



ST PETER PORT DOUZAINÉ

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Overview

This booklet is aimed at those considering standing as a Constable or Douzenier for St Peter Parish and it would also be useful for anyone wanting to know more about the workings of the parish.

The booklet details what is involved in being elected, the first requirements of a newly elected officer as well as the duties they are expected to carry out during their term of office, the work that they may be expected to support and any 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 St. Peter Port Douzaine.

Who are we?

The Constables and Douzaine

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

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 if not, they may not be able to vote at Douzaine meetings. The Constables carry out the day-to-day administration of parochial affairs on behalf of the parish.

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.

Constable and Douzenier Candidates

They are the parishioners' representatives, and 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 immediately 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.

Constables and Douzeniers shall only hold office for so long as they continue to be resident in St Peter Port. They can only be removed from the roles 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 electoral roll. The forms are available from the Constables' Office in Lefebvre Street. A copy will be available on the website [Official website of St Peter Port parish, Guernsey | St. Peter Port Parish](#) under the Documents and Publications section.

The nomination forms must be completed and handed into the office no later than 4.00 p.m. on the Monday the week prior to the St Peter Port Autumn Parish Meeting, which by law takes place on the first Wednesday in November – for the venue please check with the Constables' 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 support them, but only resident St Peter Port parishioners who are registered on the electoral roll may vote.

The agenda for the parish meeting will be available at the Constables' Office the week before the meeting, or at the meeting but, in brief, the Autumn Parish Meeting addresses both Ecclesiastical (church) and Secular (parish) matters. The meeting opens with the Lord's Prayer and closes with a Grace, it agrees the appointment of auditors, confirms the vacant election positions, and gives those standing as candidates the opportunity to introduce themselves in a short speech of approximately two minutes.

Election – immediate or deferred

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

Registered electors are given a voting slip to record their choice of candidate(s). They will 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, which will invite all parishioners on the electoral roll to vote in person at a polling station on the second Wednesday following the parish meeting, which is the third Wednesday of November.

A copy of the electoral roll will be available online to all candidates from the business support officer at the States of Guernsey Committee for Home Affairs, currently emily.grainger@gov.gg. Data protection rules apply. Candidates are allowed to spend up to £700 campaigning. This money is not refundable, and the constables will require a declaration and all receipts of monies spent within two weeks of the election.

The Returning Officer works with the office staff team to plan the election. Candidates may 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. The result is announced by the Returning Officer later in the evening.

Campaigning in a deferred election

Candidates may start campaigning as soon as they have been nominated but most people begin once it is 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.

CONSTABLES AND DOUZENIERS-ELECT

Swearing in

Newly elected Constables and Douzeniers are sworn into office at the Royal Court in November or December.ⁱ They can choose whether to take an oath (religious)ⁱⁱ or make an affirmation (secular). See page 12 for the details of the swearing in and the administration of the oath.

Orientation meeting

A Douzenier's term of office commences on the first day of the New Year. However, prior to this Douzeniers-Elect are invited to an orientation meeting with the Constables at the Constables' office. 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 working groups of the Douzaine, 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

It is intended that 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 Constable or Douzenier's term of office and the reception at the Constables' office 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 office staff organise it.

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 Constables' Office. Douzeniers are expected to attend each one and arrive in time before roll call. If they cannot attend in person, virtual means may be used. If unwell or out of the island, apologies in advance should be sent to the office as attendance is recorded and published on the website. Douzeniers are expected to have read the previous meeting's minutes and any reports prior to the meeting. They are also asked to submit any points they wish to have discussed by the Friday before the meeting.

Time commitment: 12 meetings per year, each lasting approximately 2 hours plus approximately 30 minutes preparation per meeting.

Legal requirements

The Douzaine is required by Law to carry out certain functions. 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, which elects new Jurats, comprises the Bailiff, 16 sitting jurats, 10 rectors, two law officers (HM Procureur and HM Comptroller), 38 deputies and 34 douzaine representatives, of whom 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 at 72 years of age, 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 of Election then vote in a secret ballot. Depending on the number of candidates, it may be necessary to carry out more than one ballot and the election, therefore, may last most of the morning.

Time commitment: One or two elections per year which last approximately 2 hours – usually on a Wednesday from 9.15.

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 can perform this duty as it involves some off-road 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 four miles. The state of the streams is reported to the parish staff, who contact landowners, if necessary, before reporting to the States.

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 two weeks of September.

Hedge Inspections

It is the responsibility of property owners to ensure that trees and hedges within the curtilage of their land are cut back to that curtilage and do not overhang the public pavement, road or way.

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 to the Constables' office, with photographs, for the staff to issue a written warning. Should action still not be taken, penalties may be given.

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 15th June and 1st 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 or have proposed or seconded a candidate) by manning a polling station or assisting at the count.

Parish elections take place in November each year and general elections usually 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 staff will then send out an email asking Douzeniers to go to the Constables' Office, look at the plans and endorse the Bornement by signing the paperwork – four Douzenier signatures are required in total.

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/or not in the greater public interest. The office staff will ask for comments and based on them, the Constables will submit a letter to the Planning Department on behalf of the Douzaine. Individuals who wish to object to any application have the right to do so.

Quarries

Constables must ensure that all the quarries in the parish are safe. An annual inspection must take place in order that a verbal report is given at the Chief Pleas Meeting held in the Autumn.

Liquor Licensing

Whenever there is a change of Licensee or Designated Official in shops, pubs, hotels or other premises where liquor is kept for use/sale, there must be an inspection to ensure that the alcohol is not accessible to those under 18, that all aspects of the law are understood and carried out by the official on duty. A report goes to the Royal Court, with one by the Police, before the license is issued.

Betting Offices

An annual visit is made by the Constables to betting shops to ensure that the rules are abided by – i.e., no under 18's are allowed on the premises, and the manner of operating betting is in line with the Law.

Committees

There are two Committees that are legally required:

Moorings Committee

The Committee, by Law, comprises two Constables, one Douzenier, two boat owners and the Constables' secretary. It is responsible for overseeing the moorings at La Salarie and the Lonsgtore. 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.

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 incidents/catastrophes.

Douzaine Committees

Douzeniers may feel able to participate in various projects that are proposed, or which have already been planned and are operating to enhance different aspects or elements of parish life and business.

The following have been agreed by the Douzaine to align with planning in the parish, the improvement of facilities in the parish and how more publicity may be achieved to engage with the community served by the Douzaine.

- Facilities, Management & Organisation
- Finance
- Planning
- Events & Celebrations
- Media
- Floral

Douzaine Liaison Group

Set up by the States, the Constables meet with States' members to discuss how the Parishes and the States can work better together and how any changes can be made to allow greater involvement in different aspect of States' operations.

OFFICIAL ATTENDANCE DUTIES

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

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

The attendance duties of a Douzenier are voluntary and it is accepted that on occasion individuals may 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.

27th January Holocaust Memorial Day

A short service takes place at the White Rock Memorial for the three Jewish women who were deported and killed by the Germans during the Occupation.

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 may be held at Fort George Memorial traditionally, held at time to be notified.

9th May Liberation Day Procession and Church Service

Parish and other Island officials gather at the Tourgand and then parade to the Town Church and take part in the Liberation Day church service.

5th June

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

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.

22nd July

A gathering takes place in the Le Marchant Room at the Constables' Office 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 Sandhurst) and for revolutionising the design of the cavalry sword.

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.

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 are two ceremonies, one in the German Cemetery and the other at the memorial to the First World War, near its entrance. Wreaths would be 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.

Remembrance Sunday

A Remembrance Service takes place at the War Memorial at the top of Smith Street on the Sunday nearest 11th November. There is a marching parade followed by a two-minute silence, the laying of wreaths and a short service. The Constables and Douzaine then proceed down Smith Street, and a few words are said at the St. Peter Port War Shrine – a roll of honour which lists the men of the parish who lost their lives in WWI – before laying a wreath.

At 12.00 noon, a gathering takes place at the White Rock and two wreaths are laid – the first to remember those killed in the bombing at St. Julian's Pier, with their names being read, the second further down the walkway, to remember those brought to the Island by the Germans during WWII as slave workers.

Although Holocaust Memorial Day was commemorated for some years, with wreath laying and a short service at the memorial to the three Jewish women murdered in Germany during the war, more recently the event has been held in mid-April to mark Yom HaShoah (the Jewish Holocaust Memorial Day). This is led by the Dean and Committee for Education, Sport & Culture.

30th November

Wreath laying takes place at the Royal Guernsey Light Infantry Masnieres memorial stone in the Sunken Garden. A similar service is held in Masnieres at the same time.

Meet the Team

Constables: Diane Mitchell & Ken Acott

The Constables are responsible by law for the day-to-day administration of the parish assisted by a small team of staff, who are employed by the Constables on behalf of the parish and are not employees of the States of Guernsey. 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.

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

Office Staff

Please contact the office on 720014 or constables@stpeterport.gg

Ann Jennings, Deputy Office Manager,
Jacqueline Summerson, Office Administration Assistant
Sue Aldwell, Office Administration & Project Manager

Grounds and Maintenance Staff

Chris Inder, Stuart Page and Dillon Indge

Contacts

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Lefebvre Street,
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ⁱ **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 their appreciation to everyone for volunteering.

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 jurats 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 le Roi!' Constables affirming will be called forward and asked just to raise their right hand while the affirmation is administered to them.
- Douzeniers are 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.

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 ME 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 ME GOD**