

Prince's Foundation is hoped to boost investment in Sark

150 out of 500 island's population attend open meeting

by Andy Brown

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THE company funding the involvement of The Prince's Foundation in the future of Sark has spoken about its ambitions for the island's future.

In April, the Sark Property Company put up £50,000 to pay for the Foundation's initial visit and assessment.

The company is a 100% subsidiary of Sarnia Asset Management, a Guernsey-based fund manager, and its directors are the Seigneur of Sark, Christopher Beaumont, and Swen Lorenz, the CEO of Sarnia Asset Management.

'The Sark property company is, in essence, a joint venture of Christopher and me,' said Mr Lorenz.

'In our view, Sark needs investment and I have a fund management company that can help provide that.'

The two men came together after realising they had similar feelings on what the island needed to evolve.

'I arrived in winter 2017, and in January 2018 I'd been asked to give my first impression of the island to the Chamber of Commerce,' said Mr Beaumont.

It seemed obvious to me that there weren't enough people on the island to make the community go round.

'That was the catalyst for Sven to say, "here's someone saying the same thing, and I think we should get together".'

The Prince's Foundation was established in 1986 by King Charles III to teach and demonstrate principles of traditional urban design and architecture which



Swen Lorenz, of Sark Property Company, which put up £50,000 to pay for The Prince's Foundation's initial visit to the island. (Picture by Luke Le Prevost, 32175306)

places communities at the centre of the design process.

Representatives spent a few days in Sark earlier this year, touring the island and discussing ideas with the island's population. They aim to publish a report in July.

More than 150 people from Sark's population of 500 turned out for an open meeting during the visit.

The two men said they were both incredibly pleased with the turnout and feedback from the initial visit.

Mr Lorenz moved to the

island full-time in 2017 after first visiting in 2004 and spontaneously renting a cottage.

He had previous experience of working with The Prince's Foundation in the Galapagos Islands some 10 years ago, when he personally provided funding for an initial analysis.

'Then we professionally raised millions for them to do work in the Galapagos Islands, which was, I think, very successful.'

'The only way to get them over to Sark to do some initial work was for someone

to pay for it, and as part of our overall plans and ambitions for Sark, we said now's the time for us to

make a commitment. We've disclosed this upfront.'

The pair said they could not second-guess the

Foundation's findings, but thought it was likely that Sark's low population was an obvious factor that would be addressed.

'All of that ultimately comes down to an element of real estate development,' said Mr Lorenz.

'Starting with the fact that probably 20% of the island's real estate is derelict and a blight right now.'

'There's also question of infrastructure, such as electricity. We certainly have the potential investment necessary for that and we could take pressure off the Sark treasury.'

Mr Beaumont said he believed the island had come to the conclusion that doing nothing was no longer an option.

'Something has to be done.'

'We're taking the approach that we're starting from the bottom upwards. We're asking people what they like and don't like.'

'Our community is a vital ingredient, what do they want to see happen?'

Mr Lorenz added: 'We're not here to force any of our ideas on to the island. If the assessment concluded that nothing should be done on Sark at all, then we would just basically pack up.'

Alderney will be 'watching with interest'

ALDERNEY will be monitoring Sark's involvement with the Prince's Foundation after a team of four planning experts visited the island a month ago.

The issue was raised at a States of Alderney Economic

Development Committee meeting, with interest shown over how Alderney could be able to become involved in the scheme.

States member Ian Carter said Sark's vision looked promising, however Alderney

would be taking a back seat for the time being.

'It will be interesting as a watching brief but there's been no contact as of yet, it's still in the early stages in Sark, so we will enquire as things go on,' he said.

Planners reject proposed balcony at Vale property as being 'unneighbourly'

PLANS to replace a conservatory with an extension and balcony at a Vale home have been rejected by planners on the ground that it would have an 'unneighbourly relationship' with next door.

It had been proposed that the conservatory at Terre De Vier, Route De St Magloire - near Beaucette Marina - be partially demolished, and then a single-storey flat roof extension be built, with balcony above.

The balcony would have incorporated a 1.8m-high privacy screen along the western edge of the balcony, and a 1.1m high balustrade to the south and east edges respectively.

The lower balustrades were aimed to allow residents to enjoy east coast views.

There were two objections, raising concerns about overlooking, loss of privacy and noise pollution.

The proposed balcony would be about 7m from the east boundary.

On the east boundary is a fence, with the neighbour's garden on the other side.

'Due to the limited height of the balustrade along the east and south edge of the balcony, uninterrupted views would be

afforded into the neighbour's rear garden,' the planners noted in their report.

Due to the limited size of the garden associated with the neighbouring property, the degree of overlooking would be detrimental, they said, irrespective of the boundary fence and neighbour's shed.

'Although a 1.8m high privacy screen to the west edge of the proposed balcony has been included, the close proximity and relationship of the proposed balcony to the east boundaries is likely to result in an unneighbourly relationship which would cumulatively result in a significant degree of overlooking, and is likely to have an overbearing and domineering effect while in use.'

Overall, the planners found the current proposal would result in a 'substandard relationship' with neighbouring properties and would unduly compromise the amenities of neighbouring residents.

'The degree of harm is sufficient to rebut the flexibility afforded to householders so that reasonable development aspirations can be met,' the planners ruled as they rejected the scheme.

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