



## By-Election for three Conseillers on 7<sup>th</sup> September

# The nominated candidates

### **Rosemary (Kate) Couldridge**

#### **About me**

I'm sure many people in Sark will know me as one of the many Couldridge siblings but know little else about me. I am 29 years old and was born and grew up in Sark, I attended Sark school as well as Ladies College in Guernsey staying with a host family before attending boarding school and going on to university.

Everyone is familiar with the saying "a jack of all trades is a master of none", but few are familiar that the saying continues, "but oftentimes better than a master of one." This saying I believe describes my experience, education, and career to date.

I initially studied adult nursing at university and worked as a carer and nanny on Sark in my summer holidays before deciding to leave nursing and obtain my degree in Education Studies at Oxford Brookes University.

During my studies at university, I obtained a deeper understanding of the role of education in society and explored areas such as psychology, child development, special educational needs, alternative educational provisions and the impact of culture, economics, and politics on the education outcomes for children. I went back to Sark school during this time to observe and study this unique school setting, going on to complete my thesis based on this experience.

Whilst I enjoyed my degree hugely, after graduating I returned to Guernsey and began studying accountancy, working in finance, and obtaining my chartered accountancy qualification and have now spent the last 7 years working in some of the top accountancy firms across Guernsey and London.

Growing up in Sark and attending school and university elsewhere, I was constantly asked whether I would like to live in Sark when I grow up and have my own family there, in my naivety and immaturity my answer was of course always "No!". Something I'm sure is a common experience of those who grew up and went to school here, you must go and spend time living elsewhere in bustling cities, travelling, working, or studying to really grasp how special this island we all call home is. Being fortunate enough to now live here full time again I can confidently say there is nowhere else I would rather live or hope to one day have my own family.

#### **Why I want to join Chief Pleas?**

I spent time working as an assistant CSO in 2021 and gained a real understanding of the inner workings of Chief Pleas, the committees, and the governance of Sark.

I now feel that my experience in the Chief Pleas offices as well as my degree in Education, Health Care/Medical experience, Chartered Accountancy, and time spent throughout the years working alongside my family in tourism-based roles will allow me to contribute back to the Island.

I hope to now be able to contribute these skills, experience and education into the continual improvement and future success of the island.



## **Christopher (Chris) Bateson**

### **About me**

I have lived and worked on Sark for 25 years during which time I married a local and raised a family.

I have served as Vingtenier and Constable and became a Conseiller at the first democratic election in 2008. During my time on Chief Pleas, I sat on the Public Health, Douzaine, Development Control and Road Traffic (of which I was chairman for a time) Committees.

As much of what is happening on Chief Pleas at any given time is, by necessity, not in the public domain, I feel that it would be impossible for me to produce a manifesto until I know what is happening, why it is happening and what resources are available. Anyone can produce a wish list, but reality must prevail.

Having put two children through the Sark education system, one pre-Reach 2 and one post Reach 2, I take a close interest in the education issue, and I believe, have some insight and experience on the subject. I am also interested in the perhaps more mundane aspects of living in Sark, such as how we get rid of our rubbish.

At work I interact with all kinds of Sark residents and am always keen to hear their opinions on what is happening in Sark. I feel that that gives me confidence that I would be able to represent the voice of the majority.

I have chosen to stand at this time as I feel that I am able to give the time and commitment that being a Conseiller requires.



## **Benjamin (Ben) Harris**

### **About me**

I am a 42-year-old Channel Islander, raised in Jersey and Sark. I have a 27-year connection with this unique island. My father, Christopher Harris, gave 12 years of service to Chief Pleas. My past, present and future are bound to this special place.

What experience can I bring to Chief Pleas? I read Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Oxford University. After working as a corporate governance analyst, I qualified as a lawyer in the City of London. I am used to analysing complex information and finding solutions. My vocation, however, is in psychotherapy: helping clients build personal resilience and navigate challenging circumstances. I have practiced as a psychotherapist for the last decade, in person and online.

### **How I think about politics and governance**

Sark is one community, but there are many groups within it. For our small island to work effectively, each group's interests must be sufficiently accounted for. I will always seek compromise and consensus within the bounds of what is possible.

### **What is my perspective?**

#### **Independence**

Sark's independence is core to our way of life. It is a significant responsibility and a precious freedom. I will not support any reduction in the competencies of Chief Pleas.

#### **Sound finances**

Over the last 15 years, revenue expenditure on day-to-day government spending has increased dramatically. This trend is not sustainable. I will support efforts to bring expenditure in line with our means, allowing us to build up funds for necessary capital outlays.

#### **Community**

Sark must work for existing residents first. We must retain a local housing market as we seek to find ways to bring dilapidated housing back into use. We can encourage a vibrant local economy via a small rise in the number of residents. I am open to new measures, fair to all parties involved, to protect the interests of leaseholders. I stand against the growth of a remote salaried political or bureaucratic class; a democratic system of government is a participatory one.

#### **Healthcare**

I support easing the healthcare burden on residents through enabling individuals to purchase at-cost access to the Guernsey health system. This is an exciting proposal under discussion that could reduce costs significantly.

#### **Taxation**

There are concerns about the increase in the minimum capital tax payment in recent years. I am open to new ways to raise revenue that do not punish residents or burden the working people of the island. Sark's low tax / low public spending approach and light touch government are essential to attracting new residents and allow local businesses to provide a living for islanders. Sark's islanders have always kept the money they earn. This is a defining feature of our way of life.

#### **Tourism**

Our tourist industry has long been dwindling. Aurigny's airfares don't help. We should capitalise on the island's tourist potential once more, thinking about regionally targeted advertising and better ferry links to France and Jersey.

*Please feel free to look at my full manifesto on Facebook (Sark Classified and Positivity Sark).*



## **James (Jimmy) Martin**

### **About me**

Hello, my name is James Martin, but known locally as 'Jimmy'.

I arrived on Sark in the year 2000 to start a job at Stocks hotel, the journey across from Guernsey to Sark and then to the hotel I remember as clear as if it was only yesterday. The sheer beauty of the island and friendliness of the people got me straight away and I knew then that this is where I want to stay.

I've been part of the Sark Fire Service for 18 years and more recently a member of Sark's First Responders.

I will have no problem in rolling up my sleeves and getting stuck into the challenge that's ahead, I am known to openly speak my mind and give my opinions and I will continue doing this and being a listening voice for the people our community.

I feel alongside a lot of others that there has been a breakdown of confidence in the way our island is being steered, I firmly believe that anyone who enters Chief Pleas should be on board for no longer than five years. Yes, there is a lot of years of experience there and people have worked hard to bring us to this day, however it needs change. Tourism and Shipping are in my sights as I feel they need a bloody good shake up along with a lot of other things.

My reason for coming forward is I have spoken with others within Chief Pleas and outside who have the same fire in their belly to see change and are willing to work together and to give Sark what it deserves.

I don't mention tax, healthcare, or education as we all know it's a broken system but believe me it's on my radar. Give me a chance and I will be your voice. If I upset people on the way, then so be it. It's not personal. My passion for Sark and its community are real.

Give me your vote and I'll fight your corner.

## **There are vacancies for three Conseillers**

### **Times and dates for your diary**

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> September**

**Meet the Candidates**

The four candidates have been invited to attend an informal 'meet the candidates' evening in the Island Hall from 6pm to 7.30pm. Please come along and talk to the candidates on a one-to-one basis to listen to their views and to share your own thoughts and ideas.

**Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> September**

**Polling Day**

The Polling Station will be in the Toplis Room at the Island Hall from 10am to 6pm.

The count will take place in the main Island Hall from about 6.30pm. The public are invited to attend and observe the count, but they are asked to remain silent throughout, please.