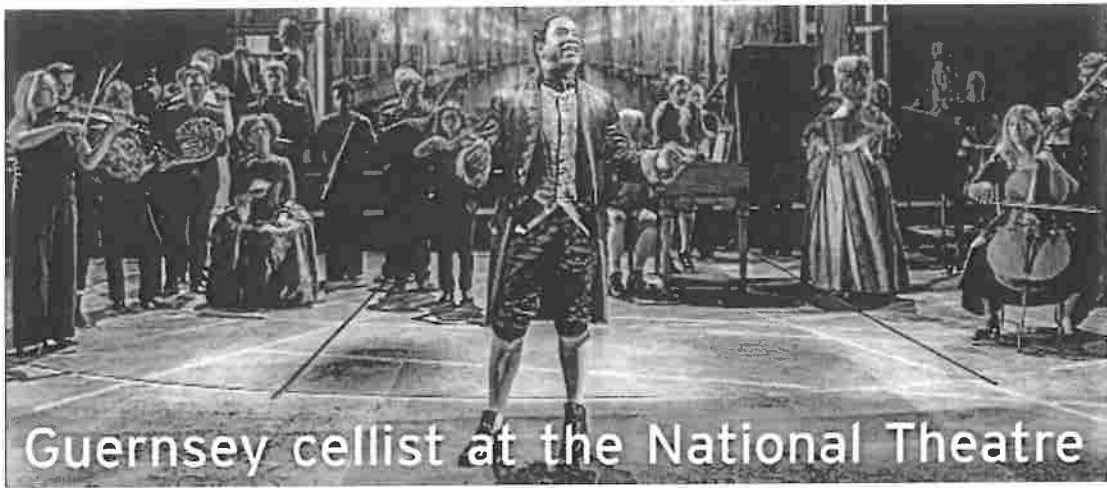


JENNY KEEPING ON THE MYSTERIES OF THE MARINE MAMMALS
ENVIRONMENT PAGE 14
DOLPHIN DISCOVERIES




FIT FOR FREE INSIDE
WORK OFF THE WINTER BLUES '17



INSIDE TODAY

VINEYARD 'NEVER VIABLE': SARK's Policy & Performance Committee chairman Charles Maitland said that the Sark Vineyards was never a viable business from the start. **Page 4**

WASTE COLLECTIONS: PARISH officials have said they would be unlikely to support any moves towards a centralised system for collecting waste in the future. The idea has been put forward before and resurfaces again in the revised waste strategy report, although it is not a formal proposition at this point. **Page 5**

Guernseywoman Angelique Lihou playing the cello, right, at the National Theatre's production of Amadeus. Next month islanders will be able to see the play when it is beamed live to Guernsey's performing arts centre. **Story Arts Extra Page 15**
 (Picture: Marc Brenner/National Theatre)

Alderney health review calls for radical changes

MAJOR improvements to Alderney's healthcare system are being recommended after a review raised concerns about 'unsatisfactory or risky professional practice' and a distrust in care.

The independent review of Health and Social Care Need, Provision and Governance in Alderney, compiled by Prof. Philip Wilson and Dr Lucy Thompson from the University Of Aberdeen Centre for Rural Health, makes 16 recommendations plus sub-recommendations, which aim to bring Alderney islanders' 'healthcare outcomes' in line with their counterparts in Guernsey.

They include giving a full apol-

ogy to Dr Rory Lyons, who was investigated after being wrongly implicated in four deaths in the island.

It also found that twice as many sleeping pills and tranquillisers were prescribed in the island than were in Guernsey.

However, the review has been criticised by senior Guernsey politicians, who said it relied heavily on anecdotal evidence.

Those comments disappointed Prof. Wilson, who said they 'may not be entirely helpful if the States of Guernsey wish to regain the trust of the people of Alderney'.

'It was our view, backed up with

by Anna Brehaut
 annabrehaut@guernseypress.com

irrefutable evidence, that the provision of primary care on the island is in a very fragile state and we consider that radical steps need to be taken to put things right,' he said.

A major point noted by the reviewers was the lack of confidence islanders had in their health care system, which they said was a top priority to solve.

'There is a big problem with people not trusting the care they are getting,' said Prof. Wilson.

'We think it is important that it is resolved.'

The distrust had been caused by the treatment of Dr Rory Lyons, the review said.

It has recommended that mediation should occur between the doctor and Health & Social Care with a view to him returning to work.

Other recommendations include:

- The structure and financing of general practice in Alderney needs changing
- More care should be provided on Alderney in the Mignot Memorial Hospital
- Clinical Governance and professional regulation needs improving

- Data systems need to be improved
- Emergency midwifery care, mental health services and sexual health services need to be improved
- Ambulance volunteers need to be supported to provide medical treatment at emergencies

Prof. Wilson said reviewing the system in Alderney had not been easy.

'There is nowhere like Alderney, in terms of healthcare it is unique in the world.'

Problems were also encountered in trying to access data.

Report in depth Pages 6 & 7
Comment Page 18

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Sleeping pill prescription rates 'double that of Guernsey'

PRESCRIBING rates for sleeping pills and tranquillisers are at least double that of Guernsey, a review into Alderney health care has found.

The review's authors said there could be a number of reasons for the results.

It was possible that this reflected poor mental health among people in Alderney, but it was their view that it reflected the prescribing habits of local GPs.

Prof. Philip Wilson, who reviewed the island's health care with Dr Lucy Thompson, said the amount of milligrams per head was ten times more in Alderney than in Guernsey.

He cited toxicification and people moving to Alderney with pre-existing conditions as other possible reasons.

'It could be that the doctors are feeling unable or unsupported to provide mental health care,' he said.

There was no clinical psychiatrist on the island and no self-help support, such as an Alcoholics Anonymous, for those with addictions.

'If you haven't got an AA then you're probably more likely to be providing those sorts of drugs.'

The review recommends that mental health services are improved in the island.

'There is a widely-held view that mental health service provision to Alderney residents is patchy and there is evidence of high levels of psychotic drug prescribing with little evidence of forms of therapeutic support for people with anxiety and depression other than standard GP consultations,' the review said.

'With the exception of old-age psychiatry provision (involving a community mental health nurse and a visiting psychiatrist), and occasional visits from a community adult mental health nurse, services are currently provided on Guernsey and this provides a remediable barrier to adequate care.'

'The reviewers understand that many Alderney residents with mental health problems consider flights to Guernsey to be an insuperable challenge.'

'Furthermore, in the case of child and family psychiatrist on Alderney it can also be problematic because of the risk of stigma perceived by several residents.'

'The review recommends the use of video-conferencing consultations with support to primary care clinicians.'



Dr Lucy Thompson and Professor Philip Wilson, who reviewed Alderney's health and social care. (Picture by Tom Tardif, 17239153)

Alderney health and social care review 'is not robust enough'

Health president says independent report 'contains gaps'

A REVIEW into health and social care in Alderney is heavily reliant on anecdotal observations, senior politicians in Guernsey have said, as they criticise it for not being as 'robust' as they would have liked.

The Independent Review of Health and Social Care Need, Provision and Governance in Alderney was carried out by the University of Aberdeen Centre of Rural Health.

It was commissioned by the States of Guernsey and Alderney.

Information was gathered from 423 population questionnaires, interviews with stakeholders and residents and written submissions.

While Health & Social Care president Heidi Soulsby said the report contained 'some recommenda-

tions' that would assist, she said there were gaps.

'HSC will now look closely at the recommendations and develop a clear action plan on what we intend to do,' she said.

'It is clear that the report contains some recommendations that will assist HSC in its absolute commitment to work with Alderney on the future provision of healthcare, but we also acknowledge there are gaps in the review. While we are aware of certain limitations in the availability of data, we are concerned that some conclusions and references appear to be drawn from anecdotal, rather than hard, evidence. Therefore, some aspects of the report are perhaps not as robust as we would like.'

by Anna Brehaut

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She said HSC recognised the need to continue to rebuild its relationship with the Alderney population.

'We acknowledge that this will not be easy in the context of the challenges of providing good health service coverage for a small island community, and the significant constraints that HSC has in terms of scarce financial and other resources.'

'We are, however, determined to make significant improvements in partnership with the community in Alderney and have already taken a considerable number of steps

in this political term, working with the Committee for Employment & Social Security to increase the level of professional, technical and financial support we provide.'

She added that her predecessor had apologised publicly and in person to Dr Rory Lyons and the Alderney community.

She reiterated those apologies.

'The Committee for Health & Social Care accepts the findings of the Good Governance Institute (GGI) report, which highlighted concerns about the investigation, in that it was rushed and due process was not followed. We also fully recognise the impact of events on Dr Lyons and the wider Alderney community.'

Policy & Resources Committee

president Gavin St Pier said the university's report did offer some useful insights, such as the potential value in linking up Alderney and Guernsey medical practices.

'However, the review is heavily reliant on anecdotal observations and we were hoping that it would have, for example, drawn more lessons from the experiences of other rural or remote communities' health services.

'These issues inevitably impact upon the utility of the report's recommendations and conclusions, which is disappointing.'

'Nonetheless, we welcome the review team's significant consultation with the community in Alderney, which has given Health & Social Care valuable insights.'

Review authors: 'There remains a distrust with state of general practice in Alderney'

MANY concerns about the state of general practice in Alderney were raised with reviewers.

The University of Aberdeen Centre for Rural Health said in its report that it was clear there remained a distrust in the system.

Instability in general practice had left many feeling unsafe, with 21 residents saying in a survey that they had a lack of confidence in the current standards.

'The reviewers heard many concerns about the state of general practice, particularly the continued closure of the Eagle Medical Practice as well as the high turnover of doctors and concerns about the quality of care offered at the

Island Medical Centre,' the report said.

Reviewers said they had heard many examples of what would be considered unsatisfactory or risky professional practice and they had to decide whether to report specific concerns to the professionals themselves or to their regulators or managers.

Each example was considered carefully but none of the cases reported were serious enough to breach confidentiality.

The report's main author, Prof. Philip Wilson, said attracting high quality doctors to Alderney to stay was a way of avoiding 'dangerous' processes.

Dangerous processes could develop in small islands due to the turnover of doctors.

'We are concerned that arrangements at the time of our investigations in August 2016 had allowed dangerous processes to develop,' he said.

'We heard of several examples of poor quality care in our interviews and questionnaire responses, and we obtained evidence that a very high proportion of the population is dissatisfied with the quality of care (compared with England and Scotland, for example).'

'We have objective evidence that care was less than ideal: for example the high rate of prescribing

of tranquilliser drugs is worrying. Furthermore, restrictions have been placed upon the practice of one Alderney doctor by the General Medical Council.'

'We are particularly concerned that so many people said they were afraid to complain about the quality of care they received.'

'Despite all these concerns, we are very pleased to note that several steps have been taken to prevent some of these worrying aspects of care continuing.'

In particular, we think that the role of the HSC Medical Director Dr Peter Rabey has been exceptionally valuable in ensuring safe practice on the island.'

Seatbelt law

THE States of Alderney should consider making it law for islanders to wear seatbelts, a review has recommended. Authors said it was surprising that Alderney did not require the wearing of seatbelts, even by children.

'The reduction in death and serious harm relating to seat belt legislation in the UK is well-documented and it seems perverse that Alderney has not followed suit.'



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'Provide more care at Mignot Hospital'

THE structure and financing of general medical practice in Alderney needs to change, reviewers have said.

A report into Health and Social Care Need, Provision and Governance in Alderney recommends that the States of Alderney and Guernsey look at the options, working with practices and Alderney residents, before deciding on a future model.

However, reviewers said they believed a single-practice States-supported model - similar to the independent contractor model of general practice in the UK NHS - was the best way forward.

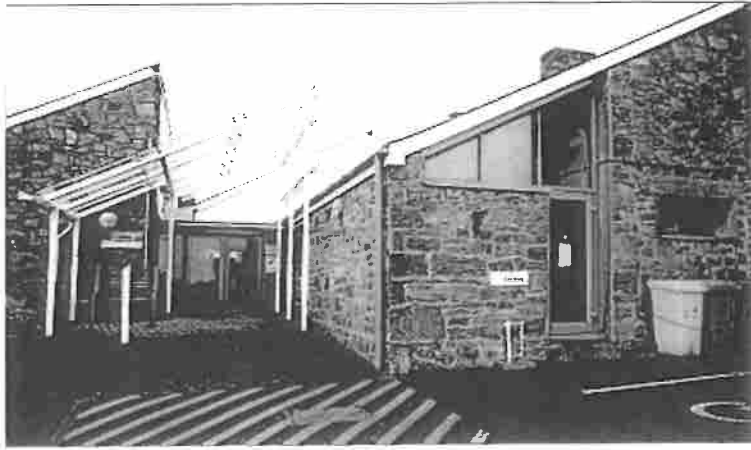
'[It] is most likely to meet the needs of the Alderney population in terms of quality, flexibility and affordability,' the review said.

Such a model would see a contractual relationship between the States and the practice, enabling the States to monitor the quality of care, the use of resources and population coverage.

It would also see a unified contract provision of primary care services and medical cover for the Mignot Memorial Hospital, but most of the administration burden would still be met by practice staff.

The reviewers said this approach could also provide more financial security for the doctors.

'Novel' approaches to care, such as video conferencing,



Alderney's Mignot Memorial Hospital. A report recommends that the States of Alderney and Guernsey look at changing the structure and finance of Alderney's general medical service.

(Picture by Adrian Miller, 17244682)

would be easier to implement.

The main author of the report, Prof. Philip Wilson, said it was unlikely that two GP practices could survive in Alderney in the long term.

However, it was important that the islanders had choice, so he believed that the island should have three GPs or two GPs and an advanced nurse practitioner.

More care should be provided at the Mignot Hospital, reviewers have also recommended.

That would include increasing the number of Guernsey consultant visits to Alderney.

'In situations where case-loads justify it, it would be more efficient for consultants to travel to Alderney than for patients to travel to Guernsey,' the review said.

It also said there should be an increased use of video conferencing and other digital technologies.

The skills of Alderney-based clinicians should be increased and general practice services should be provided by qualified GPs only or, in some circumstances, by suitably qualified advanced nurse practitioners.

Alderney GP should get full apology, says report

Independent reviewers say Health should say sorry and encourage Dr Rory Lyons to return to practise

by Anna Brehaut

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HEALTH should urgently engage in a mediation process with Dr Rory Lyons, reviewers have said, as they strongly criticised how the GP has been treated.

The independent review, by the Centre for Rural Health at the University of Aberdeen, said Dr Lyons, who was wrongly implicated in the death of four Alderney residents, had been unfairly treated by the former Health and Social Services Department.

Attempts by the States to apologise showed little public evidence of 'regret for any wrong decisions being taken'.

The report said the new Committee for Health & Social Care needed to make a full apology and that Dr Lyons should be encouraged to return to practise.

The reviewers consider, along with many Alderney res-

idents, that Dr Lyons suffered unfair and unreasonable treatment at the hands of HSSD in Guernsey,' the report said.

'This has led to distrust of health service management among many of the Alderney population and a sense of fear and injustice among many residents. We take the view that the initial complaint about his practice was inadequately investigated before a decision was made to refer the matter to the police and the GMC and this fact has not been acknowledged in any public statements.'

'Although there have been public apologies from HSC officials, these have focused on regret for the damage caused and positive changes to governance arrangements.'

'Not only did a more convinc-

ing apology need to be made from HSC, but two key individuals involved should offer their own personal apologies.'

Some steps had already been taken to try to encourage Dr Lyons to return to clinical practise but the reviewers said key principles needed to be adopted when doing so.

These included Dr Lyons' patients being treated on the same basis as those of the Island Medical Centre in terms of access to care by their own GP in the Mignot Memorial Hospital.

'Following the events in 2015, continuing provision of medical care by Dr Lyons has become financially untenable.'

'Measures should be taken to make this possible and to address the consequences of Eagle Medical Practice's partial closure.'

The report's main author, Prof. Philip Wilson, said chang-

es that already had been made to governance were going in the right direction. 'Our view is that previously governance has not worked well,' he said.

'Overzealous actions were carried out in relation to Dr Lyons - they were very unnecessarily speedy and could have been done better.'

'There are other examples where governance has been too strong in terms of disciplinary actions.'

Policy & Resources president Gavin St Pier said Prof. Wilson had presented his report to States members and included his view that HSC had made 'excellent progress' since the initial Good Governance Institute review into the Dr Lyons case.

'This acknowledgement is welcomed and offers a positive outlook on the future direction of health care provision for Alderney,' Deputy St Pier said.

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OPINION

Alderney service in need of help

AS AN exercise in taking the temperature of the people of Alderney, the University of Aberdeen independent report fulfils its remit. Trust for the health service, and Guernsey's health department in particular, is shown to be chronically poor and in need of immediate care.

The Rory Lyons episode has exposed a gulf in confidence and expectation which is much wider than the few miles between Guernsey and its northern cousin.

But that lack of trust is not just about the handling of one doctor. The report paints a worrying picture of overworked doctors and antiquated systems which was on its knees long before the police arrived on Dr Lyons' doorstep.

Where the report is less confident is in the course of treatment needed. The stories and perceptions of disgruntled patients and staff will only get you so far before there is a need to move on to innovative solutions supported by hard evidence of what works in other jurisdictions.

In that light the author recognises that this report is part of a process, not its conclusion. It takes the work of the Good Governance Institute, which laid bare how badly Dr Lyons had been treated, to the next stage.

Terms of reference set by the two governments made it clear that the people of Alderney had to be at its heart and the views of the community 'must be a key influencer of the outcome of the review'.

423 questionnaires and more than 100 interviews later the 'parlous state' of the island's health service has been identified.

What is needed now is to develop a system that puts to one side the personalities, grievances and history to look to the future.

Health & Social Care can use the Aberdeen report to inform that process. Evident disappointment at the review's reliance on hearsay and anecdotes must not be allowed to distract from that long-term goal.

And while many in Alderney rightly want help for Dr Lyons to put his professional and personal life back together that too cannot be an insurmountable obstacle to the principal aim of building a safe, efficient and caring health service fit for decades to come.

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Open Lines

Planet Peewee...



'That's been there since last June, get rid of it.'

The most anti-business government in the CI

THE pensioners and government employees that make up Chief Pleas are to be congratulated on the success of their campaign of 'commercial-cleansing' on Sark. They have successfully destroyed another commercial endeavour, Sark Vineyards. Most governments tax imports to encourage local businesses. Chief Pleas taxes exports in order to discourage local businesses. Their latest masterpiece, a tax on exports of alcohol, has so effectively discouraged the group that has spent millions of pounds setting up vineyards that they have now abandoned their investment, putting yet more people out of work. When the electricity company measured the number of vacant commercial properties this year, they reported an increase of almost 50%. The current Chief Pleas, the most anti-business government in the history of the Channel Islands, are likely to be able to celebrate a similar success when the company measures again next year.

When will Guernsey accept that Sark is part of the Bailiwick of Guernsey? When will the States intervene in Chief Pleas, an organisation that has become so toxic that they cannot even find 28 people to undertake what should be the most prestigious job on the island?

Name and address withheld.

Editor's comment: The relevant Sark committees did not comment.

Chief Pleas doesn't care

WHILE Chief Pleas may be sad about any job losses that occur now SVL has announced it is to close, it's poignant to note that is the only thing they are bothered about. They don't care about the loss of tourists and associated tourism businesses that fully productive vineyards and a winery could have brought to Sark, plus the impot that would have been raised on the sale on and off the island of the unique Sark wine.

As long as the fields that were planted to vines are returned to grass and the areas of scrub land return to their natural look, all will be well on Sark. Let's hope that nobody in the future ever has the cheek to think of something that would put Sark on the world stage. RIP Sark.

GAIL LE LIEVRE, Sark resident.

Editor's comment: The relevant Sark committees declined to comment.

What a waste of resources to renew licence

BECAUSE I insist on retaining my category C driving licence at my advanced age, I must renew it every year after presenting myself for a medical examination, so that my doctor can fill in the form certifying that I am still fit to drive.

Having already presented the doctor with a letter from the optician confirming that my eyesight was still adequate, I went to the surgery, had the examination, paid the £120 fee and agreed to return the next day to collect the completed form.

When I did so, I was told that my doctor had accidentally filled in a form relating to a different class of driving licence and that she would have to transfer the information to the correct form, which I could collect the following day.

Once I had the medical form, I used an application form for a driving licence that I had around the place and submitted both to the licensing authority, along with a very modest fee. In fact, the payment was rather too modest and I received a letter a few days later asking me to take along the correct fee but more importantly to fill in the correct form, because the one I had used was obsolete. I wasn't surprised that the form had been redesigned because one of the questions on the old one was ambiguous and could be answered 'yes' or 'no' equally truthfully.

I went down to Bulwer Avenue with the correct fee but as I was filling in the current application form I noticed that the ambiguous question was still the same as on the old form, as were all the other questions.

I only solved the 'spot the difference' puzzle when I realised that government reorganisation for greater efficiency had put the licensing authority in the Environment Department, as a result of which its name had changed slightly. Presumably the entire stock of forms bearing the old name had been dumped and replaced by ones printed with the new name, but I had made the egregious mistake of using one of the old forms. Normally it takes four or five days for

me to receive a new driving licence but a notice at the office informed me that, due to unusual demand, it could take up to two weeks for me to receive this one. Three weeks later my wife phoned the office to ask what had happened to my licence and was informed that it had been handed over to Guernsey Post for delivery a week earlier. When phoned, Guernsey Post promised to investigate and let us know the situation when we phoned back. When we next called, we were told

'In order to obtain a driving licence for one year, we have used more paper and petrol than we would normally get through in a week'

that my licence had not been delivered and that they could not find it, so would complete a letter admitting that my licence had been mislaid, which we could take to the authority so a duplicate one could be issued. My wife drove to Envoy House, collected the letter and took it to the

licensing authority, expecting to collect the replacement licence. On arrival at Bulwer Avenue, she was told that a replacement licence could not be issued until I completed a new application form. I then phoned the authority and suggested that, since I had already submitted two forms with the same information, they could perhaps prepare a new licence so my wife could collect it when she took along the third copy of the form. No, preparation of the licence could only start once the new form stating that my licence was lost had been received but the authority had agreed to waive the usual fee because of the circumstances leading to my need for a replacement. She then had to drive once more to Bulwer Avenue to take in the form and, because I needed the new licence by the end of the week and we could not now trust Guernsey Post to get it to me on time, she then had to return another day to collect the licence.

In order to obtain a driving licence for one year, we have used more paper and petrol than we would normally get through in a week. Aren't the bureaucrats of the Environment department doing a grand job showing us how easy it is to waste resources?

BARRIE PAIGE, La Haute Maison, GY6 8BP.