OFFICIAL REPORT

OF THE

MIDSUMMER MEETING OF CHIEF PLEAS OF THE ISLAND OF SARK

HANSARD

Assembly Room, Sark, Wednesday, 8th July 2026

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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
Jonathan Godwin

His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor of the Bailiwick of Guernsey
Lieutenant General Sir Richard John Cripwell, KBE, CB, CStJ

Conseillers:

Jolie Rose
John Guille
Helen Plummer
Carol Cragoe
Michael Locke
Natalie Tighe
Christopher Bateson
David Curtis
Edric Baker MBE
James Martin
Frank Makepeace
Patrick Dewe
Samuel Keyte
Nicolas Moloney
Karl Rang
Joseph Perrée
Michael Lanyon

Business transacted

Midsummer 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.

Removal of hats and jackets

The Speaker: Good afternoon and welcome. Before we get started, it is roasting hot in here and has been all day, despite having these windows open. We cannot open the windows on the front because of the noise and the dust that will come in.

However, ladies, if you wish at this moment, you are very welcome to remove your hats, and, gentlemen, you are very welcome to remove your jackets if you so wish.

Apologies received

The Speaker: Welcome to the Midsummer Meeting of Chief Pleas. We have received apologies for absence from no one this evening.

Conseiller Nicolle – Statement by the Speaker

The Speaker: However, I must make a short statement at this point. Under Section 31 of the Reform (Sark) Law 2008, Conseiller Nicolle has now failed to attend three consecutive ordinary meetings of Chief Pleas.

Upon receipt of report from the Greffier to this effect, I unfortunately have no option but declare to declare that Conseiller Nicolle shall become disqualified and is required to vacate her office as a Conseiller immediately at the end of this meeting.

Welcome to the Lieutenant-Governor

The Speaker: This evening we offer a very warm welcome to Sir Richard Cripwell, His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor of the Bailiwick. Welcome to you, sir. You are very welcome. Very good to see you.

Tribute to former Conseiller Chris Nightingale

The Speaker: Moving along, I have a further statement to make before we come to three Conseiller statements. I would like to say that we were saddened to learn of the death of Chris Nightingale last Friday, 3rd July.

Chris was first elected to Chief Pleas as a Conseiller in the December 2008 General Election, the first fully democratic election after the introduction of the Reform (Sark) Law, 2008. Chris served Chief Pleas as a Conseiller continuously until the 2020 General Election, when he chose not to re-stand.

During his 12 years of service, he served on the Education Committee, the Douzaine, and he was also for a while the Deputy Chair of the Agriculture, Environment and Sea Fisheries Committee accordingly.

I would just like to ask you to stand and to remember Chris's dedication and service to Chief Pleas, with a moment of silence and reflection. *(Silence)* Thank you very much for that reflection.

Thank you.

STATEMENTS

**Prostate cancer screening –
Statement by Conseiller Martin**

The Speaker: Moving along, we have three statements this evening. I will take them in the order in which they were received. The first statement is from Conseiller Martin, Deputy Chair of the Medical and Emergency Services Committee.

Deputy Martin, thank you.

Conseiller Martin: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Medical Committee received an email concerning the awareness of prostate cancer from a former Conseiller. I contacted the HSC office in Guernsey to ask for advice they might have. The Bailiwick of Guernsey does not currently have a formal population-based prostate cancer screening programme in place.

The UK National Screening Committee recently published updated guidance related to prostate cancer screening. The implications of this guidance for the Bailiwick will be considered by the Guernsey Screening Committee in due course as part of its routine review process. Until that review has taken place, there is no change to current arrangements.

Individuals who have concerns about prostate cancer or any other cancers or wish to discuss testing should continue to seek advice from their GP.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Martin, for that appropriate comment.

Thank you.

55th BIMR Annual Conference –
Statement by Conseiller Tighe

The Speaker: The second statement this evening is from Conseiller Tighe, Deputy Chair of the Policy and Finance Committee.
Deputy Tighe, thank you.

Conseiller Tighe: Thank you, Mr Speaker.
The 55th British Isles of Mediterranean Region (BIMR) Annual Conference took place in Gibraltar from 17th to 19th June 2026, bringing together parliamentarians and officers from across the region to explore how modern legislatures can respond to contemporary challenges. The event provided both a platform for Sark to contribute to regional discussions and an opportunity to strengthen existing relationships, build new ones, and deepen ties with neighbouring jurisdictions.
The conference opened at Gibraltar Parliament, where Madam Speaker Karen Ramagge Phillips GMH MP, welcomed delegates, followed by Chief Minister Fabian Picardo KC MP, who reflected on Gibraltar's evolving constitutional landscape. Delegates then moved into a combined opening session led by Dr Joseph Garcia, CMG MP, who provided a detailed briefing on the forthcoming Gibraltar Treaty expected to be enacted this month, outlining its significance for Gibraltar's post-Brexit future, cross-border arrangements and the wider constitutional relationship between the EU and the Commonwealth.
The second plenary session, 'Future ready economies in small Mediterranean jurisdictions', brought together Minister Sir Joe Bossano, Northern Ireland MLA Paul Frew, and Sark's Treasurer, Sarah Hudson, who delivered her address, 'Sark legislation and building a future ready economy'.
She described the realities of lawmaking in micro-jurisdictions, noting that legislation is something you hear discussed on the street, in the shop and at the pub, and emphasising that Sark's reputation is its currency. She highlighted the importance of credible legislation proportionate to Sark's size and capacity, reflecting on recent reforms, including land reform and ongoing tax reform discussions. She stressed that small jurisdictions must be agile and thoughtful, designing laws that fit their scale rather than transplanting frameworks from larger jurisdictions.
Sark's participation also reflects the growing value of its membership in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Since joining the CPA last year, Sark has benefited from access to a wide network of parliamentarians facing similar challenges, particularly in small rural or island communities. Attendance at events such as Gibraltar allows Sark to share experiences, learn from jurisdictions that have already navigated comparable issues, and draw an established good practice rather than developing solutions in isolation.
Officer engagement with the CPA also provides a valuable avenue for continuing professional development, strengthening skills, broadening perspective and supporting the delivery of high-quality governance on Sark.
Friday's sessions offered some of the most memorable moments of the conference. Plenary 3 showcased Gibraltar's Youth Parliament, where young people responded to questions with confidence, clarity and genuine passion.
Madam Speaker captured the spirit of the session with her reflection that the guardian of democracy is the citizen and it requires engagement. Seeing future citizens already engaging in decision-making that will shape their countries was a highlight of the event and Madam Speaker even remarked that one of the panel members may well be a future Chief Minister.
The session drew a natural comparison with Sark's own recent First Youth Forum and reinforced the hope that a follow-up forum can be delivered this term to continue building democratic literacy among Sark's young people.

The day continued with the plenary on digital parliaments, which explored the opportunities and risks of integrating AI into parliamentary procedure. Delegates discussed how digital tools can support legislative scrutiny, improve institutional memory and streamline processes, whilst also recognising the needs for safeguards, transparency and human oversight. This is an area Sark could explore further with potential for direct future engagement with Gibraltar to understand how these tools might be adapted for a micro-jurisdiction.

The afternoon concluded with workshops on LGBT+ allyship and accessible parliaments, both offering practical insights into inclusion, plain language, procedural clarity and modernisation; themes increasingly relevant as Chief Pleas continues to refine its own processes.

The conference ended with a visit to Gibraltar's World War 2 tunnels and a closing dinner hosted by Madam Speaker. Sark's contribution, particularly Sarah Hudson's speech, demonstrated the Island's commitment to credible law-making, thoughtful diversification, collaborative governance, and active participation within the CPA. We will also be making the Treasurer's speech available on the Chief Pleas website.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Tighe, for that summary.

Sark School –
Statement by Conseiller Cragoe

The Speaker: The third statement this evening is from Conseiller Cragoe, Chair of the Education Committee.

Thank you, Conseiller Cragoe.

Conseiller Cragoe: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Education Committee would like to update Chief Pleas on Sark School and the arrangements that are being put in place to support the school next year.

The school is central to the life of the Island. It serves our children, their families and the wider community, and we know how much parents care about its stability, standards and future. The Committee shares that commitment, and our focus is firmly on ensuring that the school is well supported, properly staffed and able to move forward with confidence.

As you will be aware, the former Head of School, Michelle Brady, was suspended in late February and was formally removed from her role at Sark School several weeks ago. We understand that this news has raised questions, and we also recognise that recent months have brought concern, uncertainty and frustration. There still remain limits to what the Committee is able to say, and we cannot discuss all confidential employment matters in detail, nor can we set out the full circumstances relating to individual contractual processes. This duty of confidentiality is not a reluctance to be open, it is part of the responsibility we hold to act properly, fairly and lawfully.

However, we can say that the decision to dismiss Ms Brady followed serious concerns about her compliance with the safeguarding obligations attached to the Head's role, in particular over a very long period from September 2024 to late February 2026, she was aware that an adult male, her son, who had previously volunteered on trips with Sark School children, including an overnight school trip, had been arrested for, charged with, pleaded guilty to and sent to prison for sexual offences against a child under 16 and for child pornography offences, including possession of category A images, which is the most serious level.

At no point during this long period of almost 17 months did she inform the school's designated safeguarding lead about this issue, nor did she inform the Island Safeguarding Officer, her employers or indeed anyone else, despite her professional and legal obligations to do so. Those obligations exist to protect children, and where concerns arise and yet are not acted on by those in positions of responsibility the Committee has a responsibility to act in the best interests of pupils. There is no evidence that Sark's children were harmed by this person, but that is not the point. The obligation remained that when she became aware of his offending and the potential retrospective risks, it should have been reported.

We are sorry that we have not been able to explain this in more detail until this point but we have had to balance our wish to communicate fully with the need to act properly and fairly, and we regret the anxiety this has caused over the last months. We are grateful for the patience that parents and Islanders have shown during this period, and we remain committed to communicating as openly as we properly can.

Throughout this time, the staff at Sark School have continued to provide care, structure and learning for pupils in the most exemplary way. They have maintained routine, supported the children and helped preserve the steady daily life of the school. Their professionalism and resilience have made a real difference, and the Committee wishes to place on record its sincere thanks to every member of staff for their work and commitment.

As you may have already been aware, we can confirm that some other members of the teaching staff will be leaving Sark School at the end of this year for their own personal reasons, and we would like to express our thanks to them individually.

Rosie Swanson has made the personal decision to leave to pursue new opportunities and challenges abroad, and we thank her very warmly for her contribution to the school and to the children of Sark. We wish her every success in the next very exciting stage of journey.

Simon Smith, who served so ably as Acting Head over the last few months, and Gina Marson-Smith, who supported the school as a cover teacher, will be leaving as planned in September, or rather at the end of August. Both have given valuable service to the school, particularly during a period that has called for steadiness, leadership and commitment, and the Committee is very grateful to them for their dedication and contribution to the life of the school, and we wish them every happiness and success in the future.

Sarah Smith, who has acted as cover teacher, is also retiring and has been a very valued member of staff over the last few years. We wish her the very best for the future.

However, and by no means last or least, Gemma Knight and Juliet Turner-Cross, our two TAs will remain in post for September, and we are also so grateful to them for their continued support and hard work. Mrs Knight, in particular, has been doing two jobs these last two months and we are actively recruiting a new administrator to relieve her burden.

The current community governors are stepping down at the end of the school year, and we really appreciate the time, care and service they have given to the school. Governance in a small community is not always straightforward. It asks people to give their judgement, patience, and personal time in circumstances where decisions are closely felt. Their contribution is recognised and very much appreciated.

The Committee is considering the most appropriate future governance arrangements for Sark School, but throughout and beyond this process, the current parent Governor, Jade Perree, will remain as a representative of parents, and we really appreciate Jade for continuing in this important role, ensuring that parents retain a clear and crucial voice as the school moves forward through this period of change.

Looking ahead, the Education Committee has been working closely with the current Board of Governors and with Guernsey Education to ensure that the school is properly supported and appropriately staffed in September. We are pleased to confirm that Guernsey Education, under an agreement, will be providing two teachers based on Island for the school for the next academic year. In addition, a part-time executive headteacher will be appointed to provide leadership, oversight and support. This executive head will be based in Guernsey and will support the school both in person and through remote working in an arrangement similar to that used recently when additional cover was needed in the school to cover staff absence.

This is a very constructive and positive arrangement for the school. It provides good quality teaching, additional leadership and a direct link to the very much wider educational support and professional expertise in Guernsey. It will help ensure continuity for pupils, support staff and provide reassurance for parents as the school moves through this period of transition. We really have appreciated Guernsey Education for their practical assistance, partnership and commitment to Sark School.

We know that confidence is built through actions as well as words. The Committee will continue to work with staff, Guernsey Education and the wider school community to support a positive and stable future for the school.

Sark is a small island and challenges in our school are felt by the whole community, but that closeness is also one of our strengths. It means there is a shared interest in seeing the school succeed, a shared pride in its pupils, and a shared responsibility to support those who teach and care for them. The Committee remains committed to that work and we thank Conseillers, parents and Islanders for your continued patience, understanding and support as these new arrangements are put in place. Above all, we remain focused on the safety, wellbeing and education of children of Sark School.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Cragoe, for that statement.

Procedural –
Electronic devices

The Speaker: Before we move on to the Agenda proper, I would just remind Conseillers to switch on their microphones before they start speaking and also to turn them off again when they have finished speaking, please. It makes life so much easier for *Hansard* and recording the meeting.

At this point, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, I would now remind all present that electronic devices, mobile telephones, recording devices, cameras, etc., and other electronic equipment must be switched off now, less for those allowed to Chief Pleas Members in accordance with Rule 19(2).

Thank you.

Business of the Day

1. Matters arising from the Christmas Meeting held on 15th April 2026

The Speaker: Moving on to the Agenda, Agenda Item 1 is Matters arising from the Easter Meeting held on 15th April 2026. Are there any matters arising from that meeting? No. Okay.

Thank you.

2. Questions not related to the Business of the Day

The Speaker: Moving on therefore to Agenda Item 2, which is Questions not related to the Business of the Day. We have two questions, which were both submitted in good time in advance of today's meeting. Thank you for allowing the Conseillers concerned to have sight of the questions in in good time.

Both questions are from Conseiller Makepeace, so I would ask Conseiller Makepeace to present his first question, please.

Conseiller Makepeace, thank you.

Conseiller Makepeace: Thank you, sir.

This is to the Chairman of the Policy and Finance Committee, Conseiller Guille. Several residents have recently asked why the Chief Pleas newsletter carries no named editorial responsibility and who determines what content is included or excluded.

Given that the latest edition is heavily focused on the Committee office and Civil Service structure, there is a growing public concern regarding who edits and who approves the publication, whether content is subject to political influence, and what safeguards exist to ensure balanced impartiality in a publicly-funded newsletter.

Could clarification please be provided on who has ultimate editorial responsibility for the newsletter? Who approves content before publication? And is there a formal editorial policy or oversight process? Transparency in public communications is important for maintaining public confidence.

Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace.

That was a question for Conseiller Guille.

Thank you.

Conseiller Guille: Thank you, sir.

Conseiller Cragoe is going to answer this question.

The Speaker: Conseiller Cragoe, on behalf of Policy and Finance.

Conseiller Cragoe: Yes, thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, the purpose of the Chief Pleas newsletter is to provide residents with information on the work of the Committees of Chief Please and on relevant public matters. It is a practical step in improving transparency, helping residents understand what Chief Pleas is doing, and keeping the public informed on key issues affecting the Island.

Recent additions have included updates on Asian Hornets, the work of the Royal British Legion, and important medical notices from the Sark Medical Centre. The latest edition included, among several items, an overview of the Committee office and some introduction to its staff. I am sure all here would agree that is useful for the public to understand what the office is responsible for and the work that it does.

In terms of contributions, any Committee can contribute to the newsletter. Each Committee is responsible for its own update and for approving that update. Contributions may also come from those engaged in the work of a Committee, for example, on Asian Hornets. There is no central political editorial oversight applied to Committee contributions.

The production delivery cost is approximately £600 per newsletter with publication approximately quarterly. That is around £2,400 over the year. Policy and Finance recognises the need to ensure value for money and a review of the cost is ongoing, but that must be balanced against the public's right to be updated on key matters being considered by Committees.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Cragoe.

I do not want to go into a debate, Conseiller Makepeace, but you have a further point you would like to make.

Conseiller Makepeace: I just find it incredible, actually, the response from Conseiller Cragoe, who she has not answered any of the questions.

Are we to believe then that random pieces get sent in there, nobody edits it or nobody puts it in a priority, and it edits itself and publishes itself? Someone must be looking at the information and deciding what is relevant and what is not. There must be someone with some editorial capacity. It does not produce itself.

I think Conseiller Cragoe has given a great description of what it may do and what it may cover, but she has not answered the questions. Who is responsible for the editorial and deciding what goes in and what does not? Because someone has to be.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace.

Are you able to clarify that Conseiller Cragoe?

Conseiller Cragoe: Yes, the Committees are asked to provide updates. The editorial content of the Asian Hornets came from the Agricultural Committee. The medical update will come from the Medical Committee. There is a light touch editing of proofreading that goes on in the office, but the actual content is produced by individual Committees. There is not really an editor. It is put together – contributions are sought from the individual Committees. The Committee office theme was decided as a good theme, and individuals were asked to supply information for themselves.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Cragoe.

Conseiller Makepeace: I am not happy with that, sir. Can I ask for further – what do I do now? I think she has just evaded the questions, so what do I do now? Can I ask for another question or an update?

The Speaker: No, this Agenda Item, Conseiller Makepeace, will not allow for a fuller debate. You have asked the question. You have now had an initial response and a subsequent response. If you are still unhappy and you have still got further questions, which is your prerogative of course, I would suggest that you put those questions in writing to Policy and Finance to get the answers that you are looking for.

Conseiller Makepeace: Okay, thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you.

That is question 1. Question 2 is also from Conseiller Makepeace, also to Policy and Finance.

Conseiller Makepeace, thank you, question 2.

Conseiller Makepeace: As Police and Finance has commissioned and is overseeing the Future Sark consultation, can the Committee explain what measures are in place to ensure that consultation remains independent and free from any perception that particular outcomes are being promoted in advance of the consultation findings?

In that context, has the Committee satisfied itself that neither consultants engaged by the project nor persons associated with the projects have anonymously promoted particular policy visions or consultation outcomes during the consultation? Will the methodology used to analyse responses and develop recommendations be published in full?

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace.

P&F, who would like to respond on that one? Conseiller Guille?

Conseiller Guille: Conseiller Tighe is going to respond to it.

The Speaker: Conseiller Tighe, thank you.

Conseiller Tighe: Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace.

Policy and Finance recognises the importance of this point. Future Sark will only be useful if Islanders can see that the process is open, fair, independent in its analysis and based on the views and evidence gathered throughout the consultation. There are several safeguards in place with Future Sark being run through a clear stage process based on a published methodology that was set out at the opening briefing at the Island Hall.

The process separates engagement, analysis, advice and decision-making. Islanders provide evidence and views. The consultants analyse and report that evidence. Chief Pleas remains responsible for any final decisions.

The overall Future Sark process and methodology have already been published and shared with Conseillers and Islanders. Further information on the analysis, reporting and framework development process will be published alongside future outputs as the work progresses.

The work of the project advisers is separate from Chief Pleas. Policy and Finance supports practical issues such as workshop arrangements, postcard distribution and data protection responsibilities. It does not carry out the analysis and it does not direct the findings.

The consultation materials have been designed to invite open responses. Islanders have been asked what they value about Sark, what should be protected, what opportunities should not be missed and what changes would most improve Island life. They have not been asked to endorse a predetermined policy programme.

Each stage builds on the previous stages and nothing is being promoted until the final reports are published. There has been no anonymous work on the part of anyone associated with Future Sark, and if anyone has any evidence to the contrary, please do provide it. There does not need to be because everything is published openly and transparently.

We have a dedicated Future Sark site website, a series of hand-delivered postcards, posters, online updates, reviews and briefing notes about previous work on Sark's future; public workshops at the Island Hall, the Mermaid and the Sanctuary where Islanders were able to shape the language in use, identify what was missing, discuss priorities and say what must go well to improve Sark's future. A full write-up of these workshops will be published shortly, which will also include the methodology.

To date, the work has benefited from around 130 responses and engagement from Islanders. A lot of care and attention has been given through the process, and we are hugely appreciative of the time and effort people have put in.

We have also had feedback though how busy people are at this time of year, and so to give more people time to get involved Policy and Finance has decided to extend the Future Sark exercise and move the survey to the autumn, with a final report in the new year. We will use that additional time positively. Before the survey opens, there will be stronger communications and engagement so that Islanders can see what Future Sark is for, what has been heard so far, how the survey will work and how the findings will be used.

Future Sark is about helping the Island think clearly and confidently about its future. The work so far has shown how Islanders care about Sark, its character, its community and its long-term resilience.

The next stage will give more people the chance to test what has been heard so far and help shape a framework that reflects Sark's own priorities.

I would strongly encourage all Islanders to stay involved, read the material as it is published, and to take part in the survey when it opens. The more people who contribute, the stronger, more representative and more useful the final Future Start framework will be.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Tighe.

Yes, Conseiller Makepeace, thank you.

Conseiller Makepeace: I would just like to say I will congratulate Conseiller Tighe for a great PR job promoting the Future Sark. However, I fail to see how successful this has been as according to Conseiller Tighe, because what we have seen are four postcards that have been put out with – needless to say, I think that the answers expected are – well, put it this way. I think the questions have been designed to get the response that they want. I do not think there is this big open discussion and talk about support when at one of the meetings just four people turned up.

I think that we are glossing over all this, like this is some great big exercise that hundreds of people are taking part in, but it is not the case. Furthermore, does the company involved expect to publish individual responses so we can check that? Because all we are going to be presented with, as far as I know, is one report and with one report to vote on when it goes to parliament or when it comes to Chief Pleas. Will individual responses be published anonymously, as with the tax system or the tax inquiry?

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Councillor Makepeace.

Technically, are you able to follow up on that Conseiller Tighe?

Conseiller Tighe: Yes.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Conseiller Tighe.

Conseiller Tighe: Thank you.

I would not judge the Future Sark exercise until it is concluded as to whether or not it is successful. Each stage there will be an interim report. So there is, at the moment, Question Factory putting together an interim report based on all of the workshops, and then we will hear more at the end of the summer as to the next stages with regards to the survey.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Once again, I will just put – thank you for the question. Thank you for the answers. If you have further questions Conseiller Makepeace, once again, the same principle applies, put them in writing to the Committee, please. Thank you.

So that concludes Agenda Item 2, those two questions.

3. Report with Proposition and General Election timetable from the Policy and Finance Committee entitled 'The Reform (General Election) (Sark) Ordinance, 2026' – Ordinance entitled 'The Reform (General Election) (Sark) Ordinance, 2026' – Proposition carried

To consider a Report with Proposition and General Election timetable from the Policy and Finance Committee entitled 'The Reform (General Election) (Sark) Ordinance, 2026' and to APPROVE the Ordinance entitled 'The Reform (General Election) (Sark) Ordinance, 2026'.

Proposition 1:
That Chief Pleas approves the draft Ordinance entitled 'The Reform (General Election) (Sark) Ordinance, 2026.

The Speaker: Moving along to Agenda Item 3, which is: to consider a Report with and timetable from the Policy and Finance Committee entitled 'The Reform (General Election) (Sark) Ordinance, 2026' and to approve the Ordinance entitled 'The Reform (General Election) (Sark) Ordinance, 2026'.

I would just remind you that amended copies of the Ordinance have been placed on the individual desks. Please ensure that you have got a copy of that. That is the document which we are now about to debate.

I would ask, I think, Conseiller Rose to introduce the Report. Thank you.

Conseiller Rose: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Section 23 of the Reform (Sark) Law, 2008 states that a general election for the purpose of electing half of the total number of Conseillers should be held on such date in every second year as Chief Pleas shall, by Ordinance, appoint.

At the Policy Development Group on 6th May 2026, Conseillers agreed that the general election date this year should be set as 25th November. This will allow sufficient time for new Conseillers to familiarise themselves with their duties and prepare for January Committee meetings and the Christmas Chief Pleas. Attached to this Report is a full timeline for the general election.

At the time of writing this Report there were nine vacancies to be filled but that is subject to change as we get closer to the time.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Rose, for that introduction.

Are there any questions or debate from the floor based on the Report that you have read and the updated Ordinance that you have got in front of you and/or the timetable; anything to do with this Agenda Item? Any points you would like to raise? Any questions you would like to ask of P&F before we go to the Proposition attached to the Report? Any questions? Any debates? No? Everyone is happy with what they have got.

In which case, let us go to the Proposition attached to this, unless, Conseiller Rose, you would like to sum up? No, you have said everything you want to say. Thank you.

In which case, let us go to the Proposition attached to the Report, which reads as follows: that Chief Pleas approves the draft Ordinance entitled 'The Reform (General Election) (Sark) Ordinance 2026. Those in favour. Thank you. Those against? That is **carried.**

Thank you very much indeed.

4. Report with Proposition from the Policy and Finance Committee entitled 'The Real Property (Transfer Tax, Charging and Related Provisions) (Sark) (Amendment) Law, 2026' – The Real Property (Transfer Tax, Charging and Related Provisions) (Sark) (Amendment) Law, 2026 – Proposition carried

To consider a Report with Proposition from the Policy and Finance Committee entitled 'The Real Property (Transfer Tax, Charging and Related Provisions) (Sark) (Amendment) Law, 2026' and to approve 'The Real Property (Transfer Tax, Charging and Related Provisions) (Sark) (Amendment) Law, 2026'.

Proposition 1:
That Chief Pleas approves the draft Projet de Loi entitled 'The Real Property (Transfer Tax, Charging and Related Provisions) (Sark) (Amendment) Law, 2026'.

The Speaker: Let us just move on to Agenda Item 4. Agenda Item 4, which reads: to consider a Report with Proposition from the Policy and Finance Committee entitled 'The Real Property (Transfer Tax, Charging and Related Provisions) (Sark) (Amendment) Law, 2026' and to approve the Projet de Loi 'The Real Property (Transfer Tax, Charging and Related Provisions) (Sark) (Amendment) Law, 2026'.

I would ask Conseiller Guille to introduce – no, Conseiller Baker to introduce the Report.

Conseiller Baker: Before we start the debate, I would like to declare an interest. It may not be directly, but I would like Chief Pleas to decide on that.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Baker. At this point I will ask Conseiller Curtis.

Thank you.

Conseiller Curtis: I have the same situation as a landowner, whether Chief Pleas considers it appropriate that we take part or not in this Item on the Agenda, please.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Baker. Thank you, Conseiller Curtis.

Conseiller Tighe, thank you.

Conseiller Tighe: I wish to declare an indirect interest as I am employed by Sark Estate Agents. I do not believe this is a direct pecuniary interest as defined by section 15(2). I believe that an indirect interest would mean that I remain permitted to stay in the Assembly Rooms, can participate in debate and vote on all relevance Propositions, if accepted.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Tighe.

Would anyone else like to declare a direct pecuniary interest in what we are about to debate and ultimately come to vote on in the Proposition?

So before we get into the debate, I would ask you for a show of hands, those in favour of Conseiller Baker, Conseiller Curtis and Conseiller Tighe remaining in the Chamber for the debate and to participate in the debate and vote on the Proposition. There are three separate issues there. Could I ask you if you would like them or you are happy for them to remain, please raise your hands now. Thank you. Those who would like them to leave the Chamber during the debate and the vote; anyone not happy that they should remain? No. Okay, in which case that was overwhelmingly in favour that you should remain in the Chamber.

Thank you for your declarations of interest. We will now move on to the Report accordingly. Therefore, is it Conseiller Guille to introduce the Report?

Conseiller Guille: It is, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Conseiller Guille, thank you.

Conseiller Guille: Mr Speaker, as all here will be aware, housing affordability is one of the most serious practical pressures facing people who live on Sark. It is not caused by one single factor and no single measure will solve it on its own, but where there is a clear barrier that Chief Pleas can reduce, we should be prepared to act.

For Local Market properties, one such barrier is the cost of property transfer tax. At present, a single rate of property transfer tax of 7.5% applies to all qualifying transactions. That is a substantial additional cost in a market where many people cannot borrow to cover the price of a house, let alone the tax. Having to find that extra cash upfront can be the difference between a move being possible and a move being out of reach.

The amendment would introduce a differentiated rate structure so that transfers of Open Market property would continue to be taxed at 7.5%, while transfers of Local Market property would instead be taxed at 4%. The purpose of this reform is straightforward, to make transactions in the Local Market more accessible and affordable for those who live in Sark and rely upon that market for their housing needs.

Mr Speaker, property transfer tax is a significant transactional cost. In the case of Local Market homes, that cost may represent a real obstacle to purchase, sale, downsizing, or relocation. Reducing the rate to 4% for Local Market properties would lessen that barrier and make it easier for local people to move within the housing market and in a way that reflects their circumstances and needs.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Guille.

There is the introduction to the Report. Two hands up at the back there. Let us start off at the back, maybe start with Conseiller Makepeace, followed by Conseiller Keyte.

Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace.

Conseiller Makepeace: I welcome any measure that genuinely makes home ownership more affordable for local people, and I support the principle of reducing the transfer tax on Local Market properties. However, this proposal exposes a fundamental inconsistency in government policy. If Policy and Finance accepts that Local Market properties are worth significantly less than Open Market properties and therefore deserve a lower transfer tax, why does that same principle not apply to annual property tax? If the value is lower at the point of purchase, it is lower every year after. The logic simply does not follow.

The Report also openly admits it cannot accurately predict the effect on Government revenue. That inevitably raises questions. What financial modelling has actually been carried out? Why was 4% selected? Is it based on robust evidence and analysis, or simply a figure that has been judged to be politically acceptable?

More importantly, this debate exposes Sark's much bigger financial problem. We have allowed Government to become almost entirely dependent on taxation as its principal source of income. Every time we try to reduce one tax, the immediate concern is how to replace the lost revenue with another tax on another charge. That is not a sustainable financial strategy for the Island. This proposal does not solve that problem. It simply exposes the fact that Sark has become over-reliant on taxation because successive Governments have failed to develop alternate and sustainable sources of income. Until we address that fundamental weakness, we will continue moving the tax burden from one group to another instead of genuinely reducing it.

I support measures that make life more affordable for local residents, but I also urge Policy and Finance to start focusing on creating new revenue streams and economic growth. Without that, every future debate about tax reform will simply become an argument about which taxpayers should pay more to compensate for those paying less.

Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace.

Before I come to Conseiller Keyte, who had the next question, P&F, would you like to come back on what you have just heard from Conseiller Makepeace? No. Okay, we will carry on.

Conseiller Keyte, would you like to make your point, please?

Conseiller Keyte: Thank you, sir.

I very much support this change as well. In the UK, when stamp duty relief for first-time buyers was introduced in 2017, HMRC estimated that sales increased by 11% to 18%. I think the Committee's Report makes a compelling case. It recognises that the transfer tax is a significant burden. It creates friction in the housing market and reducing it should encourage more transactions and more efficient use of the existing housing stock.

The proposal is a welcome step in the right direction. If reducing the tax encourages more people to buy, renovate and invest in homes here, then perhaps in time we should ask whether reducing it to zero for both Local and Open Market alike would achieve even more.

If we want local people and newcomers alike to invest in long-term homes here, if we want more derelict properties brought back into use, and if we want more taxpayers rather than more tax, I think this is a conversation worth having.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Keyte, for those points.

Once again, P&F, would you like to come back on either of those questions or any of the points that you have heard there?

Conseiller Guille: Thank you, sir.

Thank you for the comments from Conseillers Makepeace and Keyte, and for the support for the Proposition. As stated, it is not a magic bullet. It was never intended to be but it is a measure that we feel the Island can sensibly take whilst balancing the other needs in terms of budgets and all the other essential areas where spending is needed.

A further reduction or a wider change to property tax would need to be looked at carefully and in detail because of the potential impact on tax revenue. Policy and Finance are committed to bringing forward further measures to address the shortage of affordable housing and the ability of people to buy, including issues such as access to lending.

But in the meantime, I think this is a useful step on that journey.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Guille.

Does anyone else have any questions for Policy and Finance relative to the Report and the Proposition that we are about to vote on in a few moments time? Any points? Any observations? I see no hands going up. In which case, Conseiller Guille, would you like to sum up or have you said all that you wish to?

Okay, so you have heard the Report or the introduction to the Report. You have read the Report, and the Proposition reads as follows: that Chief Pleas approves the draft Projet de Loi entitled 'The Real Property (Transfer Tax, Charging and Related Provisions) (Sark) (Amendment) Law, 2026'. Those in favour? Thank you. And those against? That is **carried**.

Thank you very much indeed.

5. Report with Proposition from the Policy and Finance Committee entitled 'The Reform and Direct Taxes (Sark) (Amendment) Law, 2026' – Draft Projet de Loi entitled 'The Reform and Direct Taxes (Sark) (Amendment) Law, 2026'– Proposition carried

To consider a Report with Proposition from the Policy and Finance Committee entitled 'The Reform and Direct Taxes (Sark) (Amendment) Law, 2026' and to approve the draft Projet de Loi entitled 'The Reform and Direct Taxes (Sark) (Amendment) Law, 2026'.

Proposition 1:
That Chief Pleas approves the draft Projet de Loi 'The Reform and Direct Taxes (Sark) (Amendment) Law, 2026'.

The Speaker: Moving to Agenda Item 5, which is: to consider a Report with Proposition from the Policy and Finance Committee, entitled 'The Reform and Direct Taxes (Sark) (Amendment) Law, 2026' and to approve the draft Projet de Loi 'The Reform and Direct Taxes (Sark) (Amendment) Law, 2026'. I would ask Conseiller Tighe, I believe, to introduce the Report on behalf of Policy and Finance.
Conseiller Tighe, thank you.

Conseiller Tighe: Thank you, Mr Speaker.
This draft Projet makes two targeted but important amendments to existing legislation. The first amends the Reform (Sark) Law, 2008 to clarify when the audited accounts of Chief Pleas are to be presented. The second amends the Direct Taxes (Sark) Law, 2002 to strengthen the ability of Sark's tax authorities to recover property tax that is lawfully due. Both are practical measures designed to improve clarity, fairness and the effective administration of Sark's public affairs. The first amendment relates to section 59 of the Reform (Sark) Law, 2008, which deals with the annual Budget and the laying before Chief Pleas of the audited accounts.
At present the law gives rise to uncertainty because section 59 refers to the Easter Meeting, whereas section 63(5) provides that once the appointed person has audited or reviewed the accounts, the Report is to be submitted as soon as possible thereafter to Chief Pleas. The amendment resolves that discrepancy by making clear the audited accounts are to be presented at Easter Chief Pleas or as soon as practicable thereafter. Audits are now more detailed, rigorous and thorough than in years past. That is positive because it gives Chief Pleas and the public greater assurance that the Island's finances are being properly scrutinised. However, it can mean that the audit process cannot always be completed in time for Easter Chief Pleas.
The second amendment relates to the Direct Taxes (Sark) Law, 2002 and is intended to improve the practical ability of Sark's tax authorities to recover unpaid property tax. It makes clear that where a formal assessment so provides, the owner of real property may be jointly and severally liable with the possessor for the property tax due, together with any related penalty. This is a fair and necessary reform. There have been instances where possessors have refused to pay tax that is properly owed. In such circumstances, it is right that the owner should also bear responsibility where the tax cannot be recovered from the possessor.
Property tax relates to the property and the owner has the ultimate interest in that property. This amendment promotes accountability, discourages avoidance and helps ensure that those who do pay what they owe are not unfairly left carrying the burden created by those who do not.
Policy and Finance recommends that Chief Pleas approves this draft Projet.
Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Tighe, for that introduction to the Report.
Any questions from the floor? Yes, Conseiller Makepeace.
Thank you.

Conseiller Makepeace: Thank you, sir.
I have no objection to ensuring that lawfully due property tax is collected. However, I think we deserve a clear explanation as to why we need new enforcement powers, as such, and why the existing powers have not been effective, because surely this is about the enforcement of a debt. If the debt is difficult to enforce, it will probably be just as difficult to enforce on the owner as it was on the tenant, as such. I cannot understand why we cannot just simplify this and make it easier and just say that the owners of the property have to pay the property tax. Then it is up to them to come to an arrangement, whether they want to charge it on rent or on lease, but they are responsible for paying the property tax and they are responsible for recovering that from their tenants. It may not work, it may not be that simple, but it sounds a lot easier and we can avoid any sort of court appearances or anything.
Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace.
Conseiller Tighe, would you like to come back on that point?

Conseiller Tighe: Sorry, I missed part of Conseiller Makepeace's comments there, but I would say the purpose of these amendments is to strengthen the practical tools available for collection. Where a possessor may refuse to pay, the owner has the ultimate interest in the property and is better-placed to ensure arrangements are made with responsible tenants, so I think that is probably in agreement.

The Speaker: One second, Conseiller Makepeace.
Conseiller Moloney, would you like to make a point?

Conseiller Moloney: Just to ask another question, sir. I will come back in a moment.

The Speaker: Okay. In that case, just one second, Conseiller.
I am going to go back to Conseiller Makepeace to respond on what you have just heard from Conseiller Tighe.
Thank you.

Conseiller Makepeace: But I think that reinforces my point, that make the route direct and make the owner of the property liable for the property tax, then it is up to them how they recover that from their tenants.
Thank you.

Conseiller Tighe: I would just like to add as well, at the moment if the owner of a property pays the property tax, then it impacts on the personal capital tax available, so at the moment it is the relief then goes if the owner becomes liable.

Conseiller Makepeace: Oh, I understand.
Thank you.

The Speaker: Okay, thank you for that.
Before I come to Conseiller Moloney, I am going to come to Conseiller Cragoe and Conseiller Locke also has his hand up.
Conseiller Cragoe next, thank you.

Conseiller Cragoe: Thank you very much.
I just wanted to go back to what Conseiller Makepeace's question was. In effect, this does do in a slightly different way what Conseiller Makepeace is suggesting. At the moment there is no mechanism for getting the owner to pay property tax if a possessor, say someone who is renting, leaves the Island, defaults. Yes, to an extent it is about enforcement, but it is also finding an additional route for enforcement. We think it is much more likely that owners, ultimately tenement owners and freeholders, are likely to be on Island and therefore probably easier to find as well.
Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Cragoe.
Before I come to Conseiller Locke, Conseiller Moloney, you would like to make your point, your question?

Conseiller Moloney: Thank you, sir.

Just a couple of questions. If the possessor does not pay, can the possessor be evicted before the owner has to pay? Chief Pleas cannot protect the tenant from eviction and at the same time make the owner liable to pay property tax. If the tax assessor enforces against the owner, the owner must have the unconditional right to immediately terminate the lease or rental agreement, otherwise they take the money from the owner, which was owned by the possessor, but not allow the owner to recover.

My second question, which is more of a scenario: if the possessor owes £4,000 in tax, £1,000 in property tax, £3,000 in personal tax and they choose to pay £1,000 in tax and then leave the Island, is the £1,000 owed to the property tax paid or is it just spread across the board, 50% to personal tax, 50% to property tax?

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Moloney.

Who on P&F would like to take those points?

Conseiller Cragoe, thank you.

Conseiller Cragoe: I can answer the second one, which is that actually it is not. That is a question for the tax assessor. It is not an unreasonable question, but it is a question for the tax assessor really. The P&F does not decide how the tax assessor collects taxes.

The first scenario though, I did not fully understand what Conseiller Makepeace was asking.

The Speaker: Would you like him to repeat the question?

Conseiller Cragoe: Moloney. Excuse me, sorry, Moloney. Sorry, too many Ms. If that would be –

The Speaker: Yes, I will certainly ask him. Thank you, Conseiller Cragoe.

Conseiller Moloney, can you repeat your first question or the first part of your question, please?

Conseiller Moloney: So if the possessor does not pay, can the possessor be evicted before the owner has to pay? Chief Pleas cannot protect the tenant from eviction and at the same time make the owner liable to pay the property tax. If the tax assessor enforces against the owner, then the owner must have an unconditional right to immediately terminate the lease or rental agreement, otherwise they take the money from the owner, which is owned by the possessor, but not allow the owner to recover their money.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Moloney.

Conseiller Guille, are you going to answer that?

Conseiller Guille: Yes, I think I will try to answer. It is a really interesting question, Conseiller Moloney. I would offer that property tax is levied on 1st January every year in advance of that year, so whether after that the possessor gets evicted or not I would guess is irrelevant. They are given their property tax bill on 1st January, and then they have to pay that bill. What happens subsequently in terms of them getting evicted, they still have that bill to pay from 1st January. I hope that clarifies things.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Guille.

Just one second, Conseiller Makepeace. Ahead of you is Conseiller Locke, I believe. Conseiller Moloney, you are happy you had those questions answered? Thank you.

Conseiller Locke, thank you.

Conseiller Locke: Thank you, sir.

I would like to ask a couple of areas for Policy and Finance to consider. These have come up informally in the Taxation Review Committee. First, can we explore with Law Officers and others ways of pursuing off-Island debts? This is a big hole that we have at the moment because of the financial and legal implications. What we have are people skipping the Island and they are not paying and we cannot pursue them. In this day and age, I think we really should take a look at being able to pursue them, the same way that, for example, Guernsey and other territories do.

The second thing I would like to ask is, could we please consider some on-Island sanctions, which we could do as part of our domestic legislation, for example, either publishing people who are not paying taxes in a public notice and/or asking Sark Shipping not to transport them either on or off the Island? *(Laughter)* But being able to have some form of sanction when people are in default of their tax I think should be considered alongside this amendment, which I will support.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Locke, some interesting points there.

Conseiller Guille, thank you.

Conseiller Guille: Thank you, Conseiller Locke; indeed some interesting points.

In terms of pursuing debts, our Civil Service are in discussions. In fact, we had the Prévôt to our P&F meeting two weeks ago yesterday to discuss this very situation. Our Civil Service are in talks with Guernsey officials and the Law Officers about that and also with officials at the Ministry of Justice about debts in the UK. It is the intention to bring a case to the Royal Court as the first test, shall I say, but to pursue a debt through the Royal Court and then maybe after that we might be looking at formal treaties around debt recovery.

On the other suggestions, yes, I think we should consider all sorts of measures, and thank you for the suggestions.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Conseiller Locke – sorry, Conseiller Makepeace, one second, please – do you have a further question, a further point?

Conseiller Locke: Yes. Just one further point is that of course this may help in getting people to pay up their various on-Island bills, such as public works and others, where I know we have a problem with that. That is aligned, but a separate subject.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Obviously I do see a connection there. Thank you, Conseiller Locke.

Conseiller Makepeace, you have been waiting patiently, thank you.

Conseiller Makepeace: I would just like to make an observation, really. I was under the understanding if somebody went to the Seneschals Court here to seek judgment over a debt and judgment was granted, that that judgment is allowed to be enforced elsewhere. Am I correct or not? Say if someone owed me £10,000 and I took them to the court here and the Seneschal decided in my favour, is that classed as then a judgment that I can take to another jurisdiction or what? I am not sure how that works. I am looking for clarification.

The Speaker: Okay. A question from Conseiller Makepeace: who would like to take that on Policy and – Conseiller Guille.

Conseiller Guille: Thank you, sir.

Without a formal treaty, they are not immediately transferable, but there is a mechanism in Guernsey to pursue a debt through the Royal Courts, which the Law Officers have advised that it would be wise to test that avenue first before going down a formal debt treaty route.

The Speaker: So effectively there is a mechanism in place, yes. Very good.

Okay, are there any further points, questions relative to the Report, relative to the Projet de Loi that we are going to vote on in a few moments' time? Any further points or questions for Policy and Finance? No. Okay, in which case I think that debate has run its course.

Let us go to the Proposition, which reads as follows: that Chief Pleas approves the draft Projet de Loi entitled 'The Reform and Direct Taxes (Sark) (Amendment) Law, 2026'. Those in favour? Thank you. Those against? That is **carried.** Thank you very much indeed. That is **carried.**

6. Report with Proposition from the Douzaine entitled 'Amendment to the Oath for the Constable & Vingtenier' – The Reform (Oaths of Island Officials) (Sark) (Amendment) Ordinance, 2026 – Proposition carried

To consider a Report with Proposition from the Douzaine entitled 'Amendment to the Oath for the Constable & Vingtenier' and to approve 'The Reform (Oaths of Island Officials) (Sark) (Amendment) Ordinance, 2026'.

Proposition 1:
That Chief Pleas approves The Reform (Oaths of Island Officials) (Sark) (Amendment) Ordinance, 2026.

The Speaker: Next up we have Agenda Item 6, which is: to consider a Report with Proposition from the Douzaine entitled 'Amendment to the Oath for the Constable & Vingtenier' and to approve the 'The Reform (Oaths of Island Officials) (Sark) (Amendment) Ordinance, 2026'.

I would like to ask Conseiller Locke to introduce the Report, please.

Conseiller Locke: Thank you, sir.

This is a minor administrative or housekeeping change, which was brought up to the Douzaine at a previous meeting, in that here was an Ordinance that was approved at the Midsummer Meeting of Chief Pleas in July 2022, Item 7, and that Item 7 we can look up, and it explains the rationale for this change, but for one reason or another was never actually brought back to Chief Pleas, so this is what we are now doing with this Ordinance.

It effectively gives changes to the oath for the Constable and the Vingtenier – even though we do not have a Vingtenier in post at the moment, we keep the oaths the same – and brings it into line with those of the Prévôt, Deputy Prévôt, Greffier, Deputy Greffier, Treasurer, Deputy Treasurer, Assistant Constable and Procureur des Pauvres so that the wording remains exactly the same.

Much as I would like personally the Constables to take an oath that they would visit all gambling places and inns and present before justice all dissolute persons, I can see the rationale for bringing this into line with all the other oaths, as per The Reform (Oaths of Island Officials) (Sark) (Amendment) Ordinance, 2008.

Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Locke, for that introduction.

Does anybody have any questions for the Douzaine, for Conseiller Locke, based on what you have read and from what you have heard in that introduction? Any comments, any observations, any points that you would like to make before we go to the Proposition? No, we are mute on that.

Therefore would you like to sum up, Conseiller Locke?

Conseiller Locke: Thank you, sir, but no.

The Speaker: Thank you.

In which case, the Proposition reads as follows: that Chief Pleas approves The Reform (Oaths of Island Officials) (Sark) (Amendment) Ordinance, 2026. Those in favour? Thank you, and those against? That is **carried**. Thank you very much indeed.

7. Report with Proposition from the Policy and Finance Committee entitled 'Financial Statements' – Proposition carried

To CONSIDER a Report with Proposition from the POLICY and FINANCE COMMITTEE entitled 'Financial Statements'.

Proposition 1:
That the Financial Statements of the Island for the year ended 31 December 2025 be adopted.

The Speaker: Next on the Agenda is Agenda Item 7, which is: to consider a Report with Proposition from the Policy and Finance Committee entitled '2025 Financial Statements'. I would like to ask Conseiller Guille to introduce the Report, please.

Conseiller Guille, thank you.

Conseiller Guille: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Policy and Finance Committee presents the Financial Statements of the Island of Sark for the year ending 31st December 2025. They have been audited and signed by the independent auditors, Perkins Group, as required by the Reform (Sark) Law, 2008. Statements show that Sark's underlying financial position strengthened during 2025, with income increasing and cash reserves improving. Total income for the year was £2,381,770, which was £345,376 higher than in 2024 and £167,191 above budget. Income from direct taxation was on budget and property transfer tax was significantly above budget.

However, Policy and Finance recognises that property transfer tax is inherently unpredictable and therefore should not be relied upon to fund ordinary recurring expenditure. The Committee is therefore investigating how such receipts could be ring-fenced for capital spending and will bring a paper on that issue to a forthcoming meeting of Chief Pleas.

Income from poll tax and impôt were both under budget, although impôt remains at a similar level to 2024. Policy and Finance will work closely with the Tourism Committee to understand the causes, consider what can be done to increase visitor numbers and ensure enforcement is effective so that poll tax is paid by all those who should paid it, regardless of arrival route.

Mr Speaker, the total expenditure on ordinary activities was £2,206,689, which was £26,075 higher than budget. The accounts report an overall deficit of £57,022 for 2025. This reflects £54,230 of unforeseen expenditure on emergency stabilisation works at La Coupée and a £177,873 impairment relating to the electricity project. The reported deficit should be viewed in context. The La Coupée works were essential safety works that could not responsibly be deferred and the impairment is an accounting adjustment. It reflects standard accounting treatment for past expenditure associated with the electricity project, which because the project is not currently being progressed, can no longer be carried as an asset and must instead be recognised as an expense in the year.

Without this impairment, which relates to spending from previous years, the accounts would show a surplus. The underlying work remains valid and will still be used or built upon in the future, but accounting rules require this adjustment at this stage. In addition, it should be noted that when the new electricity company is established, there is potential for these costs to be transferred or reimbursed at that point, reflecting the ongoing value of the work already undertaken.

The increase in cash and liquid reserves is a positive indicator of improved financial resilience. However, reserves and revenue remain well below the level required to meet the Island's long-term needs. On current levels, reserves would only just cover six months of ordinary expenditure before any major capital project or unexpected emergency is taken into account. That is not a comfortable position for a small Island with limited revenue streams and significant infrastructure liabilities. Rebuilding reserves is therefore not optional. It is a basic part of responsible financial management and of protecting Sark against future shocks.

The simple answer to those who say there is no clear reason for increased revenue is that the world has changed. This is not only about public expectations, it is about what is right for a community that wants to look after its people properly and responsibly. Sark cannot assume that it can continue to operate as it once did. Education, medical provision, public safety, administration and basic infrastructure now, rightfully, have to meet standards that are higher than previous generations. We must therefore adapt deliberately and responsibly now before the change is forced upon us by crisis or by external pressure.

Alongside this, revenue reform is also about making sure the system reflects different circumstances and ability to contribute so that the same level of contribution is not expected from households with very different resources. Any changes for those with greater means should be proportionate, carefully judged and set at a level that supports the Island without being unreasonable or disruptive.

In addition, urgent and essential capital infrastructure projects still require funding, including the incinerator, sewage treatment, further works to La Coupée, safety works at the harbour quarry, and in due course replacement vessels for Sark Shipping, which will be a major and expensive requirement. Much of Sark's essential infrastructure was built for a different era and is no longer fit for purpose. These are not optional improvements that can simply be put off without consequence. They are core services and safety requirements on which the Island depends.

Sark should not be aiming merely to get by from one year to the next. It should be investing for the future and ensuring that the Island has quality infrastructure that is resilient, properly maintained and fit for the needs of future generations. If Chief Pleas does not invest in these priorities now, the result will not be saving money, but allowing problems to worsen until they become more dangerous, more disruptive and more expensive to resolve.

In summary, the 2025 Financial Statements therefore show welcome progress and an improved cash position, while also highlighting the continued need for careful financial planning, prioritisation and sustainable funding.

Mr Speaker, I appreciate that the accounts have been presented later than would usually be expected. The reason for that is because audits are now more detailed, rigorous and thorough than in previous years. That is a positive development because it gives Chief Pleas and the public greater assurance that the Island's finances are being properly scrutinised. However, that greater thoroughness can mean that the audit process takes longer than hoped. The important point is that the accounts have now been audited, signed and brought before Chief Pleas for consideration.

I would just like to thank the Treasurer and her team for putting together these excellent accounts and for going through a very rigorous process with the auditors this year, much more detailed than has previously been experienced, but worthwhile for the Island.

The Policy and Finance Committee would therefore recommend that Chief Pleas adopts these statements. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Guille, on behalf of Policy and Finance.

Any questions from the floor? Conseiller Makepeace, thank you.

Conseiller Makepeace: Yes, thank you, Conseiller Guille.

However, I would not agree with his analysis that Sark's finances are getting stronger because income has risen to £2.38 million. If the overwhelming majority of Chief Pleas' income is still derived from taxation, then increasing government income does not necessarily mean Sark's finances are fundamentally stronger. It simply means more money has been collected from taxpayers. The real question is not whether government income has risen, but whether Sark has become any less dependent on taxation than it was five or 10 years ago. If the answer is no, then the underlying financial model remains unchanged.

Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace.

Anyone from Policy and Finance like to respond to that or you want to wait to hear other question? Other questions, okay.

Conseiller Locke, thank you.

Conseiller Locke: Thank you, sir.

Having looked at some of these figures, it is a fact that the majority, if not all, of Western democracies, other than about nine petrostates – and some of them are not exactly Western democracies – rely on taxation as their major source of revenue, and I do not think Sark is going to be able to get out from under that in the near future or at all.

I do agree that the reserves do need building up for exactly the reasons that Conseiller Guille has said. On the Douzaine, we have a number of expensive items which have been on hold and need to be done going forward, which have been planned over the next few years or estimated for the next few years for Treasury and for budgeting purposes. They are things that we do need to do. The infrastructure is not up to par, at what it should be.

I note in particular, with my Future Energy hat on, that the work that has been done on the design for not only the grid but also renewables that has had been impaired in Chief Pleas' accounts I believe will become an asset for the Future Energy company going forward and that an appropriate financial adjustment will be made at that time to get the money off one set of books and on to the other. Am I correct?

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

Would you like to respond on what you have heard from Conseiller Locke before I come to Conseiller Makepeace?

Conseiller Guille, thank you.

Conseiller Guille: Yes, thank you, sir.

I will respond to Conseiller Makepeace and Conseiller Locke. Thank you for your questions and observations. I think it is a difference of opinion. The figures do not lie. The financial position has strengthened slightly, although I will stress again, we very much feel that we need to continue strengthening the reserves of the Island and we recognise, as Conseiller Locke does, that there are infrastructure spends necessary and serious spends that still need to come over the coming years.

We have made modest steps with sourcing other areas of income, such as the Sark stamps, which we are working with Guernsey Post Office on, and we hope to move into coins at some point in the future as well.

Further to Conseiller Locke's question about the design work, which was a necessary part of the whole process to resolving the electricity issue on Sark, yes, that is absolutely an option. It is very valuable intellectual property and it could be reimbursed, transferred to a future electricity company for the Island.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Guille.
Conseiller Makepeace, you had your hand up. Thank you.

Conseiller Makepeace: Thank you, sir.
I just have a question about the impairment as well, that P&F is asking Chief Pleas to accept that £177,000 of public money has been impaired, yet simultaneously tells us it has not been lost or wasted. Those two statements cannot simply be accepted without evidence. If £186,000 was spent on the renewable energy project and only £8,000 remains as an asset on the balance sheet, then I would like to know what Chief Pleas actually owns today. What tangible assets – intellectual property, engineering designs, legal rights or contractual benefits – exist that justify the assertion that this expenditure still has value?
Furthermore, the Report claims these costs may one day be transferred to or reimbursed by a future electricity company. On what legal agreement, contractual obligation or independent professional advice is that statement based or is it merely hope? Chief Pleas should not be asked to endorse optimistic assumptions. We should be presented with verifiable evidence. Unless P&F can demonstrate there is a realistic and recoverable value to this expenditure, the public will inevitably conclude that almost £178,000 of taxpayers' money has been effectively written off. I would like to ask the Chairman of P&F to produce this evidence that supports these assertions.
Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace.
Conseiller Guille, thank you.

Conseiller Guille: Thank you, sir.
The money has been spent on the design study, which was carried out several years ago. We had been keeping it on the books, but we were advised by the auditors that they were no longer comfortable with it being held there, so therefore it has been included in this year's adjustments. However, that design work and that intellectual property will inform every single step of the immediate safety work done and the immediate upgrades and any future plan to rebuild the Island's electricity infrastructure. The whole point was to produce a piece of work which would provide the framework for any future upgrades.
We were advised by the Energypeople report of 2020, I think, that it was possibly more cost effective to rebuild the entire network than to upgrade it. The design work helped to inform that, it helped to inform acquiring a loan from Guernsey to move forward with what has been a problem in Sark, what has been an issue for decades.
In terms of transferring that intellectual property, this has been advised to us by the Law Officers, it has been advised to us by the former Chairman of Alderney Electric, the Chairman of Guernsey Electric, so we are quite happy that that is sound advice in relation to those matters.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Guille.
Conseiller Makepeace once again, thank you.

Conseiller Makepeace: I would like to just say that in this ever quickly moving world, how relevant will the information that we gained from paying out this £177,000 be for a future project of building a new power station that may be years ahead? Technology moves so fast, so will any of that be outdated, that we have to go and revisit that?
Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace.
Conseiller Guille, would you like to come back on that?

Conseiller Guille: Yes. No, it will not be outdated. It was designed as a sensible system, not using any wacky, cutting-edge technology. For example, we did not look at things like tidal power; only well-proven and reliable technologies were put into the mix, and they are going to be good for years to come, as they are going to be similar technologies which underpin electricity networks across the Western world. No, this design work is going to be valuable for years to come.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Guille.
Conseiller Makepeace, then followed by Conseiller Locke.
Conseiller Makepeace.

Conseiller Makepeace: Just a question on a different part of the Report. This in the accounts: the Procureur expenditure shows that it has risen from £115,000 in 2024 to £215,000 in 2025, an increase of £100,000 or 87% in one year. While I realise this is a very sensitive area and that the Island has got an ageing population and the medical insurance costs are just going absolutely sky high, I understand that there may be a lot of reasons behind this, but I would just say, could the Chairman of P&F provide a breakdown of that £215,000 and explain what has driven a sharp rise? In particular, how much of that figure relates to non-repayable assistance and how much relates to professional costs and how much relates to debt that is unlikely to be recovered?

I know I put Conseiller Guille on the spot there because it is quite a complicated question, but I would welcome to receive his reply whenever.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace, with a caveat attached to that.
Conseiller Guille, Conseiller Baker? Conseiller Guille first.

Conseiller Guille: Thank you.

As the Procureur rightly sits underneath the Douzaine Committee, maybe Conseiller Locke wants to respond to this.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Guille. So a question for Conseiller Locke really, as Chair of Douzaine.

Conseiller Locke: Thank you, sir. Thank you, Conseiller Guille, Conseiller Makepeace.

For privacy reasons and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) reasons, I regret we will not be able to provide any detailed breakdown that may or may not help identify any individuals that may or may not be receiving support from the Procureur.

As a general rule, the majority of the funding provided by the Procureur is in forms of repayable loans or charges on estates and that is a matter for them and the Treasurer in privacy. There are very little professional fees or whatever involved. This is the bare minimum that we have to do.

The one other thing that I would point out, and I am very grateful for the work of the Procureur, who do a great deal of work in identifying each and every case to make certain that when they come to Douzaine to request some further assistance it is proportionate, it is targeted and wherever we possibly can it is repaid going forward. More than that, I do not think I should say on five minutes' notice.

Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Locke.
One second. Conseiller Baker, you wanted to say something? Thank you.

Conseiller Baker: Conseiller Guille said it for me. I was simply going to refer to the Douzaine.

The Speaker: It has been covered?

Conseiller Baker: Yes.

The Speaker: Very good, okay.

Before I come back to Conseiller Makepeace, Conseiller Cragoe, would you like to make a further point?

Conseiller Cragoe: Yes, thank you, sir.

Only to just observe that in the A3 sheets, there are some details – high level, one or two lines – on how the expenditure has changed from one year to another. Those are really quite helpful, sort of buried at the end, but in these larger sheets Conseiller Makepeace might find some of the information he wants.

The Speaker: The spreadsheet at the end?

Conseiller Cragoe: Yes.

The Speaker: Very good. Thank you, Conseiller Cragoe.

Conseiller Makepeace, to yourself.

Conseiller Makepeace: Yes, sir.

I have looked at the spreadsheets, hence the questions I ask. I understand the privacy involved, but I do not think it is a breach of any privacy or data to ask for an estimate of how much of the £218,000 outstanding or loaned out, what is repayable. I do not think that breaches any data at all. It is just an approximate figure of how much the Island is likely to recover from that amount.

Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace. You have obviously had one answer. Would you like to – yes, one second.

First of all, Conseiller Locke.

Conseiller Locke: I see that the Treasurer wishes to make a point. I am happy for that to happen.

The Speaker: Okay. Well, I am also happy for that to happen, so taking the reference from the Douzaine, the Chair of the Douzaine, Treasurer, would you like to make a statement?

The Treasurer: The £215,000 was an expenditure in the year. It is not repayable. That is how much it cost in the year. If you look at the balance sheet, there is some repayable – if I can find it – of £51,000. That will be repayable and is being repaid.

The Speaker: Thank you, Treasurer. Thank you very much.

Okay, do we have any further points, any questions reference the 2025 Financial Statements?

Conseiller Locke, thank you.

Conseiller Locke: Thank you, sir.

Just one small point, and thank you to the Treasurer for responding on that information, which I did not have, most helpful.

But going back to the energy project assets, as somebody who has spent a decade or more in the network building industry – although in that case for internet rather than for electricity – an enormous amount of the cost of designing your network is in where the wires and the cables actually go.

That work, and I have looked at it and compared in the various reports the existing grid, as far as we know it, it is a substantial piece of work. Should any future energy company, a community-owned one, come along and wish to use it, we can charge them for it, because otherwise they would have to go out and spend that same amount of money or more to do the same work to design the best and most efficient network. That is without deciding things like how you generate it. It is actually in the cost of digging the holes in the road and where best to put them, just for information, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Locke, for that point.

Do we have any further points, questions, observations reference the Report and the Financial Statements for 2025 before we go to the vote on the Proposition? Would P&F like to sum up or are you happy with what has been stated?

Okay, in which case, let us move to the Proposition attached to the Report, which reads as follows: that the Financial Statements of the Island for the year ended 31st of December 2025 be adopted. Those in favour? Thank you. Those against? That is **carried**. Thank you very much indeed.

Okay, I am conscious not only of the temperature in here, but also the fact it is now 6.27 p.m. I am happy to crack on. Is there anyone that desperately needs a comfort break or should we carry on as we are? Does anyone want to stretch their legs? No, okay. In that case, I would like to suggest that we carry on.

8. Report with Proposition from the Douzaine entitled 'Commercial Rubbish Charges' – Proposition carried

To consider a Report with Proposition from the Douzaine entitled 'Commercial Rubbish Charges'.

Proposition 1:
That Chief Pleas approves the new charging system for commercial businesses as described.

The Speaker: In which case we will come to Agenda Item 8, which is: to consider a Report with Proposition from the Douzaine entitled 'Commercial Rubbish Charges', and I believe Conseiller Plummer.

Conseiller Plummer: Thank you, sir.

I have a declaration of interest.

The Speaker: You would like to declare an interest?

Conseiller Plummer: Yes.

The Speaker: Okay, very good. Thank you, Conseiller Plummer.

So we have one declaration of pecuniary interest. Would anyone else like to declare a pecuniary interest in this Report?

Conseiller Moloney, thank you.

Conseiller Moloney: I would like to declare an interest because of my self-catering.

The Speaker: Very good, okay. So we have two declarations of interest there. We will come to a vote on that in just one second. Any further declarations of interest before we come to debate this Report?

No, in which case I will ask you the same question as I asked previously. Those people in favour of Conseiller Plummer and Conseiller Moloney remaining in the Chamber and participating in the debate and the vote on the Proposition, please raise your hands. Thank you. Anyone opposed to them remaining in the Chamber and being involved in the debate and the Proposition? No. In which case, you are welcome to remain, Conseiller Plummer, Conseiller Moloney. Thank you for the declarations.

In which case, I will revert to Conseiller Locke to introduce the Report, please.

Conseiller Locke: Thank you, sir.

As far as commercial rubbish charges are concerned, this has resulted in a great deal of work and hard effort by both current and previous Douzaine and members of the Douzaine, for which we thank them.

The kerbside recycling system for domestic waste was brought into Sark in February 2022 and, at that time, the Douzaine was intending to bring in a similar system for commercial outlets across Sark. As background, in 2022 the costs and charges for commercial rubbish, as against their receipts, meant a deficit to the public purse of some £20,000, which was in effect a subsidy either from taxation or from domestic payers to commercial businesses.

This new system, the system that we have been working on in the past, is intended to correct this. Previous reports suggesting new systems have included the exact scale of charges as a proposition and this will continue for domestic extras and sewerage.

However, experience has given us the issue that we need to take a different approach for commercial, which is more based on the needs and the amount of work that each commercial business produces. It has been very difficult, in fact impossible, to come up with a one-size-fits-all approach that is fair to every single business, large and small, who deal with their rubbish and their wastes in different ways.

It became apparent in discussions with Public Works and within Douzaine that a tailored approach to business will be needed. Moving to this tailored system will result in increases over inflation for some businesses but the new charges will be based on the reality of work that they generate for Public Works and it will eliminate some of the unfair charging anomalies. In effect, we have looked back with the now established Public Works foreman and the team in the office, who have worked very hard on this, to work out what each business and each category of business takes in terms of resource to deal with their waste and they have come up with a charging scheme accordingly.

We looked at recording each load as collected from each business, but that is simply unpractical and creates a lot of extra admin. If you can imagine trying to do that on a wet November when it is blowing a hooligan, raining – nearly said something else there – then trying to keep accurate records is just a non-starter. So it has to go on the experience that we have had in the past year.

The new charging system will be based on the type of business, and the appendix gives the types of business that are going to be charged. Small B&Bs, self-catering and larger B&Bs, hotels, campsites, and both bars and restaurants are split into small, medium and large.

The next step for us is, having published this framework, the Public Works will estimate for each business the principle on which their bills will be charged and engaging with those businesses with a specific calculation for them.

The Public Works Office and Douzaine can assist in giving advice about whether there is a way to reduce their bill, for example by producing it for collection in a different way so that Public Works can deal with it more efficiently.

This period of consultation allows for consensus and any final tweaks to the system if needed. The intention is for this consultation to be completed in time for the new system to be in operation as of the next billing cycle, which starts 1st August 2026.

This is not a revenue increasing exercise overall, although some revenue will increase. It is reflective of the costs and time involved in the collection and processing of all commercial rubbish and creates a charging structure that is fairer across commercial and domestic. If accepted, this rebalancing means we will not need to propose an inflation increase for domestic charges this year. Further, the black bag charges remain unchanged as last year.

So the Douzaine is asking Chief Pleas for approval to introduce a new charging system for commercial businesses as per the appendix and the discussions to happen, and we will report back to Michaelmas Chief Pleas on the results.

The next element of the review is to look at extras charges, as there are some new items such as lithium batteries, which are not yet on the list, and some anomalies which need correcting, but that is a further piece of work to happen as yet.

So, in summary, we ask that Chief Pleas approve the new charging system for commercial businesses as described so we can consult with it on the businesses in time to introduce it in the 1st August 2026 charging cycle.

Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Locke, for that introduction. Thank you.

So, you have the Report, you have heard what Conseiller Locke said. Do we have any questions from the floor?

Yes, Conseiller Makepeace, thank you.

Conseiller Makepeace: I would just like to ask Conseiller Locke if the new system will mean that the public will no longer be subsidising the private sector. You mentioned a figure of £20,000. Will that be then totally eliminated? Will the public not pay anything then towards subsidising the private sector?

Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Conseiller Locke.

Conseiller Locke: Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace.

Yes. But just to enhance on that a little, in 2022 the deficit for commercial was some £20,000. The previous Douzaine and Douzaine since and the office have worked hard. 2024, the deficit had been reduced to £8,500; 2025, the deficit was reduced to £6,000; and it is our plan and intention by introducing this new system to make sure that there is no deficit on commercial and therefore that we do not have to cross-subsidise commercial from domestic.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Locke.

Are there any other questions for the Douzaine regarding the Report that you see before you, Commercial Rubbish Charges, before we go to the vote on the Proposition? Any questions, observations? Conseiller Perrée, followed by Conseiller Plummer.

Thank you, Conseiller Perrée.

Conseiller Perrée: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Just relating to this, just a clarification really, are you saying that there is going to be no RPI increase across the board for 2026?

Conseiller Locke: Thank you, Conseiller Perrée.

If we are able to proceed on as we have outlined in this paper, then there is no intention to bring in an RPI increase for 2026 for domestic.

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

Conseiller Plummer, you had a question, thank you.

Conseiller Plummer: Yes, please.

A clarification: you do not have shops on this list, so I have just wondered under what section the shops come under.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Plummer.

Conseiller Locke, are you able to respond on that?

Conseiller Locke: Yes, because of the very small number of shops that we have on the Island and the tremendous disparate nature between some shops and sizes and others, and also the way that they present their waste, some good, some could do with improvement, then this is one of the things that the office and the Public Works team will be consulting with each individual business to cover how that should be.

In effect, if we get a reasonable amount of rubbish and recyclables that are well presented, as I know there are some shops that do extremely well, then that will be reflected in their charge. But, no, because of the types of shop, we do not have a specific one for shops as a whole, but it will be tailored to each individual business.

The Speaker: Very good, okay. Conseiller Plummer, are you happy with that question?

Conseiller Plummer: Yes, I am happy, thank you.

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

Conseiller Perrée, once again, thank you. One second, Conseiller Perrée. I want to keep the windows open; I was not expecting to see a tractor there.

Conseiller Perrée, thank you.

Conseiller Perrée: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Sorry, going back to my RPI question, as much as I am against increases in anything to do with normal running of the Island, it is unwise that we just stop increasing, especially if we have a shortfall in that area.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Perrée.

Conseiller Locke, thank you.

Conseiller Locke: Yes, there is not an established policy that all charges should be increased by RPI. However, it is my view and the view of some on the Douzaine that it is better, and in fact this was introduced as part of the licences debate last year, to have regular RPI increases considered as part of each budget process than it is to wait for a few years and then whack them up to a large extent. That is a general principle that we can look at in budgeting things.

In terms of this particular one, because of the rebalancing and reduction in subsidy needed from domestic, we can hold domestic as to where it is while balancing commercial charges, and then what RPI things are necessary will be considered as part of the normal budgeting process for 2027 and beyond.

It seems to be established experience that RPI increases are considered for our hard-working staff, and I mean this for all Island workers, and as well as that, costs in quite a lot of areas go up a lot more than RPI, diesel being one example, and therefore that we need to be very careful in both trying to control all these costs, but also funding them. If we want some motivated and happy staff all around, whether it is in the office or outside in the Island proper, we need to make certain that they are properly rewarded for their efforts.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller. Conseiller Perrée, happy with that? Yes, okay.

Before we go to the Proposition, do we have any further points, questions, or observations that you would like to ask the Douzaine regarding the Report? No?

In which case, therefore, the Proposition attached to this Report reads as follows: that Chief Pleas approves the new charging system for commercial businesses as described. Those in favour? Thank you. Those against? That is **carried.** Thank you very much indeed, that is **carried**.

9. Report with Proposition from the Scrutiny Management Committee entitled 'Committee Quoracy' – Proposition carried

To consider a Report with Proposition from the Scrutiny Management Committee entitled 'Committee Quoracy'.

Proposition 1:
That Chief Pleas allows the Non-Chief Pleas Members of the Scrutiny Management Committee to count towards quoracy and approves the change to the Constitution and Operation of Chief Pleas Committees to reflect that.

The Speaker: Next up, we have Agenda Item 9: to consider a Report with Proposition from the Scrutiny Management Committee entitled 'Committee Quoracy', and I would like to ask Conseiller Bateson to introduce the Report, please.

Conseiller Bateson, thank you.

Conseiller Bateson: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

As the Report says, the Scrutiny Management Committee consists of three Chief Pleas Members, which leaves us very vulnerable on the quoracy situation, insofar as if we have only got one person not to turn up, and that is it.

We have an exception in that we have the capacity for voting non-Chief Pleas Members, and it would seem reasonable to incorporate their numbers into the size of the Committee just for the reasons of quoracy, and it would be a bit more secure that way.

The Speaker: Thank you. Okay, thank you, Conseiller Bateson.

From what you have read in the Report, from what you have just heard from Conseiller Bateson, does anyone have any questions of the Scrutiny Management Committee regarding the Report and the forthcoming Proposition? Any questions, any points, any observations? No? Okay.

Conseiller Bateson, do you wish to sum up or are you happy with what you have said?

Conseiller Bateson: I am happy with that.

The Speaker: You are? Okay. So there we have it. You have seen the Report, you have heard what Conseiller Bateson said. The Proposition attached to this Report reads as follows: that Chief Pleas allows the Non-Chief Pleas members of the Scrutiny Management Committee to count towards quoracy and approves the change to the Constitution and Operation of Chief Pleas Committees to reflect that.

Those in favour? Thank you. Those against? That is **carried**. Thank you very much indeed.

10. Safeguarding Officer Report – Medical and Emergency Services Committee Report considered

To consider an Information Report from the Medical and Emergency Services Committee entitled 'Safeguarding Officer Report'.

The Speaker: Next up, we have Agenda Item 10, which is: to consider an Information Report from the Medical and Emergency Services Committee entitled 'Safeguarding Officer Report'.
I believe, Conseiller Plummer, are you going to introduce this?

Conseiller Plummer: Yes, thank you.

The Speaker: Conseiller Plummer, thank you.

Conseiller Plummer: Thank you very much.
I would like to introduce this Report. It was written by our Safeguarding Officer for Sark, Sharon Boerenbeker. They have a lot of meetings and a lot on their plate at the moment and I would just like to say thank you to them all. We have a very good team and they have put in a lot of work.
There are a lot of people that will be leaving the Island that are on this list. But as we move forward to the October Chief Pleas, Michaelmas, the replacements for the Constables and the replacements for the teachers, it will be a like-to-like replacement for the Safeguarding Team. I would like to thank them all very much for their very hard work.
Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Plummer. Thank you.
This is an Information Report. There is no Proposition attached to it. Does anyone have any questions that you would like to ask Conseiller Plummer regarding the Safeguarding Officer Update Report? Thank you.
Yes, Conseiller Makepeace, thank you.

Conseiller Makepeace: I would just like to say it is a very refreshing, honest Report by Sharon, the Safeguarding Officer. It just epitomises to me perhaps what Sark was like in the past, that with a minimum of civil servants involved, through volunteers and people just with a community spirit, this just seems to work really well, the Safeguarding Officer. It is a very modest Report by itself, thanking everyone else.
But I know that they all put in a lot, and so did her sister before, they put a lot of work into this. I just cannot help thinking if, in years to come, when people look back at the minutes, and they probably think as an Island why could they not have done more like this, more community spirited things. It is a perfect example of how Sark works together with volunteers.
Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace.
Conseiller Guille, thank you.

Conseiller Guille: I am not sure, Conseiller Makepeace, but in general Islanders are not terribly familiar with this important work that goes on, often in the background; quite rightly so. But I am sure our Safeguarding Officer, we reckon she does a fantastic job, but I am sure she will be the first to say what great support across numerous subjects she receives from the office staff. So it is not just a volunteer thing with laws and regulations and responsibilities in the modern world. The safeguarding function does receive a lot of support from the Committee office as well.

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

Does anyone else have any comments or observations based on the Report that you have read and what you have heard from Conseiller Plummer? Any further observations? Any comments?

Before we go to the next Agenda Item, Conseiller Plummer, is there anything you would like to say in conclusion?

Conseiller Plummer: No, I would just like to say that the safeguarding lead, our Sark Safeguarding Officer, takes all her instructions and extremely good help from our Safeguarding Lead from the UK. She does an excellent job and I thank everybody in the offices too because they do work hard.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Plummer. Thank you for those of you who have made observations and comments based on that Report. Thank you.

11. Stabilisation Works at La Coupée – Douzaine Report considered

To consider an Information Report from the Douzaine entitled 'Stabilisation Works at La Coupée'.

The Speaker: Moving on to Agenda Item 11, which is to consider an Information Report from the Douzaine entitled 'Stabilising Works at La Coupée.

Conseiller Locke, is this in your agenda?

Conseiller Locke: It is.

The Speaker: Conseiller Locke.

Conseiller Locke: Thank you, sir.

I hope we will be relieved that I do not intend to read all of this out verbatim. I would just like to make, because it is all there on the website for people to see, just a couple of high spots within this Report.

It is a never-ending task looking after La Coupée. Some of the pictures that are in the full Report or in the full appendix, which is available for download – we did not print it out just to save paper – but there are pictures here going back to 1900 and earlier about the continual ongoing need for work on La Coupée. That is just never going to stop.

The most recent phase that we know of was started in 1997 when the then Seigneur commissioned a stability report from the engineers Ove Arup, which led to the first works that were done as marked E1 on the plan that you have. There have been others since. There has been the Guernsey side landslip and so on and so forth.

The 2024 Geomarine inspection identified a whole bunch of areas and one of them, W5, again, as per index, let go about three months later. They could have waited until the then Douzaine had a chance to fix it, but no, it let go within three months of it being reported as an issue. That was the unexplained expenditure in the last set of accounts.

Since then, we have been working very hard with Geomarine to get a comprehensive plan for stabilisation of La Coupée, broken down into priorities that were needed this year, some next year and some ongoing. That is based on a report which is available online and the pictures that we have here.

In short, the works this year were done in three weeks as opposed to the originally-planned eight, which was a great thing. Touch wood, they are under budget, which is nice. So we will be spending a little more of that CapEx on fixing things on the rest of La Coupée, including advance work for next year.

The roll call of everybody who contributed on Sark is extensive. It includes the Committee support team, our own Public Works team, the cargo team at Sark Shipping, gallery stores, Chris Rang Aggregates, Godwin Builders, Harry Rauser for the survey, and Chill-Inn. Thanks are due to you all for this collaborative effort, which is a good example of what can be achieved when the Island works together.

So as an ex-physicist, you might like to know that there are 290 m linear length of rock anchors have been drilled in, in 88 different points on both sides of La Coupée, using 2,100 l of specialist grout that support the 21 t of concrete supplied locally and 300 m^2 of retaining mesh. That is the figures.

We have been able, following surveys and stability analysis, to relax the weight limit on La Coupée from 750 kg in a trailer to 2 t in a trailer, and heavier loads can be considered on a case-by-case basis on application to the Douzaine in advance.

The speed limit that was brought in earlier this year of five miles an hour remains in place and, due to advice, is not likely to be relaxed any time soon. La Coupée is five miles an hour and walking pace if you can do it. It is important for the stability of the roadway.

More work still needs to be done. We have now got a priority list of what needs doing over the next few years, and even up to 30 to 40 years in advance. We are starting a detailed drone inspection on an annual basis, which will then be discussed with Geomarine. So hopefully we will be able to spot some of these issues before they happen and put remedial works into place early rather than late.

If you want to know any more about all the reports in the past on La Coupée, do please feel free to come and have a word with me because I have pages of this stuff.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Locke.

Based on the Report, based on what you have heard from Conseiller Locke, it is an Information Report, does anyone have any comments or observations they would like to make based on what you have heard and what you have read? No.

In which case, thank you to Conseiller Locke from the Douzaine for presenting that Report.

12. Asian Hornet Information Report – Agriculture, Environment and Sea Fisheries Committee Report considered

To consider an Information Report from the Agriculture, Environment and Sea Fisheries Committee entitled 'Asian Hornet Information Report'.

The Speaker: We come now to Agenda Item 12, which is: to consider an Information Report from the Agriculture, Environment and Sea Fisheries Committee entitled 'Asian Hornet Information Report'. Once again, Conseiller Plummer, it is over to you.

Thank you.

Conseiller Plummer: Thank you, sir.

Yes, the Asian Hornet Information Report, as you see, they started in mid-March and concluding now. The spring queening programme to trap Asian Hornet queens migrating in from France and Jersey has been very successful. Up to date, this was up to this morning, we have trapped, or the team have trapped, 305 queens, three primary nests, and that takes us up to today.

However, they are looking roughly for another 10 nests. If anyone sees a hornet, could you please ring Peter or Ringo and let them know in what direction the hornet is heading, please? Because they are trying to maintain where they can go next. I just presume that when the leaf drop happens this is when they might find some more, as they did last year on that very large one at Le Manoir.

So we are just hoping, and I would just like to say on behalf of Chief Pleas, to thank everybody who has been doing this, to Peter and to Ringo and all the people on Sark who have been helping out. It has been an absolute magnificent time. Thank you very much, and we hope to trap more.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Plummer, on that Report.

Does anyone have any comments or observations based on what you have just heard and from what you have read in the Report from Agriculture, Environment and Sea Fisheries?

Conseiller Makepeace, thank you.

Conseiller Makepeace: How does that figure stand against last year?

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Makepeace.

Conseiller Plummer, are you are able to?

Conseiller Plummer: Yes, this is from Peter Cunneen, 'We have broken our catch records in each year since 2022. Catching one in that year; 24 in 2023' – this is queens – '30 in 2024, 135 in 2025, and here we are at 305 in 2026'. It has been. We have been very lucky that we have the team that we have because it could have been very, and it is, serious.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Conseiller Plummer. Thank you for the question, Conseiller Makepeace. Amazing answer from Conseiller Plummer. I am sure we all agree.

Before we close that Agenda Item, any further points, observations? Thank you to everyone who has been involved in that process Island-wide.

So that is Agenda Item 12.

13. Committee Elections – Development Control Committee: Conseiller D Curtis elected – Douzaine: Conseillers P Dewe and M Lanyon elected – Education Committee: Conseiller F Makepeace elected – Tourism Committee: Conseiller N Moloney elected

To elect Conseillers to Committees, as required.

The Speaker: We come next to Agenda Item 13, which is Committee elections, to elect Conseillers to Committees as required.

Therefore, I am going to go through, as I do at each occasion, Committee by Committee in alphabetical order. Sadly, because of the situation with Conseiller Nicolle, that creates four vacancies. I am going to run through them individually.

Initially, let us start with the Development Control Committee. Do we have any nominations either from the Committee or from the floor for one person to join the Development Control Committee?

Conseiller Bateson, thank you.

Conseiller Bateson: Thank you, Mr Speaker.
I would like to nominate Conseiller Curtis.

The Speaker: Conseiller Curtis. Okay, so we have a nomination for Conseiller Curtis from the Committee. Are there any other nominations from the floor to join the Development Control Committee? No.

We will just go to the vote. So we have one nomination. Those in favour of Conseiller Curtis joining the Development Control Committee, please raise your hands. Thank you very much. Welcome to that Committee, Conseiller Curtis.

Next up, we have the Douzaine. We have one vacancy left by Deputy Nicolle and one spare vacancy. So there are two vacancies on the Douzaine. Conseiller Locke, do you have any nominations?

Conseiller Locke: Yes, thank you, sir.
We would like to nominate Conseiller Dewe and Conseiller Lanyon for the two empty slots on the Douzaine.

The Speaker: Thank you very much indeed, Conseiller Locke.

So, from the Committee, we have two nominations. We have Conseiller Dewe and Conseiller Lanyon. Do we have any further nominations to join the Douzaine from the floor to fill the two vacancies on the Douzaine? No?

Well, let us do those jointly, therefore. Can we have a show of hands? Those in favour of Conseiller Dewe and Conseiller Lanyon joining the Douzaine, please raise your hands. Thank you.

Gentlemen, welcome to the Douzaine.

Next up, we have the Education Committee. One vacancy left by Deputy Nicolle. Conseiller Cragoe, do we have any nominations from the Education Committee to fill the vacancy?

Conseiller Cragoe: Yes, sir. We are restricted in who we can have. They cannot be parents of school-aged children. I understand that Conseiller Makepeace is interested in standing.

The Speaker: You would like to nominate Conseiller Makepeace; thank you very much indeed. So that is Conseiller Makepeace. Do we have any other nominations from the floor to join the Education Committee? Any other nominations? No? Okay. In which case, we will go to the vote. Those in favour of Conseiller Makepeace joining the Education Committee, please raise your hands. Thank you very much indeed.

So, Conseiller Makepeace, welcome to the Education Committee. Welcome back to the Education Committee, I believe.

Last up, we have a vacancy on the Tourism and Public Health Committee. Conseiller Tighe, any nominations from the Committee?

Conseiller Tighe: Thank you, Mr Speaker.
We would like to nominate Conseiller Moloney, please.

The Speaker: Conseiller Moloney to join the Tourism Committee. Do we have any other nominations from the floor to join the Tourism Committee? Any other nominations? No. So we have a sole nomination from the Committee, Conseiller Moloney.

Those in favour of Conseiller Moloney joining the Tourism Committee, please raise your hands. Thank you very much. That is carried.

Welcome to that Committee, Conseiller Moloney.

That completes the repopulation of Committees.

**13. Committee and Panel Elections –
Scrutiny Management Committee: Mr P Cole and Mr A Dunks elected**

To Elect Non-Chief Pleas Members and Panel Members to Committees and Panels, as required.

The Speaker: Next up, we have Agenda Item 14, which is to elect non-Chief Pleas Members and Panel Members to Committees and Panels as required. I think I am right in saying, as a result of the Scrutiny Management Committee, you would like to make some nominations.

Conseiller Bateson, I am sorry.

Conseiller Bateson: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

For the non-Chief Pleas Members, I would like to nominate Peter Cole and Anthony Dunks.

The Speaker: Peter Cole and Anthony Dunks. That is really just for information. That does not go to the vote. So based on the previous Agenda Item that we approved, therefore, the two non-Chief Pleas Members joining the Scrutiny Management Committee – let us go to the vote. Let us do it properly. Let us go to the vote. Those in favour of Mr Peter Cole and Mr Anthony Dunks joining as non-Chief Pleas Members of the Scrutiny Management Committee, please raise your hands. Thank you very much indeed.

So, welcome, Mr Cole and Mr Dunks, to the Scrutiny Management Committee. Thank you.

**Michaelmas Meeting deadline –
Statement by the Speaker**

The Speaker: That completes the Agenda for this evening. I would just remind Conseillers that the next scheduled meeting of Chief Pleas is the Michaelmas meeting on Wednesday, 30th September 2026, at 5 p.m. The closing date, please, for reports and submissions is Tuesday, 1st September at 12 noon. That will just enable the office to compile all the various reports in good time. So report in by Tuesday, 1st September, please. Thank you very much indeed.

The time now is exactly one minute to seven,. and I would like to ask the Greffier to close the meeting. Thank you.

PRAYER

The Greffier

Chief Pleas closed at 6.59 p.m.