



DECEMBER 2025

# ST HELENA AMBASSADOR



## Editorial

*Katelyn Benjamin*

Welcome to the December edition of the St Helena Ambassador!

This month, the Public Service marked MHFAider Day for the first time, recognising the growing network of trained Mental Health First (MHF) Aiders supporting colleagues across government. With twenty MHFAiders now in place, and more training planned for the new year, the programme continues to strengthen awareness, confidence, and supportive conversations in the workplace.

The Open Oceans Fund celebrated another milestone as two islanders, Cerys Joshua and Isabella Scott completed their funded sailing placements on the Cape Town–St Helena–Cape Town voyage cycle. The initiative, delivered in partnership with SHG and Wavysail, continues to open opportunities for St Helenians to experience open-ocean sailing and build maritime skills.

Progress also continued on the EDIP road resurfacing project, which has now passed the halfway mark. With Phases 1–3 completed and work underway on Phase 4, more than 4.7km of the planned 9km has already been resurfaced. The Roads team remains on programme and will take a short break over the festive period before returning in January.

SHG launched its redesigned website, offering clearer navigation, improved accessibility, and new tools to support future digital services. The platform went live on 11 December, giving the public a more intuitive way to access information and engage with government online.

The Island also marked White Ribbon Day and the 16 Days of Activism, with the annual Activism March, a new locally designed White Ribbon logo, and community-wide engagement focused on challenging violence and discrimination in all forms.

Finally, Agriculture Show Day returned to Francis Plain for the first time in many years, reintroduced by Susan Knipe. District stalls, food vendors, football from 11am, a petting zoo, and GIS Day displays created a vibrant community event, with St Paul's winning Best District Stall and competitions celebrating local creativity and skill.

If you'd like to contribute a story to the St Helena Ambassador or have suggestions for future editions, please contact [katelyn.benjamin@sainthelena.gov.sh](mailto:katelyn.benjamin@sainthelena.gov.sh) or call 22470.

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## MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AIDER DAY

On 12 November 2025, we marked Mental Health First Aider (MHFA) Day, the first nationwide celebration of MHFAs in England. On St Helena we also marked this day in the Public Service for the first time, as we have partnered with MHFA England for our mental health training and resources. The first group was trained in May 2022 and the second in January 2023 by MHFA Practitioner Lisa Stone, who delivered the training on-island. We are now building the network with online delivery with a trusted trainer who has been delivering awareness training with the Public Service since 2021.

Our MHFAs have been trained to support colleagues who may be experiencing poor mental health. They can:

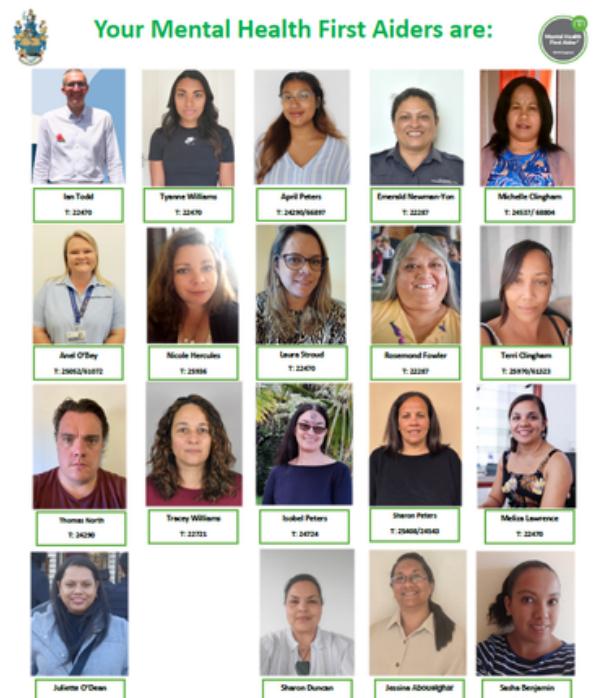
- Act as a point of contact to reassure colleagues in emotional distress or experiencing poor mental health;
- Listen non-judgementally and hold supportive conversations;
- Signpost colleagues to additional help;
- Identify the signs and symptoms for a range of mental health conditions.

The value of MHFA isn't just the two-day course. It's the conversations it sparks, the awareness it builds and the culture of support it helps organisations create.

The programme isn't the end point; it's a foundation and the start of the journey. When combined with strong organisational commitment (from leadership and refresher opportunities) it helps create workplaces where mental health conversations are normal, and support is meaningful.

We currently have twenty trained MHFAs, with two more cohorts being trained in the new year (we're pleased that more men have come forward). As MHFAs, we have a group agreement, which includes boundaries and responsibilities, which are underpinned by confidentiality. We understand that in a small community it is difficult to trust and be open, but our network has been through intense training, explored their own vulnerabilities and Frame of Reference. They are here to support you, non-judgementally and from a place of care.

The training we receive gives us the tools to offer support and prevent mental health issues from escalating. Let's work together to create a culture of support in the workplace and beyond.



There are different types of support available and a Mental Health First Aider can help you to access them. MHFAs are a point of contact if you, or someone you are concerned about is experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress. They are not therapists or counsellors, but they can listen, give you initial support and signpost you to appropriate help, if required. Your conversation with MHFAs is completely confidential. They will only ever disclose that you have spoken to them if they have concerns for your safety, or the safety of someone else.

If you have any questions about Mental Health First Aid please contact any of the MHFAs above - during working hours. Information is also available on the intranet, or from Laura Stroud, Central HR&OD on 22470 or email [laura.stroud@sthelena.gov.sh](mailto:laura.stroud@sthelena.gov.sh)

## OPEN OCEANS FUND HIGHLIGHTED SUCCESSFUL VOYAGE CYCLE

On Friday, 31 October 2025, the St Helena Open Oceans Fund marked another milestone in its mission to promote inclusive yachting and open-ocean experiences for the island community. Established through collaboration between the St Helena Government (SHG) and ocean adventure company Wavysail, the fund celebrated the departure of its latest grant recipients on the Cape Town–St Helena–Cape Town voyage cycle.

Two islanders were selected for this third cycle:

- Cerys Joshua travelled from Cape Town to Jamestown aboard Wavysail's yacht, experiencing the first leg of the journey.
- Isabella Scott joined the outbound voyage, sailing from Jamestown back to Cape Town.

The programme, which typically costs several thousand pounds, was fully funded for the recipients through the Open Oceans Fund, ensuring that cost was not a barrier for islanders seeking this unique adventure.



**Crew Members and Grant Recipient, Cerys Joshua in Cape Town, South Africa**

Both recipients expressed their gratitude to SHG and Wavysail, reflecting on the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to gain hands-on sailing experience, encounter wildlife at sea, and build confidence in ocean navigation. Their participation highlighted the fund's commitment to opening doors for St Helenians to engage with maritime heritage and adventure.

### About the Fund

Launched in 2023, the St Helena Open Oceans Fund built on the longstanding relationship between SHG and Wavysail, a frequent visitor to the island. Each grant provided a full placement on the yacht, along with the option of up to three nights' accommodation in Cape Town arranged by Wavysail.

The grant was open to residents of St Helena and members of the diaspora aged 18 and over. Applications for future voyages could be made either through self-nomination or by nominating someone who would benefit from the experience.



**Aurora Docked in Cape Town, South Africa**

# PROGRESS ON THE FCDO-FUNDED EDIP ROAD RESURFACING PROJECT

The FCDO-funded EDIP road resurfacing project began in early August and represents an important step in improving the island's primary road network. The programme covers 9 kilometres of resurfacing, delivered in a series of planned phases that allow work to move steadily across key routes.

Phase 1, covering Ladder Hill Road (1,150 metres), marked the start of the project. This was followed by Phase 2, which included the section from Ladder Hill to White Wall (2,025 metres) and Napoleon Street (180 metres). With these areas completed, the team moved on to Phase 3, resurfacing the 800-metre stretch from Gordon's Post to Hutt's Gate.



***Roads Team Working on Bottomwoods***

By the end of November, the project remained on schedule. A total of 4,730 metres had been resurfaced — just over half of the full 9,000-metre target. With Phases 1, 2, and 3 completed, work is now underway on Phase 4, the 2,406-metre section from Bottom Woods to Longwood Gate, where progress has reached 24%. Overall, the project stands at 52.5% completion.

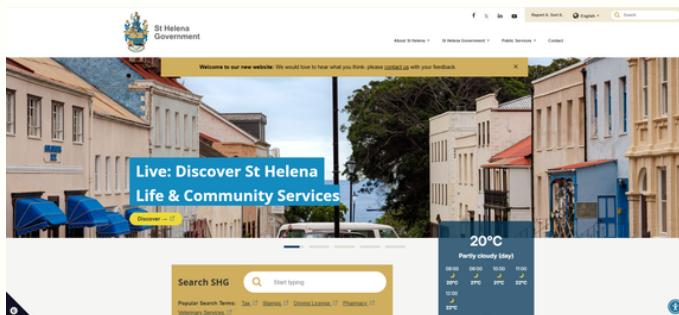
The remaining phases — Longwood Gate to Hutt's Gate (1,744 metres) and Side Path to Gordon's Post (695 metres), will follow as the programme continues into the new year.

After several months of continuous work, the team will take a well deserved block leave break from 22 December to 4 January, returning in the new year to continue delivering the remaining phases. This project is a significant investment in the island's transport infrastructure, supporting safer travel and improved connectivity for the community.

## SHG LAUNCHES ITS REDESIGNED WEBSITE

The St Helena Government has officially launched its redesigned website, following its go-live on Thursday, 11 December 2025. This upgrade represents an important step in strengthening the island's digital presence and improving how government information and services are accessed by the public. The redevelopment focused on improving the site's structure, navigation, accessibility, and overall user experience, while keeping the core content familiar. From the moment the new platform went live, users were able to explore a clearer and more intuitive layout, with the flexibility for content updates to continue smoothly over time.

The redesigned website introduces several improvements intended to help users find information more easily, including improved navigation, better accessibility across devices, enhanced search tools that allow filtering, and updated visuals that reflect SHG's identity and the island's culture. These changes aim to make the site more user-friendly for both the public and internal users.



The platform also lays the groundwork for future digital service delivery. Members of the public can now subscribe to official communications, with plans underway to introduce online payments for selected services. Users can submit available government forms directly through the website, with the long-term goal of moving all SHG forms to digital fill, sign, and submission. A realtime feedback tool has also been introduced, allowing users to submit comments, report issues, or provide feedback instantly.

The transition to the new website took place on Wednesday, 10 December 2025, during which brief periods of downtime occurred as expected. SHG appreciates the public's patience during this process and remains committed to ensuring a reliable and accessible online service.

The public is encouraged to explore the redesigned site at [www.sainthelena.gov.sh](http://www.sainthelena.gov.sh) and to share constructive feedback through established channels such as the Public Service Delivery Survey, Report It, Sort It, or by emailing the Communications Hub. The launch of the redesigned website marks a meaningful step in modernising how SHG communicates and delivers information, supporting a more accessible and responsive digital experience for the island.

# WHITE RIBBON DAY AND THE 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM ON ST HELENA

White Ribbon Day, observed each year on 25 November, is a global movement dedicated to ending violence and promoting respect and equality. This year on St Helena, the campaign broadened its focus to include all forms of violence and discrimination, including sexism, racism, bullying, and harmful gossip, issues that continue to affect individuals and the wider community. The Health and Social Care Portfolio supported the initiative and encouraged everyone on the island to stand together for a safer and more inclusive society. Wearing white became a simple but meaningful way for people to show solidarity and a shared commitment to ending abuse and discrimination in all its forms.

Violence and discrimination extend far beyond physical harm. They include attitudes and actions that undermine dignity and equality, whether through unwanted comments, prejudice, intimidation, or the spreading of rumours. These behaviours damage relationships, affect mental wellbeing, and weaken the fabric of community life. This year's campaign encouraged the public to reflect on these issues and to challenge harmful norms where they appear.

On Tuesday, 25 November 2025, the White Ribbon Working Group held the annual Activism March, beginning with a flag-raising ceremony at Police Headquarters before moving through Lower Jamestown and finishing at Castle Gardens for reflections. The march offered a moment for the island to come together and demonstrate that St Helena stands united against violence and discrimination.



**White Ribbon Day Attendees**

As part of this year's activities, a locally designed White Ribbon logo was launched, created by one of the joint winners of the St Helena Secondary School (SHSS) Logo Competition. The logo symbolised St Helena's commitment to promoting equality and ending violence. Staff and partners were encouraged to use it in their email signatures from 25 November to 12 December in support of the 16 Days of Activism.

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, an international campaign running from White Ribbon Day to Human Rights Day concluded on St Helena on 13 December, marking the end of a period dedicated to awareness, reflection, and community engagement.

The White Ribbon Working Group also invited individuals passionate about creating positive change to become White Ribbon Ambassadors. Ambassadors help promote respect and equality, speak out against violence and discrimination, and support awareness activities throughout the year. Those interested were encouraged to contact Nicole Hercules for more information.

Support remained available throughout the campaign and continues to be available for anyone affected by violence, discrimination, or in need of someone to talk to. Services include the Royal St Helena Police Service, Domestic Abuse Service Lead, Equality & Human Rights Commission, Mental Health Team, Children's Services, and the Samaritans, who offer free and confidential support at any time.

The 2025 White Ribbon campaign highlighted the importance of building a community grounded in respect, compassion, and equality values that strengthen St Helena and support the wellbeing of everyone who calls the island home



**White Ribbon Day Logo**

# AGRICULTURE SHOW DAY RETURNS TO FRANCIS PLAIN

Reintroduced by Susan Knipe, Agriculture Show Day returned to Francis Plain on 15 November 2025 after many years without a dedicated island-wide agricultural celebration. The event brought together growers, families, district representatives, and community groups under the theme “Love, Patience and Community.” The day opened with an address from the island’s Culture Champion, Councillor Dennis Leo, who reflected on St Helena’s long agricultural heritage. He spoke about the island’s earliest known farmer, Fernando Lopez, who planted fruit trees and tended livestock centuries ago, and noted how agricultural fairs were later encouraged by Governor Alexander Walker in the early 1800s to build “pride and self-reliance.” Denny highlighted that the show recognises everyone who contributes to the island’s food and craft traditions, from farmers and animal raisers to backyard gardeners, bakers, and artisans and reminded young people that agriculture holds opportunities for innovation and creativity.



*District Representation at Agriculture Show Day*

From late morning, the field was already active, with football at 11am providing entertainment for visitors. District stalls from St Paul’s, Half Tree Hollow, Alarm Forest, and Longwood showcased produce, crafts, and displays, with St Paul’s receiving the award for Best District Stall. Families gathered around the petting zoo, which featured pigs, sheep, goats, ducks, guinea pigs, and rabbits, a favourite for children throughout the day. Food vendors added to the atmosphere, with Melvins (Rock Club), Dan’s Bakery, New Horizons, and Solomons offering meals, snacks, and sweet treats. Alongside the agricultural activities, the GIS team marked GIS Day with a series of public displays, speaking with visitors about how GIS supports planning, environmental management, and emergency response on St Helena. They also highlighted how GIS work from St Helena has been recognised internationally, demonstrating the island’s growing contribution to global geospatial conversations. Competitions in horticulture, home baking, and arts and crafts celebrated the creativity and skill found across the island, with thanks extended to all district representatives and contributors who helped bring the event back to life. Agriculture Show Day’s return marked an important moment for the island; a celebration of heritage, community, and the shared values that continue to shape St Helena’s future.

SHG Comms Hub | 1st Floor, The Castle | Jamestown |

Tele: +290 22470

jamie.drabble@sainthelena.gov.sh | nicola.essex@sainthelena.gov.sh |  
 danni.thomas@sainthelena.gov.sh |katelyn.benjamin@sainthelena.gov.sh |  
 anne.dillon@sainthelena.gov.sh | tyanne.williams@sainthelena.gov.sh |

[www.sainthelena.gov.sh](http://www.sainthelena.gov.sh)