

CHIEF PLEAS NEWSLETTER

sarkgov.co.uk committeeoffice@sarkgov.co.uk +44 (0) 1481 832118



May 2025

Welcome from Conseiller John Guille, Chairman of Policy & Finance

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the May 2025 edition of the Chief Pleas Newsletter. Across our Committees, practical and forward-looking work is underway. From secondary education planning and updates from the Douzaine to the energy and ambition of the Tourism Committee, we are seeing meaningful progress. Thank you to everyone who is devoting their considerable time and effort to achieve positive changes for the good of Sark and its community.

A significant development occurred on 1st May 2025, when the States of Deliberation in Guernsey overwhelmingly approved a £1.5 million loan facility to enable Chief Pleas to enter good-faith negotiations to purchase Sark Electricity Limited. This is a crucial step forward in what has been a very long running and serious issue for our community. We now have a very real opportunity to bring our energy infrastructure into local hands as we look to secure a safe, sustainable and independent future for our island.

The loan conditions offered by the States of Guernsey are not only prudent from a financial perspective but also present an opportunity for Sark to modernise aspects of its governance and fiscal sustainability. At first glance, concerns about autonomy or external influence might be understandable. It is important though to consider that these stipulations are in fact an opportunity to strengthen Sark's position in the modern world. Seizing these opportunities can reinforce and protect our independence for generations to come.

A key point is that loan repayments are calculated to be covered through the unit price of electricity – making the arrangement financially self-sustaining. The use of Sark's Impôt tax as security is a last resort backstop and not a primary repayment mechanism. This is a reasonable safeguard from Guernsey's perspective. A similar arrangement was used in 1825 when Sark last borrowed money from Guernsey; that time, it was to rebuild and modernise Creux Harbour, another key part of the island's critical infrastructure.

The ongoing taxation review gives us the opportunity to ensure our revenue model is fair and equitable and aligned with our island's needs; with limited resources and growing responsibilities, this is a timely and necessary step toward long-term sustainability.

Participation in the proposed Bailiwick Commission would provide Sark with a stronger voice in addressing shared challenges across the Channel Islands. It encourages co-operation, promotes mutual understanding, and ensures we play an active role in shaping our collective future. Discussing long-standing issues such as secondary healthcare provision and health insurance costs has the potential to deliver meaningful change for residents.

Finally, work has now begun on developing an 'Island Plan'. This will genuinely engage with all residents and stakeholders. Whilst similar pieces of work have been carried out before we feel it crucial that residents are given the maximum opportunity possible to have their views heard and to be active participants in the Plan's development. This important project will guide decisions about land use, service delivery, and infrastructure investment ensuring we have a clear, joined-up vision for Sark's long-term future that we can all be invested in.

Tourism Committee

Sark's newly populated Tourism Committee are excited to be working together with the island's Visitor Centre to enhance the principle driving force of the island's economy by augmenting the visitor experience, supporting local businesses, and protecting Sark's natural beauty while promoting responsible tourism.

Our aim is to increase awareness of Sark as a unique island and hope to achieve this by way of destination marketing and promotion: improved digital campaigns, social media growth and press and media collaborations. Improvements to the visitor experience, existing infrastructure and public amenities are additional aspects that we would also like to address as well as expansion of the events calendar and an exploration of opportunities for off-season visits, such as stargazing retreats and wellness weekends. The team will be focusing on trying to ensure that there are seamless travel connections for visitors and residents alike and hope to engage with ferry operators to optimise timetables for better connectivity.

Following on from the recent public meeting, the Tourism Committee welcomes feedback from the community and is keen to strengthen collaboration with local businesses and residents; please reach out with ideas or concerns as we continue to develop Sark's tourism offering. For more information, please contact tourism@sarkgov.co.uk, or visit <https://www.sark.co.uk/>

– Conseillers Natalie Tighe (Chair), Jolie Rose (Deputy Chair), Helen Plummer and Mary Nicolle



Sark Shipping Update

We are pleased to report that the Corsaire refit project is progressing steadily, with a number of key maintenance and upgrade tasks either completed or well underway. Preparatory works, including inspections and safety enhancements, have been carried out in line with regulatory standards. Major components such as the gear-boxes have now arrived on-site, and various supporting works are on schedule.

While there have been some unforeseen challenges, such as delays in the delivery of certain materials and the late arrival of the new engines, we are actively engaging with suppliers to ensure timelines are kept on track.

We fully recognise the importance of having Corsaire back in service ahead of the busy season and are doing everything possible to minimise delays. To support continuity of service in the meantime, we are adding additional sailings where possible and chartering third-party vessels, both under-12 and larger commercial vessels as demand requires. Our team is maintaining close coordination with all contractors and stakeholders involved, and we will continue to provide updates as the project progresses.”

– Mark Roffey, Managing Director, The Isle of Sark Shipping Company Ltd.

Policy Development Group

After a successfully contested General Election in December 2024, the first since 2018, Chief Pleas' Policy Development Group (PDG) has since convened several times with a unified approach to formulating strategic policies that address the island's unique challenges and opportunities. Populated by all sitting Conseillers, the PDG intends on promoting community engagement and development through inclusive policies and development projects to ensure Sark's long-term sustainability.

The PDG will serve as a central platform to enhance communication by facilitating regular interactions among various committees, the group aims to ensure cohesive policy development and implementation. Additionally, the PDG will be responsible for reviewing legislation from the wider Bailiwick as well as the United Kingdom, assessing their relevance and applicability to Sark. This proactive approach will enable the government to align local policies with broader legislative frameworks, ensuring that Sark's legal and regulatory environment remains current and effective.



Through these functions, the PDG will act as a vital tool in promoting integrated governance and informed legislative oversight in Sark. The PDG is committed to fostering a sustainable and vibrant future for Sark, balancing development with the preservation of the island's unique heritage and environment.

For further information or to provide policy ideas or feedback, please contact the Policy Development Group at pdg@sarkgov.co.uk.

- Conseillers Scott Sullivan (Chair) and Natalie Tighe (Deputy Chair)

Update from the Douzaine

The new Douzaine mixes experience and fresh ideas. Thanks to the previous Douzaine for their service in challenging times and passing the baton on work in progress.

Rockfall at the harbour site means a temporary move to Les Lâches. Safety is top priority. Geomarine have designed possible solutions. We are reviewing all aspects of waste and sewage management to identify affordable solutions appropriate for Sark. Shaun, Public Works Foreman, works tirelessly to find practical solutions to problems. Thanks to Shaun, Mark and Elliot for their work year-round in all weathers.

The Douzaine and Public Works were within the 2024 budget. The 2025 budget includes some known works and a new maintenance position to look after Island properties. Rene Dallos (pictured) has been appointed as the island's maintenance person and is already repairing and maintaining island properties with a rolling work program planned.

Edric and Eugene continue their excellent work on the cliff paths which enable residents and visitors to access Sark's natural beauty. Thanks to Kevin and family for support during La Coupee's Geomarine stabilisation then starting road repairs.

There's a lot to do so look for updates at Chief Pleas and in the next newsletter. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with any queries or comments. Email: douzaine@sarkgov.co.uk or Tel: (01481) 832118.



- Conseillers Mike Locke (Chair), Chris Bateson, Carol Cragoe, David Curtis, Ben Harris and Mary Nicolle

Historic celebrations to commemorate



The Island of Sark came alive from 8th to 11th May 2025 with a moving and memorable programme of events to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of Liberation from German Occupation during the Second World War. The four-day celebration blended solemn reflection with joyful festivity, paying tribute to the island's resilience and honouring a defining chapter in Sark's history.

A highlight of the commemorations was the visit of Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, who met with Sark residents and joined in marking the anniversary. Her presence underscored the national importance of this milestone and offered a deeply appreciated royal connection to the occasion. Also in attendance was Mr Jean Morin, President of the Department of La Manche in Normandy, symbolising the enduring cultural and historical ties between Sark and France.

Events began on Thursday 8th May, aligning with VE Day, with the lighting of the VE Day Beacon at Pilcher's Monument. This act of remembrance was mirrored across the UK and was followed by a poignant procession of the flame to Sark Prison, setting a reverent tone for the days to come.

On Saturday 10th May, The Avenue transformed into a lively celebration hub. Crowds gathered to meet Chelsea Pensioners and Gurkhas, witness the unveiling of the 80th Liberation Plaque, and enjoy a traditional street party filled with performances, historical demonstrations - such as a Kukri Knife display - and community games on the Avenue Green.

President Morin presented the Liberté Bell to the Seigneur - a small commemorative bell crafted by the Département of La Manche to mark the 80th Anniversary of D-Day and offered thanks to Chief Pleas for its recent contribution to the Manche Iles Express.

Sunday 11th May brought the community together in a vibrant cavalcade to St. Peter's Church and Millennium Field. Guests enjoyed a rich afternoon of events including a school-led Liberation display, a theatre performance of 'The Dame of Sark', and a special screening of 'Appointment with Venus', the beloved film set during Sark's Occupation.

The Liberation 80 celebrations not only honoured those who endured the hardships of war but also stood as a heartfelt celebration of peace, unity, and the enduring freedom of Sark. Islanders and visitors alike took part in this historic occasion, creating lasting memories and reaffirming the spirit of a proud and close-knit community.

