



ST HELENA LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

ORDER PAPER

**First Sitting
of the
Twelfth Meeting
of Legislative Council**

**Friday, 12th February 2016 at 10 am
in the Court House**

1. Formal Entry of the President

2. Prayers

3. Address by the President

4. Papers:-

- SP 01/16 St Helena National Trust 2014/15 Annual Report and Financial Statements
(Hon Financial Secretary)
- SP 02/16 St Helena Public Accounts Committee – Report to Legislative Council on the PAC Review of the St Helena Government Accounts 2012/13 and Audit Management Letter
(Hon Nigel Dollery)
- SP 03/16 St Helena Public Accounts Committee – Report to Legislative Council on the Formal Session of the Public Accounts Committee held on 11th November 2015
(Hon Nigel Dollery)
- SP 04/16 Government of St Helena, Procurement Regulations V1.3 November 2015
(Hon Financial Secretary)
- SP 05/16 St Helena Audit Service – St Helena Fisheries Corporation Report and Accounts for Financial Year Ended 31 March 2015
(Hon Financial Secretary)
- SP 06/16 St Helena Audit Service – Enterprise St Helena (ESH), Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2015
(Hon Financial Secretary)

- SP 07/16 St Helena Audit Service – Enterprise St Helena (ESH), Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2014
(Hon Financial Secretary)
- SP 08/16 A Bill for an Ordinance – First Supplementary Appropriation Bill, 2016
(Hon Financial Secretary)
- SP 09/16 Estimates of Recurrent Revenue, Expenditure and Capital Expenditure 2015/16
(Hon Financial Secretary)
- SP 10/16 Government of St Helena, Schedule of Special Warrants 2015/2016
(Hon Financial Secretary)
- SP 11/16 Report by the Deputy Speaker on her Investigation of a Complaint made by Mr Trevor Graham, Director of Environment & Natural Resources Directorate
(Hon Chief Secretary)

5. Questions:-

1. Hon Dr Corinda Essex to ask the Hon Chairman, Social and Community Development Committee:

Will the Hon Chairman, Social and Community Development Committee tell this House why the introduction of the Better Life Allowance has made some recipients slightly worse off than they were previously and when this situation will be rectified?

2. The Hon Dr. Corinda Essex to ask the Hon Chairman of the Public Health Committee:

Will the Hon Chairman of the Public Health Committee tell this House, the average number of hours per week each doctor (by post and not name) spends undertaking outpatient consultation?

3. The Hon Dr. Corinda Essex to ask the Hon Chief Secretary:

Will the Hon Chief Secretary tell this House what components, scheduled for implementation within the capital expenditure programme for 2015/16 are now unlikely to be achieved within the current fiscal year and explain the reasons for the slippage?

6. MOTIONS:

1. Hon Financial Secretary:

That the First Supplementary Appropriation Bill, 2016, be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council.

2. Hon Lawson Henry:

That this House resolves that immediate priority be given to improving the implementation of the Capital programme.

3. Hon Dr Corinda Essex:

That this House resolves that in order to safeguard vulnerable elderly persons and those with significant disabilities, urgent consideration should be given to utilising associated resources in order to improve their living conditions where necessary and in particular access to their homes.

4. Hon Derek Thomas:

That this House, as a matter of priority, cause an investigation to be carried out on the Comprehensive Development Area in Bottom Woods, to establish the cost of the associated infrastructure in order for this area to be made available for local house building.

5. Hon Nigel Dollery:

This House resolves, further to the practice of good governance, that the Reports of the Public Accounts Committee as contained in Sessional Paper 02/16, namely the Report to Legislative Council on the PAC Review of the St Helena Government Accounts 2012/13 and Audit Management Letter; and, Sessional Paper 03/16, namely the Report to Legislative Council on the Formal Session of the Public Accounts Committee held on 11th November 2015, are adopted by this Council and requests the responsible member of the Executive Council, in accordance with Section 69(9) of the Constitution of St Helena, to advise the Legislative Council of the action proposed to be taken in respect of these reports.

8. Adjournment Debate

QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN RESPONSE:

The Hon Dr. Corinda Essex

1. Will the Hon Financial Secretary tell this House what are the benefits of St Helena continuing to have its own currency?

Response:

I thank the Honourable Member for her question with regards to the benefits of keeping the St Helena Pound, in my response I have provided a brief overview of the main benefits.

- It's a significant source of revenue: Income from the fund has averaged £191,000 over the last seven years (2006/07 to 2012/13). Once costs have been deducted, of which the most significant are for printing notes, minting coins and investment management charges, the net income has averaged £99,000 a year.
- The transition to Sterling will be difficult to achieve and could be expensive, depending on the transition option chosen.
- Maintaining adequate supplies of Sterling could be difficult: If the in-flows of Sterling brought by tourists is not adequate to maintain currency supplies, additional supplies will need to be brought in, which is very expensive. It depends not just on the number of tourists who come, but where they come from and the extent to which they bring cash or use payment cards.
- A source of 'free' money: When a note is irretrievably lost in some way, accidentally destroyed, effectively the Currency Fund gets to keep the Sterling that backs that note. Similarly, those who have bought commemorative coins or those collecting pristine notes, are unlikely to ever want to cash them in, even if the St Helena Pound is abolished. So, a certain amount of the value of the Currency Fund is effectively free money and could be drawn down from the Fund.
- In most countries, having its own currency is a source of pride: This was part of the rationale for introducing the St Helena Pound. We would need to consult with the public to understand if this is still the case generally. It would be impossible to quantify, but is a relevant consideration. It also brings a level of 'unique' experience to the island for tourists. Having, what is probably one of the smallest currencies in the world is a further selling point and should not be undervalued.

The Hon Dr. Corinda Essex

2. Will the Hon Chief Secretary tell this House, the current state of play regarding the finalisation of an updated Disaster Management Plan for St Helena and associated Evacuation Plans for both Jamestown and Rupert's Valley?

Response:

The Island Major Incident Response Plan (MIRP) was initially put in place in November 2014 and exercised during December 2014. During 2015 a number of reviews and amendments were carried out with the final updated version produced in September 2015. Also in 2015, the following Risk Specific plans were added to the main plan:

- Infectious Communicable Diseases Plan
- Maritime Emergency Plan
- Rockfall Emergency Plan
- Hospital Major Incident Response Plan.

Under the guidance of the St Helena Resilience Forum the Island Risk Register Identifies and prioritises Specific Risks and necessary mitigating action plans.

The need for evacuation plans for Jamestown and Ruperts Valley have been highlighted in the Risk Register, initially due to the risk of a Tsunami, Rockfalls and the Hazardous Industry present in Ruperts Valley.

The risk of a Tsunami has now been dismissed after investigations carried out into the risk were undertaken by the South Atlantic Seismic Activities. However, the other risks still remain although the new BFI is not yet functional.

The Resilience Forum decided that all Emergency Plans and Exercises relating to the Airport and its opening were to be given priority and consequently mainstream work was in this area.

The Evacuation plans for Ruperts and Jamestown are still to be completed

The Hon Dr Corinda Essex

3. Will the Hon Chairman of the Economic Development Committee tell this House what actions are being taken to ensure that the closure of Argos Helanta does not jeopardise the supply of fish to local consumers?

Response:

Argos Atlantic Cold Stores Ltd did not renew their agreement with the St. Helena Government and notice was given that they would cease operations on 31 October 2015.

As a result, SHG hired the services of Nautilus Consultants in September 2015. The purpose of this consultancy was to advise the government on the options open to it for the future development of the **facility** as a whole. The preferred development option for the Cold Store outlined in the Coldstore Consultancy Report which was presented to and supported by the Cold Store Working Group, the Board of SHFC and Legislative Council back in October 2015 included the following:

“to bring the cold store operation back under the management of the SHFC for a 2 year period, combining and streamlining workforces to better reflect the commercial, profit-oriented focus of the combined business, and then re-examination of the transfer of the business to full or part-private operation in the latter half of 2017, with a preference given to buy-in from island-based investors”

One of the recommendations proposed a move away from the current model of domestic sales through a single distribution contract with SHFC and instead open the local market to competition and this was implemented by SHFC from 1 January 2016. It remains illegal for anyone to sell catches other than to the SHFC, but any eligible trade entity will be able to buy fish at wholesale from SHFC. These trade entities will be free to retail fish at whatever price they deem appropriate.

Following adverts and radio interviews, there was response from some of the main retailers being Solomon's & Company retailing through the Star, HTH supermarket and their Silver Hill shop; Thorpe's through Tinkers and their Sandy Bay outlet, Rose and Crown through their Longwood supermarket and Chad's in Jamestown. There is one further entrepreneur who is currently working towards a mobile service in the country districts. Fish is also retailed through the SHFC cold store in Ruperts Valley.

In early January, there was a shortage of fresh fish so most of the outlets could only order frozen fish, if they wished to do so. Since the offshore vessels are operating once again, fresh fish is available on a regular basis.

The Hon Nigel Dollery

4. Will the Hon Financial Secretary please tell this House why it would not be appropriate to amend the Currency Fund Ordinance to require the audited accounts to be laid before Legislative Council as recommended by Public Accounts Committee in Sessional Paper 14/15?

Response:

I thank the Honourable Member for his question on the matter and see no reason as to why the Currency Fund Ordinance should not be amended to allow the Financial Statements to be laid before Legislative Council.