



OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER OF SARK CHIEF PLEAS

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28th January 2020

Conseillers of Chief Pleas,
La Chasse Marette,
Sark GY10 1SF

Dear Conseillers,

Following last Wednesday's election of Speaker in which I failed to gain a majority of members' support for my re-election, please accept this as my resignation as Speaker of Sark Chief Pleas with immediate effect.

Although my term of office was due to end on 26th February 2020 I feel that, losing the confidence of a substantial number of members, the Speaker is honour bound to leave the office immediately or, practically in this case, as soon after sufficient preparation has been made for a seamless succession. I have now completed all outstanding work associated with the Speaker's role and that of the Returning Officer preparing for the forthcoming by-election and have handed over all responsibilities to the Deputy Speaker. In the immediate future, I will continue offer my service to the Deputy Speaker and Deputy Returning Officer as required.

I have felt privileged to serve Chief Pleas for over six years firstly as a Conseiller, then for a short period as President and finally for three years as Speaker during which I had two aims to help improve our Parliament; firstly to encourage people of diverse opinions and independence to stand for elections and secondly to give assistance in the process helping elected members to transform Chief Pleas into a modern transparent democracy.

Regarding that first aim, during my Speakership, I was pleased that Sark had its first contested election for many years resulting in a number of younger members elected to our Parliament; they have become fully engaged in the work of Chief Pleas and are making a wonderful addition to the existing stalwarts.

Last Wednesday I stood for another term in order to help achieve that second outstanding aim namely to encourage Chief Pleas to do more to become a modern democracy embracing transparency in the way it operates.

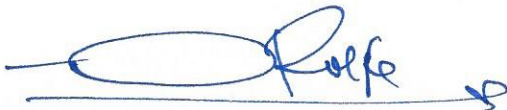
Whilst meetings of Chief Pleas are open to the public, it is within the Standing Committees that are held 'behind closed doors' where the constructive discussions take place, and this is where there is understandable and quite considerable legitimate public interest.

It is accepted that discussion of issues of a sensitive personal nature affecting members of our community and issues of a sensitive commercial or security nature should rightly be dealt with in a professional way under the auspices of the Douzaine, Medical and Emergency and other specialist committees, confidentially without public scrutiny. However, there is absolutely no reason why the vast bulk of general Government business under discussion currently by all standing Chief Pleas committees is still inexplicably conducted with the utmost secrecy. Frustratingly this secrecy does not just extend to the public but often between other committees. In other jurisdictions, public involvement would be considered essential and helpful.

I would encourage Conseillers to bring the whole archaic process up to a standard that is overwhelmingly desired by the inhabitants of Sark and accepted as a normal way of performing good governance by modern democracies throughout the rest of the world.

Finally, I wish Chief Pleas well in the future and will continue assist in its development wherever I can.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Arthur Rolfe', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and includes a small flourish at the end.

Arthur Rolfe

cc: Members of Chief Pleas (By email)
Officers of Chief Pleas and their Deputies (By email)
Seneschal and Deputy Seneschal (By email)

Copied for information to HE the Lieutenant Governor, the Bailiff and HM Procureur