



ST PETER PORT DOUZAINÉ

CODE OF CONDUCT

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Introduction

The procedures which govern the Constables and the Douzaine are partly provided by Guernsey law, and partly set and reviewed by the Douzaine itself. In particular, Guernsey law governs the procedure for the election of Douzeniers and Constables and through The Reform (Guernsey) Law 1948 (as amended), Part V and The Elections Ordinance, 2007. The Guernsey statute book also includes the [2011 Guernsey Douzaine Charter](#).

Internal procedures of the Douzaine are its own affair and this document describes the procedures and processes as they apply to the Douzaine of St Peter Port. This is a living document and will be amended periodically to meet the changing needs of the Parish.

Responsibilities

The Constables are responsible for the collection and disbursement of local taxes and duties, the maintenance of parish assets, and the efficiency of parish management. The Constables, in consultation with the Constables' administrative team, organise the regular and ephemeral tasks of the parish year, propose the structure and timetable of parish business, draw up the agendas for meetings, including regular reports from various committees to the full Douzaine, provide the Douzaine with information, and keep the records including the accounts.

The Douzaine is responsible for the vision, direction, transparency and engagement of parish affairs. The Dean of the Douzaine lends a guiding hand in this and the Vice-Dean stands ready and informed, should the Dean be indisposed.

Appointments

The posts of Dean and Vice-Dean are, by convention in St Peter Port, filled by the senior and second most senior Douzenier. However, in 2022 this is under review to ensure a true and proper democratic process is followed as in other Parishes.

Appointments to Douzaine committees are ratified at the first meeting in the New Year, so that new members can participate. The process is overseen by the Constables present or in their absence by the Dean or Vice-Dean.

Committees

Committees/working groups are established at the request of Constables to pursue specific projects and aims, they exist to recommend policy to the Douzaine on their special areas. They also advise the Constables between Douzaine meetings on matters which cannot wait for the next regular meeting, do not merit a special Douzaine meeting, or do not require full Douzaine attention. Committees are not decision-making bodies.

Committee membership will normally be established each year at the January Douzaine meeting. The standing committees of the Douzaine are: Emergency Planning, Amenities, Masnières, Celebrations and Events, Education and The Townie. Ad hoc groups may be requested by the Constables for specific projects. Committees shall not speak for the Douzaine unless they are authorised to do so, but shall report to the Douzaine as circumstances require on the activities of the said committee and keep the Constables informed of progress.

Frequency

There are twelve regular full meetings requested by Constables each year. They are held at St Peter Port Douzaine Room (or nominated venue).

A Special or Extraordinary Meeting may be called by the Dean or in his/her absence the Vice Dean, should eleven Douzeniers so request, then the Dean, or in his/her absence the Vice Dean, shall so order such a meeting to be convened. It shall be the duty of the Constables to request all Douzeniers to attend all full meetings, and all committee Chairs to request members' attendance at relevant committee meetings.

Attendance

All Constables and Douzeniers are expected to attend all Douzaine Meetings, Public Meetings, Elections, events and other occasions as the Constables shall deem to be of parochial importance, subject always to matters of conscience or acceptable absence. A decision was granted to allow attendance via electronic means or via a phone call. A record of attendance will be recorded and published in respect of regular meetings.

Absence shall be accepted if a Douzenier or Constable due to extenuating circumstances, or circumstances beyond their control. In either case the office shall be informed either by word of mouth or in writing of such intended absence and the reason thereof prior to any such meeting or event. In cases of emergency the absentee shall similarly make apology as soon as possible after his or her absence.

The Douzaine may co-opt other parishioners onto a committee. The Constables are members of all committees and are entitled to attend.

Quorum

Eleven Douzeniers shall constitute a quorum. Unless a quorum shall be formed, no decisions shall be binding.

Duration

No meeting shall last longer than three hours. Unfinished business shall be held over until the next statutory meeting or at some other time as may be determined by the Chair with the agreement of the Meeting.

Conduct

No Douzenier or Constable shall bring the Douzaine or the Parish to disrepute, nor shall they behave in such a manner as to negate their Oath of Office in whole or in part. Dress at meetings should be smart/casual/comfortable. Proceedings at meetings will be conducted in a formal manner, with all comments addressed to the Chair. Douzeniers are present as volunteers who represent the ratepayers and should show each other due respect and courtesy.

At no time during a meeting should any member sense their personal integrity is being questioned or brought into doubt, and no individual should be made to feel undermined or undervalued.

Members must not use their position for professional advertisement, such as issuing business cards which advertise their position as Douzenier or Constable or give the Constables' Office as a business address.

Chair

Full Douzaine meetings are chaired by a Constable, the Senior Constable taking precedence, or in their absence by agreement with those present, the Dean or in his/her absence, the Vice-Dean. Committees are chaired by a member named by the Douzaine at the time of its appointment.

Rules of debate

The Chairman of any meeting will ensure that matters are debated fairly, that contributions are respectful and relevant, all viewpoints are heard, and that conduct is orderly. Normally the Chair will seek comments or address members in order around the table. Those wishing to speak out of turn should catch the Chairman's eye. The Chairman will acknowledge and ask for the individual's comments at the appropriate time.

If the Chairman of any meeting anticipates or witnesses any inappropriate behaviour, he/she may propose temporary measures to the meeting before or as the matter is addressed/discussed. Such temporary procedures must be subject to a vote of the Douzaine on whether they may be applied. They may include warnings or temporary disbaring of disruptive speakers. In extremis, the Chairman has the right to adjourn the meeting.

Interest

In the age of social media, internet and mobile phone cameras, the integrity and value of parochial administration is under the public microscope as never before. The high standards of governance required of the States' political process also extends to parochial administration. Public and media alike demand explanations and transparency, and are quick to judge. Reputations which took years to build, may be destroyed in as many hours. The individual member must be protected from this spotlight, as much as the Douzaine as a whole.

To maintain objectivity and impartiality and ensure that their judgment could not be or viewed to be compromised, a member must not put their personal interests or those of any another person/organisation with whom they have a relationship before the interests of the Douzaine. All Douzeniers and Constables have undertaken an oath in the Royal Court, which they are bound to honour with regard to Parish affairs. A Member may not take advantage of any information obtained in the course of Douzaine work to further their commercial interest.

Where a Douzenier considers and/or confirms that they have or may be perceived to have a conflict of interest whether personal, political or financial on any matter being discussed by the Douzaine, they should express that conflict as soon as practicable and offer to leave the room whilst that matter is being discussed. If the Douzaine requires them to leave, it may also require that the section of the official minutes of the Meeting relating to a subject where a Douzenier has left the room shall not be sent to that Douzenier. Should a Douzenier believe that another Douzenier has a conflict on any matter being discussed by the Douzaine, such belief should be conveyed to the person chairing the meeting as soon as possible and the matter of conflict be resolved by the Douzaine as a whole.

Resolutions of the Douzaine

The Douzaine shall be given fair warning of important forthcoming decisions. Resolutions which seek to call an Extraordinary Parish Meeting, or seek the acquisition or disposal of real property or financial reserves of the Douzaine, shall be notified at the meeting prior to the Meeting at which they are to be decided. The wording of such resolutions shall be circulated to members at least 3 days before they are debated, indicating who has proposed and seconded them. Other resolutions may be proposed and seconded at the Meeting itself. Each Douzenier shall have one vote. In the event of a tied vote the motion shall be declared “not carried” and the status quo shall prevail. No decision of the Douzaine shall be binding unless agreed by a majority of those present.

A Constable has no vote, unless he/she is also a Douzenier.

Voting is by show of hands, unless 3 or more members demand a secret ballot.

Planning Department decisions - Proposed development plans requested from the Planning Department by the Douzaine shall be presented by the Constables to the next available Douzaine meeting. In extremis, the Constables will arrange for all Douzeniers to be informed there is a planning application which they need to see and the individual comments of the Douzeniers will be recorded.

Confidentiality

The proceedings and deliberations of the Douzeniers and Constables at all meetings approved by the Douzaine shall be confidential. Should a Douzenier or a Constable consider that there be an irregularity or impropriety at any meeting then such Douzenier or Constable shall inform the Senior Constable and / or the Dean.

Statements to the media

Statements to the media can be made by anyone, but it should be stressed that this is a personal opinion, and not speaking or representing the Douzaine thought's; opinions or discussions. Press releases and contact with media is typically arranged by the office at the request of the Constables.

A Constable (the Senior Constable always taking precedence) only shall be responsible for issuing statements to the media on all matters pertaining to the Douzaine. On matters pertaining to the Parish, statements to the media shall, again, generally only be issued by a Constable (the Senior Constable always taking precedence).

Record-keeping

Minutes of the Douzaine meetings are taken by the nominated party, or in his/her absence an alternate. Draft minutes are circulated first to the chairman of the meeting for correction and thereafter to the attendees for their comments. Draft minutes should be circulated to attendees at least 48 hours before they are proposed to be signed.

Data protection

The Douzaine and Constables are registered with the Guernsey Data Protection Registrar. The Constables and Parish Secretary have a duty of care to protect and hold confidential personal data held on electronic files both accessed centrally within Island government, and stored locally at the Constables' Office.

E-mail communication

Each member has a responsibility to ensure the security of Douzaine procedure/information and to maintain the utmost confidentiality and integrity in all that it does. Each Douzenier has a Parish Email address and this is to be used for Parish Matters.

Email should be treated as formal communication and should be written in a professional and courteous manner. The misuse of email will be treated seriously.

The Douzaine needs to be aware that that email messages may be subject to Data Protection legislation if they identify living individuals and are held in automated form, in live archive, back-up systems, or have been deleted from the live system but are still capable of recovery. They may also be subject to confidentiality rules if, despite having been deleted from the electronic system, they are stored in paper form. Douzaine information should not be sent to or shared with anyone outside the Douzaine. In order to protect the Douzaine from data breach, names of recipients should be checked prior to sending correspondence, particularly emails.

Anything deemed secret or of an extremely sensitive nature should be password protected.

Minutes of the meeting should be treated as confidential, however past minutes can be shared with new Douzeniers to inform them of matters. When a person leaves the Douzaine it is up to them to securely dispose of any Douzaine information.

Alteration

The Douzaine may from time to time decide to alter, amend, add to or declare null and void any or all of the above. The foregoing, (or as Amended), shall be subservient to Island Law whether by Projet or Ordinance.

Information

Each Douzenier or Constable shall on election be made aware in a manner approved by the Douzaine of all the foregoing, (or as amended). They shall also be briefed on the relationship with the States, and the information which the Douzaine receives from the States, for example regarding Billets.

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