



ST PETER PORT  
DOUZAINE





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## Overview

This booklet is aimed at anyone considering standing as a douzenier for St Peter Port, but it would also be useful for anyone wanting to know more about the workings of the parish.

The booklet details what is involved in getting elected, the first requirements of a newly elected douzenier as well as the duties they are expected to carry out during their term of office, the committees that they are expected to support and possible time commitment.

The booklet explains some of the parish traditions and areas of engagement as well as including some supplemental information which relates to the role of douzenier.

## Who are we?

### The Douzaine

The douzaine is a democratically accountable body which is responsible for the administration of the parish. Amongst other things the douzaine is responsible for the supervision of the polls at elections, granting permits to build near to highways, issuing dog licences and ensuring that hedges are cut. They organise the collection of rubbish, administer the parish cemeteries and carry out other administrative tasks.

### Douzeniers

There are 20 douzeniers in St Peter Port. Douzeniers are elected to serve for a term of four years and may stand for re-election.

### Constables

There are two constables in St Peter Port. They are elected to serve for terms of three years and may stand for re-election. The constables do not necessarily need to be douzeniers, but they often are. The constables carry out the day-to-day administration of parochial affairs on behalf of the douzaine.

## Douzenier Candidates

Douzeniers are the parishioners' representatives and are responsible for the vision and direction of the parish. They are expected to carry out their duties with integrity, objectivity, and openness.

### Who can stand

Candidates must:

- be over 18 years old,
- be on the electoral roll,

- have been a resident in the island for two years immediate before the date of nomination, or for five years in total at any time before the date of nomination.

#### Candidates must not

- have been sentenced by a court in the UK, Channel Islands, or Isle of Man to imprisonment for a period of six months or more, whether suspended or not, without the option of a fine, in the last five years.

Douzeniers shall only hold office for so long as they continue to be resident in St Peter Port.

Douzeniers can only be removed from post by order of the Royal Court.

#### The election process

Candidates need to be proposed and seconded by two residents of St Peter Port who are on the on the electoral roll. (The forms are available from the Constables' Office in Lefebvre Street, or with this link.

<https://www.stpeterport.gg/media/1410/nomination-form-douzenier.pdf>

The nomination forms must be completed and handed into the office no later than 4pm on the Monday the week prior to the [St Peter Port Autumn Parish Meeting](#). (For 2021 this would mean by 4pm on Monday 25th October for the meeting on Wednesday 3rd November.)

#### The St Peter Port Autumn Parish Meeting

By law, the autumn parish meeting takes place on the first Wednesday of November – for the venue please check with the office nearer the time.

Anyone on the island is entitled to attend the meeting so candidates can ask 'non-parish' friends, family, and colleagues to come to the meeting to support them, but only St Peter Port parishioners registered on the electoral roll may vote.

The agenda for the parish meeting will be available at the parish office the week prior, or at the meeting but, in brief, the autumn parish meeting addresses both ecclesiastical (church) and secular (parish) matters. It opens with the Lord's prayer and closes with a grace, it agrees the appointment of auditors, confirms the vacant election positions, and gives standing candidates the opportunity to introduce themselves in a short speech of approximately 2 minutes.

#### Election – immediate or deferred

The election can take place at the parish meeting, particularly if there are fewer candidates than there are vacancies. However, if seven or more voters vote in favour

of deferral the election will NOT be held at the parish meeting and a contested election will take place two weeks after the parish meeting.

#### If the vote takes place at the parish meeting

Voters are given a voting slip to record their choice of candidate(s). Voters have as many votes as there are vacancies. The count happens immediately, and the result is announced that evening.

#### If the vote is deferred

A notice will appear in the Gazette Officielle inviting all parishioners on the electoral roll to vote in person at a polling station on the second Wednesday following the parish meeting. (For 2021 this would mean Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November.)

A copy of the electoral roll will be available to all candidates from the business support officer at the States of Guernsey Committee for Home Affairs, currently [anne.cann@gov.gg](mailto:anne.cann@gov.gg). Data protection rules apply.

Candidates are allowed to spend up to £700 campaigning. This money is not refundable, and the constables will request a declaration of all receipts.

The returning officer works with the parish staff team to plan the election. Candidates can liaise with the returning officer and the office staff should they need to.

On election day when the polls close, the ballot boxes are taken to the Constables' offices and the count begins immediately. Candidates are entitled to be present in the room for the count, but they must arrive before the doors are closed and they may not leave until the count is complete. The result is announced by the returning officer later in the evening.

#### Campaigning in a deferred election

Candidates can start campaigning as soon as they have been nominated but most people begin once it's clear that there will be a contested election.

A key difference between a general election and parish elections is that there is no central communications team making sure everyone in the parish knows about the elections and who is standing. The parish puts notices in the Gazette Officielle in the Guernsey Press, issues press releases and promotes the election on its website and social media platforms. The onus is on the candidates to promote themselves.

## DOUZENIERS-ELECT

### Swearing in

Newly elected douzeniers are sworn into office at the Royal Court in November or

December.<sup>i</sup> They can choose whether to take an oath (religious)<sup>ii</sup> or make an affirmation (secular)<sup>iii</sup>. Please see appendix.

### Orientation meeting

A douzenier's term of office commences on the 1st day of the New Year. However, prior to this douzeniers-elect are invited to an orientation meeting with the constables at the parish offices. This gives them the opportunity to learn more about the workings of the parish. It also gives the constables the chance to get to know them better and discuss the different committees with a view to making the most of their skillsets. Douzeniers-elect will also be invited to attend drinks before the December douzaine meeting.

### Douzaine meetings

Each douzenier-elect will be allocated an experienced member of the douzaine to act as their mentor and help them get their bearings.

### The New Year's Day Reception

New Year's Day is the first official day of a new douzenier's term of office and the reception at the Constables' offices is the first event that they are expected to attend. The reception is usually attended by His Excellency the Lt Governor, the Bailiff, the Deputy Bailiff, Dean of Guernsey, some of the deputies and St Peter Port parishioners and its purpose is to toast the Sovereign. It also gives the new douzeniers the opportunity to get better acquainted with their colleagues, parishioners, States members and other individuals. The constables host the event, and the secretary organises it. New douzeniers may be asked to present flowers or gifts to key guests.



## DOUZENIERS

### Douzaine Meetings

There are 12 douzaine meetings a year, traditionally held on the last Monday of the month at 7pm in the Brock Room at the parish office. Douzeniers are expected to attend each one. If they cannot attend, they should tender their apologies in advance to the office. Douzeniers are expected to have read the previous meeting's minutes and any reports prior to the meeting. They are also required to submit any points they wish to have discussed by the Friday prior to the meeting.

*Time commitment: 12 meetings per year each lasting approximately 2 hours plus approximately 30 minutes prep per meeting*

### Legal requirements

The douzaine is required by law to carry out certain functions. As members of the douzaine, douzeniers are expected to make themselves available for these duties, however it is understood that it may not always be possible for individuals to perform certain functions because they are unable to leave their place of work during the working day or for other exceptional circumstances.

### Election of New Jurats

The States of Election elect new jurats. The States of Election is made up of the Bailiff, 16 sitting jurats, 10 rectors, two law officers (HM Procureur and HM Comptroller), 38 deputies and 34 douzaine representatives, of which 10 are from St Peter Port. On average, there are two jurat elections a year. Jurats do not serve a fixed term of office and elections are triggered either by the resignation or retirement of a sitting jurat.

Elections are held at the Royal Court before the start of a States meeting. A proposer and a seconder each make a short speech outlining the candidate's experience and suitability for the role. The members of the States Election then vote in a secret ballot.

*Time commitment: One or two elections per a year which last approximately 2 hours - usually on a Wednesday from 09:15*

### Stream and Douit Inspections

Landowners in Guernsey must ensure that streams are free from vegetation and silt to enable the water to run freely. To ensure this happens and to comply with the law, landowners must allow douzeniers access to the streams and douits twice a year for inspection.

Not all douzeniers are expected to perform this duty as it involves some off-path activity and requires a level of physicality. During inspections, two or three douzeniers inspect the streams while a staff member drives them between locations. The route covers approximately 4 miles. The state of the streams is reported to the parish office

who contact landowners if necessary.

The inspections take place in the last two weeks of June and the last two weeks of September.

*Time commitment: 3 to 4 hours on a Saturday morning twice a year during the first 2 weeks of June and the last 2 weeks of September*

## Hedge Inspections

It is the responsibility of homeowners to ensure that trees and hedges on their properties are cut back and do not overhang the public throughfare.

Douzeniers usually work in pairs to carry out these inspections and as St Peter Port is a large parish, each douzenier is required to get involved.

Douzeniers are allocated an area of St Peter Port to oversee and, if necessary, serve a soft notice to the property owner that the hedges require cutting back. The douzeniers then revisit those properties to check if the work has been undertaken satisfactorily.

Should the douzeniers find that it has not, they report back to the parish office who then issue a written warning.

Inspection routes vary and so it is at the douzeniers' discretion whether they go on foot, bicycle, or car.

*Time commitment: minimum two evenings after 15<sup>th</sup> June and 1<sup>st</sup> October for approximately 2 - 3 hours*

## Other Duties

### Parochial and General Elections

Douzeniers help to run parochial and general elections (unless they are a candidate) by manning a polling station or assisting at the count.

Parish elections take place in November each year and general elections every four years.

*Time Commitment: minimum of 2 hours*

### Bornement Applications

A bornement relates to applications for building permits to carry out construction work within 1.5m of any public road, pavement or way.

The constables review the plan or plans and once they are satisfied, they sign the bornement. The office will then send out an email asking four douzeniers to go to the

parish office and endorse the bornement by signing the paperwork.

### Planning applications

On occasion the douzaine as a collective will submit comments regarding certain planning applications. Usually this is when a planning application appears to be ill-conceived and not in the greater public interest.

The office will ask douzeniers for comments and, based on these, the constables will submit a letter to the planning department on behalf of the douzaine.

### Committees

Douzeniers sit on one or two committees. Each committee focuses on different elements of parish business. On occasion a committee will be formed to deal with a specific matter that has arisen, once this is resolved the committee disbands.

Each committee has a chairperson and a secretary. Reports from each meeting are sent to the office for circulation to the rest of the douzaine.

#### Amenities Committee

The Amenities Committee considers matters relating to:

- the improvement and provision of amenities and facilities
- mobility and access
- environmental initiatives

The committee undertakes approximately three walking audits of St Peter Port, per year, to review signage, lighting, public conveniences, street furniture, (seats, bins, bus shelters) vegetation, cleanliness, and condition. It then reports back to the constables and office who address the matter with the groundsmen and/or the relevant States department or private individuals and firms and may initiate new proposals.

*Time commitment: monthly meetings – approximately 1 hour plus tri-annual walkabout approximately 1.5 hours*

#### Douzaine Council (DC)

The douzaine council is external to the parish. It is a forum where representatives from each douzaine meet twice a year to discuss matters of mutual interest for instance street lighting, streams and hedge inspections, IT systems and dog taxes. The St Peter Port representative then reports back to the St Peter Port douzaine.

*Time commitment: N/A*

### Douzaine Liaison Group (DLG)

The Douzaine Liaison Group is external to the parish, and it works to maintain and improve the relationship between the States of Guernsey and the parish authorities. It acts as a reference point for the douzaines to discuss any major issues and to facilitate communication between States committees and parish authorities. The DLG consists of a member of the Policy & Resources Committee and three other States members as well as one representative from each of the ten parish douzaines.

*Time commitment: N/A*

### Emergency Planning Committee

The Emergency Planning Committee is chaired by the senior constable and forms part of the Island Emergency Planning Committee, which is in place to deal with any major catastrophe.

*Time commitment: N/A*

### Floral Coordinator

The Floral Coordinator coordinates the floral displays in St Peter Port and organises the parish competitions. The coordinator works with the constables as well as the groundsmen, the contractors and States Works.

*Time commitment: N/A*

### IT Committee

The IT Committee meets to discuss changes and implements actions in relation to computer processes to benefit procedures and communication both internally and externally as well as managing the parish's social media presence. The committee trials and recommends platforms that might assist the douzaine and office staff in their day-to-day administration.

Members of the committee help fellow douzeniers familiarise themselves with new programs and technologies implemented.

*Time commitment: 4 x approximately 1 hour and additional according to projects and need*

### Masnières Committee

St Peter Port is twinned with Masnières, the site of a World War One battle in which 500 islanders were killed, wounded or went missing.

The Masnières Committee works on initiatives to strengthen the links between St Peter Port and Masnières as well as those that will encourage cultural and language connections. It also supports the annual memorial service.

*Time commitment: N/A*

### Moorings Committee

The committee comprises two constables, one douzenier, two boat owners and the constables' secretary. It is responsible for overseeing the moorings at La Salerie and the Longstore. The annual general meeting is held in March at which time the committee inspects insurance and ownership documentation, collects the mooring fees, and listens to suggestions and/or complaints that the boat owners may have.

*Time commitment: approximately 1 hour*

### The Townie Committee

The Townie magazine aims to be informative, inclusive and representative of the parish at large. The committee is responsible for steering the magazine through the production process. The committee invites contributors to provide articles and photographs as well as producing some themselves. The committee proofreads and collates the articles before they are formatted and sent for typesetting and printing. The committee also sells advertising slots to defray production and distribution costs, and overseas distribution and promotion.

*Time commitment: 12 meetings per year of approximately 1 hour each plus 5 to 8 hours per edition*

## OFFICIAL ATTENDANCE DUTIES

Events take place during the year which are a physical commitment to the community - past and present. The purpose of these events is:

- to mark the service & sacrifice of those who have promoted & protected our way of life,
- to honour certain outstanding individuals,
- to acknowledge our shared identity,
- to celebrate festive occasions.

The attendance duties of a douzenier are voluntary and it is accepted that on occasion individuals might not be available. However, where possible douzeniers are expected to attend the events and douzeniers who are unable to attend should advise the office staff in advance.

### New Year's Day Reception

The reception is held in the Brock room at the Constables' Offices immediately following the Bailiff's reception at 11:30am. It is usually attended by His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, the Bailiff, the Deputy-Bailiff, the Dean of Guernsey, various deputies and St Peter Port parishioners. A toast is raised to the sovereign.

*Time commitment: approximately 1.5 hours*

### 27th January

To mark Holocaust Memorial Day a service and wreath laying take place at the White Rock Memorial to Holocaust Victims followed by a service held in the Town Church.

*Time commitment: approximately 1 hour*

### 25th April

To mark Anzac Day, the anniversary of the first major military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces during the First World War as allies of the British Commonwealth, a service is held at Fort George Memorial traditionally held at 7am.

*Time commitment: approximately 1 hour*

### Liberation Day Procession and Church Service

Parish officials and other island officials gather outside the Royal Court and then proceed to the Town Church and take part in the Liberation Day church service.

*Time commitment: approximately 1.5 hours*

### 5th June

Service and wreath laying at the Castle Pier upper walkway to commemorate the death of Flight Lieutenant John Walton Saville who was shot down and died whilst attaching the German radar site on Fort George in 1944.

*Time commitment: approximately 30 minutes*

### 28th June

A wreath laying takes place at the Harbour Bombing Memorial to commemorate the death of 34 people killed during the air-raid on St Julian's Emplacement as well as all Guernsey civilians who died during the second world war.

*Time commitment: approximately 30 minutes*

### 22nd July

A gathering takes place in the Le Marchant Room at the Constables' Offices to commemorate the death of Major-General John Gaspard Le Marchant who died leading a charge at the head of his cavalry at the battle of Salamanca in Spain in 1812. Le Marchant is celebrated for having established the Royal Military College (now at Sandhurst) and for revolutionising the design of the cavalry sword.

*Time commitment: approximately 1 hour*

### 13th October

A gathering and wreath laying takes place annually outside Boots to commemorate Major-General Sir Isaac Brock (the Hero of Upper Canada), who was mortally wounded during the battle of Queenston Heights in which his troops defeated the U.S. forces in October 1813.

*Time commitment: approximately 30 minutes*

### 11th November - Armistice Day

A Combined Nations Armistice Day service takes place at Fort George's Military Cemetery where both British, German and soldiers of other nationalities are laid to rest. It aims to remember those who lost their lives but also to recognise the importance of reconciliation.

There were two ceremonies, one in the German Cemetery and the other at the memorial to the First World War, near its entrance. Wreaths are laid at both memorials.

It is attended by the Royal British Legion, His Excellency the Lt-Governor, the Bailiff, parish officials, veterans, families and in recent years German soldiers serving at the Allied Rapid Reaction Force in Gloucester.

*Time commitment: approximately 1 hour*

## Remembrance Sunday

A remembrance service takes place at the War Memorial at the top of Smith Street. There is a marching parade followed by a two-minute silence, the laying of wreaths and a short service. The assembly then proceeds down Smith Street, and a short service is conducted before the St Peter Port War Shrine – a roll of honour which lists the men of the parish who lost their lives in WWI.

*Time commitment: approximately 1 hour*



## Meet the team

### Constables

Zoe C C Lihou

*(Please see the St Peter Port parish website for an up-to-date list of douzeniers.)*

The constables are responsible by law for the day-to-day administration of the parish assisted by a small team of parish staff. The constables attend the office as required, to hold meetings, sign documents and deal with items that require their attention. They are available for douzeniers to meet and discuss any issues or concerns.

The parish staff are employed by the constables on behalf of the parish and are not States of Guernsey employees.

### Office Staff

Secretary to the Constables

Fiona Malley

Assistant Secretary

Ann Jennings

### Grounds and Maintenance Staff

Chris Inder

Jon Morris

Desmond Newberry

### Contacts

Constables' Office

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St Peter Port

GY1 2JS

Tel: 01481 720014

Email: [constables@stpeterport.gg](mailto:constables@stpeterport.gg)

Website: [www.stpeterport.gg](http://www.stpeterport.gg)

### Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> **GENERAL GUIDE TO THE PROCEDURE FOR SWEARING-IN CEREMONY IN COURT.**

(It may differ from time to time depending on numbers and the judge's wishes.)

The swearing-in of officials following the annual November elections usually takes place on a Tuesday morning in the Royal Court (States Chamber) before a judge (i.e. Bailiff, Deputy Bailiff, Judge of the Royal Court or Lieutenant Bailiff) and three jurats. All are robed, as are the Advocates. Similarly, parish officials are expected to dress appropriately for court e.g. jacket and tie or suitable formal attire. Family and friends can watch from the public gallery if they wish.

Having greeted everyone beforehand, Fiona Sloan (court paralegal) will get everyone seated. The court ushers will ask everyone to stand when the judge and jurats enter and the the greffier will recite the Lord's Prayer in French. Once everyone is seated, the judge will say some words of welcome and, on behalf of the court, extend his/her appreciation to everyone for volunteering.

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The precise format of the swearing in will depend, as mentioned, on the wishes of the presiding judge but it's usually in groups by parish, and officials wishing to affirm are usually called separately from those swearing the oath. Seating in the court should hopefully reflect this.

Before each set of swearings-in take place, an Advocate from the Law Officers will present the officials to the court and confirm when the elections took place and that all the formalities of the law were complied with. The judge will then consult with the jurors to confirm they are happy for the elected officials to be sworn in and ask them to come forward as follows:

- Constables swearing the oath are called forward to the the greffier's table and asked to place their left hand on the Bible and raise their right hand while the oath is administered to them, in French, by the the greffier. They do not need to say anything, but they are then asked to 'kiss' the Bible. In these days of Covid however, it's not necessary to make actual contact. The court will then shout, 'Dieu sauve la Reine!' Constables affirming will be called forward and asked just to raise their right hand while the affirmation is administered to them.
- Douzeniers are usually called forward to the well of the court which means standing behind the metal 'railing' in the middle of the court room (if in the Royal Court) in small groups by parish, although sometimes they are sworn in standing in their seats. Again, they are asked to raise their right hands and the oath or affirmation is administered to them in English by the judge. They do not have to say anything.

Once sworn in they may leave. It is considered courteous to nod/small bow to the judge before leaving the court but it's not a problem if they don't.

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#### **OATH OF A DOUZENIER**

Vous jurez et promettez sur la foi et le serment que vous devez à Dieu que bien et fidèlement vous exercerez l'office et la charge de douzenier de la paroisse de de Saint Pierre comme a telle charge appartient. **AINSI DIEU VOUS SOIT EN AIDE**

#### **OATH OF A DOUZENIER**

You swear and promise on the faith and truth that you owe to God that well and faithfully you will discharge the office of douzenier of the parish of St Peter Port to such charge appertains. **SO HELP YOU GOD**

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#### **AFFIRMATION OF A DOUZENIER**

I, do solemnly sincerely and truly declare and affirm that well and faithfully, I will discharge the office of douzenier of the parish of St Peter Port, the whole as to such charge appertains.