

CHIEF PLEAS NEWSLETTER

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August 2025

Welcome to the August Edition of the Chief Pleas Newsletter

We're pleased to bring you the latest updates from across Chief Pleas, as well as from the Medical Practice, highlighting the wide range of work currently underway. This is an exciting time for Sark as we continue to move forward and work to make our island a better place for everyone.

Upcoming By-Election – 17th September: A by-election will be held on 17th September to fill four vacancies for Conseillers, following resignations earlier this year. Conseillers play a vital role in shaping life on Sark. As the smallest self-governing jurisdiction in the British Isles, Sark's system of government is unique. This gives islanders a strong voice in how we are governed. That's why who stands for Chief Pleas, and who we elect, really matters.

Chief Pleas needs Conseillers who reflect our community, who call Sark home, and who are committed to its future. If you care deeply about the island, consider standing for election and making a meaningful difference. Of the four available seats, three have terms that last until the next General Election in December 2026. This gives those new Conseillers a term of just over a year. That could be an ideal opportunity to get involved and see if serving in Chief Pleas is right for you.

Register to Vote – deadline 29th August, 4pm: To stand for election or to vote in any election, you must be registered on the electoral roll. The deadline to register on the electoral roll is 29th August. Registration forms are available at sarkgov.co.uk, from the Committee Office, or from the Greffier. Registering is important, every voice counts, especially in a community as close-knit as ours.

Looking Ahead: Island Plan and Community Initiatives

There's a great deal of exciting work in progress. From developments in tourism to new approaches in how we deliver education for our children, the momentum is growing.

Sark is facing a number of challenges with infrastructure and services, some of which have been put aside for too long, but must now be tackled. There is further preventative work needed on the Coupée in the coming years and an overhaul of the waste management and sewage works are being investigated in detail. A close look at how the island raises money will be needed to pay for this crucial work and a lot of effort is also being put into how this can be fairly achieved. Some tough decisions may need to be made in the coming year and your involvement with Chief Pleas, in one form or another, is crucial to making this a success.

We are currently working on an outline for a new Island Plan exercise, set to launch early next year. The plan will be developed as a whole community, using external facilitators and will involve genuine cross community dialogue. It will include clear goals, timelines, and performance measures – so everyone can be involved in shaping the plan, can see what's happening and how we're progressing.

Finally, a heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributes to life on Sark. Our island thrives because of the commitment and community spirit of its people. Chief Pleas is proud to be one part of that shared effort, and we recognise how much work is being done every day, across all sectors, to make Sark stronger.

Education Committee Update

A New Era for Sark's Young People: Three Education Pathways Now Available Post-13

For the last 5 years, families on Sark have faced a difficult crossroads when their children reached the age of 13. With no on-island options except home schooling for education beyond Year 8, students had to go to Guernsey or the UK for years 9-11 including GCSEs.

The Education Committee is proud to announce a new initiative in partnership with leading online school Kings Interhigh located within a Sark School setting, allowing students to remain on Sark while receiving a high-quality education that meets national UK standards. This will be in addition to off island options.

These new arrangements will apply to children entering year 7 in September 2025 and for any new children arriving on the island; for older children, who have already made arrangements with the Education Committee for their child's schooling off island, there will be no changes although they may attend the on island, online school if they prefer.

Option 1: Hybrid Online School

Pupils choosing this option will continue to attend Sark School in person, supported by staff and integrated into school life, while their academic lessons are delivered online, with 28 iGCSE and 6 City & Guild subjects to choose from, the majority of which can be taken as online exams, removing the need to go to Guernsey for exams. This approach combines the flexibility and breadth of online learning with the social, pastoral, and community benefits of in-person education, and there will be no tuition fee for families.

This offer is open to all students, regardless of how many years they've previously spent at Sark School. More information about Kings Interhigh may be found on their website: <https://kingsinterhigh.co.uk/>

Option 2: Guernsey Day School while living with a term time host

For those who prefer off-island education, students who have attended at least three full years at Sark School are eligible for subsidised education at Les Beaucamps High School in Guernsey. Parents may also opt to apply this subsidy towards other private day schools on the island, provided that the child lives with a registered term-time host who is not a parent or family member. Chief Pleas also offers a financial contribution towards this accommodation on a sliding scale, depending on the length of prior enrolment at Sark School.

This route suits students who are seeking a traditional classroom setting with access to Guernsey's broader extracurricular and academic programmes.

Option 3: UK State Boarding Schools (Years 9-11)

Another route for eligible students who have spent three or more full years at Sark School is attending a UK state boarding school. Chief Pleas provides the same level of financial support as it does for the Guernsey-based option. The state boarding route allows families to access a wider range of specialist subjects and facilities. However, private UK schools and non-UK schools are not eligible for funding support.

Unfortunately, where children live off island with a parent or another family member or guardian for their education, Chief Pleas is no longer able to provide financial support for tuition or accommodation. Families with children approaching age 13 are encouraged to speak with the Education Committee to explore which option is best for them.

More details available at www.sarkschool.co.uk or by contacting admin@sarkschool.co.uk

Sark Tourism Community Update

Guernsey Stamps Launch Featuring Sark

In a major philatelic milestone, Guernsey Post has just released a new series celebrating Sark - as part of its 'Islands of Sark and Brecqhou' issues scheduled for 27th August and 3rd September pending Royal Approval. Sark is the first island since Alderney in 1983 to launch its own stamps and these stamps highlight Sark's identity within the Bailiwick, offering another channel for promoting the island's unique heritage to collectors and enthusiasts.

New to Our Visitor Centre Team

We're thrilled to welcome George Timpson to the Tourism team! Alongside Jane, Elsie, and Rosalie, George is helping to deliver an even more personal, informative and engaging welcome for visitors and providing residents with up-to-date information on island events and offerings.

Stronger Ties

The Tourism Committee has been working hard behind the scenes to actively strengthen connections with our neighbouring islands and beyond. Joint planning and promotion aim to support ferry reliability, develop combined package experiences like island-hopping tours, and enhance regional marketing through VisitGuernsey and island-agency collaborations.

Twinning with Port-Bail-sur-Mer - Community Support Needed

Towards the end of this season, we'll be holding a community meeting about Sark's planned twinning with Port-Bail-sur-Mer in Normandy. This initiative will celebrate our historic links with Normandy and create opportunities for cultural exchange, tourism collaboration, and community projects. We'll be looking to the wider Sark community for ideas, support, and involvement as this exciting project moves forward. Please keep an eye out for further details and how you can participate.

Residents, businesses, and visitors alike are encouraged to:

- Stay in touch & share ideas for events or cross-island collaborations.
- Visit www.sark.co.uk/events for the full event calendar.
- Meet the Visitor Centre team or email office@sark.co.uk
- Follow our social channels for live updates:

Facebook: [@sarkisland](https://www.facebook.com/sarkisland)

TikTok: [@island.of.sark](https://www.tiktok.com/@island.of.sark)

Instagram: [@sark_island](https://www.instagram.com/sark_island)

YouTube: [@sarkislandofficial](https://www.youtube.com/sarkislandofficial)

– Conseillers Natalie Tighe, Jolie Rose, Helen Plummer and Mary Nicolle



Message from Sark Medical Centre

Measles and MMR update from Sark Medical Practice

The UK has seen a recent increase in the number of cases of Measles with one recent fatality being recorded. While we have no current recorded cases of Measles on Sark or Guernsey there have been two cases in Jersey in the last year.

Measles is a viral infection that spreads from person to person very easily and is often thought of as a "childhood" illness, but it can cause serious and sometimes life-threatening complications. Measles in adulthood tends to be a more severe illness with a greater chance of complications, it is strongly recommended in women of a child bearing age who may wish to become pregnant as it can cause complications in pregnancy and Routine Rubella screening is no longer offered during pregnancy. Unvaccinated adults should have two vaccinations.

There is no definitive cure for Measles, so PREVENTION is very important. Thankfully we have the MMR Vaccine which gives a remarkable 95 to 97% protection from Measles, Mumps and Rubella or German Measles. Tried and trusted and in use for over fifty years the world over and for more than thirty years in the United Kingdom. If you are unsure if you or your child has had or needs to have this Vaccination, please contact Sark Medical Practice on 01481 832045.

Separate note from Sark Medical Practice

We would like to gently remind the population and visitors of Sark that outside of The Surgery's opening hours and in an emergency, they must ring 999. This call is triaged for its severity in Guernsey and then immediately relayed to the Doctor and other relevant team members for that call such as the Community First Responders. This is a safety mechanism for both the Doctor and the public and by calling 999 you will be ensuring that you are accessing the correct help for the patient in the most efficient manner.

The Medical Practice, CFR team and Medical Committee wish to thank Sam La Trobe-Bateman for all his hard work as Lead Community First Responder, ahead of his departure this August.

Information from the Douzaine Committee

What does the Douzaine do? Our Douzaine is different to those in the rest of the Bailiwick. The Douzaine is also different in Sark being the only Committee mentioned in the Reform Law. The Douzaine has been providing all those services which support the community since the 1700s. We're effectively "the Ministry of Works" for Sark, plus Land Registry (Cadastre), Welfare State (Procureur des Pauvres), Waste Disposal, Island Property Manager, Employer of record for Constables, Bus Company, Road Traffic Authority and Licensing Authority for firearms, tractors, carriages, drivers, invalid carriages and bicycles. It's certainly not just go to a few meetings and turn up at Chief Pleas.

As the name suggests, there used to be 12 Douzainiers. Now we are only 7 Conseillers and the mandate covers many more areas than when the Douzaine started. Thankfully, we have an excellent team both in the Committee Office and in Public Works to support the work. It wouldn't be possible without them.

Here's one of our specific projects aimed at improving the services for the island:

To Burn or not to Burn? There's more waste today than there's ever been. More plastic, more glass, more packaging, more metal, electronics and batteries, and more construction. All of this waste has to be dealt with and that costs more money than ever before. The incinerators in the Harbour Quarry have been out of use and uneconomical to repair for some time so we've had to revert to the old open-burning system. This is currently at Les Lâches as the burning pits at the Harbour collapsed some time ago.

This is far from ideal so we have been investigating a new waste strategy for Sark which we hope to implement for 2026. We have been working with Guernsey Waste, the Guernsey Recycling group and the States of Alderney to learn from what they do, the services they offer us and what their future strategies are.

Sark's volume of waste is lower than Alderney's or Guernsey's. There's no economy of scale for Sark to earn money from recycling – other than non-ferrous metals, we have to pay for everything to be processed in Guernsey.

Our research is balancing shipping and processing costs for the amount of waste of all types generated by Sark against the cost of the right equipment and processes to deal with it here on Sark. We will need to buy more kit but then we won't need to pay ongoing processing and shipping.

Further info will be in future newsletters and a report presented to Chief Pleas. The Douzaine will be covering other subjects in future newsletters as well. If you have any questions, please contact the Douzaine via the Committee Office.

– Mike Locke, Chair of the Douzaine, on behalf of the Douzaine

