to deal with all of the workload it receives. I would welcome conversations with Policy and Finance. I do not believe extending Policy and Finance is the answer. The answer is
1285 implementing the measures that were agreed in January 2024.

I appreciate that Law Office time is short and that it is a hard thing to do, but we need to start with that work and we need to do it soon. So I would ask if Policy and Finance will focus on the economic development plan and the reserves policy, because the reserves policy is going to be essential if we are to seek external funding, and particularly the economic development plan, and
1290 that they perhaps work with Chief Pleas as a whole as a way of perhaps moving this all forward and drawing a line under tonight. I would appreciate that very much, if they were open to that.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Lord.

1295 I am conscious that it is coming up to the two-hour mark that we have been discussing this very important subject. I am not demeaning the subject, but there has been a lot of debate, a lot of conversation across the House. As we start to draw to closing this and bring the motion to the vote, Conseiller Barker, you have a comment to make.

1300 **Conseiller Barker:** Yes, thanks, Mr Speaker.

In agreement with Conseiller Lord on what he has been saying this evening, I do believe from my studying and from sitting in the back here, it was Pauline Mallinson in 2018 and 2019, who advised Chief Pleas, which was passed, regarding a scrutiny committee. I do think this is a big part of the problem here, when the Policy and Finance Committee became one committee, because before that obviously it was two Committees with five on each Committee, and it has created like a superpower committee. Most jurisdictions and countries do have a scrutiny committee. I do not understand how it has taken so long to do this from 2019. I believe possibly we would not be having this conversation or this debate now if this was a motion. I think in 2022 it was former Conseiller Delaney that commented on this, and I think it would be nice to get some guarantees that this could happen, please.

We do need more emphasis on an economic plan, we do need more revenue streams, Mr Speaker. It is part of the Policy and Finance Mandate to do that item 6 and 7 out of 12. I have sat behind here before as a Conseiller for a few years. I have sat in here for two and a half years. We have not any; none. How is this even possible? What are we going to do here? We need new revenue streams, sir. We need some new ideas. We need to freshen it up. We need to try and be more proactive in our economics. If we do not, yes, I think we are going to be in trouble. That is the bottom line of it, and that is the seriousness of where we are.

Thank you very much.

1320 **The Speaker:** Thank you, Conseiller Barker.

Before I come to you, Conseiller Makepeace, Conseiller Tighe, you are next.

Conseiller Tighe: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I would like to thank Conseiller Cragoe for her reference to we need to be given a chance to work. We are a new cohort who have only been in for three months. As mentioned, the PDG is working again. We have a Revenue Generation Working Group. We also have a Good Governance Working Group, which has various aspects under its policies identified such as the scrutiny scorecard, the amalgamation of the tribunal structures. We need to be given a chance to action these things. I think this proposition was premature in the fact that, as the new cohort, we have not been given a chance to bed in, we have not been given a chance to get our feet off the ground really and so these items that you bring up, Conseiller Barker, are being addressed within the PDG.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Tighe.

Before I come back to you Conseiller Barker, Conseiller Makepeace, you are next.

1335

Conseiller Makepeace: I would just like to give note that I made an inquiry for the Policy and Finance around about three or four days ago and I actually produced something from the Chief Pleas of 9th February 2022 and it says:

Formation of an independent scrutiny panel for the Policy and Finance Committee. It was noted that the Policy and Finance Committee are working with the Law Officers and a draft projet with an acting Ordinance is due to be discussed with the Law Officers.

1340

This was over three years ago. I wrote to P&F, 'Maybe you could update of its progress' but I did not receive a reply.

Thank you, sir.

1345 **The Speaker:** Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace.

One second, Conseiller Bateson. Conseiller Barker, you wanted to say something?

Conseiller Barker: Yes, Mr Speaker.

1350 I would like a more solid reply on the scrutiny situation. I do think one reason why we are here now is because of this. I think from 2019 is long enough. The Chair of Policy and Finance was Deputy Chair of the Policy and Finance Committee in 2019. It is long enough to work on it, four and a half years. Four and a half years, in my humble opinion, sir, is quite a long time to have some more revenue streams and trying to sort out more revenue generation coming on to the Island. That is where it is. It is just frustrating.

1355 We need a bigger focus on this or we could be in trouble, in my humble opinion, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Barker.

Conseiller Bateson, you had your hand up.

Thank you.

1360

Conseiller Bateson: Thank you, sir.

I would just like to point out we have just witnessed Conseiller Makepeace reading from a mobile phone, and you have just seen it yourself because it was in full view. Is that okay? I thought all mobile phones were supposed to be turned off.

1365

The Speaker: I hear what you are saying, Conseiller Bateson, but, in fact, referring you to Rule 19 part 2, those must be switched off now, less for those allowed to Chief Pleas Members in accordance with Rule 19. So Rule 19 does cover it if you need – I see Conseiller Lord has a device there as well. They are permitted for the benefit of the debate within Chief Pleas.

1370

Conseiller Makepeace: Sir, I have my files on here, I do not have a slate and a chisel any more so now I am using the phone, which has got all my details on there.

The Speaker: You are obviously using that. Okay. I think we are getting to a stage now where we hear a lot of discussion, a lot of debate.

1375

Before we go to the vote, Conseiller Guille, would you like to say something?

Conseiller Guille: Yes. Policy and Finance will happily – if Conseiller Barker wants to pose questions about economic development and a scrutiny committee, he can do it to Policy and Finance without having to resort to a vote of no confidence.

1380

The Speaker: Okay, thank you.

Right, I think we are getting to a stage whereby we can start to sum up. On behalf of the seven Conseillers who brought the motion, who would like to bring it to a conclusion in order that we can present it to go to the vote? Who would take the lead on that?

1385

Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard, thank you.

Conseiller Kenney-Barnard: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Could I ask for a named vote tonight, would that be okay?

1390

The Speaker: Very good.

Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard: I would just like to say thank you to everyone for listening and hearing this important debate out. I think we know the outcome here but let's see how it goes.

1395

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you very much.

One further comment from Conseiller Tighe.

Thank you.

1400

Conseiller Tighe: Sorry, can I please ask for a named vote?

1405

The Speaker: Yes, Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard has just done that. So there are two requests for a named vote. We will just organise things here and if I just ask you all to focus on the debate and not have individual conversations, both in the Chamber and the public gallery. It is very tempting, I know how tempting it is, but let's focus on the job in hand, please.

1410

So we have before us a motion of no confidence in the Policy and Finance Committee and we are going to go to a named vote on this. So if you are in agreement with the motion, vote pour. If you are against the motion, vote contre. So it is pour in favour, contre against. I am sorry to state basics but just to avoid any confusion.

Conseiller Barker: Mr Speaker, and abstain, sir, yes.

1415

The Speaker: You are going to abstain?

Conseiller Barker: No, can Conseillers abstain? Of course, they can, yes.

1420

The Speaker: Yes, indeed. You can vote pour or contre or no vote, if you prefer. If anyone would like to vote no vote, then that is your prerogative.

At which time we will start the voting. Greffier.

There was a named vote.

Carried – Pour 5, Contre 10, No Vote 2

POUR

Conseiller Christopher Kennedy-Barnard
Conseiller Marcus Barker
Conseiller Benjamin Harris
Conseiller Mary Nicolle
Conseiller Frank Makepeace

CONTRE

Conseiller Jolie Rose
Conseiller John Guille
Conseiller Helen Plummer
Conseiller Helen Cragoe
Conseiller Michael Locke
Conseiller Natalie Tighe
Conseiller Christopher
Bateson
Conseiller David Curtis
Conseiller James Martin
Conseiller Edric Baker MBE

NO VOTE

Conseiller Scott Sullivan
Conseiller Steven Lord

1425

The Speaker: Thank you for your patience. Thank you for voting. The results are as follows. Those in favour of the motion, 5 votes; those against the motion, 10 votes, with 2 no votes. So I therefore confirm that the motion has been unsuccessful as written.

1430

Thank you for that. Thank you for the debate. Thank you for keeping it under control. A very emotive subject and I am very grateful for the way in which you have presented yourselves. Therefore, based on that, it is now seven o'clock. I, for my own benefit, very selfishly, I would like to propose a comfort break for five minutes, just to draw a breath before we move on to the rest of the agenda.

Thank you. If you could come back here at five past seven, please.

*Chief Pleas adjourned at 6.59 p.m.
and resumed its sitting at 7.05 p.m.*

1435 **The Speaker:** Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for coming back in, grabbing some fresh air. It has now just gone five past seven so we move on to Agenda Item 1.

1. Matters arising from Extraordinary Meeting held on 13th November 2024

1440 **The Speaker:** Matters arising from the Extraordinary Meeting held on 13th November 2024. *Hansard* has been published and it is on the Chief Pleas website. Does anyone have any points they would like to raise from those minutes? No? Okay.

2. Matters arising from Budget Meeting held on 20th November 2024

The Speaker: Likewise, Agenda Item 2, matters arising from the Budget Meeting held on 20th November 2024. Does anyone have any points they would like to raise from that meeting? No? Okay, thank you.

3. Matters arising from Extraordinary (Special) Meeting held on 20th January 2025

1445 **The Speaker:** Agenda Item 3, matters arising from the Extraordinary Special Meeting held on 20th January 2025. Does anyone have any things they would like to raise from that meeting? Thank you.

4. Matters arising from Christmas Meeting held on 22nd January 2025

1450 **The Speaker:** Agenda Item 4, matters arising from the Christmas Meeting held on 22nd January 2025. Does anyone have any points they would like to raise from that meeting? Okay, thank you.

**5. Questions not related to Business of the Day—
Marriage (Bailiwick of Guernsey) (Amendment) Regulations 2004—
Question by Conseiller Lord**

1455 **The Speaker:** We come next to Agenda Item 5, which is questions not related to the Business of the Day. I have received three questions not related to the Business of the Day.
Let me get my notes up. The first one is a question from Conseiller Lord for the Policy and Finance Committee. Conseiller Lord, would you like to ask your question, please?

1460 **Conseiller Lord:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.
At the meeting of the States of Deliberation on 19th February, the meeting laid an amendment to the Marriage (Bailiwick of Guernsey)(Amendment) Regulations 2024. Section 66(4)(b) of this law states:

Before making any regulations under this law, the Committee must consult, (b) in the case of regulations having an effect in Sark, the Policy and Finance Committee of the Chief Pleas of Sark.

1465 In relation to the terms of the proposed regulations, a failure to comply with this subsection does not invalidate any regulations made under this law.

I would like to ask Policy and Finance what consultation took place, how the Committee was informed and when, what actions were agreed and in which meeting? Given that P&F wished to publish their actions, would they also publish the actions from this meeting so we have a starting point for discussion on consultations to take to PDG?

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Lord.

Slightly more involved there than I had written down. Who is going to take this question?

1475 Conseiller Rose, thank you very much indeed.

Conseiller Rose: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The answer is there was no consultation on this matter that we were aware of. The regulations seek to better align the fees payable by civil celebrants and authorised religious officials under the Marriage (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Law 2020. The fee for training for authorisation as a civil celebrant was decreased from £250 to £60. The fee for registration of celebrant was of civil celebrant was increase from £50 to £60.

Thank you.

1485 **The Speaker:** Thank you, Conseiller Rose.

Moving on to question number 2 from Conseiller Makepeace, also to the Policy and Finance Committee.

Conseiller Makepeace, thank you.

1490 **Conseiller Makepeace:** I cannot remember what that is. Sir, I think I have said enough tonight to the Policy and Finance Committee, I will waive on that one.

The Speaker: Would you like me to remind you?

1495 **Conseiller Makepeace:** No, it is okay.

The Speaker: Okay, so question 2 falls away, therefore you are back on your feet, potentially. Question number 3 from yourself to Policy and Finance.

1500 **Conseiller Makepeace:** Pass. I will let that one go as well.

The Speaker: This is looking good, or not, as the case may be. Thank you. So you can stand down, Policy and Finance, on those last two questions.

**6. Amendment to the Cutting of Hedges (Sark) Ordinance 2009 –
Agriculture, Environment and Sea Fisheries Committee Report considered –
Proposition carried as amended**

To consider a Report with Proposition from the Agriculture, Environment and Sea Fisheries Committee entitled 'Amendment to the Cutting of Hedges (Sark) Ordinance 2009'.

1505

Proposition:

That Chief Pleas directs the Agriculture, Environment & Sea Fisheries Committee to speak with the Law Officers of the Crown to draft an amendment to 'The Cutting of Hedges (Sark) Ordinance, 2009' to bring about the change detailed in this Report together with a practical enforcement process with appropriate level of penalties for non compliance.

The Speaker: Let's move on to Agenda Item 6, which is to consider a Report with Proposition from the Agriculture, Environment and Sea fisheries Committee entitled 'Amendment to the Cutting of Hedges (Sark) Ordinance 2009'. I would ask Conseiller Plummer to introduce this.

1510 **Conseiller Plummer:** Yes, may I just pass this report over to Conseiller Carol Crago, please.

The Speaker: Conseiller Cragoe, okay, thank you very much indeed.
Conseiller Cragoe, would you like to introduce this Report, please?

1515 **Conseiller Cragoe:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Yes, actually to real business. This Proposition proposes an alteration to the Cutting of Hedges (Sark) Ordinance 2009. This Ordinance is technically within the Douzaine's remit but it was discussed in Douzaine and because the impetus for the changes are primarily, or in part, agricultural, the Douzaine felt it more appropriate that the Proposition came from Agriculture and Environment.

1520 I sit on both Committees, as does Conseiller Curtis, and I would like to thank him very much for his extensive and very valuable advice in putting this together. If you want to know more about best hedge-cutting practice, I suggest you speak to him. I also want to thank Conseiller Rose for her initial work on it when she was on Douzaine, and also Linda Higgins from La Société Sercquaise for her help.

1525 The existing Ordinance requires hedges bordering public roads to be cut back twice a year, once in early June and again in late October. The June cut is problematic because this is not only when birds are nesting and hedge flowers are out, but also when tourists begin arriving in large numbers. Yet at just exactly this moment we start hacking back habitats and very attractive vistas. Cutting at this time, because we are taking away the flowers, we reduce hedge fruit that is available for wildlife and, I might say, connoisseurs of sloe gin. Sorry, I had to add that. I was decanting some earlier today as an alternative to all the other things I had to think about. *(Interjection)* It is. It is, absolutely, based on Conseiller Harris's advice as well on when to decant my sloe gin.

1535 Therefore, the Committee believes if the timing of the cut were changed to a single main cut of woody vegetation, which is say trees and hedges, in late October, with a summer maintenance cut of verges in June, the impact on wildlife and tourism would be greatly lessened. We are also extending the June cut period to lessen the impact of 47,000 people with strimmers, saws and so on, all at the same moment.

1540 We are also asking that landowners refrain from cutting woody vegetation between the beginning of February and the end of August. I would note that this Ordinance only applies to vegetation along public roads but we would hope that landowners will generally follow best practice — we obviously cannot make them — and keep tree and hedge cutting to late autumn and winters, which is when it belongs.

1545 The existing ordinance does not provide a lot of detail on how cuts are to be done, other than that trees should be above a certain height. This results in what can only be described as scalping banks, right back to bare earth. This is destroying very sensitive wildflowers and then just allowing more resilient thugs like hogweed. Therefore, we have proposed to include more detail about verge cutting and about keeping the gutters clear. I do have a couple of slight amendments to what we are proposing, which I will come on to. But this is to help to keep the gutters clear for the flow of water while at the same time balancing other needs.

As this is a road safety and maintenance issue, I would note that the Douzaine intends to reinstate L'Enterrement, the funeral march in early November, and if you are not familiar with that, it is a formal walk along all the public roads with the Constable and the Douzaine to check that hedges and trees have been cut correctly. If necessary, any relevant landowners will be notified of what needs to be done to rectify any problems and the Ordinance provides for penalties up to level 2 for non-compliance.

We are also intending to produce a short guide for landowners to show how hedges and verges can be cut so that they are better for the hedge, the road and everyone else. The Proposition therefore is to instruct the law officers to make the necessary changes, and we would recommend that the Assembly approves this policy and we are committed to regular reviews to it.

I would also like to say that in the actual Report, which I have mislaid now, there are two – thank you, Conseiller Curtis. There is in the first bold heading at the bottom of the first page, in the heading 'Cutting of hedges' there is a typo and it is not 'there all hedges' but 'all their hedges'. Then under summer maintenance at the top of the second page, having consulted with our road maintenance crew, we would like to revise this sentence:

In addition, they shall between the 1st day and the 25th day of June, trim banks and verges to no shorter than 10 cm (4 inches)

which is what it already says:

save for the lowest 12 inches of banks and verges which should be reduced to a length of approximately 2 inches

so not scalped, not bereft, but short:

in order to maintain a clear road gutter and they shall immediately thereafter remove from the public road all materials cut.

I am sorry about that late addition but they came in quite late.
Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Cragoe. That was in addition to the original Report, the point that Conseiller Cragoe made.

Conseiller Cragoe: Yes.

The Speaker: The Proposition has also changed and I will re-read the proposition when we get to that stage in a minute. Anything else you would like to add Conseiller Cragoe?

Conseiller Cragoe: No, I think unless anybody has any questions, that is fine.
Thank you very much. Thank you.

The Speaker: All right, thank you.

Are there any questions to what you have just heard from Conseiller Cragoe from the Committee? No? Okay, well, therefore, if you are happy, let's go to the vote. Sorry, let's go to the Proposition. The Proposition reads: that Chief Pleas directs the Agriculture, Environment and Sea Fisheries Committee to speak with the law officers of the Crown to draft an amendment to the Cutting of Hedges (Sark) Ordinance 2009, to bring about the change detailed in this Report together with a practical enforcement process with appropriate level of penalties for non-compliance. That is the Proposition.

If I could ask for a vote of hands. Those in favour; those against? That is **carried**.
Thank you very much indeed.

**7. Scallop Licence Fee –
Agriculture, Environment and Sea Fisheries Committee Report considered –
Proposition carried**

1600

To consider a Report with Proposition from the Agriculture, Environment and Sea Fisheries Committee entitled ‘Scallop Licence Fee’.

Proposition:

That Chief Pleas approve the increase in the Scallop License Fee, to £125, for 2026.

The Speaker: Next to Agenda Item 7, which is to consider a Report with Proposition from the Agriculture, Environment and Sea Fisheries Committee again, entitled ‘Scallop Licence Fee’.
Conseiller Plummer, is this to you?

1605

Conseiller Plummer: Yes, it is.
Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Plummer, introduce the Report.

1610

Conseiller Plummer: Yes, thank you very much, indeed.

The Report really is self-explanatory but in order for a person to take scallops from Sark waters they need to have first applied for and been granted a licence to take scallops. These licences are issued at the beginning of the year. The licences are being issued to them by the Agriculture, Environment and Sea Fisheries Committee under the Scallop Licensing (Law) Sark Ordinance 1998. In addition to the closed season and that only hand-dived scallops may be taken, the number of scallop licences that the Committee issue each year acts as a control against overfishing.

1615

For 2025, 12 scallop licences have been issued. A report on the total scallop catch for the year is presented to Chief Pleas by the Committee as part of its annual report. Under section 5(1) of the 1998 Ordinance, the Committee may require that for it to issue a scallop licence, a fee shall be paid. For 2025, the fee is £100 and was set at this figure at the Christmas Meeting in 1998.

1620

The Committee feels that it is time that the fee is reviewed and it is suggesting that for 2026 it should raise to £125. Yes, we just wanted to go for a small increase because we know it is a dangerous job, we know that we have divers that go down and they are not, as you heard, allowed to take the scallops away, but Sark does use up all the scallops that are provided for them and I hope that people will vote for this Proposition.

1625

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Plummer.

1630

Does anyone have any questions of the Committee regarding the scallop licence fee? Yes, two questions. Conseiller Barker first, followed by Conseiller Lord, Conseiller Nicolle third.
Conseiller Barker.

Conseiller Barker: Yes, thank you, Conseiller Plummer.

1635

Does Conseiller Plummer know how much the licence fee in Guernsey is, please? I would just like to know.

Conseiller Plummer: No. I think it is more but I can check and I can let you know. I will do that tomorrow.

1640

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Plummer.

Conseiller Lord, you are next.

1645 **Conseiller Lord:** The rise seems quite reasonable given the time since the last increase, accounting for inflation at £100 in 1998 should be over £200 by 2026. I spoke to a local scalloper who told me that scallops are the only additional licence on top of the fishing licence. People listening, although not those watching, may be surprised to know that I am not actually a diver myself.

1650 I do know that scalloping is an incredibly dangerous and hard-working job and it is not well paid. So I would like to ask what the Committee is doing to protect local fishermen and the fishing industry, and what attempts it has or plans to make in order to improve their lives.

Thank you.

1655 **The Speaker:** Conseiller Plummer, did you have notice of that question?

Conseiller Plummer: No, I did not have notice.

The Speaker: Would you like to respond?

1660 **Conseiller Plummer:** Yes, I will. Yes, we do protect our fishermen. We have a closed season. The closed season is from October the 20th until March the 20th and they are protected. The fishermen are having problems at the moment but it is not just within our Bailiwick waters, it is the south of England with octopus. They are finding it very, very hard going. We have a diver that goes down, Ms Sue Daly, and she inspects the beds every so often for us to let us know.

1665 The reason that we did not put it up higher, it was discussed in Committee, we kept it low for the reason of the divers. They do dive well. I have not had any complaints from them at all. We have issued licences to Guernsey divers, we have six licences I think going out to Guernsey divers, the boats come in, the scallops are shucked on board and they are brought up the hill and taken to different people that want to buy from the hotels, etc.

1670 So we have kept it down. It was suggested that we put it with the RPI. I took advice from Mr David Cocksedge, he was Chair of this Committee for many years, and he just said we will keep looking at the beds all the time and then come back further when we have got results in the next few years.

Thank you.

1675 **The Speaker:** Thank you, Conseiller Plummer.

Any other questions of Conseiller Plummer regarding the Sark scallop licence fee? Conseiller Nicolle, I beg your pardon.

1680 **Conseiller Nicolle:** It is just a little add-on. I would like to acknowledge the hard work of the fishermen, the farmers and the growers and I would also like to acknowledge the appreciation from the Island residents who do purchase the quality products, many of which we are lucky to have on the Island. It is also a big driver for tourism, the fact that we have such good quality food right here. We do not have food miles on Sark, we have food metres.

1685 **The Speaker:** Thank you, Conseiller Nicolle.
Conseiller Plummer, thank you.

1690 **Conseiller Plummer:** May I say thank you to Conseiller Nicolle, please, because, yes, we do our very, very best for the Island.
Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you.

1695 A very positive debate, thank you. Therefore, without further ado, let's go to the Proposition attached to this Report, which reads as follows: that Chief Pleas approve the increase in the scallop licence fee to £125 for 2026.

Those in favour; those against? **Carried.**

Thank you very much indeed.

**8. Recycling/Rubbish and Sewage Charges –
Agriculture, Environment and Sea Fisheries Committee Report considered –
Propositions carried**

To consider a Report with Propositions from the Douzaine entitled 'Recycling/Rubbish & Sewage Charges'.

Proposition 1:

That Chief Pleas approves the increase to the Sark Public Works charge for the Rubbish/Recycling collection to £114.64 per person, per year (£28.66 per quarter).

Proposition 2:

That Chief Pleas approves the increase to the Sark Public Works charge for the sewage collection to £23.71 per load.

Proposition 3:

That Chief Pleas approves the increase to the Sark Public Works charges for commercial rubbish collection, by 4.6%.

Proposition 4:

That Chief Pleas approves the increase to the Sark Public Works charges for Extras collection, by 4.6% rounded to the nearest 10p.

1700 **The Speaker:** Next up we have Agenda Item 8, which is to consider a Report with Propositions from the Douzaine entitled 'Recycling/Rubbish and Sewage Charges'. I would like to ask Conseiller Locke to introduce the Report.

1705 **Conseiller Locke:** May I defer to my colleague, Conseiller Cragoe, please?

The Speaker: Conseiller Cragoe.

Conseiller Cragoe: Thank you very much and thank you, Conseiller Locke.

1710 Yes, I think this is fairly self-explanatory. These Propositions are to increase the existing public works charges by RPI, which is 4.6% across the board. This includes, if I am getting this correct, the household per person charge, but not the per bag sticker charge, which will remain static at £1.50 and £3, depending on the size of your bag, and still no charge for recycling. So everybody please recycle. It is better for everybody, including your wallet.

1715 The sewage load charges, the commercial waste standing charges to businesses and the extras charges which are for items which are brought separately to the harbour waste site or are collected by Public Works and also for – sorry, I should have also said anything that is brought up to Le Lache, so it is not just the harbour, it is also Le Lache.

1720 Clearly our costs include Public Works employee salaries, diesel, maintenance, the maintenance for the tractors and the trailers used for collection, shipping charges, maintenance and equipment. We have just bought some new skips. Everything keeps going up and these

1725 increases are necessary to help with that. I think that it is interesting to have the scallop licences just before this because although £25 – I feel there was, perhaps, some suggestion from some people it might have been higher, £25 on £100 is 25% and I think what we are trying to do is not have these huge cliff-edge increases, so that it is a gentle increase and that allows us to keep pace with our charges.

1730 I think also, as noted in the Report, we are reviewing the way commercial waste collections are charged for, as it is the case that the Island is currently providing a subsidy to business in regards to waste collections. However, this needs to be part of a larger consideration of how we dispose of waste and recycling. Conseiller Locke will be updating us on the Douzaine progress on that at items 15 and 16, I believe.

1735 I would also observe that we have noted that there are some businesses, especially new businesses, which may not have been sent bills or not being correctly billed under the current system. We will be sending out some letters to rectify that. Also, I think Conseiller Lord wanted to ask a question. Are you still interested?

Conseiller Lord: There is also a question from Conseiller Makepeace as well.

1740 **Conseiller Cragoe:** Yes. I was only going to answer your question. So the question from Conseiller Lord was: how much will all of this raise? Obviously, the simple answer is 4.6% more than last year. But we have had a response from the Treasurer about that. It is a little bit more complicated as we are applying our charges halfway through a financial year. We have been provided with figures, which I am sure if the Treasurer and Chair are content, anybody can see. So it is a half year.

1745 Sorry, it has been a long evening already. I have figures for the whole year but we would be applying, it would be approximately half year, I believe, because we will have two billing rounds. If this is approved, we have two billing rounds and then the rest of it. This is the total difference in how much we would be raising. The domestic standing charges, £2,873. Domestic extras, £485. Domestic sewage, £784, domestic Le Lache, £78 pounds. That is an overall domestic increase over
1750 the year, which is to say to this time next year, of £4,201.40 or £2,111.70, I think that adds up to. I am pleased with my math on the hoof.

In terms of the commercial, as I say, there is an issue with the commercial waste, which we are conscious of, and I know that propositions have been brought before and then were withdrawn, but we are working on this one. The commercial we will raise £826.58 from the standing charge,
1755 £453.99 from extras, £608.49 from commercial sewage and £20.15 from commercial Le Lache, which gives us a commercial increase of £1,909.21, an overall increase of £950. It is a total increase of £6,130.61, so it is not actually huge amounts and, as I say, that is 4.6% more. But, again, it is slightly variable because that depends on what people – if nobody throws anything out, then the extra charges are not as high. But that is where we are predicted based on last year's figures.

1760 Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Cragoe. A lot of numbers in there. Conseiller Makepeace, you had a question?

1765 **Conseiller Makepeace:** Yes, I would just like to say I think the term 'recycling' when it comes to plastic is quite misleading because, as I believe – and correct me if I am wrong – I think there are around 10 or 12 different types of plastic, yet I think only two of those can actually be recycled into reusable items. Most of the plastic gets processed into fuel pellets, which technically is then classed as recycling because it goes to fuel power stations. I do not suppose there is any way we
1770 would know what happens to our plastic, it just gets grouped in with the rest?

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace.

Conseiller Cragoe, would you like to answer that question?

1775

Conseiller Cragoe: No, I would like to ask Conseiller Locke to reply, please.

The Speaker: Conseiller Locke.

1780

Conseiller Locke: Thank you, Conseiller Cragoe.

We are operating under a contract with Guernsey Recycling Group and we receive occasional reports from them as to what happens to the waste. I will gladly look out those items and bring them before the House in an email.

1785

The Speaker: Thank you, that is kind of you.
Conseiller Martin, thank you.

Conseiller Martin: Thank you, sir.

1790

Can I just ask Douzaine if they have considered the extra cost that is going to be involved with running tractors up and down Key Le Lache. I believe it is private landowners' roads and at some stage the more vehicles that are going down, there the roads are going to need repairing. Would that come under the Douzaine to look at or does that go under private land?

The Speaker: Thank you for your question, Conseiller Martin.

1795

Who would like to answer that? Conseiller Locke, thank you.

Conseiller Locke: Thank you, Conseiller Martin.

1800

There will be an item on the possible removal to Le Lache in my report later on and the difficulties getting tractors up there and the amount of journeys that there are, are part of that review.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Locke.

Does anyone else have any questions they would like to ask the Committee before we go to the four propositions attached?

1805

Conseiller Baker, thank you very much.

Conseiller Baker MBE: I think really to answer Conseiller Martin's question, it is not a private road. The Island has access to that road because they own property at the end of it. That is basically it.

1810

The Speaker: Okay, does that answer your question, Conseiller Martin?

Conseiller Martin: It does, thank you.

1815

The Speaker: Thank you very much.

Thank you, Conseiller Barker, for clarifying that.

Does anyone else have any questions of the Committee? Conseiller Nicolle, thank you.

1820

Conseiller Nicolle: Sorry, sir, just to politely explain it was Conseiller Baker that clarified it, not Conseiller Barker.

The Speaker: I beg your pardon. You are quite right. My apologies, Conseiller Baker. I beg your pardon.

Conseiller Lord, thank you.

1825

Conseiller Lord: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I have spoken to a couple of businesses, admittedly not many. I would say that it is surprising how emotional this can be. I never knew that waste would be such an emotive issue for so many people and I really appreciate the hard work that Conseiller Cragoe, Conseiller Locke and all of the Douzaine are putting in with respect to recycling, solving the burning of open waste and the sewage issues.

Personally, given the numbers that we have here that we are pulling in, I think that this represents a small administrative burden, but an administrative burden nonetheless, on businesses at the start of the tourist season and perhaps promotes a bit of uncertainty about what the rises might be. Given that there are pricing reviews, given that there will obviously be cost changes when sewage is working properly, when waste handling and recycling is working properly I think I am unable to come with on this Proposition and I just want to put it out there now because I appreciate we have had a very contentious vote and that does not mean that I am against the people and their work that they are doing, I just do not feel that I can support this increase. I prefer to see one later down the line.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Lord.

Conseiller Locke, would you like to come back on that?

Conseiller Locke: Yes, thank you, sir. Thank you, Conseiller Lord.

It is within our figures, kindly supplied by the Treasurer, that the domestic charges just about cover the costs of collection, whereas the commercial charges do not gather enough to cover the commercial cost of collection. So we need to address that but we thought it better to get a 4.6% RPI inflation increase in right now and then we will come back to the House with formal proposals for restructuring commercial waste so it is all on a pay-for-what-you-throw-away basis. That work is ongoing but it is horribly complicated.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Locke.

Are there any other questions of the Committee before we go to the vote on the four Propositions attached to the Report? Any further questions? So you have heard lots of figures, lots of statistics, let's try and summarise them in the following four propositions.

So the propositions are: Proposition 1: that Chief Pleas approves the increase to the Sark Public Works charge for the rubbish recycling collection to £114.64 per person per year, which equates to £28.66.

Those in favour; those against? **Carried.**

Proposition 2: that Chief Pleas approves the increase to the Sark Public Works charge for the sewage collection to £23.71 per load.

Those in favour; those against? **Carried.**

Proposition 3 over the page. Proposition 3: that Chief Pleas approves the increase to the Sark Public Works charges for commercial rubbish by 4.6%.

Those in favour; those against? **Carried.**

Finally, on this Report, Proposition 4: that Chief Pleas approves the increase to the Sark Public Works charges for extras collection by 4.6%, rounded to the nearest 10 pence.

Those in favour; those against? That is **carried.**

Thank you to the Committee for bringing that Report. There is obviously an appendix attached to that, which I think was produced after the papers were produced, which makes I think fascinating reading if you are an anorak to do with waste charges.

Well done. To whoever compiles those figures, thank you. Thank you very much on behalf of us all.

**9. Funding for 13+ Education –
Education Committee Report considered –
Propositions carried**

To consider a Report with Propositions from the Education Committee entitled ‘Funding for 13+ Education’.

Proposition 1:

That Chief Pleas agrees to the creation of an on-Island secondary offer for years 9-11 (ages 14-16) in a Sark School setting using a quality online provider.

Proposition 2:

That Chief Pleas agrees to fund any off-Island tuition for years 9-11 using the current funding model based on the cost to Sark from Guernsey of tuition at Les Beaucamps High School.

Proposition 3:

That Chief Pleas agrees to fund off-Island accommodation with Guernsey term time hosts and at UK state boarding schools using the current model of costs shared with parents based on a sliding scale of time spent at Sark School.

Proposition 4:

That Chief Pleas agrees to limit tuition and accommodation support to children living with approved term time hosts on Guernsey (attending a state school or a private Guernsey day school) and those attending a state boarding school in England.

Proposition 5:

That Chief Pleas agrees that children living with off-Island relatives or other guardians will not be eligible for Chief Pleas education funding, and that these parents or guardians will be expected to enter the child into the local school system themselves, unless custody or safeguarding dictates otherwise.

Proposition 6:

That Chief Pleas agrees that there will be no support for private schools in England or elsewhere than Guernsey, whether boarding or day.

Proposition 7:

That Chief Pleas agrees that subject to the establishment of an on Island secondary offer, no support will be provided for off-Island education where a child has attended Sark School for two or fewer years.

Proposition 8:

That Chief Pleas agrees that these changes will apply from 1 September 2025 unless a funding agreement has already been agreed with parents.

Proposition 9:

That Chief Pleas agrees that the Education Committee should instruct the Law Officers to make any changes necessary to the Education (Sark) Ordinance to implement these changes.

The Speaker: Moving on. Agenda Item 9, which is to consider a Report with Propositions from the Education Committee entitled ‘Funding for 13+ Education’. I would like to ask Conseiller Rose to introduce the Report.

Thank you, Conseiller Rose.

Conseiller Rose: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

1885 When I first took on the role of Chair of Education I was told repeatedly that it was a poison chalice. No one wanted it. I had to twist more than a few arms to form a committee, and even then the path ahead looked treacherous. But today I stand before you humbled and proud to say we have brought a high-quality, thoroughly worked paper to Chief Pleas, staged through blood, sweat and more than a few late-night spreadsheets.

1890 This has not been the work of one, but of many. I want to thank every Conseiller who has helped along the way, in particular Conseillers Bateson, Miller, and Baker. Your support and insights wove into this journey, strengthening it at every turn. I am deeply grateful you gave your time, your thought and your care to this process.

1895 To the current Education Committee, Conseillers Sullivan, Harris, Nicolle, and Cragoe, thank you. Each of you has contributed to moving this forward with care and rigour. I must give special thanks to Conseiller Cragoe, whose tireless attention to detail and drive helped us fine-tune the figures and bring these propositions to a place where all stakeholders felt heard and satisfied.

1900 To the parents, thank you for your patience. You have been through the ringer these past years with shifting sands and uncertain futures. Your feedback, your persistence, and your passion for the future of Sark's children has not gone unnoticed. Our hope, our belief, is that this education plan is not just workable but sustainable, that it gives Sark a clear run for the future with strong structures in place, such as the newly formed Sark School Board of Governors to support the school through this vital transition. This moment is a rare opportunity to pause and celebrate. It proves what is possible when Conseiller work together, listen and commit to getting it right. Thank you.

1905 I want to hand over to Conseiller Cragoe to talk through the main points of the Report. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Rose.
Conseiller Cragoe, thank you.

1910

Conseiller Cragoe: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

1915 You will be all glad to hear that this is the last thing that I am doing tonight. I would just like to echo Conseiller Rose's thanks to everyone who has had an input into this, the other members of the Committee, we also had a very useful session with the Policy and Finance Committee about it, discussions with the Treasurer as well, the Sark School Board and the parents, of course.

1920 I am assuming you have all read this, but I think I just want to summarise it in a certain amount of detail. These Propositions are about making some changes to the way secondary education is provided on and off Island, and it follows on from the Information Report to the Midsummer Meeting of Chief Pleas in July 2024, which was, shall we say, challenging. But I think, as Conseiller Rose says, we have come to a really good solution that pretty much everyone is quite happy with.

1925 Sark School, as I am sure you all know, educates children up through year 8, which is age 13. Following the REAch2 review, education for Sark children age 14 to 16, which is years 9 to 11, is provided off Island, unless the children are homeschooled. The school leaving age is 16, so therefore we do not fund education after that.

1930 Depending on the school that the children attend, all or most of the costs are funded by Chief Pleas and if there are extra costs, these are picked up by parents. That can be quite significant, getting up maybe towards £10,000 a year, depending on what school the children go to. While going off Island suits some children, it does not suit others and, as I say, there are also significant financial implications. It also puts pressure on children — all children — to leave Sark no later than age 14.

We have been continuing to consider ideas for changing this structure. We undertook extensive consultation in a couple of rounds with the parents of Sark School children, with our education advisers, and with the Sark School Board of Governors. We would thank everyone who was involved for their input.

I think the key messages are that there is a desire for a continuing off-Island secondary education offer, particularly for children who have grown up on the Island, and that includes both a Guernsey day and UK state boarding offer. I think what really came out of the consultation was the longer the parents had been here, the longer the kids had been in school, the keener they were to go away. Equally for those children who were new to the Island, and parents were new to the Island, there was a lot of support for having an on-Island offer and some frustration that that was not available. This would have to be with an online school because we do not have the resources to provide the probably six, eight, 10 teachers which would be necessary to provide a decent secondary offering here up to GCSE.

There was also support for continuing the existing part-parent, part-Chief Pleas support system and a concern about education, tourism and the potential for the current system to be exploited. As a Committee we think our priorities are to provide high-quality education for all children living on Sark up to the age of 16, and also to make best use of Sark's limited financial resources. So the changes we are proposing to make are: for on-Island education; we are proposing to reintroduce an on-Island offer for years 9 to 11. This is something that has not existed since REAch2 in 2017. This will be in a Sark School setting and it will use a quality online provider. We have not yet chosen the provider. We are doing further consultation with parents and the school board at the end of May and, assuming this passes, letters will be going out at the end of this week. If Allie is listening, I am sorry, I still have not finished drafting that. But it will go out to parents at the end of this week, giving them the dates and the schools. Whichever provider is chosen, the per-child cost is likely to be less than the current cost of off-Island education, especially as no additional accommodation costs will be necessary. Also for the purposes of the families, the whole family can live here, which is a benefit to the Island.

So the Board of Governors is also considering introducing some formal online teaching using the same provider for year 7 and 8 within Sark School, within the existing class 3, to improve the range of subject choice. There is a letter from the school board attached to this Report and I would refer you to that. This does have some cost implication and, again, more details will be brought back to a future meeting. It very much depends on how much provision we choose, what school we choose to use, how many children, etc. So that is on Island.

Off Island – sorry, this is slightly long – we will continue to support off-Island education but we are planning to put some restrictions on how the funding may be used. At the moment, it is completely open-ended and people can choose any school they like, anywhere they like. We want to keep the structure on the existing system, which is based on the cost to Sark from Guernsey of tuition at Les Beaucamps High School. That is definitely something I would like to talk about in the Bailiwick Commission. Also the cost of accommodation for term-time hosting, possibly another topic for the Bailiwick Commission.

Tuition is a fixed cost for any child, no matter how long or not long they have been on Sark, the accommodation funding is given on a sliding scale based on years spent at Sark School and there is a minimum requirement of three years for any funding for accommodation. We are proposing to limit this support for off-Island education to children who live with an approved term-time host on Guernsey, whatever school they are going to, and those attending state boarding schools. Where children go off Sark for schooling and they live with parents or guardians who are resident in another jurisdiction – and this does happen quite a lot, some parents move, some parents are already there. Those parents will be expected to enter the child into the local state school system or local school system for themselves. They have that option for free if they live there and we do not feel that it is appropriate to use Sark funding to pay for that.

Finally, as a state body, we also think it is right to remove support for private schooling in England or elsewhere than Guernsey. Guernsey private schools are partly funded by the state, so

there is an argument. Also, it is possible to get term-time hosting through some of the colleges. That can be difficult in the state school.

We also want to focus off-Island support for children who have been on Sark for a certain period of time, and subject to the establishment of the on-Island secondary offer – which I believe is Proposition 1. It does not matter, anyway, it is a proposition – we will be limiting our support for funded off-Island education to children who have attended Sark School for three or more years. It is phrased in a slightly different way but it is three or more years. This fits with the accommodation support. So the whole package, it is the package or no package.

This is something that we heard about education tourism and a concern that people were expecting us to fund, they maybe had a tenuous connection to Sark but were expecting us to fund children who had never really spent much time in Sark School.

These changes apply from 1st September 2025, so the beginning of this year, unless a funding agreement is already agreed with parents. This change means that it only applies to children in year 6 and below in Sark School and those who come to Sark in the future, all the year 7s – remembering that year 7 and year 8s have two more years that they can go to Sark School. So everyone else has had a funding agreement agreed.

Finally, which I am sure you are all wondering – it is actually probably when will she shut up – the financial implications. As Jolie said, we spent a lot of time with spreadsheets and playing around with trying to work out how to work out what the savings are going to be. It is very difficult, and I have not shared spreadsheets — I would be happy to take somebody through them if they really want to see them — but it depends on parent choice, it depends on the number of children, It depends basically. If every parent who has sent a child to school between the current years 8 and 13 made an identical choice to what they made now and all these propositions were accepted, we would have saved between 25% and 30%.

However, we think that probably some of those parents might not have chosen those particular choices for their own personal reasons or financial reasons or because actually they are not going to be the same parents. I think we have maybe one younger child who belongs to older children. It is a whole new group of parents. Even in the worst-case scenario, we think that these savings are likely to be in the region of 10%. So there is a saving and it will depend. It also will depend on the success of the online school and whether people really want to stay here and whether that will help to attract people. I know there have been people unable to come and I will sit down now.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Cragoe.

I see one hand up. Conseiller Makepeace, thank you.

Conseiller Makepeace: I would just like to ask a question I remember from before. What is the situation now if newcomers arrive on the Island with children, say two children, for example, 12 or 13 years of age. I understand by law we have a duty to provide education for everyone that comes to the Island but what level of support – for example, now, if we are looking to increase population of the Island, if we suddenly had an influx of persons with 12 or 13-year-old children that needed to go to secondary school, whatever you call it now, what level of support would be given?

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace.

Conseiller Cragoe, would you like to answer that?

Conseiller Cragoe: Yes, certainly. It is very simple. Under the present system, for a 12 or 13-year-old Sark School is available, because those are years 7 and 8. So they would go to Sark School. From 14 onwards, or new children arriving in that age group, the current system is that we provide the Guernsey tuition equivalent, which was £9,033 in this past school year. That can be used at a

school of the parent's choice. That is one of the things we are proposing to change. That is why we are bringing in the online offer, but we also heard very much from people who were new that they were really very keen to use an online school. We cannot say, 'Oh, here, we can do this' because we do not have any Mandate from the House to do that at the moment. Of all the things we would like to do, that is probably the single most important thing.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Cragoe.
Conseiller Makepeace, again.

Conseiller Makepeace: How would that happen then with the digital nomads, as such, that may come along and then take advantage of the online learning and go somewhere else and transfer it to another jurisdiction? I know in England if you take the child out of the school or wherever you get fined or penalised, how would that happen if they had parents that were moving around as digital nomads? Would they still be able to log in through the school elsewhere and we would still be paying for it or how does that work?

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace.
Conseiller Cragoe.

Conseiller Cragoe: Yes, thank you very much, Conseiller Makepeace.
It is a very good question and one that needs to be discussed with the online school providers. It is part of the reason we propose to do it in a Sark School setting so that the children are at school, in Sark School, and it is not simply a home schooling, which of course is portable. That is entirely within reason, that your home is where somebody goes. You can use an online school or you could take home-schooling books, or whatever you wanted to do if you went on holiday, out of term time or whatever.

So, yes, it is a discussion and it is a discussion with providers around how their fee structure works for that and making sure if somebody starts or somebody leaves that we understand that. This is still something to be discussed and we will be coming back with more proposals about that. It was a very good question.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Cragoe.
Conseiller Harris, thank you.

Conseiller Harris: Thank you very much, sir.
First of all to say that this has been a tour de force by Conseillers Rose and Cragoe. It has been a long time coming and it has been the result of a synthesis of lots of different perspectives. Following on from what she was saying, one of the most important things about this, I think, is precisely that it puts us in a position where having an influx of young families with children is a good thing not a bad thing. It is not going to provide a major financial cliff end as having to fund more children off Island.

As it progresses, hopefully if the online school proves itself to be popular with parents, then it may be that we can save further money. We might be looking at changing the comparator that we use for support from the notional Beaucamps School and term time host to our online school; that is something we have been talking about. There will be further progression on this, I think, as we go forward.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Harris.
Does anyone else have any questions you would like to ask of the Education Committee?
Conseiller Plummer, thank you.

2090 **Conseiller Plummer:** May I just ask, we have got some families over here that some of the children or children have gone and they have got either brothers or sisters left here that are nearly ready to go away. What are the parents' thoughts on this new system, please? Because we funded the first child, what about the second child or the third?

Thank you.

2095 **The Speaker:** Thank you, Conseiller Plummer.
Conseiller Cragoe.

2100 **Conseiller Cragoe:** For children partly this has come out of the consultation and to ensure that we are providing support. Any child who is in year 7 or above, there is no change to what is happening. So there are a couple of the younger children who have older siblings — they are indeed in year 7, or possibly in year 8; I cannot remember offhand — they are just doing what they were going to do all the time.

2105 It is one of the things, particularly where the siblings are going to state boarding schools, and that came out of something that was very positive and people really liked. That is one of the reasons to keep — being quite specific that it is English state boarding school — it is quite an affordable option for parents because of the way the funding system works and that you are paying basically for the accommodation and not for the tuition; it is not like going to Eton.

2110 Yes, as I say, if parents continue to make the choices they are making, it should not have too much impact on many of the younger children in year 6 and below either. There might be one or two whose parents might wish to make different decisions. Mostly we tried to accommodate as much as we could, while also providing for people who were saying, 'But wait, wait, we don't want to send our children away.'

Conseiller Plummer: Thank you.

2115 **Conseiller Cragoe:** Sorry, I should have added that there is a proposition somewhere just to clarify some of the drafting in the 2023 Ordinance to make sure that we are funding things, we are accommodating things properly. I think it is Proposition 3; it will come into the drafting. Sorry, I have not explained that very well, I am too tired.

2120 **The Speaker:** Thank you, Conseiller Cragoe.
So you are saying that Proposition 3, as I am about to read in a few minutes, stands as read?

2125 **Conseiller Cragoe:** It absolutely stands as read, yes. These are designed to accommodate everything that we have been talking about so far and I hope everything that almost every parent we have talked to thinks is a good idea.

The Speaker: Okay. Thank you, Conseiller Cragoe.
Conseiller Martin, thank you.

2130 **Conseiller Martin:** Thank you, sir.
Can I just ask, what is in place if there were children with special needs that would obviously need a wee bit different caring system, would that be involved with the school with the packages that you are offering?

2135 **The Speaker:** Thank you, Conseiller Martin.
Conseiller Rose would like to answer that; thank you.

Conseiller Rose: That is one of the benefits of there being choice. We are offering something that is quite unique. It is not something you get in the UK, so there is choice. The reason why we

2140 did not choose a specific state school — because that was one of the things that we were looking at — is for that very reason. If we say any state school, there are some that specialise in different needs and so therefore children can choose that school to go to.

Thank you.

2145 **The Speaker:** Lovely. Thank you for explaining that.
Back to Conseiller Cragoe, thank you.

Conseiller Cragoe: Yes, thank you.

2150 I would just like to add something to that as well, which is, one of the things about the online schools is that for certain special needs, particularly something like high anxiety, actually the online school can be really a very good and positive thing. They are very experienced with dealing with children with — not necessarily every special need — but as Conseiller Rose said, sometimes those might need an in-person school. Actually an online school can be a surprisingly good alternative for that because they can accommodate individual needs for the child.

2155 **The Speaker:** Thank you, Conseiller Cragoe.
Are there any other questions for the Committee? Conseiller Nicolle, did you have a question?

Conseiller Nicolle: Yes, please.

2160 **The Speaker:** Thank you.

Conseiller Nicolle: Not so much a question, sir, as a comment. I am so pleased, as I hope this sends a clear message to young families that they are valued and supported members of this Island community. Financial support has had to be curtailed; it was getting far too much of a burden on what is a very — we only have a certain amount of income. The parents now have a very good choice of options. It is the choice that I believe is so important in this situation, better, I believe, than you would have in an English regular state system.

2170 I would like to express my gratitude, obviously, to the Committee who I have had the privilege to join at the end of all this hard work, but particularly to the head, the teachers, the support staff and the Board of Governors for the way that they are actively looking into the provision of online learning within the school because I think it is going to make a real transformative change. It is only by people being open and willing to look at these opportunities that such good provision will, I hope, ultimately be put in place.

2175 I am aware that the Education Committee did not have to bring this to the House but I am so glad they did because I firmly believe that the whole House should be involved in all matters going forward.

Thank you.

2180 **The Speaker:** Thank you, Conseiller Nicolle. Thank you very much indeed.

So there you hear it; you have the report. Does anyone have anything they would like to add before we go to the vote on the eight Propositions? No? In which case, let's crack on with the Propositions one by one.

2185 Proposition 1: that Chief Pleas Agrees to the creation of an on-Island secondary offer for years 9-11 (ages 14-16) in a Sark School setting using a quality online provider. Those in favour; those against? **Carried.**

Proposition 2: that Chief Pleas agrees to fund any off-Island tuition for years 9-11 using the current funding model based on the cost to Sark from Guernsey of tuition at Les Beaucamps High School. Those in favour; those against? **Carried.**

2190 Proposition 3: that Chief Pleas agrees to fund off-Island accommodation with Guernsey term time hosts and at UK state boarding schools using the current model of costs shared with parents based on a sliding scale of time spent at Sark School. Those in favour; those against? **Carried.**

2195 Proposition 4, over the page: that Chief Pleas agrees to limit tuition and accommodation support to children living with approved term time hosts on Guernsey (attending a state school or a private Guernsey day school) and those attending a state boarding school in England. Those in favour; those against? **Carried.**

2200 Proposition 5: that Chief Pleas agrees that children living with off-Island relatives or other guardians will not be eligible for Chief Pleas education funding, and that these parents or guardians will be expected to enter the child into the local school system themselves, unless custody or safeguarding dictates otherwise. Those in favour; those against? **Carried.**

Proposition 6: that Chief Pleas agrees that there will be no support for private schools in England or elsewhere than Guernsey, whether boarding or day. Those in favour; those against? **Carried.**

2205 Proposition 7: that Chief Pleas agrees that subject to the establishment of an on-Island secondary offer, no support will be provided for off-Island education where a child has attended Sark School for two or fewer years. Those in favour; those against? **Carried.**

Proposition 8: that Chief Pleas agrees that these changes will apply from 1st September 2025 unless a funding agreement has already been agreed with parents. Those in favour; those against? **Carried.**

2210 My apologies, I cannot count, there is a ninth Proposition; I do apologise.

Proposition 9: that Chief Pleas agrees that the Education Committee should instruct the Law Officers to make any changes necessary to the Education (Sark) Ordinance to implement these changes. Those in favour; those against? **Carried.**

Thank you very much indeed.

10. 2024 Financial Statements – Policy and Finance Committee Report considered – Proposition carried

To consider a Report with Proposition from the Policy and Finance Committee entitled ‘2024 Financial Statements’.

Proposition:

That the Financial Statements of the Island for the year ended 31st December 2024 be adopted.

2215 **The Speaker:** Right. Moving along to Agenda Item 10. Agenda Item 10 is: to consider a Report with Proposition from the Policy and Finance Committee entitled ‘2024 Financial Statements’. Can I ask Conseiller Guille to introduce this Report.

Thank you.

2220 **Conseiller Guille:** Thank you, sir.

Policy and Finance Committee presents the Financial Statements of the Island of Sark for the year ended 31st December 2024. They have been audited and signed by our independent auditors, Perkins Group, as required by The Reform (Sark) Law, 2008.

2225 2024 results show a surplus of £47,710 compared to the surplus budget of £3,098, which is a positive variance of £44,612. It is important to note that while a surplus was achieved this year, income for the Island was £120,665 down on budget. Property Transfer Tax, an income stream that has averaged over £147,000 annually for the last three years, fell to £28,766 in 2024. It is looking considerably better already this year.

2230 **Impôt** fell below budget by £76,438 in 2024 and was £42,615 lower than 2023. This highlights the importance of diversifying Sark's revenue streams to bring stability, as well as guaranteed surpluses to provide for future infrastructure plans. If there are any detailed questions about last year's Financial Statements, I may have to direct them to the Treasurer.

2235 **The Speaker:** Thank you, Conseiller Guille.

Does anyone have any questions, either for Policy and Finance or for the Treasurer, regarding the 2024 Financial Statements that you have before you and the detail therein? Any questions? Any comments? Any observations?

Conseiller Makepeace, thank you.

2240

Conseiller Makepeace: Yes, just an explanation. The accumulated fund, being the Island's general reserves, has increased by £48,963 from £3,418,403, what is that actually, the accumulated fund, if you could, please?

2245 **The Speaker:** Is that a question for the Committee or the Treasurer?

Conseiller Makepeace: Well, for the Treasurer or anyone really who could answer it.

The Speaker: Treasurer, are you able to answer that?

2250

The Treasurer: It is the Island's general reserves which are made up of its fixed assets, its cash, its debtors, its creditors. Every year there is a surplus it —

Councillor Makepeace: But that is the total? The total, okay.

2255 Thanks.

The Speaker: Okay, very good.

Does anyone else have any questions for either the Policy and Finance Committee or for the Treasurer regarding the Financial Statements for 2024?

2260 Conseiller Lord, thank you.

Conseiller Lord: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

When you look in the notes you will see that there is £104,620 allocated as a tangible asset for the electricity project work in progress. I believe this to be the community's for a renewables project. If that is the case, what is the tangible asset associated with that work?

2265

The Speaker: That is a good question; thank you, Conseiller Lord.

Who would like to take that question? Conseiller Guille? Treasurer?

2270 **The Treasurer:** It is a work in progress capital spend of the overall electricity project to the end of an electricity system.

Conseiller Lord: Okay. So if there is a tangible asset, there would be some land, real assets, physical structures?

2275

The Treasurer: It is the fees paid so far for people to scope out the project. It is an asset; it is a fixed asset, not necessarily tangible because it is a work-in-progress project.

Conseiller Lord: So, when is the project expected to complete? Is that this year or ...?

2280

The Treasurer: I do not know the answer to that.

Conseiller Lord: Because my understanding is that the project was solely for a front-end engineering design, so that would make it an expense, not an asset.

2285

The Treasurer: It has been audited by Perkins and they are happy with the way it has been treated so far.

Conseiller Lord: Okay. I find that a bit strange, I think is the way of putting it. I am not trying to contest any audit findings or your good self; I recognise the effort that has been put in there. Is there an impairment assessment?

2290

The Treasurer: I am not commenting.

2295

Conseiller Lord: Okay. Thanks very much.

The Speaker: Okay. Thank you, Conseiller Lord.

Does anyone else have any other questions they would like to ask Policy and Finance or the Treasurer regarding the 2024 Financial Statements?

2300

Conseiller Nicolle, thank you.

Conseiller Nicolle: Could I just ask, I understand that wider areas of Island money, Friends of Sark School, Community First Responders, are all held within the Treasurer's remit. Is each amount ringfenced or is it treated as a whole?

2305

The Treasurer: It is held separately. You will be able to see that in the balance sheet.

Conseiller Nicolle: Thank you for the confirmation.

2310

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Nicolle.

The Treasurer: Page 35.

Conseiller Nicolle: Thank you.

2315

The Speaker: Thank you.

Before we go to the Proposition attached to the Report, does anyone else have any further questions for the Committee or for the Treasurer? No? Okay. Thank you to the Treasurer for answering those questions.

2320

Therefore, the Proposition attached to the Report reads as follows: that the Financial Statements of the Island for the year ended 31st December 2024 be adopted. Those in favour; those against? **Carried.**

Thank you very much indeed.

How are we going for time; 10 past eight.

**11. Allocation of Prescribed Person Status –
Policy and Finance Committee Report considered –
Proposition carried**

To consider a Report with Proposition from the Policy and Finance Committee entitled 'Allocation of Prescribed Person Status'.

Proposition:

That the roles of the Senior Executive Officer and Senior Operations Officer be designated as 'prescribed persons'.

2325 **The Speaker:** Let's go to Agenda Item 11 which is: to consider a Report with Proposition from the Policy and Finance Committee entitled 'Allocation of Prescribed Person Status'. I would like to ask Conseiller Baker to introduce that Report.

Thank you.

2330 **Conseiller Baker MBE:** Yes, sir. I think the Proposition is quite straightforward. This follows the Housing (Control of Occupation) Law which was 2011. The community was concerned that other people were slipping through the net, so there was a lot of discussion with the Law Officers at the time and we developed the Housing (Control of Occupation) (Commencement and Prescribed Persons) (Sark) Ordinance, 2014.

2335 As it happens, the Douzaine is the responsible Committee for this, although P&F are bringing this Proposition forward, because we are dealing with the Civil Service. It allows the Committee to make arrangements for the Civil Service, anybody working for Chief Pleas, basically, to be a prescribed person.

2340 **The Speaker:** Great.
Thank you, Conseiller Baker.

Conseiller Baker MBE: Thank you.

2345 **The Speaker:** Thank you.
Conseiller Makepeace, thank you.

2350 **Conseiller Makepeace:** Just a clarification. It is the role that is prescribed and not the person? It is just that we seem to go through so many civil servants, naming the person; we would be always back here every few months, wouldn't we? It is the role, isn't it?
Thank you.

The Speaker: Conseiller Baker. Yes, thank you.

2355 **Conseiller Baker MBE:** Yes, that is correct; it is a role, yes.

The Speaker: It is correct?

Conseiller Baker MBE: Yes.

2360 **The Speaker:** Thank you for confirming that.
Are there any other questions regarding this Report? Any other questions? In which case, let's go to the Proposition which reads: that the roles of the Senior Executive Officer and the Senior Operations Officer be designated as 'prescribed persons'. Those in favour; those against? **Carried.**
2365 Thank you very much indeed.

**12. Amendment to the Policy Development Group Remit –
Policy and Finance Committee Report considered –
Propositions withdrawn**

To consider a Report with Propositions from the Policy and Finance Committee entitled ‘Amendments to PDG Remit’.

Proposition 1:

That Chief Pleas approves the amended Policy Development Group Remit.

Proposition 2:

That Chief Pleas approves the amended Constitution and Operations of Chief Pleas Committees document.

The Speaker: Moving on to Agenda Item 12 which is: to consider a Report with Propositions from the Policy and Finance Committee entitled ‘Amendment to the Policy Development Group Remit’. Who would like to — Conseiller Tighe.

Thank you very much indeed.

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Conseiller Tighe: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

This Report and Proposition is pretty self-explanatory. It is to expand the remit of the Policy Development Group and the subsequent amendments to the Constitution and Operations document of the Chief Pleas Committees. I would like to vote in support of it.

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The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Tighe.

Does anyone have any questions of Policy and Finance regarding this amendment to the Policy Development Group Remit? Any questions?

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Conseiller Makepeace: I do, sir.

The Speaker: Yes, Conseiller Makepeace.

Thank you.

2385

Conseiller Makepeace: It is just a question. It says:

The Policy & Finance Committee asks that Chief Pleas approves the amended Policy Development Group Remit.

Then:

The Constitution and Operations of Chief Pleas Committees document will also need to be amended to reflect the change in the Policy Development Group’s remit.

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I am just a little confused because if it is a group, where does it stand with the status of a committee as such?

Thank you.

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The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace.

Conseiller Tighe, thank you.

Conseiller Tighe: Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace.

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So it is within the definition. The amendment is also the Policy Development Group is a group consisting of all Conseillers whose purposes are to identify and prioritise the workstreams of Chief

Pleas to appoint informal working groups to relay information across Committee and to review forthcoming legislation. Non-Conseillers can also be members. That is the amendment to the Constitution operation.

2405 **The Speaker:** Thank you, Conseiller Tighe.
Does anyone have any further — Conseiller Lord, thank you.

Conseiller Lord: Thank you, Mr Speaker.
2410 The changes to the PDG group remit were voted through on 5th February in PDG and that included an item (d):

To appoint special committees to conduct policy development work on behalf of Chief Pleas.

Looking at the version submitted, the version submitted says,

2415 To appoint informal PDG working groups operating within PDG with a specific brief, a clearly defined remit and timeframe, serving as a preliminary step before the formation of special committees.

This is not the version that was voted on and I would like to understand why, when that change came in, who put it forward, and how come this was not brought back to PDG just to get the nod?

2420 **The Speaker:** Okay. Thank you, Conseiller Lord.
Conseiller Tighe, are you able to answer that?

Conseiller Tighe: Yes, sure. Can I pass that over to Conseiller Sullivan, please?

2425 **The Speaker:** Conseiller Sullivan, thank you very much.

Conseiller Sullivan: I will have to get back to you on that one. There were a few drafts of this. Those drafts were all in the shared drive that everyone had access to. I will get back to you on exactly how that change transpired.

2430 **The Speaker:** Conseiller Lord, thank you.

Conseiller Lord: Sir, could I make a suggestion then? If everybody is happy with it as it is, that we go ahead with it as it is, but if perhaps it is possible for anybody who might have an objection to raise it now and then it could go back to PDG. Would that suit?
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The Speaker: I think that is a reasonable way forward, quite frankly, yes. So, based on that, how would you like to take this forward, Conseiller Tighe?

2440 **Conseiller Tighe:** Conseiller Sullivan, please.

The Speaker: Sorry, back to Conseiller Sullivan; I beg your pardon.
Conseiller Sullivan.

2445 **Conseiller Sullivan:** So, yes, we can do as Conseiller Lord suggested.

The Speaker: Okay. Thank you.
So, based on that, are we saying you would like to vote on these propositions or —

2450 **Conseiller Lord:** I just thought that we give everyone the opportunity, if anybody has any objections, to say so, otherwise go ahead and vote now.

The Speaker: Okay. So, based on Conseiller Lord's question, does anyone have any objections to what they have heard or what they have seen?
Conseiller Nicolle, thank you.

2455 **Conseiller Nicolle:** I would just like to ask that it be taken back to PDG for the whole of the Conseillers to discuss it and clarify exactly what we would like to take forward, please.

The Speaker: Okay. Thank you, Conseiller Nicolle.
2460 Does anyone else have any observation, any comment on that suggestion? Any other suggestion? Any other comments? So, therefore, Conseiller Sullivan, what would you like to do in terms of moving this forwards or withdrawing it or taking it back to the PDG?

Conseiller Sullivan: Yes, we will withdraw it, take it back to PDG. We will discuss it there and bring it back to the next Chief Pleas.

The Speaker: Okay.

Conseiller Sullivan: Thank you.

2470 **The Speaker:** And that applies to both Propositions?

Conseiller Sullivan: Yes, both Propositions.

2475 **The Speaker:** Both Propositions, okay. So, we are going to the vote on that, make sure it is absolutely clear. The two Propositions —

The Seigneur: Have been withdrawn.

2480 **The Speaker:** Yes. Effectively, this Report is being withdrawn to be brought back to Chief Pleas on a future occasion. Can I just have a vote on that, please. Those in favour of it being withdrawn? Thank you. Those against? That is **withdrawn**.

**13. Change to Mandate –
Tourism Committee Report considered –
Proposition carried**

To consider a Report with Proposition from the Tourism Committee entitled 'Change to Mandate'.

Proposition:

That Chief Pleas approves the changes to the Tourism Committee Mandate.

The Speaker: Right. Next up we have Agenda Item 13 which is: to consider a Report with Proposition from the Tourism Committee entitled 'Change to Mandate'.
2485 Conseiller Tighe, over to you, thank you.

Conseiller Tighe: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

We are transitioning the role of the Visitor Centre out of its *ex officio* position on the Committee while we continue to value the important contributions of the Visitor Centre and the insight that they bring to our work. To that end, we will continue to invite the Visitor Centre Officer to attend meetings on a regular basis where their input is particularly relevant; however, we do not feel that compulsory or permanent attendance is necessary at this time. Our goal is to enhance the Committee's efficiency while ensuring ongoing collaboration with all key tourism stakeholders.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Tighe.

Does anyone have any questions or observations on the report that you have got before you and what Conseiller Tighe has just explained? Any questions? Any debate? Okay, in which case, let us go to the Proposition which reads: that Chief Pleas approves the changes to the Tourism Committee Mandate. Those in favour; those against? **Carried.**

Thank you very much indeed.

14. Relocation of Public Works to Les Lâches – Douzaine Report considered

To consider an Information Report from the Douzaine entitled 'Relocation of Public Works to Les Lâches'.

The Speaker: Next we have Agenda Item 14 which is: to consider an Information Report from the Douzaine entitled the 'Relocation of Public Works to Le Lâches'. I would like to ask Conseiller Locke to introduce this Report.

Conseiller Locke: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I will apologise in advance to other Conseillers; I have got three on the trot. As far as relocation of public works to Les Lâches is concerned, at the Michaelmas Meeting of Chief Pleas, 2nd October 2024, the Douzaine informed Chief Pleas it had been looking to relocate the incinerator and burning facilities from the Harbour Quarry to Les Lâches.

A subsequent small rockfall at the Harbour Quarry site led to an inspection by the Geomarine Team. The result of this inspection is that the Douzaine has closed off an area within the Harbour Quarry for the protection of its workforce, and members of the public. While a solution to the Harbour Quarry is still being sought, some work tasks have been moved to the Les Lâches site on a 'temporary long-term basis'. This has included the open burning of rubbish.

The Douzaine is appreciative of the co-operation it has had from the workforce at this difficult time and would wish this to be noted. The situation at the Harbour Quarry is ongoing, and is the subject of a separate report.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Locke.

Does anyone have any questions of the Douzaine they would like to raise based on what they have read or what they have just heard? No? Okay. The Douzaine Information Report, there are no Propositions attached to it.

So thank you for that, Conseiller Locke; thank you to the Douzaine.

**15. Sewage System –
Douzaine Report considered**

To consider an Information Report from the Douzaine entitled 'Sewage System'.

The Speaker: Moving along to Agenda Item 15, and as Conseiller Locke has quite rightly pointed out, he is back on his feet again to consider an Information Report from the Douzaine entitled 'Sewage System'.

Conseiller Locke, thank you.

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Conseiller Locke: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Again, at the same Michaelmas Meeting of Chief Pleas, 2nd October 2024, the Douzaine informed Chief Pleas that the sewage handling facility at Les Lâches was not functioning as expected and, consequently, raw effluent was being discharged. Regrettably, the situation

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continues. However, a great deal of investigation has been carried out and we are moving toward a solution. The Douzaine has held meetings with the States of Guernsey's Office of Environmental Health and Pollution Regulation, the States Analytical Laboratory, and Guernsey Water. This has led to suggestions of a suitable testing and sampling regime similar to that for Guernsey's effluent

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outfall. It is similar to Sark in that they discharge untreated sewage into the sea but it is different in that it is via several hundred metres of undersea pipe. Further, we have had extensive correspondence with the Guernsey Agent for the current treatment fluid, Ensol, and the manufacturer in New Zealand. The Guernsey Agent, Alan Le Cheminant, is now retired but has offered to come over and look at the situation on site

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when he is back from holiday. Thanks to all of them for all the help and information they have supplied so far. There has also been a lot of information supplied by those who worked on the system to convert it to the use of Ensol and a design for a replacement set of tanks for the same method from a previous member of the Douzaine. Thanks go to them also.

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Work has been done to fix the dosage pump and the system, although, since there are no holding tanks currently in use, there is no time for the Ensol to do its job so it has been turned off to save waste. We have investigated the repair of the existing system by splitting an unused tank to scope the work needed for a proper refurbishment. The leaks appear to be coming mainly from the connections to the pipework and the join between the two halves of each tank. Fixing these

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and refurbishing the fibreglass interior where necessary appears to be well within the competence of local contractors. This would include new plumbing and valves to connect up the tanks. There are other items which could improve general operation of the system such as a proper screening and compaction filter for the intake and an unloading ramp to ensure the tanker is high enough up to be able to fill a holding tank simply by gravity. Chief Pleas may recall that a new type

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of treatment plant was costed at over £750,000, which was considered unrealistic. Work to find a solution suitable for and affordable by Sark continues. This includes: (1) Finalising a suitable testing regime and carrying it out. This may be in conjunction with Agriculture, Environment and Sea Fisheries Committee and we are fortunate to have Douzainiers who serve on that Committee as well. (2) Confirmation with the Guernsey expert of the dosage and how best

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to bring the current system back into full operation. (3) Comparison of the fix/refurbish/replumb cost with the new set of holding tanks already investigated and costed at around £45,000 to £50,000. (4) Costing an updated filter screen and compaction unit. (5) Costing an unloading ramp; Conseiller Mary Nicolle — thank you, Mary — has taken on the task of looking at alternative systems such as reed beds and other sewage plants

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already in use on Sark. Lastly (6) investigating a Guernsey-style seabed outflow. We plan to finish all this work in time to bring reports to Midsummer Chief Pleas. Should further information be available, a verbal report will be given.

Thank you.

2575 **The Speaker:** Thank you, Conseiller Locke. Thank you very much indeed.
There we are, Information Report, Conseiller Makepeace, thank you.

2580 **Conseiller Makepeace:** Yes, I would just like to ask Conseiller Locke if he actually spoke to Tim Cunliffe from Aqua UK who was the consultant we chose to look at our system. When Conseiller Locke says £750,000, that was for the whole new system, a hi-tech system which would have turned the sewage — we would have been able to get power from the sewage but it was deemed to be too expensive. However, the grid part of it, was explained, would cost around £60,000. The tanks, are you considering replacing four tanks or —

2585 **The Speaker:** Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace.
Conseiller Locke, thank you.

Conseiller Makepeace: Or four tanks?

2590 **Conseiller Locke:** No, I did not consult the gentleman concerned but I did read the reports, as you will see. It started with, as you say, a filter and compaction unit at around £65,000, which is still a lot of money to bring to Chief Pleas. In terms of looking at the current system, we have an option for replacing the current tanks with eight smaller, newer ones to be run in two banks of four. Also we are considering to refurbish the existing four tanks rather than replace them with
2595 new ones, so it is also under discussion.

The Speaker: Yes, thank you, Conseiller Locke.

2600 **Conseiller Makepeace:** Unless you have got a proper screening process in place, the tanks act only as holding tanks. If you do not have the sufficient capacity in the tanks, the sewage cannot sit in the tank long enough for the oil, or Ensol, whatever it is called, to function. So I think you would know as well as I do, the most important thing really has to be the screening of the waste at the top.

2605 Because when you talk about Guernsey tipping waste into the sea, the difference there is, is that their waste has been treated in line with UK regulations, ours has not. When before it was tried just to tip the Ensol on top, it does not sit in the tanks long enough because the tanks were damaged and the capacity is not high enough, you would not be able to turn over the sewage quick enough.

2610 I would suggest that, as was recommended before, the first step really should be to look at the grill because it could improve the — and even if you break that sewage down now, because it is not treated properly, the sewage is going into the sea, maybe the solids have broken up, but the poor quality of the water and the effluent is exactly the same.

2615 We did suggest before — you talk about testing — it is not a difficult process to test that. You only have to test the solution that is going in and test it the other side. I do not see why we could not do that now because it was mentioned before that the tanks have improved, we fixed the problem, but as I asked before, no figures were given.

2620 We would not know if the quality of the waste had improved or not unless we took a reading before and a reading after. I am of the opinion that we could do that on Island, just to give us a starting point to see at what level our waste is and at what level it is being tipped over. I think we could do that on Island, myself, and fairly quickly, just to give us a starting point.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace.
Conseiller Locke, would you like to respond to that?

2625 **Conseiller Locke:** Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace.

As stated, the screening unit of £65,000 is in contention: Item 4 on the work to be done, costing an updated filter screening compaction unit. To be accurate, then filtering and compaction of the solid waste does not remove the biological load from the resultant liquid effluent, which still needs treating. The amount of time in the settling tanks and for the Ensol to do its work is under
2630 consideration with the person who designed the system in the first place.

In terms of testing, we are finalising a suitable testing regime in order to carry it out. This all started some months ago with my request to Guernsey States Laboratory — or the States Analyst — to say, ‘Okay, what are the testing standards that apply in Guernsey and can you test them for us?’ He said, ‘There aren’t any for effluent.’ I have since followed that out; they do not
2635 test their effluent, they test the water into which it is sent.

In any case, at the moment, there is no treatment going on in the system and not likely to be for some months so, therefore, there is actually no point in doing a before and after testing, because there is no after.

Thank you.

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The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Locke.

Does anyone else have any questions of the Douzaine regarding the Report and what you have just heard? Any other questions for Conseiller Locke and the Committee? No? In which case thank you for presenting that. This time of night it is never the best subject to deal with but, hey, it
2645 happens, as they say. I will not use the other word. *(Laughter)*

16. Recycling and Waste Disposal – Douzaine Report considered

To consider an Information Report from the Douzaine entitled ‘Recycling and Waste Disposal’.

The Speaker: So we are at Agenda Item 16 now, aren’t we? Agenda Item 16 reads: to consider an Information Report from the Douzaine entitled ‘Recycling and Waste Disposal’. Conseiller Locke, is this back in your court?

2650 **Conseiller Locke:** I am afraid it is, sir, and I will try and keep this as to the point as I can.

At the same Michaelmas Meeting as referred, the Douzaine informed Chief Pleas that both incinerators were out of action and that the options were either to purchase a replacement incinerator able to cope with the increased amount of burnable domestic rubbish or to continue with open burning in some form or other. The Proposition directing the Douzaine to further
2655 investigate such acquisition was carried.

The situation became more complicated due to the small rockfalls at the Harbour Quarry which means a restricted work area, temporary open burning at Les Lâches, and an uncertain future. I would like to thank current and former Members of the Douzaine and our staff, both in and out of the office, who have had to deal with the current restrictions on their work and taking the time
2660 to investigate suitable solutions.

The current situation is that some temporary open burning takes place at Les Lâches. This can only happen when wind and weather conditions permit. At other times, open burning takes place under restricted conditions at the Harbour Quarry. Open burning is not an acceptable long-term solution for residents impacted by the smoke and smell, or for visitors and users of the harbour and harbour café, quite apart from the health risks for the workforce and general negative impact
2665 on our environment.

Following the rockfalls at the Harbour Quarry, Geomarine inspected the site and recommended some restrictions and a larger exclusion zone which does allow some work on that

site. Their longer-term mitigation plan has now been received but they would not be able to carry it out until September at the earliest.

Therefore a medium-term plan to get us through the season is being investigated. That is likely to involve repairing the open burning pits to allow two pits to be operated which allows the ash in one to cool sufficiently for handling while the other pit is being filled with burnables for that week's burn.

As for a longer-term solution, the Douzaine has held discussions with Guernsey Recycling Group, with whom Sark already has a contract for recycling waste, Guernsey Waste and Alderney Waste. Public Works staff have also come up with ideas, for which many thanks.

We now see the current options as: (1) Open burning with a two-pit system as before. This is the least favourite due to the issues given earlier. Were it to be at the Harbour Quarry, some form of screening would be advisable to improve the appearance for visitors. (2) An Island-designed concrete incinerator also allowing two-pit operation but enclosed and with a chimney. This is being investigated. (3) Purchasing a new incinerator. Previous work by the Douzaine and Committee Support Officer (CSO) has identified a range of incinerators of various throughputs varying from 100 kg an hour at £30,000 up to 450 kg an hour at £285,000, plus of course the cost of the diesel to run them.

Option (4) Shipping all rubbish, recycling, commercial and builders' waste to Guernsey. This would require some baling and compacting machinery, and some shipping containers. Costs and practicalities of this are still under investigation but we note that this is the solution used by both Herm and Alderney.

In addition, we need to consider whether to carry out the full mitigation of rockfalls, as recommended by Geomarine, later in the year or to move Public Works in its entirety to Les Lâches. There would be significant costs – into six figures – and difficulties with either option so it will take some time to arrive at recommendations suitable for Sark to bring to Chief Pleas. In addition to this, as referenced earlier, we are looking at ways of encouraging more recycling, particularly from commercial premises, and reviewing the commercial waste charging structure accordingly. A report will be brought to Chief Pleas when this review has finished.

We plan to finish all of this work in time to bring reports to Midsummer Chief Pleas. The Douzaine is appreciative of the co-operation it has had from the workforce at this difficult time and would wish this to be noted. Should further information be available for Easter Chief Pleas, a verbal report will be added.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Locke.

Very good. Okay, Conseiller Makepeace, thank you.

Conseiller Makepeace: Yes, just one question, and the concrete option, I think I remember that from before. What I would like to ask is: what are the approximate savings on fuel in the period that we have been open burning? Because obviously I know, as within many committees, they are cash strapped — or maybe that money gets used elsewhere — but there must be a considerable saving because no fuel has been used when we are open burning. Has that amount been taken into account for maybe a future project?

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace.

Conseiller Locke, thank you.

Conseiller Locke: My understanding, Conseiller Makepeace, is, no, that it has not because it is not spent and it sits within the Island's general resources. So, despite the fact that several tens of thousand pounds have not been spent by Public Works, it is not available for our use in this budget year for capital projects.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Locke.

Conseiller Makepeace.

2725 **Conseiller Makepeace:** Would I be correct in thinking then that we need to have a different accounting system where the money is carried over? Because I understand at the moment, am I correct in thinking that when it gets to the end of the year, if it has not been used, then that is it, it is not available anymore? I am not an accountant so I do not know how it works.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace.
Conseiller Locke.

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Conseiller Locke: I believe that is standard. It is how the budgets in the UK work; it is how we work here. For further guidance on the subject, I would look to P&F and the Treasurer.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Locke.

2735 P&F and/or the Treasurer, would you like to answer that question about what is left over at the end of the year? What happens to those funds?
Conseiller Guille, thank you.

Conseiller Guille: It is standard accounting which happens on all Committee budgets.

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The Speaker: Thank you.

There we have it. Thank you to the Douzaine for that report. That completes that report, I think, yes.

Thank you very much.

17. Tourism Committee Update – Tourism Committee Report considered

To consider an Information Report from the Tourism Committee entitled 'Tourism Committee Update'.

2745 **The Speaker:** Let's move along to Agenda Item 17 which is: to consider an Information Report from the Tourism Committee entitled 'Tourism Committee Update'.
Conseiller Tighe, it is over to you, thank you.

Conseiller Tighe: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

2750 Unfortunately, we were not able to bring the standard Information Report to Chief Pleas because we are still waiting on information figures from Sark Shipping, so as an alternative, this is the pullout that we had for the public meeting a few weeks ago. The information is pretty self-explanatory again.

2755 Following on from the positivity from the public meeting, the Tourism Committee, we welcome any feedback from the community and we are keen to strengthen collaboration with local businesses and residents. We look forward to them reaching out with ideas or concerns as we continue to develop Sark's tourism offering.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Tighe.

2760 Does anyone have any questions for the Tourism Committee based on the report that you have seen? Sorry, the update.

Yes, Conseiller Lord, thank you.

2765 **Conseiller Lord:** I note in the report that global figures for the wellness market are provided. I was wondering if Tourism could tell us how much of the market is coming here and what Tourism believes that it could capture, and if it knows what proportion of Island businesses have confirmed they can and want to serve wellness markets and tourism?

2770 **The Speaker:** Thank you, Conseiller Lord.
Conseiller Tighe, are you able to answer that?

Conseiller Tighe: Yes, does anyone else in Tourism want to contribute or no?

2775 **The Speaker:** Anyone else from Tourism want to take that question?

Conseiller Tighe: If not, I am happy to.

The Speaker: Conseiller Tighe.

2780 **Conseiller Tighe:** So at the moment we have very little data coming in but we are speaking with Sark Shipping at possibly having an exit survey on the vessels so that when people are leaving, we can get that information. We are also looking at engaging further with the stakeholders so that they could provide us with some data but it is still early days for us to be able to obtain that information but we are working towards it.

2785 Did that cover it or was there more?

Conseiller Lord: Yes, pretty much. I have got a follow-on, if that is okay.

2790 **Conseiller Tighe:** Okay. Go for it.

The Speaker: Okay. Thank you.
Conseiller Lord.

2795 **Conseiller Lord:** So, just to make a point, I also wanted to congratulate Tourism for the hard work that they have been doing, especially Conseiller Tighe, Conseiller Rose; I know they have been working very hard. There is, I believe, a Chamber of Commerce meeting on Thursday. I was wondering if that might be something that could be taken to start looking at market sectors and what businesses have capacity for to see if that might be useful in planning.

2800 **The Speaker:** Thank you, Conseiller Lord.
Conseiller Tighe.

2805 **Conseiller Tighe:** So just to confirm with the potential resurrection of Chamber of Commerce, it has not been confirmed yet if it is happening. I went to the only meeting so far and there were around a dozen people who attended. There appears to be an appetite for some kind of business forum/Chamber of Commerce to be resurrected but as yet it is not known who will drive it, if it is going to be populated, so they are taking it forward on its constitution but there are no actual policies being developed at the moment from there.

2810 **The Speaker:** Thank you, Conseiller Tighe.
Conseiller Makepeace, thank you.

2815 **Conseiller Makepeace:** Yes, there is just one thing I was going to ask. I would suggest that our budget for Tourism is fairly low per capita. I do not know the exact figures now but I remember looking into Guernsey and they got some 350,000 visitors a year and their budget was X amount,

which I think equated to four or five times the budget that we allowed for. So, I think they have a difficult situation because would it be maybe an idea to look into the budget that Guernsey receives per visitor and maybe liken that because I think you are probably underfunded.

2820 **The Speaker:** Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace.
Conseiller Tighe.

2825 **Conseiller Tighe:** Unless anyone else from Tourism wants to answer, I am happy to go again. So at the moment, Tourism, we are working within the constraints of the budget that was approved for the last Committee, so for 2025 I definitely feel like we have some constraints. I think it was, off the top of my head, £32,500 that was allocated for print advertising and £3,000 for digital marketing. We have been able to tap into the resources of Visit Guernsey to help us with some budgeting, where they are already advertising. They have kindly been able to help us to cancel some of the obligations so we can move some of the funds across to digital marketing.

2830 Yes, we look to investigate more with the budgets; we actually have a meeting with the Treasurer tomorrow evening to get some more familiarity around what is available to us. Like I say, we have inherited someone else's budget and someone else's commitment, so, yes.

2835 **The Speaker:** Thank you for the question; thank you for the answer, Conseiller Tighe.
Conseiller Nicolle, thank you.

2840 **Conseiller Nicolle:** I would just like to take this opportunity, I, like Conseiller Helen Plummer, am also a member of the Tourism Committee, and we are working very hard. It is early days but it is very exciting to be part of that Committee. I would like to express sincere thanks to Mark Roffey of Sark Shipping. He has been enormously helpful and proactive, both in promotion of Sark Shipping and the wider Island of Sark. Sue Daly also does an awful lot for us and wider members of the community, such as SAstroS, everyone coming together, Ed Stone, the Observatory, the Planetarium, exciting times ahead. I do hope we can turn the ship around.

2845 **The Speaker:** Thank you, Conseiller Nicolle. Thank you very much indeed.
Any other — Conseiller Martin, thank you.

2850 **Conseiller Martin:** Thank you, sir.
Just to say that I was speaking with Mr Roffey yesterday and we are hoping to have an update on the Corsaire and what is being done while the Corsaire is not here. We are hoping to get it out in the new Chief Pleas' newsletter that is coming out very shortly, so hopefully that will be good news for us all.

2855 **The Speaker:** Very good, thank you.
Thank you, Conseiller Martin. That sounds very positive, thank you.
Very good. So, any other questions before we close that Agenda Item? Right. Thank you. Getting close to the four-hour mark, but I am sure we all are aware of that.

**Committee Elections –
Taxation Review (Special): Conseiller M. Locke elected**

To elect Conseillers to Committees, as required.

2860 **The Speaker:** Let us deal with Agenda Item 18 now which is the Committee Elections. Now, correct me if I am wrong, I have got a list here that the office pulled off for me this morning. I do

not see any vacancies on any Committees. Is that the correct view of —
Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard, thank you.

2865 **Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard:** Unless I am wrong, was there one from Tax that was in a tie last time around and then it got laid over? Or was I wrong on that? I might be incorrect.

The Speaker: Please remind me which Committee that would have been.

2870 **Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard:** It was the Taxation Special Committee and, if my memory serves me correctly, I believe Mike and Ben ended up in a tie. Did it get laid over or something? Or am I completely wrong?

The Speaker: Was it Online Identity?

2875 **Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard:** No.

A Member: A Special Tax Review.

2880 **Conseiller Tighe:** No, Tax Review.

The Speaker: Special Taxation Review? Okay. Yes, according to me, Taxation Review currently comprises Conseiller Miller, as Deputy Chair, Conseiller Guille, Conseiller Barker and Conseiller Tighe. Is that the full makeup of the Committee?
Conseiller Guille, thank you.

2885 **Conseiller Guille:** No, the Special Taxation Committee had brought a motion that was passed for a fifth member from the Mandate.

2890 **The Speaker:** And, remind me, that has not been voted on yet?

Conseiller Guille: No, Conseiller Kennedy-Barnard is correct; it was voted on but there was a tie, so no fifth member was appointed.

2895 **The Speaker:** Okay. Would you like to amend that this evening?

Conseiller Guille: It should be on your list.

2900 **The Speaker:** Yes, sadly it has not been — anyway, I should check my facts. It has not been highlighted. So, therefore, we are looking for a fifth member to join the Taxation Review Committee. Do we have any nominations from the floor of anyone who would like to join the Taxation Review Committee?
Conseiller Barker, thank you.

2905 **Conseiller Barker:** I would like to nominate Conseiller Harris again, please.

The Speaker: Conseiller Harris as a nomination. Thank you very much indeed. Do we have any other nominations to join the Taxation Review Committee?
Conseiller Nicolle, thank you.

2910 **Conseiller Nicolle:** Am I allowed to nominate myself?

The Speaker: You can, yes.

Conseiller Nicolle: I would like to nominate myself.

2915

The Speaker: Okay. So that is Conseiller Nicolle.

Then back to Conseiller Guille, thank you.

Conseiller Guille: Thank you, sir.

2920

I would like to nominate Conseiller Locke. He was nominated last time and he sent an excellent summary, a very detailed summary, of his thoughts on taxation to all Conseillers some time ago, which we were all very impressed by.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Guille.

2925

So we have got three — Conseiller Nicolle, thank you.

Conseiller Nicolle: Sorry, I will withdraw my nominating myself. I would like to withdraw that.

2930

The Speaker: You would like to withdraw your nomination?

Conseiller Nicolle: I just thought it was important that we have a representative of the income streams on the Island.

2935

The Speaker: Very good. Okay, I appreciate what you are saying, thank you.

So, anyone else who would like to add their name to the list of nominees for the fifth person to join the Taxation Review Committee? So we have two names: we have Conseiller Harris and we have Conseiller Locke. Once again, we are going to do this on a show of hands, so please raise your hand — you can vote for both of them. No, you cannot. No, you cannot vote for them. (Laughter) You cannot vote for — it is time to go home. (Laughter) You cannot vote for both of them; you can only vote for one of them.

2940

So, therefore, let's go with Conseiller Harris first. Those in favour of Conseiller Harris joining the Taxation Review Committee, please raise your hand? I make that 7. Leave your hands up, please. The Greffier, can you help me?

2945

The Greffier: Yes, I have got 7.

The Speaker: Seven, okay. So it is 7 votes for Conseiller Harris.

Thank you; put your hands down.

2950

Those in favour of Conseiller Locke joining the Taxation Review Committee, please raise your hands, thank you. Right, okay. I make that 10. So, therefore, by my calculation, Conseiller Locke is elected to the Taxation Review Committee. Welcome to that Committee.

Thank you for standing, Conseiller Harris. It is always good to have a contested election, as Conseiller Nicolle said. So Conseiller Locke is joining the Taxation Review Committee.

2955

Are there any other vacancies that I am not aware of that anyone would like to bring to my attention? No? I do not think there are, so let me put that one to bed.

Committee and Panel Elections – None

To elect non-Chief Pleas Members and Panel Members to Committees and Panels, as required.

The Speaker: And last, by no means least, Agenda Item 19, which is Committee and Panel Elections: to elect non-Chief Pleas Members to Committees and Panels, as required. Once again, are there any vacancies, are there any nominations? Any Committee Chairman like to fill me in as to whether there are any nominations to join Committees as non-Chief Pleas Members? No? Okay. So we will move on from that.

**Midsummer Meeting deadline -
Statement by the Speaker**

Right. Thank you very much indeed for sticking with us. It is now 10 to nine. I would just like to make a quick closing statement, if I may. Please be aware that the Midsummer Meeting of Chief Pleas is on Wednesday, 2nd July 2025. Committees, please ensure that you submit your reports with supporting papers in good time and, please, no later than 12 noon on Tuesday, 3rd June.

I apologise, it seems so far in advance, but it takes a week to compile the reports and then the required three-weeks' notice before the meeting and, if you work it back, that is the timeframe that is required. So reports in no later than noon on Tuesday, 3rd June 2025. Thank you for that and I will ask the Greffier to read the closing prayer.

Thank you.

PRAYER
The Greffier

Chief Pleas closed at 8.51 p.m.