

Sark News

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SARK'S ELECTION CANDIDATES

WHO ARE THEY AND WHAT DO THEY STAND FOR?

Do they share the hopes and aspirations of the people of Sark?

What the vast majority of Sark's population wants for the future of the island is independence, employment and democracy. Can the soon to be announced candidates be trusted to work towards the same goals? That is hard to ascertain at the moment.

The only election candidates who have publicly come forward are the founding members of the Independent Economic Alliance. It is to be hoped that more will make themselves known when the nominations become published in the box outside the Seneschal's office from 14th November, well before the nominations close on 26th November only two weeks before the elections.

Why are the remaining candidates so adamantly anonymous until the last moment? Sark News is certain that these candidates are well known amongst their own supporters, well organised and probably poised for what they hope will be a *coup d'etat*. It would seem that what we are in fact witnessing is a continuation of the Sark tradition of conducting important business and making important decisions behind closed doors. If the culture of secrecy, unaccountability and cronyism is not replaced with transparency, accountability and equality for all, how is Sark ever to become a proper democracy?

Many are at the moment arguing because of powerful influences from Brecqhou, Sark's character and traditions are in danger of becoming overwhelmed by "outside" forces. We ask you to take a closer look at that argument: As far as we can ascertain, Sark is not an island with a predominantly indigenous population. A high proportion of those involved in island politics and decision-making have lived here for a comparatively short time and cannot call themselves "Sarkees". The electoral roll counts people from America, South Africa, Germany and Finland, to mention but a few. It is a misconception that "outside forces" are something new. Changes to Sark's way of life, welcome or not, have been taking place and will continue taking place regardless of whether they are influenced by pressure from the UK, Guernsey, Brecqhou or the island's own politicians; be they immigrants from Canada or "indigenous". The good thing about the coming democratic election is that finally everybody will have a say in which direction these changes should proceed but it does require candidates to come forward who genuinely represent the majority view and wishes, who genuinely represent what is in Sark's best interest, who can put prejudice and bigotry to one side.

Information being the most important building block of democracy, the silence surrounding the coming elections is a bad omen for Sark. Because candidacy announcements and manifestos are so thin on the ground, Sark News has tried to fill in the gaps by making some "guesstimates", at times tongue in cheek, which you will find overleaf. It would, of course, have been preferable not to have to present Sark News' readers with speculation and we therefore urge prospective candidates to end the era of secrecy and

COME FORWARD!

THE SARK NEWS
LIST OF POSSIBLE ELECTION CANDIDATES

Name of candidate	Profession and/or background	Track record in public life	Best known for...
Armogic, Paul	Hotelier, and long time resident on Sark	Present member of Chief Pleas (Deputy) and Sark's Chamber of Commerce. President of Constitution 2007 Committee, member of Douzaine and Sub-Committees and the GP&A. Member of Tourism, Sea Fisheries, Medical, Millennium and Public Health Committees.	Lengthy service record in public life. Founding member of the Independent Economic Alliance, sometimes accused of sitting on the fence waiting to see which way the wind blows.
Bache, Andrew	Retired diplomat, recent arrival on Sark	Non-Chief Pleas member of GP&A.	Nothing yet. He could make his views more public.
Baker, Diane	Moved to Sark many years ago to work in catering business.	Present member of Chief Pleas (Tenant). Member of Constitution 2007 Committee, the Douzaine and the Medical Committee.	Having some deeply entrenched ideas... Key proponent of the Reform Law without safeguards. Also known for her pedigree as a staunch supporter of the feudal regime.
Baker, Edric	Tenant, with local credentials	Present member of Chief Pleas (Tenant). President of the Planning Committee, President of Douzaine, and member of Sub-Committee for Public Works. Member of GP&A, Public Health Committee and member of Société Sercquaise.	Tends to play "following the leader" with his predecessor Michael Beaumont on planning etc. Hands up who is happy with his planning decisions! A feudal talibanist, does he really support the aspirations for independence, employment and democracy or would he lead Sark to financial & political disaster?
Birch, Jo	Professional busybody and sometime resident of Sark.	Non-Chief Pleas member sitting on Agriculture Committee. Member of Société Sercquaise who has a tendency towards libellous comment whilst holding public office.	Claims to speak for "the people of Sark" on the radio whilst studiously avoiding any contact with anyone outside her inner circle of political allies.
Bird, Fiona	Ex United Nations development manager, currently working in facilities management. Sark resident of many years' standing.	Regularly attends Chief Pleas as a member of the public	Is renowned for her energy and organisational skills. The kind of common sense, no nonsense, what's best for Sark approach that Chief Pleas so badly needs.
Boerenbeker, Robert	Moved to Sark as a joiner, runs part time fiduciary business and on our Sark Lark list.	Accepted his sister-in-law's invitation to sit as a Non-Chief Pleas member on Finance Committee.	Holds family stake in charity funded pub and is keen to be a part of the present "feudal establishment".

Boerenbeker, Sharon	Life resident with a variety of local employment experience.	Attends public meetings with apparent interest and voiced approval for the Ministry of Justice directives when its representatives attended the Island Hall to promote the Reform Law.	Holds family stake in charitably funded pub and works at the Island Hall. Also a keen member of the feudal “establishment”
Burgess, Paul	Publican who moved to Sark to run Bel Air some years ago.	Present member of Chief Pleas (Deputy). Member of Sea Fisheries Committee and Sark’s Chamber of Commerce. Active member of the emergency services.	Tends to raise public interest issues in Chief Pleas, to the discomfort of some! Often in a minority amongst the Deputies but has proved himself to be a good and fearless Deputy who deserves re-election.
Carré, P.J.	Local electrician	Past Deputy of the People in Chief Pleas.	Quite outspoken on local political matters.
Cocksedge, Dave	Currently a builder, past teacher and fisherman. Long time resident.	Present member of Chief Pleas (Deputy). Member of Douzaine, Old Island Hall Sub-Committee, Harbours Committee and Millennium Committee. President of Road Traffic, Pilotage and Sea Fisheries Committees.	Tries to find solutions and avoid controversy whenever possible but gets it in the neck as present of Road Traffic Committee. A good and conscientious Deputy who works hard for Sark.
Cole, Bertha	Moved to Sark some years ago and runs Sark (Lark) off-shore services.	Widely known for noise-making on the Chief Pleas gallery and disrupting various proceedings.	May not stand but would probably still seek to interfere from the sidelines. A great advocate of her own interests.
Cole, Peter	Moved to Sark some years ago. Previously involved in education.	Was elected as a deputy but resigned in a fit of pique when things didn’t go his way. Is now the island’s official water-tester.	Undoubtedly likes to be in charge but unfortunately cannot cope with any form of criticism. Is he for inward investment on Sark?
Cook, Andy	Has recently been spending time on Sark to qualify as resident.	Co-opted on Harbours Committee and seems to be keen on adding to his roles of Special Constable and back-up sea fisheries assistant.	Building up local credentials but does seem somewhat insulated from reality.
Couldridge, Simon	Long time Sark resident and Sark enthusiast	Served on Constitution Committee which presented various sensible solutions which were later objected to by the DCA.	Operates Sark Moorings and gift shop in the Avenue. One to watch and worthy of a seat in the new Chief Pleas.
Courtney, Elsie	Sister of current Seneschal.	Public office as Assistant Procureur for the poor.	Highly unlikely to oppose her brother the Seneschal.
Cunneen, Peter	Fisherman. Resident on the island for some years.	Past organiser of charitable events.	As writer of letters to the public he has expressed ideas on a variety of issues.
Dailey, Sue	Recent resident, may not have been on Sark long enough to qualify to stand.	Has enjoyed success as a professional wildlife photographer.	Suspected of having an unrealistic approach to solutions for Sark.
De Carteret, Rossford	Real local, runs carriage and cycle hire business.	Present member of Chief Pleas (Tenant). Member of Douzaine, Millennium and Sea Fisheries Committees. Passionate fundraiser.	Has been critical of manner in which taxpayers’ money has been used when invested in IoSS.

De Carteret, Simon	Real local, employee of Sark Electricity and part time fiduciary.	Present member of Chief Pleas (Tenant). Member of Development Control, Education, Finance, Firearms and Shipping Committees.	Generally likes to avoid the spotlight and agree to Guernsey legislation, possibly to avoid attention to Sark Lark activities; but respected and liked nevertheless.
Delaney, Kevin	Moved to Sark following successful business career in building industry in UK & Channel Island.	Has sat in Chief Pleas for the past year (Tenant). Has been extremely forthright in pointing out shortcomings of Sark Shipping's Dielette fiasco.	The broadest shoulders on Sark? Even his fiercest critics acknowledge the expertise and commitment he brings to his work. Chief Pleas would benefit enormously from his presence.
Dewe, Elizabeth	Sark local who operates gas and carting business.	Relatively recent member of Chief Pleas (Deputy). Member of Douzaine, Education and Road Traffic Committees.	Vocal on issues such as boat times. Can get heated at public meetings but has potential to become a credible representative if she acts independently. Will she commit to being independent and supporting Sark employment in her manifesto?
Dewe, Richard	Arrived on Sark as a youngster and has operated successful business before retiring.	Present member of Chief Pleas (Deputy). Member of Douzaine, President of Firearms Committee, member of GP&A and Medical Committee.	Will this rather self-important man listen to your views if you vote him in? Very active in island politics but given to emotional outbursts. Resigned from Constitutional Committee when he felt they had no confidence in him. Awed by and eager to please the powers to be in Guernsey, would he be a supporter of Sark's independence?
Donnelly, John	Long time resident involved in self catering and Guernsey fiduciary company. Soon to be hotelier.	Present member of Chief Pleas (Tenant). Member of Harbours Committee and Road Traffic Committee. Strangely ejected from Shipping Committee over rescue of Sark Viking and stance on Shipping Review.	Certainly no "feudal friend"! Given to bringing awkward issues to the attention of the public, to the annoyance of those who favour secrecy. A fearless member of Chief Pleas who deserves a seat in the new assembly. Every assembly needs individuals who will challenge the establishment. John Donnelly is a man who undoubtedly works hard for Sark and wants what he perceives is best for the island.
Dunks, Anthony	Relatively recent arrival on Sark's political scene. Some time Island employee.	Present member of Chief Pleas (Deputy). Member of Development Control, Education, Emergency Services and Finance Committees.	Could be a useful member of future Chief Pleas. Position on independence and feudalism is unclear but appears to have a common sense approach, which is welcome.
Gill, Jill	Long term resident married to local man.	Not known in public life but may surface as a representative and give it a go.	Could be forthright and outspoken on many island issues.
Gomoll, Stefan	Active Advocate / businessman with quite a few years as a Sark resident.	Member of Chief Pleas (Tenant). Member of Constitution 2007 Committee and the GP&A.	His understanding of finance and law should have been more of an asset to the island. Has sat on the fence on far too many issues and should have challenged the estab-

			ishment more bravely. Is his participation motivated by self-interest? We think he deserves to be elected to the new Chief Pleas but needs more backbone.
Gordon-Brown, David	Recent arrival on Sark. Operates long standing family business Sark Electricity Co.	An active member of Sark Chamber of Commerce.	A steady pair of hands! Analytical approach to many issues. Active in seeking solutions to Sark's energy needs. An intelligent and thoughtful man who could make a very useful contribution.
Guille, Colin	Local man who provides Harbour Hill transport and is the island's funeral director.	Previous member of Chief Pleas who served many years as a Deputy and as a Tenant. He has travelled wide and far to promote Sark tourism.	An experienced politician with genuine local credentials and a real passion for Sark. Managed to produce accounts for Chief Pleas for the old Island Hall. Please could he help with the new one?
Guille, Stephanie	Sark local working with Guernsey fiduciary company. Sark Lark track record.	Recently appointed assistant constable and has a tendency to be over-enthusiastic with official duties.	Seneschal's niece and therefore unlikely to be of independent thought.
Guy, Jan	Moved to Sark some years ago as school teacher, now part time. The Island's Tourism Officer and self-proclaimed "political officer".	Non-Chief Pleas member of Education Committee. Resigned as a Deputy (<i>see Cole, Peter</i>) but still likes to make her views heard in most Chief Pleas matters from the public gallery (<i>see Cole, Bertha</i>). She recently resigned from the Chamber of Commerce and has a history of petulance when things do not go her way.	Apparently she would like to re-establish herself and "teach" her vision for Sark instead of concentrating on her publicly funded day job. Unlikely to support the aspirations of the vast majority of the people of Sark. Will leave Sark up the economic and political creek without a paddle.
Higgins, Simon	Recent arrival on Sark with unknown background – though apparently interested in shipping.	Recently appointed fisheries officer. Has a reputation for being over-zealous in discharging his duties.	Seems to be out for thrills and spills on the ocean waves, like his predecessor Peter Stisted.
Hunt, John	Comparatively recently arrived with school teacher wife. Runs very useful computer shop.	There are hints that he may like to enter onto Sark's political stage.	A member of the "school hall group" who would be likely to tow the party-line. Be your own man, Mr Hunt!
Le Lievre, Gail	Moved to Sark some years ago.	Previously served as Sark constable.	Has previously stood for elections as deputy.
Le Lievre, Tony	Arrived from Guernsey to establish Empire Builders	Present member of Chief Pleas (Deputy) and newly appointed director of Sark Shipping. Member of Douzaine, Pilotage and Firearms Committees. President of Shipping and Harbours Committees.	Founding member of the Independent Economic Alliance. Known for taking initiative for change at IoSS as President of Shipping Committee. Will need to hold his nerve if he is to see the job through. Works hard and is plainly dedicated. Deserves to be elected to the new Chief Pleas. Has earned respect.

Magell, Helen	Relatively recent arrival on Sark. School-teacher of independent means. On our directorship list.	Present member of Chief Pleas (Tenant). President of Education Committee, Vice-President of Tourism Committee.	Another member of the “school hall group” who turns to Jan Guy for inspiration. Should seek better informed role models.
Melling, Dave	Island employee, public works and chief rubbish burner. Also on Sark News’ directorship list.	Present member of Chief Pleas (Deputy). Member of Douzaine, and its Sub-Committees Old Island Hall / Public Works. President of Millennium and Public Health Committees and member of Shipping and Tourism Committees.	Seems to favour the island hall pub being the seat of government, funded by charity donations and taxpayers. How would he propose to fund Sark’s economy when apparently opposed to current projects taking place? All of that said, Mr Melling was a hard working and dedicated member of Chief Pleas who commands respect. If he could bring himself to be friendlier towards inward investment, he would be an excellent Conseiller.
Olsen, Roger	Talker / meddler of fairly recent arrival. Apparently a published writer.	Present member of Chief Pleas (Deputy), who came to office in an uncontested election rumoured to be at the prompting of the Seneschal over a drink at a cocktail party. Leading light of GP&A. President of Medical Committee and member of Shipping Committee.	He’s into everything and eager to busy himself with the government of Sark; turning to Guernsey for inspiration and advice at every turn. He seems to be ready to give away Sark’s territorial waters and cannot hold himself back when it comes to tidal energy. Has a ready smile and a sense of humour but needs to stand up to the old guard. What does he stand for?
Parsons, Bob	Recent resident with experience in UK politics.	Assisted the new school with its IT support before the turbulent changes. Has not yet stood for public office but is rumoured to be interested in standing.	Founding member of the Independent Economic Alliance but, apparently, a supporter of the pub in the school building.
Perrée, Michelle	Carter and busy local business person.	Long and distinguished record of service to the island through organising large outdoor events for charitable purposes. Stood for election previously.	We hope she will dare to stand up and speak out and keep up that independent Sark spirit!
Perrée, Elizabeth	Very successful hotelier.	Member of Chief Pleas (Tenant). Member of Tourism Committee.	She might be busy but when you need something done, ask a busy person. Her commitment to the Island is undoubted.
Perrée, Philip	Local farmer, carter, carriage operator and outstanding at welcoming tourists to Sark.	Present member of Chief Pleas (Tenant) who is always ready to ask questions from the floor of the house. Member of Agriculture Committee.	Could be a valuable, steady pair of hands to keep Sark on track to maintain and enhance its tourist offering.
Plummer, Helen	Local resident and relatively recent politician.	Present member of Chief Pleas (Deputy). President of Avian Flu Committee, member of Douzaine, President of Emergency Services Committee, member of Finance,	Seems seriously challenged by the burden of her involvement and is perhaps busy making popular rather than thought through decisions. Does she share the electorate’s as-

		Medical and Sea Fisheries Committees.	pirations of independence, employment and democracy?
Rang, Chris	Busy local Businessman	Long standing member of Chief Pleas (Tenant). Member of GP&A and Harbours Committee where he is very active with current Maseline refit project.	Has proved himself an effective and passionate member of Chief Pleas, making points coherently and briefly, but latterly a fence sitter, unfortunately. Could be a very good Conseiller.
Raymond, William	Some time resident. Accountant who runs off-shore services rumoured to be through Panamanian company. Sark Larker.	Present member of Chief Pleas (Tenant). Long time Director of Sark Shipping, during which time the company has been plunged into a perilous financial situation. Responsible for commissioning the Sark Viking, showing little commercial sense and despite being fully aware that the Brecqhou freight contract had come to an end.	If you think his performance as director of Sark Shipping is confidence inspiring, by all means vote him in! But would an election campaign be another vanity project for Mr Raymond? Another feudal Taliban who doesn't deserve to be elected.
Shuker, Trish	Long time resident who successfully ran the Moinerie Hotel.	Stood for election previously.	Could be an asset to Chief Pleas with her proven business experience in tourism.
Southern, Bernard	Local man who runs family business 1 st Call Decorators with his brother Harry.	No previous experience but has proven himself to have good organisational skills.	A dark horse. A popular local man of independent thought.
Southern, Christina	Proprietor of Petite Poule bistro in the Avenue.	Unsung heroine of charitable events. Active on this years' Avenue Christmas Lights committee.	Will she dare speak out and represent young working families here on Sark?
Stisted, Peter	Quite a recent arrival, enjoys local market accommodation and seems keen to find an occupation.	Former fisheries officer famously taking care of the island RIB (R.I.P.). Has unsuccessfully stood for election previously.	A liability the taxpayer cannot afford? The new Chief Pleas does not need this loose cannon.
Taylor, Robert	Recently established resident of independent means.	The new "strong man" at the helm of Sark Shipping. Bon voyage!	Apparently a no nonsense man with a strong feeling for what he perceives to be right and wrong.
Tonks, Peter	Long standing resident businessman.	Driving member of the Chamber of Commerce and key member of the Sark Sports Club. Helped to raise considerable amounts for Sports Club through Lord Taverner's. Stood for election previously.	Founding member of the Independent Economic Alliance who would be a very good Conseiller.
Tye, Natalie	Proprietor of Time and Tide Restaurant in the Avenue	As yet untested but she has earned island-wide respect by proving herself to be a very astute businesswoman.	Could be a strong voice for the up and coming younger generation.

Ventress, Tony	Public school long time resident who professes in writing to the Guernsey Press to be a “peasant”.	Involved in the Chamber of Commerce. Supports improvement but without and credible policy to attract investment. His public persona of kindly local elder is dispelled by his habit of penning poisonous and vindictive letter to those who do not share his views.	Whilst he may now have time for involvement, he should have utilised his educational advantage to Sark’s benefit long ago. Please see article further on in this issue. Would join with the feudal Taliban in taking Sark into the economic and political valley of the shadow of death.
Williams, Paul	Long time resident. Combines his time on the island’s payroll with running his own food & drinks distribution business.	Present member of Chief Pleas (Deputy). President of Agriculture Committee, Vice President of Avian Flu Committee, member of Finance Committee and member of the Douzaine. Chairman of Public Works and Old Island Hall Sub-Committees. Member of Harbours, Public Health and Road Traffic Committees.	Seems to take a defensive position in respect of any change. May disguise a potential conflict of interests between his business activities and his many appointments across an exceptionally broad range of committees. Commanded respect but made a very poorly judged and petulant speech in response to proposal to make Sark organic. Showed his true colours.
Williams, Sandra	Lifelong resident and recently established publican.	Present member of Chief Pleas (Deputy). President of Finance and Tourism Committees, member of Constitution 2007, Development Control, Public Health Committees.	You know very well what Sark News wants you to ask yourself here! Another who may have conflict of interest between her business activities and her many appointments across an exceptionally broad range of committees. Is simply not equipped to be President of the Finance Committee, or to be a Conseiller, we suggest.

IS THE SEIGNEURIE SOLD?

What on earth is the Seigneur up to?

Word on the street insists that the Seigneurie has either been leased or sold, possibly to the (South-African?) anonymous donor who facilitated the Seigneurie Garden Trust. Further speculation has it that this same individual is paying for the present renovation works to the building.

In the absence of any confirmation, information or, in fact, any utterance at all on the subject from the Seigneurie’s present owner and Sark’s “figurehead”, Michael Beaumont, the islanders are left to speculate - and speculate they do! Through his continued silence, Mr Beaumont leaves the ground extremely fertile for some rather wild rumours to

abound. Jennifer Cochrane’s imminent removal from her Seigneurie premises and probably Sark’s shores, as more or less announced in the latest issue of La Vouair de Sercq, has certainly served to up the ante and fan the flames of the rumour-mongering. Although some of the speculations are on the wild side, their entertainment value makes them worth a mention in Sark News:

The Seigneurie has been sold to:

- a) **Mr Synnott**
- b) **The Disney Corporation**
- c) **A consortium of anonymous South African businessmen**
- d) **The Republic of Panama**
- e) **The RSPCA (large, anonymous donation)**
- f) **Sir David and Sir Frederick Barclay**

The building will be renamed:

- a) **The Synnotterie**
- b) **Sarkland Hotel and Adventure Park**
- c) **The Sark African Clearing House**
- d) **The Panamanian Embassy**
- e) **Rest Easy; a home for Sark's ageing and homeless cats**
- f) **Little Fort Brecqhou**

The Seigneurie building will

- a) **Be used as a stepping stone into Sark High Society**
- b) **Be rebuilt as a 2-star hotel with self catering facilities for large families. Planning permission is expected for the construction of a rollercoaster and a pool with big slides adjacent to the gardens.**
- c) **Have additional phone lines put in and the windows replaced with one-way ones to ensure privacy.**
- d) **Have a commemorative plaque by the front door to honour all that Michael Beaumont has done to further good relations between Sark and Panama**
- e) **Become a world famous but rather malodorous retreat for old cats**
- f) **Be subjected to a much needed and rigorous renovation programme**

With the proceeds from the sale, Michael Beaumont will, apparently, retire with his family to Bermuda but intends to stay in touch by writing a letter to Chief Pleas once a year, to confirm safe receipt into his off-shore account of the index-regulated £28,000 stipend!

Clearly, many of these outlandish rumours are totally unfounded. According to the old adage, however, there is no smoke without fire. The only way for Mr Beaumont to stop such wild speculations is, quite simply, to supply the island community with the facts.

What we really object to though is the double standards the Seigneur has applied, denying any such dealings with the Seigneurie at one Chief Pleas meeting and then refusing to answer questions at the next when these are matters of proper public concern and where the public deserve an explanation. It is as if the Queen were to let

out Buckingham Palace. If the Seigneur wishes to be the local head of state (and he has described himself as such), then he should behave like one.

THE SEIGNEURIE GARDEN TRUST

If Jo Birch's curious notice at the Gallery Stores is anything to go by, the much trumpeted donation to the Garden Trust does not suffice to cover its running costs. Why else the plea for used flower pots of any size and colour?

Being a major tourist attraction on Sark, the Seigneurie Gardens have always been a commercial enterprise with the annual takings in entrance fees estimated at some £30,000. With the exception of some modest contribution to Sark charity from the sale of Christmas trees, this is money which until the creation of the Garden Trust went straight into Mr Beaumont's pocket. The million dollar question is: Into whose pocket will it go now? Clarification is needed!

If intended for the community of Sark, are there any safeguards in place to ensure that this possible and sorely needed source of income will not meet with the same sad fate as the Island Hall and instead become a burden to the islands taxpayers? Indeed, Ms Birch's plea for old pots is an indication that this might well be the case.

LA SEIGNEURIE GARDENS TRUST

If you have any spare flower pots we would be grateful for them. Any size, any colour, clean if possible.

Please leave them at the Seigneurie Potting Shed or call 832788 and they can be collected from you.

Jo Birch

ON FRIENDLY TERMS INDEED

Much is being said about supposed animosity between Sark and Brecqhou. For Brecqhou's part it would welcome peace with Sark but it takes two to agree. Any such animosity as exists is on a political level only, fanned by the short-sighted few.

On the operational level – on the shop floor – friendliness and cooperation reign supreme, as illustrated by the photo below.



Sark Venture and Brecqhou Lass having a rest and a quiet cuddle in Guernsey Harbour!

MR A.G. VENTRESS

A likely, if somewhat unlikeable, candidate?

The man who has hitherto vented his irrational, somewhat unhinged anti-Barclay, anti-Brecqhou spleen direct to Sark News and its publishers in the form of venomous and abusive letters, has finally come out of his cupboard and begun corresponding with the Guernsey Press. Why would he make that great big step out into the open, we wonder? Since he claims in his published letter to speak for all who live on Sark, could it be that this unpleasant individual is planning to stand for election, by any chance?

If so, Sark News would have no hesitation publishing excerpts from the above mentioned communications. The electorate does, after all, have the right to know what sort of man they are being urged to vote for. Mr Ventress would be disastrous for Sark if elected.

BUSINESS BRAINS WANTED!

Is there not one person amongst those involved with the Island Hall with a modicum of business acumen?

According to John Carré's statements quoted in the Guernsey Press on 30th October, the Island Hall needed an income generating pub in order for the island to be able to afford its community centre. However, we now also know from the island Hall litigation that Ms Williams accounts show a loss and that the Trustees have waived the fees they could rightfully have collected from the Hall management for the use of these communally owned facilities. As we have seen from the budget, maintenance of the building is already subsidised by the island's taxpayers.

Obviously therefore, the pub is costing the taxpayers money instead of generating income for them. You don't need an MBA to work that one out! So why, then, is this establishment still there?

ACCURACY ACCURACY ACCURACY

La Vouair de Sercq's "Gazette Officiale"

Yet again, Ms Cochrane's "official" version of current affairs is sadly lacking in accuracy. Some three quarters of the latest "Gazette Officiale" is dedicated to reporting on the on-going case against the Trustees of the Island Hall. This being a high profile matter on the island, Sark News sees a need for putting the record straight:

The action against the Trustees of the Island Hall was brought by Sir David Barclay, Sir Frederick Barclay and the Barclay Foundation (and not just by the Barclay Foundation, as stated in the Gazette).

Ms Cochrane further states that "Sir Frederick Barclay was not well enough to attend either". This is not just inaccurate; it is untrue. Sir Frederick's health was not a factor at all. It was quite simply deemed expedient

for the Court to take his evidence at the same time as taking Sir David's on Brecqhou. Thus there was no need for Sir Frederick to attend on Sark.

Curiously, the final paragraph of the *Gazette* gives a reader the impression that three Trustees were intentionally left behind in Creux harbour by the boat carrying the members of the Court to Brecqhou on 28th October. Sark News has spoken to eye witnesses about this and there certainly was nobody left on the dock when the boat left. The timing of the boat was put forward by half an hour in order to make the tide and all relevant parties were informed of this in advance. The tractor waited until the last moment at the top of Harbour Hill. Mr Carré was unable to attend for health reasons. Nobody else was known to want to attend. Three trustees were present at the hearing in any event.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the Trustees in question were not at all required for the day's business of taking witness statements on Brecqhou. Could it be that these individuals were piqued by missing out on a day's jolly, including a good lunch, a peep around Brecqhou castle and a tour of its grounds?

In order to deserve the name *Gazette Officiale*, the public must be allowed to expect total accuracy in what is reported. It is an important source of information and the reporter's political leanings and personal views should not influence its contents. Ms Cochrane's little "slips" are unprofessional. Perhaps this part of La Vouair de Sercq should be renamed *La Gazette Inofficiale*? Then again, now that there is a distinct possibility of Ms Cochrane leaving on the proverbial boat in the morning, maybe somebody else will soon be in charge of recording island events?

AN OPPORTUNITY LOST

On the drawing board at SEM there was until recently an exciting plan: Investigations were taking place looking into the possi-

bility of building a funicular railway on the Harbour Hill. Whilst being a tourist attraction in its own right, a funicular railway could besides have transported passengers, luggage and cargo up and down the hill, without producing the dust, noise and pollution generated by the present transport system.

Investigations showed that the natural place for such an installation would be running down the valley from the Friponnerie, along the road and on to the harbour. Some of the land needed for this plan to be realised was owned by Don Willis.

Unfortunately, the funicular plan came to the attention of anti SEM forces and in order to prevent the development taking place, a deal was quickly set up for Mr Willis to transfer ownership of the land in question to the Island of Sark.

Sadly, it is now a lost opportunity; a great benefit to Sark lost due to ill will and short-sighted animosity. This is absolutely typical of the kind of self-defeating, secretive guerrilla tactics employed by the feudal Taliban. If you are in your right mind, then do not vote for these individuals.

RECESSION BITES ON ALDERNEY

As reported in the Guernsey Press on 4th November, estate agent John Postlethwaite urges Alderney house owners to lower their selling prices to realistic levels, in tune with the still falling market. He fears that one of the island's three estate agents will go under. "... **there is a recession both in Alderney and the UK**" he says.

Jersey's Treasury minister appears to take the over-optimistic view that, due to its £70 million "stabilisation fund", Jersey is somehow immune to the precarious state of the world's financial markets. What planet are they living on? His Guernsey counterpart, on the other hand has now admitted that a "downturn" is expected in that island's economy. How long it will take before this can also be applied to Sark, which certainly has no "stabilisation fund", only destabilisation loonies who perpetually seek to offend and frustrate the only economic buttress Sark has?

LEAVING A SINKING SHIP....

With Directors William Raymond and Adrian Guille having left the sinking ship that is IoSS, we wish the new board of Directors Robert Taylour, Julie Mann and Bruce Wallace along with new President of the Shipping Committee Tony Le Lievre good luck in their endeavours to keep the ship afloat and hope they have understood the seriousness of the situation.

TURBULENCE FOR ALDERNEY TIDAL POWER

There appears to be widespread worry amongst the Alderney islanders that they have been “*outmanoeuvred*” when it comes to the much publicised development of tidal energy generation in Alderney waters (Alderney News, Guernsey Press, 31st October). Nobody knows when the project will start up or how to go about transporting any resulting electricity to prospective mainland or continental buyers. Although figures were suggested, nobody knows what the island will earn from it and what the developers stand to make. So now, years after the original deal was signed, the islanders worry whether they have grossly undersold the goose that may be capable of laying golden eggs.

More recently, it came out that Guernsey’s Law Officers had identified a legal snag meaning that the renewal of the States of Alderney’s agreement with developers Alderney Renewable Energy had run into troubled waters – apparently because of changes to output guarantees which would be lowered under the new agreement after OpenHydro’s equipment trials at the European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC). These snags must have been weeded out, as on 11th November it was announced that despite political fall-out and uncertainty about commercial benefit for the island, the project is going ahead, two years early and skipping the originally planned deployment of trial turbines in order to meet a contract with a French energy distributor.

The mere fact that OpenHydro is still conducting trials at EMEC’s site in the Orkneys highlights the extreme youth of tidal power generation as an industry. Common sense dictates that, far from representing a bonanza and regardless of the French contract, there is still a long and costly road ahead before this technology is ready for commercial exploitation. **Take note Sark!**

HARBOUR WORKS

No pain, no gain!

A considerable amount of taxpayers’ money is going into the on-going works at the Maseline Harbour and the disruptions to boat schedules and freight delivery has become an annoying fact of life of late.



Works in progress

However, the Harbours Committee, and especially key players Chris Rang and Tony Le Lievre, have taken on the challenge of keeping the project on schedule and within budget constraints with gusto. Let’s hope they are successful; at least one part of Sark’s infrastructure is receiving the attention it requires.

Publisher: Brecqhou Developments
Editor: Mrs S. Oliver
www.sarknews.com / sarknews.co.uk
Contact: sarknews@cwgsy.net
P.O. Box 8
St Peter Port
Guernsey GY1 4AE

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