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# CHIEF PLEAS OF SARK



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## Government information

### Summer 2010

Information shown here is factual and not political opinion. You will also be aware that agendas, reports and minutes of Chief Pleas meetings can be accessed on [www.gov.sark.gg](http://www.gov.sark.gg) as can press releases given out by Committees. Conseillers' contacts and Committee membership can also be found there. Chief Pleas reports can also be obtained from the Committee Secretary as can copies of this document.

**Chief Pleas items:** In this information circular you will find brief details of forthcoming agenda items which have been submitted by Committee Chairmen and a few other items of recent and relevant information. Please refer to [www.gov.sark.gg](http://www.gov.sark.gg) if you wish to read the full reports.

**On**  
**Monday 28<sup>th</sup> June**  
**Conseillers will be available at**  
**The Island Hall between 4.00.p.m. and 7.00.p.m**  
**to discuss Chief Pleas items informally with you.**

Agenda Items for Chief Pleas Summer meeting. July 7th 2010

#### Items 3 and 4

**Road Traffic** will be seeking permission to initiate the necessary procedure to increase tractor and carriage driving licence fees. Similarly, the Committee is seeking permission to initiate the procedure to increase the tax on horse-drawn vehicles.

#### Item 5

**Finance and Commerce** are bringing a proposition to CP to request permission to increase tax on cycles, dogs and horses.

Last increase was in January 2007. The proposed increase, in line with RPI, would take effect from January 2011 and would make cycles £11, Dogs £11 and Horses £22.

#### Item 6

The Splitting of the dual role of the Seneschal. **GP&A** has been looking at how the Seneschal's role should be divided between his duties as a judge and his duties as President of Chief Pleas. Due to the ruling of the Court of Appeal that the UK Government is in breach of its international obligations on human rights because of the dual role, **GP&A** considers that it is now in Sark's best interests to carry through the necessary reforms after consultation with the residents of Sark as to their preferred options.

### Item 7

The Age of Sexual Consent. For historical reasons, the legal age of Sexual Consent in Sark is 16 for heterosexuals and 21 for homosexuals.

**GP&A** has been advised that such discrimination is no longer tenable and proposes legislation to make 16 the common age for sexual consent as in the rest of the Bailiwick.

### Item 8

In considering the composition of “The Housing (Control of Occupation) (Sark) Law, 2010” **DCC** have encountered an impasse on the matter of ‘self-catering’; as to whether the number of properties able to offer ‘self-catering’ should be increased, or kept at the current level. The Committee decided that the best way forward was to offer the matter up to Chief Pleas for its views, and those of the wider public.

The Committee will listen to the views of Chief Pleas, and the public at the surgery meeting of the 28<sup>th</sup> June, making a decision on how best to proceed based upon what it hears.

### Item 9

Refurbishment works at the Committee Offices. The Trustees of Island Properties have recommended in a report to **GP&A** that refurbishment should be undertaken in the Assembly Room and that plans should be put forward for the redevelopment of the Seneschal’s office. The Committee has also been considering how further offices could be provided once the Seneschal’s role has been split into two, together with more space for the Constables and a general reorganisation of the Chasse Murette offices to make them more efficient and user friendly. The Committee is asking for direction on the drawing up of plans and the costing of these proposals.

### Item 10

**Harbours and Pilotage** will update The House on the current situation related to moorings for visiting yachtsmen.

### Item 11

Tidal Energy. This is an information report from **GP&A** on the progress of Sark’s legislation and the production of the environmental assessment which is due to be finished shortly.

### Item 12

**Shipping** will make the Isle of Sark Shipping Company's November 2010 to October 2011 timetable available for information. This is similar to 2009/2010 timetable with minor changes in sailings and one change to terms and conditions. Fare increases will be held below the rate of inflation.

### Item 13

**Sea Fisheries** will inform The House of the intention to appoint Mr Andy Leaman as Special Constable, Sea Fisheries, for a probationary period.

### Item 14

Over the past eighteen months **DCC** has at times been reduced to four or three members able to vote on a given development. Reasons such as illness, personal interest, business interest, etc, have meant not all of the five members are able to vote, even if present at a meeting. To help alleviate this, the Committee are seeking permission to add a sixth Conseiller to the Committee.

### Item 15

**Road Traffic** will be submitting an information report on Harbour Hill transport relating to the replacement of a bus

### Item 16

**Medical** was informed earlier this year that Sark's Island Health Insurance scheme, provided by Aetna/Goodhealth, was set to rise considerably; 25% for those under the age of 54 and 50% for those above the age of 54, or a 40% increase across the board.

Both the Committee and its Insurance Broker, Rossboroughs in Guernsey, found this to be an unacceptable increase. The broker looked for an alternative company to take on Sark's Health Insurance. At two public presentations held in the Island Hall in late May, the new Insurer, a La Carté (ALC), based in Sussex and underwritten by Allianz Worldwide Care, attended to answer questions about the change.

This was reasonably well attended and many questions answered. Other alternative insurers investigated by the brokers were not interested because of the size, age and medical profile of Sark Policyholders. ALC were prepared to take on existing Goodhealth subscribers without adding new exclusions, only existing exclusions being transferred. There is no perfect medical insurance for Sark and even if one was found that offered everything that could be wanted, it would be too expensive for the majority to afford.

As you may have seen, the Medical Committee has placed three notices in the public boxes recently –

- first is to bring to everyone's attention the need for medical insurance by visitors and staff coming to Sark.
- second is to make people aware that most medical insurance policies do not cover a visit to the doctor so, although staff may be covered by their employer's insurance, they are not always aware they have to pay for a visit to the Medical Centre and pay for any medicines prescribed. This has caused some problems for the Island Doctor.
- third is a notice asking everyone to look carefully at their medical insurance as some do not cover medical emergencies.

**It is very important that everyone is aware that**

**Sark does not have either  
a National Health Service or any similar scheme**

### Item 17

**Douzaine** and **Harbours and Pilotage** will update The House on tenders for modifying an existing shed to accommodate a crane.

### Item 18

**Agriculture** will update The House on the Dark Skies Project and will request five thousand pounds to be made available to fund Sark's nomination to become the world's first Dark Skies Island.

## **Other recent and relevant information**

- The Reform (Sark) Law 2008 allows those elected to a committee to elect a chairman and a deputy chairman from amongst that elected membership. The Reform Law makes no mention of the title 'Chief Minister' therefore that title does not exist and any reference is not created by Chief Pleas or its elected members.

Conseiller D Melling on behalf of Committee Chairmen.

- Many people ask how their tax is spent. The following, which relates to minimum tax payment, is prepared by The Treasurer at the request of the Finance Committee, based on the 2009 accounts

Per the draft 2009 accounts a £220 tax payment is spent as follows:

	£.p
Education	36.78
Administration salaries and office expenses	28.92
Public works wages, materials and equipment	23.00
Procureur	16.22
Repairs and maintenance of Island properties	16.09
Tourism	9.02
Health services	6.36
Legal and professional fees and legal aid	5.73
Insurance	5.60
Constables' office expenses and salaries	4.81
Police, customs, prisons and fisheries	4.29
Grants and subsidies	2.28
Fire protection	1.41
Miscellaneous	1.17
Harbours	1.03
	<hr/> 162.71
Added to Island reserves	57.29
	<hr/> <hr/> £220.00

**Reminder: Conseillers will be available to discuss agenda items with you on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> June, 4.00.p.m to 7.00 p.m. at The Island Hall.**