



**St Helena
Government**

ST HELENA GOVERNMENT

GOVERNMENT OF ST HELENA
PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
THURSDAY 6TH OCTOBER, 2022
FIRST SITTING OF THE EIGHTH MEETING

ST. HELENA
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

THE PRESIDENT

The Honourable Cyril Keith Gunnell

EX-OFFICIO MEMBER

The Honourable Acting Attorney General, Ms Aine Hurley

ELECTED MEMBERS

The Honourable Rosemary June Bargo
The Honourable Gillian Ann Brooks
The Honourable Mark Alan Brooks
The Honourable Ronald Arthur Coleman
The Honourable Jeffrey Robert Ellick
The Honourable Corinda Sebastiana Stuart Essex
The Honourable Martin Dave Henry
The Honourable Robert Charles Midwinter
The Honourable Christine Lilian Scipio
The Honourable Julie Dorne Thomas
The Honourable Karl Gavin Thrower
The Honourable Andrew James Turner

Clerk of Councils

Mrs Connie Johnson

PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, 6th October, 2022

The Council met at 10.00 am
in the Council Chamber

(The Honourable Speaker in the Chair)

ORDER OF THE DAY

1. **FORMAL ENTRY OF THE PRESIDENT**

2. **PRAYERS** (Father Ernest Fritz)

3. **ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT**

Good morning, Honourable Members, ladies and gentlemen, and all those listening to this live broadcast from the Council Chamber at the Castle, Jamestown of these proceedings of the first sitting of the eighth meeting of St. Helena Legislative Council since the Council was formed in 2021. Welcome. We welcome also His Excellency the Governor, Nigel Phillips KBE and our Chief Minister, the Honourable Julie Thomas back to the island. Both returned recently from the UK, having attended the state funeral of our late sovereign Queen Elizabeth the Second. Returning with them was the Honourable Councillor, Dr. Corinda Essex, who represented St. Helena at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, held in Halifax, Nova Scotia from the 20th to 26th of August and Councillor Karl Thrower, who was away for a short period. We welcome you, one and all. Honourable Members, this is the first occasion since the passing of the late Queen Elizabeth the Second that we have met formally. It is fitting, even though St Helena was represented at her late Majesty's state funeral and we sent messages of condolence, we still can take opportunity in this House to reflect publicly. Elizabeth the Second was Queen of the United Kingdom and other Commonwealth realms from 6th February 1952 until her death on 8th September 2022 at the age of 96 years. She was also head of the Commonwealth of which St. Helena is an integral part. Honourable Members, we are included in a membership of over 17,000 parliamentarians and parliamentary staff spread across more than 180 Parliaments and legislatures. In Cape Town, on the occasion of Her Majesty's 21st birthday, she declared in a radio broadcast to the then British Empire in a solemn act of dedication, to devote the whole of her life to our service; this she carried out with great wisdom and humility. She reigned supremely for over 70 years until her death, which was due to old age. The Queen's eldest son Charles III, succeeded his mother, he ascended

to the throne on 8th September 2022 having served an apprenticeship second to none. I will end here because I sense that others in this House may want to express similar sentiments later.

The business for this meeting comprises of seven Sessional Papers to be laid, 14 Questions to be answered orally, two Motions for debate and the Adjournment Debate. I extend grateful thanks to Father Ernest for Prayers, SMS for broadcasting these proceedings live and Mr. Patrick Young the bearer of the Mace. Our Deputy Speaker, Honourable Cathy Hopkins is listening,..... I said Hopkins again, didn't I, I'll start again then. Our Deputy Speaker, Honourable Cathy Cranfield is listening to these proceedings from home. I respect her reasons for not being here today and we all look forward to the time when she can work alongside of us in the Council Chamber. Now that an application for development and planning permission for wheelchair capable access and disabled toilets has been posted, this hopefully will happen sooner rather than later.

Honourable Members, there is a significant amount of business for us to deal with today and so we need to press on. I therefore call on the Clerk to announce the first item of business please

4. PAPERS

SP 37/2022 – The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development.

The Speaker –

Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Mark Brooks (Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development) –

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker I beg to present Sessional Paper 37/2022 entitled The Second Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2022/23 Bill, 2022.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 38/2022 - The Honourable Minister for Treasury Infrastructure and Sustainable Development.

The Speaker –

Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Mark Brooks (Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development) –

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 38/2022 entitled Second Supplementary Estimates 2020/2023.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 39/2022 - The Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs.

The Speaker -

Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs.

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick (Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs) -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 39/2022 - Prison Amendment Bill, 2022.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 40/2022 - The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development.

The Speaker –

Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development.

The Hon. Mark Brooks (Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development) –

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 40/2022 entitled St Helena National Trust - Annual Report and Financial Statements for year ending 31st of March 2020.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 41/2022 - The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development.

The Speaker –

Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development.

The Hon. Mark Brooks (Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development) –

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 41/2022 entitled Equality and Human Rights Commission - Annual Report 2021- 22.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 42/2022 - The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development.

The Speaker –

Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development.

The Hon. Mark Brooks (Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development) –

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 42/2022 entitled Equality and Human Rights Commission - Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2022.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 43/2022 – The Honourable Chief Minister.

The Speaker –
Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas (Chief Minister) -

Mr. Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 43/2022. Government of St. Helena, Proceedings of the Legislative Council, Friday 10th December 2021. First Sitting of the Second Meeting.

Ordered to lie on the table.

The Speaker –

Honourable Members, in accordance with Standing Order 2, Section 3 (a) I put the question that draft record of the proceedings of the Legislative Council held on Friday, 10th of December 2021, be confirmed.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker –

Next item of business, please?

5. QUESTIONS

Question No. 1 – The Honourable Robert Midwinter to ask the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development tell this Council, what preparations are being made by the St Helena Government for the island to host a Cape to St Helena yacht race again and when is this likely to take place?

The Speaker -

Thank you. Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Mark Brooks (Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development) -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for his question. Mr. Speaker, before I proceed, I would just like to take the opportunity to apologise in advance for any coughing or anything because just recently getting over COVID last week, we still have a bit of a cold lingering on, so I'd just like to apologize now in advance, Sir, in case there is any spluttering going on.

The Speaker -

No need to apologise I don't think. Perhaps I should apologise for not having actually caught it yet. I tested this morning and I was okay.

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

And just as I said that, now the cough starts.

The Speaker –

Proceed, please.

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

So, Mr. Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for his question and I'm pleased to say actually that the Cape to St Helena yacht race, formerly known as the Governor's Cup, is planned to begin at the end of December this year. We are expecting the race to begin around the 29th of December and we are expecting around some 18 yachts to compete. Mr. Speaker, bringing in hopefully some eighty odd sailors to the island along with some visiting supporters; we hope that number will be around 30, that has been indicated so far. So, it is expected that the first yacht will arrive in St. Helena waters around the 7th of January, and the remainder of the yachts will arrive on the following days after that. It is expected that, sorry, that the prize for the winning yacht is due to take place in Plantation House on Friday the 13th of January and I'd just like to thank the Governor for his support in allowing us to use what is also his home to host this event. The majority of the sailors is due to depart on the 14th of January and in terms of preparation, Mr. Speaker, the Sustainable Development team is working with some key stakeholders, including Airlink, the Mantis, St Helena Yacht Club, the Royal Cape Yacht Club, and St Helena Port Control and others in my Portfolio to ensure that there's a joined up approach to maximize the benefits of this yacht race. So, we are also planning to put on some social events for the competitors and spectators. We're also making preparations for allow fishing mooring space within our Harbour. The ferry has also been consulted to allow for peak demand so that there is the service there to take the sailors to and from the yachts and we will anticipate that there will be the toilet facilities in place at the seaside by this time. There are also plans to take some of the yacht's back on the MV Helena and we've been working with Andrew Weir to make sure that that can be accommodated. So we are also promoting the race and trying to use that promotion to bring awareness to the world that St Helena is open as a destination again, and we're utilizing our PR companies in South Africa and the UK to help us achieve this. It is hoped that the race will have a positive impact on the economy with having sailors and their supporters on the island, as well as some returning Saints around this time of year and it's expected with the extra 100 people that will visit during the yacht race we'll see in a region of £10k spent a day when you include all the accommodation, the tourists, the beverage and the food places, transport tours and activities that hopefully they will all take part in on the island. And so I also take this opportunity being as this is going out in public to invite anyone who has interest in offering in any of the services around Christmas time and January to contact the Tourist Office or should I say the Visitor Information Centre or a member of my Sustainable Development team and they can also give you a bit more about the events and stuff that is happening so if you want to plan something for that, you can. So I hope that has covered everything that is involved with the Cape to St Helena Yacht Race and like I said at the beginning, I'm glad that this is going ahead now this year. Thank you, Sir.

The Speaker –

Thank you Honourable Member. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I'd like to thank the Honourable Minister for his very detailed response because he has actually addressed most of my supplementary questions. Mr. Speaker, can the Honourable Minister say what budget has been allocated by SHG to support this race?

The Speaker –

Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for his supplementary question. No additional budget has been allocated for this race, What we have done is use the budget that is within the Sustainable Development team to allow for some of these events and organizing to take place, so it's all been covered within the budget that was approved earlier this year.

The Speaker –

Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

Mr. Speaker, that being the case, is the Honourable Minister able to give this House a commitment that when this has taken place, we will actually be able to see what the actual costs was of assisting this Race?

The Speaker –

Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for his supplementary question and just to undertake that, yes, we will try and sift out the expense for this yacht race within the budgets that, like I said it was will be used from, to give a indicative costing at the end of it, so, yes, we can do that. Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Robert midwinter? No? Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister explain why the Mantis is the only accommodation provider that has been approached directly with regard to the Yacht Race?

The Speaker –

Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Mr Speaker, I'm not aware that the Mantis was the only accommodation provider that was approached. I was under the impression that all companies and providers was approached. Obviously we don't have control over where any visitors book, but we did ensure that the Mantis would be open, nothing to do with the Yacht Race, but to do with our plans going forward under the Tourism Recovery Strategy.

The Speaker –

Thank you.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

May I rise on a point of information?

The Speaker –

Dr Corinda Essex, yes, please, go ahead.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

On a point of information, I accept what the Honourable Minister has explained now but in his initial response only made mention of the Mantis when he was outlining the various organizations and stakeholders that had been contacted. He did not make mention of any more, although in the end, he did refer to the need for wider participation, and my question was in response to the information provided by the Honourable Minister. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Minister, do you wish to respond?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Just to say, Sir, I think the Mantis was mentioned because we are working alongside the Mantis. I think the only reason why we haven't mentioned any other accommodation is because I think that information still needs to be collated, so I'd be happy to approach the Information Centre to see if others have shown interest and I can do some sort of numbering so that we know what accommodations is providing for how many people. It will also give us an indication of the numbers that is arriving too as, as I said, the 30 sailors was an estimate, sorry, the number of sailors and the number of visitors was an estimate, but if we can get confirmation from bookings, that would give us a bit more confirmation on how many people would be arriving. So, yes, I will, I will take on that piece of work, because that will also benefit us from the numbers that will be arriving and we can then translate that to the public. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Honourable Rosemary Bargo?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo –

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, will the Honourable Minister say if formal marketing will be relayed to the public and not just by his word today, here in the meeting today?

The Speaker –

Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Mr Speaker, may I just ask my Honourable Friend to explain her question a little bit more, so I can understand what she's trying to get out of this question.

The Speaker –

You may. Honourable Rosemary Bargo?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo –

Sure, I need to know if you, sorry, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm asking if, like, formal marketing of the race is going to be happening too so other accommodation providers or businesses, such as, you know, restaurants and things can make plans, and I declare my interest at this point?

The Speaker –

Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I'd like to thank my Honourable Friend for clearing up that and I'd like to say, yes, that we will, I think it's already started, the promotion of the yacht race, but we will endeavour to make sure that the message is getting out there even more as we run up to December's month. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Minister.

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo –

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Anybody else wish to speak on that? No? Next item of business please?

Question No. 2 – The Honourable Rosemary Bargo to ask the Honourable Chief Minister.

The Speaker –

Honourable Rosemary Bargo?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo –

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Honourable Chief Minister tell this House how the attainment levels of boys and girls have compared over the last five years with regards to GCSE results?

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas (Chief Minister) -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think all the listening public will know that quite a few of us in here are struggling with coughs and colds and all the rest of it, but we are recovering. So I'd like to try my utmost to answer my colleague's question, it is a bit about numbers and percentages here, so I will try and go slowly, but I would suggest because of the type of information it might be good to have it printed as well so that it's easier to read. So, all students in Key Stage Four and Five undertake their GCSEs at the end of the schooling in Year 11 in Prince Andrew School. The compulsory subjects studied are in the core subjects of English, Maths and Science. Other subjects studied are as per the individual student's options. Currently gender attainment is reported on the core subjects of English and Math.

In 2017, Year 11, comprised of 42 students, 22 boys and 20 Girls. 45%, that is nineteen students, 6 boys and 13 Girls achieved five A star to C grades or 4 to 9, including English and Math because now that is done in numbers. This equates to 27% of boys and 65% of girls achieving that attainment. In Mathematics alone, 55% of students achieved 4 to 9 grades, 45% of those students were boys and 65% Girls. In English, 57% of the students gained A to C grades, 32% were boys and 85% Girls, so in that particular year, the girls attained higher than the boys in both English and Maths.

In 2018, Year 11 comprised of 35 students, 17 boys and 18 Girls. 37% of the students, that's 13 students, five boys and eight girls achieved five A star to C grades or 4 to 9 including English and Maths. This equates to 29% of boys and 44% of girls. In Mathematics, 37% of students achieved 4 to 9 grades, 35% were boys and 39% were girls. In English, 46% of the students gained A to C grades and of that 46%, 41% was boys and 50% were girls. So, in 2018, the girls attained slightly higher than the boys in both English and Maths.

In 2019, Year 11 comprised 28 Students, 16 Boys and 12 Girls. 43%, that is 12 students, six boys and six girls achieved five A star to C or 4 to 9 including English and Maths and this equated to 38% Boys and 50% Girls. In Mathematics alone, 50% of the students achieved 4 to 9 grades, 50% was boys and 50% were girls. In English, 54% of students gained A star to C grades, 44% was boys and 67% were girls. So in this year, there is a balance of attainment in Maths, but the girls attained better in English.

In 2020, Year 11 comprised 35 Students, 11 Boys and 24 Girls. 51%, that is 18 students, which equated 6 boys, 12 Girls, achieved five A star to C or 4 to 9 including English and Maths and this equated to 55% Boys compared with 50% Girls. In Mathematics, 60%, 21 students achieved 4 to 9 grades and this equated to 72% being boys and 54% being girls and in English 74% gained A star to C grades, 64% were boys and 79% were girls. Also for the statistic for Year 2020 the boys attained better than the girls in Maths but not in English.

And the final year in 2021, Year 11 comprised 38 Students, 20 Boys and 18 Girls. Note that three student girls were exempted from examinations. 60%, that is 23 Students, 12 Boys and 11 Girls achieved five A star to C or 4 to 9 which is the English and Maths and this equated to 60% that is 12 Boys and 61% of girls which was 11 girls achieving this and in Maths 71% which is 27 students achieved the 4 to 9 grades and this equated to 75% being boys and 67% being girls and in English 71%, that is 27 students achieved A star or C grades. This equated to 70% being boys and 72% being girls, so for 2021 there is a general balance between the attainment of boys and girls.

In summary, it can be seen from the earlier years in 2017 and 2018, the girls were attaining higher than the boys in both English and Maths. However, there appears to be a change in that trend in 2019 and 2020, with the boys attaining better in Maths than the girls, and then our results from last year indicate a general balance between the attainment of boys and girls. The results for 2022 have yet to be analysed in detail, but it will be interesting to see if this trend continues. For, I think, a

member of St Helena's community, the greatest thing for me whenever I walk into Prince Andrew School actually, is the dwindling numbers of students in a Year 11 compared to when we were going to school and the numbers that were there, I see a smile on Mrs Essex face, because I can tell our numbers were extremely high compared to these but we are attaining. I hope Councillor Bargo that will help with your answer.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Councillor Bargo?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo–

Yes, I thank the Chief Minister for her answer. Thank you very much.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Honourable Gillian Brooks –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Thank you, Chief Minister, that was a really detailed account, I just want to make sure and check something. I'm sure you said that in 2019 to 2020, there was sort of a balance, more of a balance and a shift between the boys and girls so they sort of came up a bit, was that due to anything different in the curriculum or any specific, just a simple....okay.

The Speaker –

Please answer.

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

I thank the Honourable Gillian Brooks for the question, so just to confirm, yes, there is a more, more of a balance happening now. There's been no change, all I can say is that we've got boys and girls who are eager to learn now and it's becoming a more balanced result. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

No, I just want to thank the Chief Minister for her answer and just to say that is really pleasing to hear.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Honourable Rosemary Bargo, do you wish for a report in writing as is offered to you?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, yes, I believe we all would like that. Thank you, Chief Minister.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Honourable Chief Minister has said, yes, she would be glad to do that. Alright, thanks very much. Anybody else on that question? Just prior to the proceeding starting, I was asked to consider whether people can take their jackets off, but some people are still recovering from the COVID and some people haven't had it, myself, I haven't had it, but the offer is there if you wish to remove your jackets then please go ahead and do so whenever you want to do so. Thank you very much. Next question, please?

Question No. 3 - The Honourable Ronald Coleman to ask the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development.

The Speaker –

Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development make a statement to this House on what work has been done to put in place a program for the construction of much needed Government Landlord Housing?

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development.

The Hon. Mark Brooks (Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development) -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for his question. Before I talk about what we have in place as a program, I would just like to give you some right up to date stats. So, the number of households on the Housing Register for Government Landlord Housing as of the 16th of September was 10, but this figure changes almost daily so it's hard to estimate or give you right up to date figures as these things, like I said, it can change almost on a daily occasion. But out of this number that was assessed on the 16th of September, one household was in need, was in need of, was deemed as to be high on the priority list, three was deemed to be medium, and six was deemed to be low. So, in addressing the need for a home, we employ a number of approaches, which include ensuring that our existing stock is used to its full potential. We are aware that with changing family circumstances, some Government Landlord housing is under occupied and that's because people move in and out also of Government Landlord housing, especially when it's a family house. It's also some tenants who may be able to purchase their own home. So they leave obviously, when they are able to do that. We are also taking steps to address in the future, for example, tenancy audits, contacting tenants to see if they would like to or are able to move and reviewing the rent policy for 2023 to reflect the size of the home, and homes are allocated to those with the greatest need and we aim to turn around any empty homes in quick time to reduce the waiting lists. So to sum that up, there is a bit of a juggling going on, almost on a daily basis to try and get the Government Landlord houses used in the most, sort of, suitable way and to use to their full potential.

Let us talk about what we are planning to do. So, in terms of constructing new homes, any program to build new homes is very much dependent on the availability of funds. I have said this before in the house, Mr. Speaker, nothing has changed since then. That is the main problem. The only fund that is currently available to Government Landlord is the Government Landlord Housing capital

fund, set up under the Special Fund Ordinance 2012. This fund is set up to finance the construction or purchase or make major renovations to social housing, so basically to take care of all the needs of social housing. Under the previous Government, a commitment was made to develop Government Landlord housing on a comprehensive area in Bottom Woods, the CDA. So on that we built two bedroom, two, two bedroom houses and, yeah, so we've built two two bedroom houses, these houses was built in a way that would take care of some of these needs well into the future, so they have disabled access, they also have quite a bit of space, so if you think of a footprint of a three bedroom house, these two bedroom houses that we actually built is around the same size and that is to allow for someone to live in there well into their old age that might need facilities like?.... stuff, so we build them with that aim that they will take care of from families of two bedroom families right through to when you start to get older.

So what's next then? So on that site, well actually, I, first, what I should say is what remains in the capital fund is £286,000 and with that amount, based on what the market value is for building a house, that will only build you three homes, but our next plan is to build a block of four single flats in the same development area, because we assessed that our needs is more for single flats going forward than houses, like I said, we've already built two houses there.

So finally, although there remains a few Government Landlord houses going through the process of being sold, I have taken my Office's advice and I agree with them to stop the sale of any further government landlord houses until such time that we can have an assessment of the stock. So, to sum it up, the houses that we are selling for the cost that we are getting does not provide for the building of the new home. So we're basically selling more than we can replace. So we need to just pause, I think, and also my Office's thing so that we can re assess the stock and then try and build in a way that will meet the demands of the future. And that's all I would say for now, Mr. Speaker, but there is plans and I hope that soon when the Housing Strategy and that which we are currently working on is complete, it will give some sort of assurance of the plan going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Minister. Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can I just ask if the 10 people on the waiting list include the single people now being housed in multiple shared accommodations to avoid homelessness?

The Speaker -

Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Mr. Speaker, I don't get that level of detail. I get numbers, but I don't get individual circumstances. So I'm sorry, I'm not able to answer that question here today. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Can the Minister get that information to us? Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker -
Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –
Mr. Speaker, yes, I would just give my Honourable Friend assurance that I will get this information that he requires. Thank you.

The Speaker –
Thank you for that. Honourable Rosemary Bargo?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo –
Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister provide this Council with a specific timeframe for the completion of the flats please?

The Speaker -
Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -
Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for her question. I don't have that detail here with me today, but I can get an estimate of the timeframe and provide that to this House. Thank you.

The Speaker -
Thank you, Honourable Rosie Bargo?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo –
Thank you. Thank you, Minister.

The Speaker -
Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –
Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can I just ask the Minister if he knows how many Government Landlord Houses is now standing vacant?

The Speaker –
Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –
Sorry, Mr. Speaker, to disappoint my Honourable Friend again with his question, but I'll have to have this information supplied to you; I don't have the actual detail. As I said, it changes on a daily basis, so to give him the right number I will have to check this with the housing agency. Thank you, sir.

The Speaker –

Thank you Honourable Member. Honourable Dr. Corinda. Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the Honourable Minister provides the information promised to Councillor Bargo, can he also indicate why there's been a delay in starting the construction of the four flat unit, because this was something that was, in fact, approved in principle over a year ago. Thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Yes, I can get a detailed answer on why the delay has occurred, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Minister. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex first?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Going back to the numbers on the waiting list, can the Honourable Minister confirm whether those who are currently being housed in temporary rented accommodation are also on the waiting list or whether, in fact, these are not being taken into account?

The Speaker -

Thank you. Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Mr Speaker, I do appreciate there's been a lot of questions on this and asking for some detailed information. Unfortunately, the Housing Officer who would have this information to hand is not here, he's, I actually think he's still off with COVID, but as soon as he's back I can, if Dr. Essex would like to send those questions to me, I can go back to the Housing Officer and get those answers. So I do apologize, Mr. Speaker, but I don't have those details because the information changes every day and so I would have to get that information when I have time to speak to the Housing Officer.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member. They are relevant questions. Councillor Dr. Corinda Essex, did you have your light on? No? I think it was Honourable Karl Thrower?

The Speaker -

The Honourable Karl Thrower?

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Honourable Minister be able to clarify whether they're still looking at working closely with the private sector to provide GLA housing in the future?

The Speaker –
Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for his question. Yes, in the CDAs, we are still working with the private sector. Bunkers Hill is being undertaken by a private sector developer and we're hoping that the four block of flats, next Government Landlord Development, will be done by the private sector as well, so, yes.

The Speaker –
Thank you, Honourable Minister. Next question, please?

Question No. 4 - The Honourable Gillian Brooks to ask the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care.

The Speaker –
Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care tell this Council what level of interest has been received to date in relation to the tender for a new medical service provider overseas?

The Speaker –
Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care?

The Hon. Martin Henry (Minister for Health and Social Care) –

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you to the Honourable Member and I will apologize in advance for my short answer to this question in particular. The tender process continues and the Portfolio, with the support of Procurement, are in the process of short listing and asking a further round of questions in line with the procurement process within the allocated timeframe of completing within this financial year. Unfortunately, this is a live process and no further information can be shared at this time. However, Members will be given an update by myself as soon as is practical to do so.

The Speaker –
Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's fine if the Minister can't indulge any more information at the moment.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Any further supplementary questions? No? Next question then, please?

Question No. 5 - The Honourable Dr. Corinda Essex to ask the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development.

The Speaker –

Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister of Health and Social Care for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development tell this House what action is being taken or will be taken in order to improve getting air freight to St Helena in a timely and efficient manner?

The Speaker -

Thank you. Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Mark Brooks (Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development) -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I'd like to thank my Honourable Member for her question. So, since the end of the Titan Airways Service to St Helena and the re-introduction of Airlink flights on a bi weekly basis, St Helena has faced significant disruption to air freight service in South Africa. I've stated that before, obviously everybody knows that, people are having problems. Mr. Speaker, the primary cause for this disruption is because of the limited tonnage available on each flight, particularly from sort of mid-July, when after the service started again and numbers of passengers start to build up. There has been some difficulties. Full aircraft is limited by a certain weight and space for the freight on the aircraft is also limited and the priority would be the passengers and the passengers' baggage. This has resulted because of the increased number of passengers in an over subscription of air freight, and has caused some goods to be left behind in South Africa. So, we have tried and we have made attempts to alleviate some of these issues. The Civil Aviation team have been advising stakeholders, including freight forward agencies and importers, to appropriate package and label for freight to ensure that it has the highest chance of being shipped, so they are working with them, they are telling them about the sizes and extra to try and get these packages on the plane. They've also, obviously been trying to work with some of the importers about using alternative ways, including the MV Helena in this period of high disruption. While there has been some improvement in recent weeks, we do not anticipate the backlog of air freight to be completely cleared until we start back with a weekly air service and I'm pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that that is now only a few weeks away. So we'll just have to see if a weekly flight, again, it all depends on the number of passengers booked on that flight, but obviously having a more frequent flight, we would hope that there'll be more space for freight, and then we can try and clear some of the backlog. So I'd like to thank Dr Essex for her question and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Minister. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

I thank the Honourable Minister for his response, but if, indeed, the backlog continues, even after the introduction of weekly flights, has any thought been given to the possibility of actually sending that backlog from Johannesburg to Cape Town to be loaded onto the MV Helena if it is non urgent in nature?

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. . Honourable Minister, response please?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank Dr Essex for her question. And yes, I think I didn't mention it within my response to your initial question that Aviation team has been trying to work with importers to try and get some of the cargo moved to the shipping arrangements with Andrew Weir. I think, also I can say that, from my Portfolio side, we have inquired with Airlink, about putting on a actual flight to bring in the backlog of cargo. However, what this actually means or transpires into the cost of the freight, I think it outweighs the, how should I say, the need to put it on because it will cost so much that it's not going to be viable. So not saying we have ruled it out, but we are so close to go into a weekly flight, we are hoping that that will alleviate some of the problems before we take the next steps. If it don't, then obviously we need to start thinking of other alternative ways of getting that cargo in. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Minister. Next question, please?

Question No 6 – The Honourable Rosemary Bargo to ask the Honourable Chief Minister.

The Speaker -

The Honourable Rosemary Bargo?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo –

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Honourable Chief Minister tell this Council if there are any plans Education have for reinstating School Attendance Officers?

The Speaker –

Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas (Chief Minister) -

Thank you Mr. Speaker and I thank the Honourable Bargo for her question. As far as the records in Education show, there has never been an appointment of designated School Attendance Officers. A long while ago, the checking of school registers and attendance was carried out by officers employed by the then Social Services. When the Education Ordinance was reviewed in 2008, provision was made for the appointment of Attendance Officers by the Governor, but this was not and has not been auctioned. Responsibility for the monitoring of attendance in schools currently rests with the Head teacher. However, we recognize that there is a growing need for School Attendance Officers to carry out the functions as described in the Education School Attendance Regulations 2009, section 73. As a result of this, the Portfolio will now be proactively seeking to address this and ensure the duties of a School Attendance Officer can be carried out as per the

Education Ordinance 2008. So the extract from the Education Ordinance, “an Attendance Officer. The Governor must appoint such number of School Attendance Officers, as are necessary or desirable for the performance of the duties of such Officers prescribed by this Ordinance; and 13 (2) the functions of Attendance Officers are as prescribed in this part, or by regulations made under this Ordinance.” And when we look at section 73, the functions of the Attendance Officers are described as follows: the functions of Attendance Officers appointed under Section 32 of the Ordinance are in addition to the functions prescribed by Part five of the Ordinance, which is to receive and investigate any report that a child of compulsory school age has, without reasonable excuse failed to attend school, as required, by that part all of these regulations, and, (b) to receive and investigate any report that a child of compulsory school age has been employed during school hours, in contravention of Section 63 of the Ordinance to report to the Director in writing the results of such investigations, and with the approval of the Director to take appropriate action, including legal proceedings against any person who appears to the Officer to have contravened Part five of the Ordinance. In a nutshell, also, I think you would probably find it very useful to know that we are looking at our whole Education Ordinance, it’s going to be a tiresome job and a lot of work to be done, but this is something we’ve now started and we hope that a revised Ordinance can be brought to this House in early of the next financial year that we’re looking at, but there’s quite a number of things, this is just one of them and I can understand the need for looking at introducing Attendance Officers. Thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you. Thank you very much. Honourable Rosemary Bargo?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo -

Thank you, Chief Minister for that comprehensive response on that and it is very pleasing to see that you share, you know, our concerns as parents as well. And we look forward to the changes or policy changes to ensure that we get this on board. Thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas -

I think I just wanted to also add, as Councillor Bargo is also the Children's Champion, whilst we go through this process, obviously, we will be including yourself as well.

The Speaker -

Excellent. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Honourable Chief Minister state if there will be any budget implications to appointing School Attendance Officers?

The Speaker -

Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas -

Thank you, Dr Essex, for your question. Of course there will be, so that is something that needs to be considered, hence we're going through it now and that would be something we'd need to consider for our new financial year.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex -

Will the Honourable Chief Minister state whether it's envisaged that these posts would be full time or part time?

The Speaker -

Thank you. Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas -

Sorry, Mr. Speaker, for the delay. So at the moment, we're just having a look at this but we're wanting to see if it can be incorporated into the roles of our inclusion section.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Next question please?

Question No. 7 - The Honourable Gillian Brooks to ask the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development

The Speaker -

Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development tell this Council if Government will consider installing some appropriate lighting through the waterway which we know as The Run in Jamestown?

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Mark Brooks (Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development) -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for her question. So the Infrastructure Section, which sits under my Portfolio, is responsible for external lighting on Crown property on St. Helena. This consists of around 335 individual units made up of solar LED, mercury and some of the old conventional way that lighting used to work. There is some few words that describe that, but I don't think people would understand that anyway. Additionally, we also manage the Jacob's Ladder lighting and the festive lighting that is used mostly in Jamestown around the Christmas period. So what are we doing? We have been and we will continue to replace most of the high energy, mercury vapor, the other sorts of lighting to be replaced with solar or LED lighting to reduce the operational costs over the years that will follow. And the way we're

doing this, we're using a spend to save approach. So basically, we will spend the money we will replace the lights, in return that will give us a cheaper bill, because we're using cheaper means of lighting. And then with that money that we save with paying that bill, we go along and we replace even more lights. So it's an ongoing thing. But like I said, we need the money savings before we can buy the additional lighting. So this initiative also supports the Altogether Greener goal of the Island's Ten-Year Plan going forward, obviously replacing the old conventional lights with new solar or LED lights. And as we're replacing them, we also are replacing them that they will be dark skies compliant. And this also helps support our Vision for St Helena to be a more greener Island, of course, so not only saving money, but we're doing our bit for our environment as well. So what plans do we have going forward, and I think I've summed up what we're doing and that needs to be completed before we look at any additional lights. So we have, I can give you some figures actually, this is quite interesting, we have and for the public too, because it could help save their money if they replaced their own lights. So the savings that we generated from moving to a more energy or more greener solution, we are now actually, we have now actually reduced our energy bill from 47,000 pounds in 2018, that's when I think we had a full complement of old fashioned lights, to now, and I must add here that we haven't replaced all of them yet, but our bill now is 10,000 pounds. So you can see the amount of savings that we've made by changing the lights and that savings obviously pays for new lights. So, we're at the stage where we're doing all this, we're replacing all the old lights with new lights and until that program is finished, we won't take on any more additional lights, because we need to get our stock, or our lighting stock in order, up to scratch, in line with our Vision, in line with all the sustainable development goals and then we will start adding additional lighting. So, in short, in the immediate future, or in the short term future, there is no plans to put lighting down The Run, but in the long term future it might be, but we need to assess this once that we've finished replacing all the lights, so we've got a step approach. The first approach is to replace what we got, second approach is to look at where additional lighting is most needed. So I think that has, kind of, answered your question, I know it's not ideal, but it is something that we have planned in the long term. So, thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks -

Thank you. I just want to thank the Minister for the detail and good to know that we're going to go green, more green with our lighting. I understand there's probably not money right now for lighting through The Run, but I would like to hope that you continue to hold that because, Mr. Speaker, The Run is one of our heritage, part of our heritage in Jamestown albeit.....

The Speaker -

Are you turning this into a point of information now?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks -

No, just trying Mr Speaker.

The Speaker -

Which I'd like to hear about, but are you doing that?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks -

Yes, okay, Sir, just to say very quickly, it is part of our heritage, it's like 300 years old and I know in the grand scheme of things it probably isn't significant as such, but it is used daily, really regularly because it's got easy access to some homes and it's also a lot more level for people to walk, so I would just like the Minister to, if possible, keep that in mind in the future. Thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much, Honourable Minister. Yeah. I was just going to ask you myself, Honourable Minister, you were talking of course about other things other than The Run, but has any sort of observation been made as to see if there are any safety issues or whatever, with regards to The Run? I think this is what the questioner was asking about.

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Sorry, I'm not too sure. So let's go back to my Honourable Friend's question. Are you asking if there is?

The Speaker –

Look, she's asking for consideration to be given?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Yes, there will be consideration given, but like I said, first what we want to do is we want to use that savings to replace what we got. Once we've replaced that we got we will continue to see those savings, of course on a year to year for electricity costs, then with that savings, we will assess what we need doing. So yes, The Run will probably be part of that assessment, but we have to see what the priorities is, it might be that another area on the Island might deem a priority over The Run, I don't know that yet because we haven't undertaken that assessment yet, Mr. Speaker, but I can assure my Honourable Friend that, for me, personally, I think it's high up on the priority, because like she said, a lot of people do use The Run, I know in the day that's not an issue, but obviously in the evening can be an issue, but it is, the Run is not just as simple as putting in one extra light, you need to put in a number of lights to be able to light that safely. There's no point in doing half the job, it needs to be either from the beginning to the end, all lighted up so that it is safe enough to walk up and down. And that will take some substantial investment, so that's all I can say at this time, Sir. Thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member for that clarification. Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

No. I would just like to thank the Minister.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Honourable Karl Thrower?

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Honourable Minister just say, due to the enormous savings that they've seen with the external street lighting, whether there is now a serious consideration being given to SHG incorporating energy saving lighting in all SHG properties and wherever it actually has SHG lighting?

The Speaker -

I think the question is relevant, Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for his question. From the savings I've just read out, it will make perfect sense to do that, but you need to start with initial investment, so you need to have that money to replace the lights to see the savings. So I think the question is, do we have the initial investment to start there, and I'm not too sure. At this time, our plan is to replace what we have first before we go and start and that is in regards to street lighting. In regards to actual lighting within properties, I'll have to check what plans is in place for that. But like I said, I would imagine that we would need an additional, well, an initial funding to start the program of and that is probably going to be where the issue lies, Sir, so thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Next question, please?

Question No. 8 - The Honourable Robert Midwinter to ask the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care.

The Speaker -

Honourable Robert Midwinter.

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care tell this Council how many people have tested positive for COVID 19 in St Helena since the removal of quarantine restrictions, and if he will provide an update on the matter?

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care?

The Hon. Martin Henry (Minister for Health and Social Care) -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you to my Honourable Friend for asking the question. The total number of positive test results for COVID 19 As of Tuesday, the 4th of October stood at 1,730. A record number of positive results was recorded at the week beginning the 16th of September 2022, which stood at 879. In comparison, we have received a total of 64 positive results for the week beginning the 30th of September 2022. With the last two days recorded data, which was the 3rd and 4th of October, being at 9 and 10, respectively. As with a previous radio update on the 26th of September 2022 by the Health Director, it is likely that the number of people who have now had COVID-19 is estimated to be twice the recorded results, either from being asymptomatic or not reporting their positive results. Using this estimate, combined with the low number of current daily

positive test results, it is likely now that some 80 to 85% of the current population has already had COVID 19. Thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much, Honourable Member. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I thank the Honourable Minister for that very positive news. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister say whether or not any hospitalizations or deaths have occurred in St Helena as a result of removing quarantine restrictions?

The Speaker -

Thank you. Honourable Minister of Health and Social Care?

The Hon. Martin Henry -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to my Honourable Friend. So, from the outset, I will say that there have been no deaths because of COVID-19. There have been no hospital admissions for the treatment of COVID-19. There have been people admitted who have had COVID-19 or with COVID 19, but for the treatment of other short and long term illnesses.

The Speaker -

Thank you. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and again, I thank the Minister for that very positive response. Mr. Speaker, now that the Public Health are no longer testing for COVID 19 at the General Hospital, will consideration be given to issuing a revised recommendation relating to self-isolation?

The Speaker -

Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Martin Henry -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you to my Honourable Friend Not at this point, but we will update yourselves and the public as soon as this advice comes from the health professionals in the Health Department.

The Speaker -

Thank you. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and again, I just wish to thank the Minister for his response and, if I may, as a point of information place on record?

The Speaker -

Okay, go ahead.

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

I place my own appreciation for the work that has been done by the Portfolio over the past few weeks. I will be saying more in the Adjournment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Do you wish to respond at all, the Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Martin Henry –

Just to thank the Honourable Member for that point.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Next question, please?

Question No. 9 - The Honourable Ronald Coleman to ask the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development.

The Speaker -

Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development make a statement to confirm that the Fish Factory project completion date has passed, the Factory is now fit for purpose and will benefit the entire fishing industry as a result of the Government's investment of up to half a million pounds?

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Mark Brooks (Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development) -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for his question. The Fish Factory refurbishment project concluded at the end of August this year with all the necessary equipment installed to ensure that the factory is able to purchase fish and process it for sale on the local market as well as for export. The refurbishment has also removed a requirement for the fish processing to be subsidised by St Helena Government going forward. This should save the taxpayer around 350,000 pounds a year based on the subsidy figures for 2019. The benefits to the fishing industry of the Government investment will now depend on a number of factors going forward and this will include the global demand for fresh, frozen and value added tuna, the ability for St Helena's product to perform competitively in the global marketplace, Government and the industry's ability to monitor tuna stocks in our waters and secure appropriate scientific data, so that the island's total allowable catch can be increased within a sustainable limit, and export biomes can increase and, last, the fishing community working together to ensure a productive working relationship are established between the fishers, the processors, and the retailers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for his question.

The Speaker -

Thank you for the statement. Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can I just ask if the factory has now got its export licence?

The Speaker -

Thank you. Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for his question. And just to confirm that the Factory has an export licence, but not to, at this time, not to the EU countries, so they can export anywhere else, not just EU, but the Factory is working to ensure that that is included going forward and they are working with Public Health to ensure that the processes and everything is in place to allow it for export into EU countries. Thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman -

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Can I also ask if they've got the boat licence for an exploratory licence?

The Speaker -

Honourable Minister, are you able to answer that question?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to say that it is not my department, so I am not up to scratch on that, but I'm sure Minister Scipio will be happy to answer.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Honourable Minister Scipio?

The Hon. Christine Scipio (Minister for Agriculture, Natural Resources and Planning) -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can confirm that no exploratory licence has been issued because we are still waiting on details from the Saint Tuna Corporation.

The Speaker -

Thank you. Any further questions? Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman -

Just to thank the two Ministers. Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Honourable Minister confirm that there are now no limitations on the quantity of catch that can be handled by the factory?

The Speaker -

Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks (Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development) -

Mr. Speaker, there is limitations. The factory employs a certain amount of processors or workers, and they, to increase the input they would need to employ more workers, so I can't say whether, what that number is, but I can assure that is based on the capabilities of having the actual staff to process the throughput.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex -

I thank the Honourable Minister for his response, but presumably now that the blast freezer has been installed and so on, the capacity that can be handled is increased significantly to what it was prior to these upgrades, so I would be grateful if the Honourable Minister could, in fact, ascertain the throughput that can be handled on a normal day in the factory.

The Speaker -

Response, please, Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Yes, I can go and ask, but like I said, I think it is very much dependent on the number of staff that the factory currently employs, but I will ask if there is a limit, and what that limit would look like.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Honourable Rosemary Bargo?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Ministers say when is the licence to export to the European Union likely to be issued?

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Mr. Speaker, maybe I should just explain that part of this whole process is cross cutting between a number of portfolios, so although my portfolio kinda oversees the refurbishment of the factory, the requirement of the licenses and the Public Health to approve that is dealt with other departments, so I don't know if Minister Henry would like to add something here that could help with Councillor Bargo's question.

The Speaker -

It's a fair question asking when the EU would be able to be involved. Anyone has an answer to that question. Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care?

The Hon. Martin Henry (Minister for Health and Social Care) -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you, to my Honourable Friend. We cannot put a particular date on when this can be ascertained, however, there are a number of processes that we must go through. And if I could just quickly explain it, what it largely requires is a continuous what is considered as a wet run, so actually processing the fish through the factory and for our Public Health Officials to be able to see that process being done and ensuring that it is carried out to the standards required, so we are unable to just grant the licence based on what the factory looks like, it needs to comply with the HASAP considerations which is slightly different for the EU, and/or non EU countries. So once this data has been collected by my team, then we will be able to say if this licence can be obtained. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much, Honourable Member. Anyone, I see two fingers wanting to press the buzzer, Honourable Rosemary Bargo?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo -

I'd like to thank the Minister for this, but can I just say on a point of information?

The Speaker -

Yes, you may.

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo -

So just to say that, for this licence, it also depends on fishermen being able to bring more and more fish into the factory, which would be, you know, crucial to help our fishermen to be able to, you know, process more fish and get more money, so I think this is vital licence, you know, for this company.

The Speaker -

Thank you for that point of information. Any response to that or if not, then I see two lights going at the same time. Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can I just address a question to Minister Scipio?

The Speaker -

Well. Is there a question?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks -

It's in response.

The Speaker –

But because it is cross cutting, I suppose, you're looking at two Ministers or three Ministers at the same time.

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

It's in response to the answer, which was given to Councillor Coleman.

The Speaker –

Earlier on, okay.

The Hon. Gillian Brooks -

Just to ask what information has been rated on for that licence.

The Speaker –

Honourable Minister Scipio, please?

The Hon. Christine Scipio (Minister, Agriculture, Natural Resources and Planning) -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, as all elected members are aware, because I have shared that information, with all elected members of what the requirements are to be able to process it through ICCAT. So it will be basic details of the vessel, basic details as the name, the weight, the capacity and everything else, but what is important, and I don't know if listeners will be aware of it, because we have a marine protected area out there, we got conditions that are set, and we liaise with ICCAT in maintaining our marine protected area, category six. So what has been put on the table is a vessel to be flagged in a completely different country that is not in the category for ICCAT, so if we're not meeting the obligations of our ICCAT, then we can't entertain a particular vessel that is flagged in a different country. So what I'm saying about the details is that we are waiting on the details of a vessel that will be flagged in a country that meets the category of ICCAT. I hope that it's very clear for you to understand. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker -

Perfect. Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks -

I just would like to thank the Minister and I'm sure everybody enjoyed hearing about that. It was very informative. Thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And my question goes back to the EU, exporting to the EU and I'd just like to ask the Minister, he made reference to the fact that there is a need to observe the wet runs, what period of observation is required in order to fulfil that licence requirement?

The Speaker -

Understood. Thank you very much. Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Martin Henry (Minister for Health and Social Care) -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you to my Honourable Friend for asking Minister Brooks' follow up questions. Just to say that currently we're probably looking at a period of six months to continuously look, it will depend on the number of times that we can go and see this run, but we want to be able to issue this licence not only to STC in particular, but this factory belongs to SHG. We have invested a huge sum of money into it and from a general point of view, I would want our factory to be able to process fish for the entire world. Thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much Honourable Member. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

Yes, just, again, to thank the Honourable Minister for that response because I think that is really what Councillor Bargo was looking for was that indicated by.

The Speaker -

I assume so, yes. Thank you very much for that. If no further question, oh, yes. There appears to be a light there. Honourable Minister Brooks?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

I think I should just rise on a point of information as this question was raised to me.

The Speaker -

Yes, okay.

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

But it is very cross cutting. I mean, just to give assurance that all indications so far is that the factory refurbished works, the physical works that has been done will meet the standard of EU and non EU countries. So far, that is the indication back. Like Minister Henry say, until they actually go through the wet run, they might discover that something needs to be done, but so far, we are happy that the physical work, the actual work that's been done at the factory is to the standard that will allow for export into EU and non EU markets. So that is the part that needs ironing out, the actual physical work, no more needs to be done this time to allow that to happen.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much for that point of information. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, again, if I can ask you another question that is really about clarification, directly relating to the licensing of the vessel and registration with ICCAT?

The Speaker -

Okay.

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Can the Minister confirm whether or not the vessel that is proposed is currently registered with another regional fisheries management organization?

The Speaker -

Are you able to answer that question, Honourable Minister Scipio?

The Hon. Christine Scipio (Minister for Agriculture, Natural Resources and Planning) –

Thank you, Mr. Speaker., I would not have that detail is to say what particular vessels are registered with any other country, so I don't have that detail.

The Speaker -

Thank you. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Is the Minister able to find that information out, please?

The Speaker –

Minister Scipio?

The Hon. Christine Scipio –

Yes, Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Friend could tell me the detail of the vessel, the name of the vessel that he's referring to, then I can find that information out that you require?

The Speaker -

I think that's fair. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Christine Scipio –

Mr Speaker, he's referring to a vessel, aren't you?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Yes, I am, I thought there was reference made to the information that was required earlier relating to vessels, it's not new information from myself, it's from the parties bringing the vessel to St Helena, my understanding from the response given was actually that the vessel being proposed was not currently in a country flagged in a countryICCAT and ICCAT is one regional fisheries management organization. Other countries fall under other regional fisheries management organizations. So that is the clarification I'm asking, is that country where the vessel is flagged, which was mentioned, does that fall under another regional fisheries management organization?

The Speaker –

I take the point. Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Christine Scipio –

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just for clarity to let the listeners be aware, there has been mention of five vessels, so hence the reason I asked what particular vessel that he's referring to and my

Honourable Friend has made reference to a particular vessel, which I think he's talking about the MV Maiden, Iron Maiden, so I can follow that through.

The Speaker –

Right, we got to the bottom of that one. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development state who in fact inspected the works following the completion of the refurbishment and how he bases his statement that everything is being done satisfactorily?

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just checking clarification. I can't say, I was gonna say the person's name, because that's how I knew him, but their job title is the Senior Engineer for SHG has inspected it, along with an Electrical Engineer and a Plumber from our department, so they've been around, they've looked at the work that's been done and they find no issues. That is in a report that has been presented to the Project Board. The other areas are what Public Health inspected to do with the whole asset and processing lines, but those were our reporting expertise to say that the factory and the work, the physical work that has been done, they don't see any issues with it. Just to add that there was no actual structural work done, it was mainly cosmetic work, so, you know, it all depends on now the whole process with licensing and stuff like that, but, yes, no structural work was done to the building, it was just cosmetic work, everybody's who is involved has seen that and is happy with it. The Project Board, obviously we are not professionals in fish processing or anything like that, but we've been round, we've seen the work at each stage, and we've seen how it's been done and now we've got a reassurance from the professionals that it was done correctly. Thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Minister made reference to project completion a report, will that be shared with this House?

The Speaker -

Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Mr. Speaker, yes, I'll be happy to share that project report with the entire House. Thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you. Now, it seems like we're done. Next question please?

Question No. 10 – The Honourable Dr. Corinda Essex to ask the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care.

The Speaker -

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care, tell this House what is the current situation relating to the finalisation of the Tobacco legislation that was taken out for public consultation in 2020?

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care?

The Hon. Martin Henry (Minister for Health and Social Care) -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you Honourable Member Dr Essex for the question. The Control of Tobacco and Related Products Ordinance 2020 was passed by Legislative Council in 2020. A subsequent amendment was passed by Legislative Council in June 2021 and the supporting regulations were endorsed by ExCo in 2021. The Control of Tobacco and Related Products Ordinance 2020, along with the supporting regulations, will be implemented on St Helena through a phased approach, with the first components being implemented from January 2023. A communication strategy to inform the community and businesses about this implementation of the legislation is planned from November this year. From January 2023 to January 2024, some of the items that we will move forward on is the expansion of smoke free premises and vehicles, restrictions of the supply of tobacco or tobacco related products, restrictions on advertising, promoting and sponsorship of tobacco or related products, restrictions on the importation and sales of some tobacco related products and the introduction of a registered dealer program to import and sell tobacco and related products. In conjunction with this implementation, we will launch the stop smoking service in January 2023. The St Helena Stop Smoking Service will provide an evidence based program of support with sessions delivered by trained Stop Smoking Advisers, two Tobacco Control Specialists will be visiting St. Helena and the Health Service in November of this year to support the Island with this implementation of both the Tobacco Control legislation and the Stop Smoking Service. Six Health Care workers have already passed their Stop Smoking Practitioners training, which have been worked on with colleagues from the Office of Health and Improvements and Disparity in the UK, to further develop their skills and knowledge. The Health Promoter and myself have already made a soft launch on the 20th of September's In Scope programme on SAMS radio and a follow-up two page article by the Sentinel was produced on 22nd September respectively. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex -

I thank the Honourable Minister for his response, but would he kindly explain why there's been such a delay in actually implementing this legislation if all the necessary regulations were, in fact, passed in 2021?

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care?

The Hon. Martin Henry –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. So, I can only go back to when I started, which was just less than a year now and the Health Service at that particular time has been dealing with other major issues, including at the beginning staffing and then taking the Island through the COVID roadmap. We feel as a Service that it is now time that we move on on these other implementations which require the input from the public and also to be able to let businesses know what we are planning to do, so I do apologise for the delay from the Department itself, but it is in my opinion that this is the right time to start doing these other related things from Health.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Honourable Dr. Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Honourable Chairman state what the budget implications will be for actually starting to roll out this programme?

The Speaker –

Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Martin Henry –

The actual costs of the rollout of the Stop Smoking service, the nicotine patches etc. is in the region of £70,000..

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Any further questions? Honourable Andrew Turner?

The Hon. Andrew Turner -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister state whether it is intended to continue with moves to restrict vapes, which, just looking at the NHS websites, are currently being described as one of the most effective tools for quitting smoking?

The Speaker -

Response, Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Martin Henry –

I cannot make any further comments on vapes at the moment, I am dealing with the current Ordinance, but, however, with the current Ordinance, there is, there are, we are looking at restrictions to restrict flavoured vape products.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much for that information. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister say who is responsible for the enforcement of the tobacco legislation and just to clarify what I mean here, if an establishment were to not be in compliance with the legislation, who would the public report such a violation to?

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Martin Henry -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you to my Honourable Friend. We are currently in the process of working with the Police, Environmental Health and our own departments to look at how we can enforce some of these implementations, hence the reason that some of the ones that require this are further back on our lists, however, it is likely that it will be enforced by fixed penalty notices.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Honourable Robert Midwinter.

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

So, thank you, Mr. Speaker and just to confirm again, if a member of the public actually had a concern about a violation, who is their first point of contact within that group?

The Speaker -

Okay, I see where you're coming from. Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Martin Henry -

It is likely to be Environmental Health, but there will be other points of contact that we will make available to the public.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. If I may, sort of, just make a comment, who would have thought that it would take all this time because I am aware all of this started in 2012 and, sort of, 10 years later, we still haven't got to where they wanted to get to in 2012. Thank you very much. Next question, please.

Question No. 11 - The Honourable Rosemary Bargo to ask the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development.

The Speaker -

Honourable Rosemary Bargo?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development inform this House of the names and locations of the official playgrounds and play areas on St Helena?

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Mark Brooks (Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development) -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I'd like to thank my Honourable Friend for her question. So, the question was, you want to know the official grounds? The answer is there ain't many. So there's the upper public recreational ground. Sorry, under the Public Recreational Grounds Ordinance 1938, the upper half of the graveyard in Half Tree Hollow is one and Francis Plain is the next one, so those are the only two areas that's been declared as public recreational ground reserved for the use of children and young people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Rosie Bargo?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo –

Thank you. Will the Honourable Member say if there are plans to identify and formally recognize other areas that are commonly used as playgrounds?

The Speaker -

Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Mr Speaker, I'd like to thank my Honourable Friend for supplementary questions. First of all, I think just for the publics, also for the public's information, I'll name out some of those grounds. So the other areas that are used as play areas and have equipment on them will include Levelwood, New Ground, Longwood Green, SHAPE premises in Sandy Bay and Blue Hill. That's i, thank you, Dr Essex. Yes, so those are the areas and equipment at these areas was either donated or put there by the community. There was a community cleanup initiative carried out by Enterprise St Helena, I think a couple of years ago, and there was some funding allocated to New Horizons. However, funding is and was, before we came in, no longer available through New Horizons for these facilities. Some maintenance has been carried out by the local community, but that has been unfunded and has basically been a good community spirit to help clean up some of those areas. So why aren't we doing it anymore? It's simple; we don't have the necessary funds allocated within this budget to do it. Not to say that the House don't support that we could put some money into these areas, but at the current time we don't, we don't have the funds to do it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Rosie Bargo?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo -

Thank you, Minister, for your response. It is disappointing to hear we don't have the funds, but hopefully we can have a look at that going forward, Minister. Thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. If there are the other questions? Yes, Councillor or rather Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister say what process exists for adding or deleting playgrounds and play areas to the official list?

The Speaker -

Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for his question. The question relates to the process and I'm not too sure. All I can say is that over the years, there's the Duke of Edinburgh Recreational Grounds Order 20 1957, it was revoked in March 2016. So that's the only one that I've known that has changed over my lifespan, but I don't know how that come about, so I'm not sure of the process, Sir.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much, Honourable Member. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

I do have two more questions, Mr. Speaker, in relation to the Duke of Edinburgh playground, it was a point of information. There is still a notice up saying that it's a temporary closure by the relevant department.

The Speaker –

Yes. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

That's outside the Duke of Edinburgh playground as a temporary closure.

The Speaker –

Thank you for that information.

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

The question is, can you say who is responsible for maintaining those areas that still are included on the official list?

The Speaker -

Thank you very much, Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

So, thank you, Mr. Speaker and I'd like to thank the Honourable Member. So out the two that is designated as actual recreational grounds, the one in Francis Plain is maintained by Education, so Honourable Chief Minister within her Portfolio takes care of that ground. The other one doesn't

really get any maintenance, the one in Half Tree Hollow, so, yes, the only allocation for these grounds is through the educational budget. Thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you, Mr Speaker and I think that part addresses my next question, because can he say how much has been budgeted by SHD to support such maintenance?

The Speaker –

Minister? No? Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas (Chief Minister) -

Sorry, Mr. Speaker, yes, so I will speak on behalf of Francis Plain, which comes under Education. On an annual basis, about five and a half thousand pounds is allocated for maintenance.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Honourable Rosie Bargo?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo -

Mr. Speaker, can I just ask Minister Brooks just another question, because I'm not sure if I got the answer?

The Speaker =

If it's related just go ahead.

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo –

Yes. Are there any plans to identify other areas as playgrounds? I don't think I got that answer.

The Speaker –

Okay. Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Brooks?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

I think before I can make any commitment to identify, I think we need to identify the funding beforehand, because if we are going to bring more recreational areas under Government control or designated under Ordinance, we need to be able to maintain that. I think first we need to establish a budget before we go any further in bringing any more under the Ordinance as designated play areas.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Honourable Rosemary Bargo?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo -

Thank you, Minister.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and, again, if I can rise on a point of information to say that, firstly, thank you that from Education that there is budget allocated and how much that is, but to really express my concern that a play area that is listed, that is very well used in Half Tree Hollow by the children in Half Tree Hollow has no maintenance budget, and I find that very concerning from a Health and Safety perspective, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much for that information. Any other further questions? So if not, Minister Brooks, you mentioned that this, you want some information for the public. Just a second, for the public and just for my own edification, you also mentioned about there only being at Prince Andrew School is now a play area. The Ordinance was that there were two dedicated playgrounds, Duke of Edinburgh playground, and Prince Andrew School playground, so has it all changed now so that Prince Andrew School is now a play area, could you answer me that, please?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Mr. Speaker under the Recreational Grounds Order, Francis Plain has been dedicated as a Public Recreational Ground, reserved for the use of children and young people.

The Speaker –

So that's an amendment then that has been made along the way. Alright, thank you for that.

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Well, I would imagine so Sir, and I also like to add that the Duke of Edinburgh Recreational Ground was revoked in March 2016. So that is two changes that I know of, Sir.

The Speaker -

Now that is correct, yes. Thank you for that. Honourable Karl Thrower?

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Would the Honourable Minister undertake to do costings to provide some kind of play facilities in each district in time for the next budget?

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for his question. Yes, some work has already been done on this. However, finding how much it costs is one thing, but actually having the money to maintain that cost is another thing. So we kind of have some sort of indication what it will cost based on the work that was done in the past when New Horizons was maintaining the playgrounds, we know how much was allocated then, we assume that will be around a similar amount now, but we don't have the finances to do it, so that is the issue.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Honourable Chief Minister.

The Hon. Julie Thomas -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to support the Minister here and also to remind, I think the whole Council, about our Vision and our strategic objectives, and there's a lot of wish lists that I think we have. But when we think about what our budget has been used for this year, which Minister for Health will be able to explain, we've talked about this quite a lot, I think what the Minister has identified or told us here today, is that finally health is in a more balanced place now and they can start moving along with, if I can say, how to move our Health Service forward instead of firefighting, because I know that was the word that Mr. Henry has used for quite some months and I know that firefighting was exactly the words to use. So I think we need to be careful here and remember what our strategic objectives are for our tenure. And yes, as the Minister for Education, I'd love to have play areas in all the different districts, but always remember if we're considering that there will potentially be taking it away from somewhere else. So we need to be thinking about what is our core strategic objectives as we go forward. I just wanted to remind everybody about that. Thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you for that contribution, Chief Minister, Honourable Chief Minister. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

Mr. Speaker, thank you and again I thank the Chief Minister for that further clarification. If I may, in relation to my statement earlier regarding Half Tree Hollow play area, I'm actually concerned from a liability issue for the St Helena Government. If that play area is listed as an official play area and it is not maintained and a child is hurt, the liability on SHG and that was my biggest concern there, the safety of the children, and then the liability on SHG because that is listed play area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker -

That point of information you were rising on there.

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Yes.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas -

Just to clarify on that, that's not what I meant when I was talking about the costing of new areas. I would, I would stand in support of what you were saying about our responsibility as St. Helena Government, I just wanted to make it very clear that to be funding for additional playgrounds at this time is going to be really difficult because we are struggling, I think it's fair to say in all different portfolios, to be able to find the things that we have to; we're asking people to find cuts,

so to actually go out and try and put more work streams together, that we can't entertain. What you're on about there Councillor Honourable Midwinter, I would totally support you. Thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much for that. It seems like we're all done. Next question, please?

Question No. 12 - The Honourable Gillian Brooks to ask the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care.

The Speaker -

Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care tell his Council what measures have been put in place to address waiting times for GP appointments and also for medical test results via telephone?

The Speaker -

Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care?

The Hon. Martin Henry (Minister for Health and Social Care) -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to my Honourable Friend for asking the question. The medical appointment system has been reviewed by the Chief Medical Officer, the Director of Health and General Practitioners in order to increase the number of available appointments in Jamestown and country clinics. There has been some delay in the implementation of this increased number due to unforeseen travel delays. However, from the 10th of October next week onwards, it is anticipated that the community will benefit from an increase in clinics available. Patients will have two options. You can book for the next available slot for a doctor or you can book for the next available slot to see a specific doctor. And I think there's some confusion here when it comes to waiting times. Obviously, if you booked for a specific doctor, this will result in a longer waiting time. We are also working with the Community Nursing Staff to determine the best distribution of clinics among the country sites. However, the total number of country clinic slots will increase with the current number of doctors are present, I must say here, that there will be times throughout the year when we may suffer a loss of a doctor for unforeseen circumstances and it's in these cases that we will have to restrict some of this, but in general, we are planning to increase the availability of appointments as of next week. With regards to receiving tests via telephone, this was a trial system in August 20 and the feedback was mixed. One of the largest factors was that many of the patients with GP appointments booked just to receive test results still wanted the physical appointment left open as they have other medical issues, so some 61% still required the appointment, which kind of kind of defeated the purpose of having the telephone and the results back. Due to the shortages of medical staff during the Covid outbreak for unforeseen delays, we stood the service down. However, we plan to review this position in the coming weeks taking into account all of the results we have gathered. Just finally, we will continue to trial other solutions and review the outcomes as part of an evolving process to continuously streamline and improve the service in general.

However, this sometimes comes with bumps in the road where we may have to stop and review systems going forward. Thank you. Mr Speaker.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

No, I would just like to thank the Minister; I understand that Health has been under a lot of stress and strains. I would just like to say thank you and we will just wait to see how that's going forward. Thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you for that. No further supplementary questions? Next question then please?

Question No. 13 - The Honourable Ronald Colman to ask the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development.

The Speaker -

Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development tell this Council, now that the preferred bidder in the Telecommunications Procurement has been announced, can the Minister make a statement on what the outcome means for the people of St Helena going forward?

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Mark Brooks (Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development) -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I'd like to thank my Honourable Friend for his question. So the awarding of the preferred bidder status to Maestro means that both parties, SHG and Maestro, will now work in good faith to try and conclude on a legal binding contract that is very much in line with Maestro's tender submission and the questions backwards and forward at that time to leave out the details of that submission. So to aid with due diligence, and to ensure that Maestro can honour their commitments made in that bid, two representatives of the company, of Maestro this is now, has recently spent two weeks on the island to further understand the challenges of undertaking the work, also have an opportunity to speak to the contractors, which will help finalize their pricing and their timelines. It should be noted that at this stage SHG does reserve the right not to enter into a contract with Maestro should it not be possible to come to an agreement with the substantial contract around Maestro's tender, so, as I said, it is just a preferred bidder status there's no signing of any contracts and nothing to set the goal yet.

Whilst there is still much work to do, our intentions is to have this contract ready around the end of October, so once signed, if that is the case, Maestro will work at a pace to build a world class

broadband infrastructure network, which will be available to all residents and businesses by the end of 2023.

The new broadband service will provide a significant increase in upload and download speeds; we're also hoping that we will be able to offer unlimited package for data and those unlimited packages will come at a much reduced cost to what we currently pay.

The exact details of this is still to be finalized and will form part of the new tender exercise for the new local service provider that will ensure that this is taken, this is done within the next few months. So basically, once we come to an agreement with Maestro and we can sign those contracts and we can go out for **Lot 3** and put out expressions of interest for somebody to provide that service. Once we know that we're building the infrastructure and what that infrastructure would look like. So that's all I can say right now, it is an ongoing process. It is very high on this Ministerial Team's agenda to try and get the best out of this cable now for the islanders, the Government community as a whole. So that's all I'd like to say at this time, but I would hope to give more updates in the near future. Thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, just to thank the Minister for his update.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Honourable Karl Thrower?

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister give us an update on how this relates to when the cable actually goes live with the date of the end of 2023 for the fibre installation?

The Speaker –

Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for his supplementary question and just to say that we have signed an agreement with SURE for one year's extension and that is at the end of their license, I think, which is the 31st of December this year. And that will take us a further year ahead. The cable is due to go live in the first/second quarter of 2023. The building of the new network is hoped to be completed by the end of 2023. So for a period the cable will be live and we will be under the one year's extension of the SURE contract, but that is only a matter of months if all the timelines work out as expected. So, thank you, Sir.

The Speaker -

Thank you. Honourable Member. Just before I do that, I missed the Honourable Rosie Bargo earlier on, I just wanted to see what her question is all about?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo -

Okay. Can the Minister say if SHG feels that two weeks is sufficient time for any preferred bidder to visit the island to gain the necessary information and experience to allow them to make good informed decisions and ways forward for the island?

The Speaker -

Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

So two weeks was an actual physical visit here by the preferred bidder. There was a lot of work being done in the background, they had a lot of the mapping system of the island from GIS so they understand to a degree the terrain and what they was dealing with, but the idea of actually having, and this is just there, shall I say, their technical experts on the Island was so that whatever they've seen remotely on a computer that now they can actually visualize for themselves in being here. Also, like I said, gave them the opportunity to talk to contractors. But this is not the end of the process. We're expecting, like I said, on the next flight for, is it two more, sorry, we're expecting on the next flight one more representative from Maestro to come out here. Obviously they will have feedback from the technical team that will be leaving or has left now, so this is, yes, it's not just all the decisions made within that two weeks, that two weeks, was just to give them a bit more reassurance of what the actual physical work on the ground would look like, and like I said, and to be able to talk to the contractors. So, yes, there's more work to be done, but, no, they didn't reassure the whole bill over just two weeks, the work has been going on before the visit and it will continue after their visit.

The Speaker -

Thank you for that clarification. Honourable Karl Thrower, I went across you, so I do beg your pardon.

The Hon. Karl Thrower -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Honourable Member say in the interim on the timeframes he's got between when the cable goes live in the first to the second quarter to when the new contract at the end of 2023, taking into account the extension to SURE, in that interim of between nine, six and nine months whether people on the island will still see a benefit even though it's through the current network, whether we should see a speed increase or a data increase on our prices that we get?

The Speaker -

Thank you. Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

So, I would like to say yes to that, but the contract that has been agreed with SURE is the same as the contract was before, so they would be under no obligation to provide any benefits. We would hope that if they can, they would, but as it is, it is basically a one year extension of what we have now.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. No further question? Next question, please?

Question No. 14 - The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex to ask the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care.

The Speaker –

Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care, state to how many persons and in what roles training is being delivered by the qualified paramedics currently on island?

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care?

The Hon. Martin Henry (Minister for Health and Social Care) -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to my Honourable Friend for asking the question and if she may allow, I would like to provide some, an overview, just for context to my answer.

Paramedics routinely train between two and four years at university level, normally leading to a diploma or degree qualification. The training they undertake to fulfil the roles is diverse, and includes not only emergency care to be able to perform lifesaving interventions when dealing with heart attacks or severe allergic reactions, but also knowledge of longer term conditions that enable them to care holistically for patients with a diverse array of diverse needs within our community. Traditionally, the role of the paramedic was confined to ambulances, but this has evolved to allow paramedics to work within the community's primary care, GP surgeries, hospitals, A&E and end of life or palliative care roles, as well as the traditional roles within the ambulance service. So the benefits of having these qualified paramedics here is an increased amount of range and kit they can carry on board ambulances to support patient care, increased scope of treatment provided within the community during emergencies, support provision of health care services within the hospital when not responding and adding an additional layer of resilience on a daily basis. The creation of an emergency care assistant posts and associated training package to upskill our local workforce and to provide support and training to the wider portfolios within SHG. These are just some of the roles.

The two UK registered paramedics currently in the role of senior paramedics within SHG have been here for five and eight months respectively. They have worked together setting up an array of support, supporting policies and documentation for the ambulance service, ensuring kits and equipment acquisition, empowering and mentoring staff within the service and working towards gaining accreditation from a UK based qualification Centre to deliver formulized medical and first aid training locally. The paramedics run the ambulance service on a day to day basis and have the support of our newly appointed Chief allied health professional who is also a UK registered paramedic.

So from a training perspective, we are currently waiting for Quallsafe Award Centre approval to run the Fast Response emergency care course, but also other courses such as first aid at work for both adults and paediatrics.

Our initial plan is to offer the First Response emergency care course to 24 spaces at level three, and level four. As agreed in our training protocol, these places will be offered to our colleagues across different SHG Directorates who would provide first aid responses within their role. So for example, health, sea rescue, the fire service, and the police, among others. Once approved, we will be able to offer first aid courses to those in Health and Social Care and later on to the public. Beyond the formal training that is currently being pursued, the paramedics have contributed to training within the Health and Social Care portfolio, including local mentorship and on the job training, which also includes induction training for new colleagues. I would just like to say that this new service is part of the new transformational health program and has already provided like the ability to save lives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much Honourable Member. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I thank the Minister for his response. When is it hoped that accreditation will be received?

The Speaker -

Thank you. Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Martin Henry -

Thank you, Honourable Dr Essex, this side of Christmas, Ma'am.

The Speaker –

That's fair enough, thank you very much. Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Martin Henry -

This year, sorry.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

I thank the Honourable Minister for his response. Why is the training initially being restricted to SHG?

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Martin Henry -

I would assume the first, the level of the first courses will be because, as I said through my answering the question, these people will provide the first and may have to provide first response in emergency situations, so they are on the priority list in this case. However, it is planned to deliver further first aid training to the wider community after this.

The Speaker -

Thank you. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex -

Thank you. Will these training courses lead to a recognised qualification for participants?

The Speaker -

Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Martin Henry -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to my Honourable Friend for her follow up question. Yes, they will, the first aid response emergency care is recognized as a level three and you can move on to a level four and level five qualification which can also be used towards becoming being such as like a qualified paramedic. So you can use it to cut down on some of the modules when working through a degree for these courses. So they provide the basis for our teams to start working towards these recognised qualifications and becoming recognized qualified personnel of the Health Service.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex -

Will the Honourable Minister indicate what entity or organization will actually validate these qualifications?

The Speaker -

Thank you. Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Martin Henry -

Thank you for the follow up question to my Honourable Friend. Again, I said during my answer to the question Quallsafe. So Quallsafe Award Centre is the Centre that we are approaching for these qualifications.

The Speaker -

Quallsafe, thank you very much. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understood that that was the Centre that would actually be accrediting the training. Are they also then validating the qualifications that the individuals that follow the training courses would be obtaining?

The Speaker -

Thank you. Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Martin Henry -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you, Doctor Essex. I don't have all of the details but in the first process, it is a train to trainer process to start with.

The Speaker -

Okay. Thank you very much. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Honourable Minister say whether or not having the two paramedics has reduced the demands placed on the hospital nursing staff, and improved ambulance response times as was intended?

The Speaker -

Thank you. Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Martin Henry -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you to my Honourable Friend. Again, as mentioned in my answer to the initial question, the paramedics while not responding to the emergency care, provide a backup or resilience, resilience in the hospital and can help to manage, especially the A&E part, so emergency care that comes in on a daily basis as this is one of the areas that we are currently developing. Sorry, my Honourable Friend, what was the other part to that question?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

There were two things, and, in fact, I think that part way goes to what I was trying to get at, so just to elaborate, Mr Speaker, if I may, so our understanding was the idea of having the two paramedics would enable quicker response times of the ambulance because the paramedics would be able to go straight out. Having to come down to the hospital to take nursing staff away from the hospital and thereby putting an additional burden on the hospital being short of nursing staff, so that was the two-fold question was my understanding when you were discussing the paramedics was the paramedics would alleviate the need to come down to the hospital, take nursing staff away from the hospital and be able to respond quicker to emergency situations, so I'm asking has that actually transpired in practice?

The Speaker -

Thank you very much, Honourable Member. I should have asked you to be seated whilst the Honourable Member was speaking.

The Hon. Martin Henry -

Sorry Mr Speaker.

The Speaker -

No, that's okay, can you answer the question, please?

The Hon. Martin Henry -

Thank you, Mr Speaker and thank you to my Honourable Friend for asking, answering his own question it would have been the answer to the question. The structure behind initially employing qualified paramedics is first and foremost a quicker response to life saving treatment for members of our community, and, yes, before we had paramedics, we would sometimes have four nurses on shift and we would then have to take one of those nurses to travel with an ambulance driver to the

site. So it has alleviated sort of both sides, as well as now having the ability to be able to upskill our staff as well.

The Speaker

Thank you very much. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Just again to thank the Minister for that response.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Any further supplementary questions? No? So we've come to the end of the Questions then, 14, a long morning this morning, but a lot of work got done and people were bearing up under it. So thank you for that anyway. But now we come to the last part of the proceedings today and so we've got two Motions to deal with and also, of course, the Adjournment Debate after that. So I call the Clerk to make the announcement.

6.

MOTIONS

Motion No. 1 – The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development.

THE SECOND SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (2022/23) BILL, 2022

The Speaker –

Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Mark Brooks (Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development) -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to move that the Second Supplementary Appropriation (2022/23) Bill, 2022 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council. I also have authority from the Governor to proceed.

The Speaker –

Can I see that please? Thank you. Is there a seconder? Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas (Chief Minister) -

Mr. Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Mover, you may now speak to the Motion.

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Second Supplementary Appropriation Bill (2022/23) Bill, 2022 is presented to the House today to seek authority to withdraw 65,000 pounds from the general reserve of the Consolidated Fund to allow urgent investment in the St Helena Sea Rescue Service for its sea rescue vessel to ensure that they are capable of providing the search and rescue

and also the requirements that they need to do for the St Helena Airport. So the systems is required to meet the international aviation obligations, which would have an immediate impact on the operations of the St Helena Airport if, for some reason, we can't provide the service.

So the reason why this is being asked today, the current engines used by the Search and Rescue vessels are now deemed as old technology and the engine types has been discontinued and therefore parts are no longer available to purchase. One engine has already suffered catastrophic failure or complete failure that way and is no longer operational and the others are expected that they will start to fail soon and this is as a result of their age, and, as I said, the engines cannot be repaired, therefore, they are now considered to be obsolete.

So this has substantially increased the risks to the Service and the provision of other critical service for the island and therefore urgent investment is required.

There has been no source of finance for these new engines, so a withdrawal from the Consolidated Fund is required here today, so that is the basis of the Motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member, Honourable Minister. Honourable Members, here is your opportunity to debate the principles of the Bill, if you wish, so I put the question that the Second Supplementary Appropriation (2022/23) Bill, 2022 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council. The question is now open for debate. Minister Ellick?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick -

Thank you Mr. Speaker. Yes, I rise in support of the Supplementary Appropriation. As my Honourable Friend has stated, this is required so engines can be replaced on the sea rescue boats. As most are aware, this area falls under my remit, however, the money to purchase the items fall under that of my Honourable Friend. Therefore, it would be remiss if I did not stand up and support the supplementary appropriation. I will not repeat all what my friend has stated, but add that the service provided by the sea rescue vessels is an obligation we must meet if we are to maintain airport operations and other sea rescue services. In a nutshell, if we don't have operational sea rescue boats, we might lose our airport accreditation, but also the other services in terms of sea rescue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member. Anyone else wish to speak to the principles of the Bill? Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this Bill. We're an island surrounded by water, I think it makes absolutely perfect sense that we have a capable Sea Rescue Service. As we heard earlier in the house today, we have a Yacht Race coming up later on in the year, the airport is about to go to weekly flights, this is something that the island certainly need, so I support the Bill.

The Speaker -

Thank you Honourable Member. Anyone else? Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also support the Bill, but I do ask why these details were not made known earlier and why this is coming to us at this point in time when the fact that engines were aging must have been known for some considerable period of time? Thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member. Anyone else wish to speak to the principles of the Bill otherwise Honourable Mover, you may reply to the debate.

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think, just in relation to my Honourable Friend, Dr Essex's statement is that at the time, we, or the Sea Rescue Service knew that there was going to be difficulty finding the parts, they didn't realise that company would stop making the parts. So that is, we had some indication that it was going to be more and more difficult going forward it was just after this year's budget was approved it was then discovered that the parts were no longer being made. So, therefore, there was no option to get these parts, so that was only after the budget was approved for this year's, Sir, so I'd just like to add to that.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you for that explanation.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member.

Question that the Second Supplementary Appropriation (2022/23) Bill, 2020 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the Whole Council, put and agreed to.

The Speaker –

Mover, do you wish to respond?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

No, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to thank everyone for their support.

The Speaker -

So you want?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Council do resolve itself into a Committee to consider the detailed provisions of the Bill.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Is there a seconder? Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas (Chief Minister) -

Mr. Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –
Thank you.

Question that the Council do resolve itself into a Committee to consider the detailed provisions of the Bill, put and agreed to.

Council in Committee.

The Chairman -

Honourable Members, in accordance with Standing Order, the Standing Orders, procedure on Appropriation Bill, Order 13, (2) (a) we first of all need to work through the schedules. Schedule I is Capital Expenditure. Honourable Mover, do you wish to go through this? Okay, so you're asking me to do it.

Okay, so Schedule I, I put the question that Head 15 - Safety, Security and Home Affairs, standing in the amount of £65,000 do stand part of the Bill. Honourable Minister for Treasury Infrastructure and Sustainable Development, would you like to provide an overview?

The Hon. Mark Brooks (Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development -

Mr. Speaker, no, I've done that in when I presented the Motion, so, no, there's no overview to provide. This is a very simple Bill, it is for Head of Expenditure 15 for Safety, Security and Home Affairs and as you say it is £65,000 withdrawal on the Consolidated Fund.

The Chairman -

Thank you, Honourable Minister. Are there any questions or comments from other Honourable Members at this stage? Honourable Karl Thrower?

The Hon. Karl Thrower -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to ask if the lesson's been learned. Before we buy new engines, obviously, depending on the manufacturer, different outboard manufacturers supply parts for different number of years. So, for example, Honda, Suzuki, they'll all have different guarantees for supply of parts. Have we learned that lesson, have we now looked when we're purchasing new ones, I take it, they're not going to be the same manufacturer, because of the lessons learned. So how, are we now purchasing from a manufacturer who can guarantee parts for a much longer period so we get the full lifespan, because obviously, the lifespan for outboard engines is actually measured in the hours that they use, not in the age of the unit?

The Chairman -

Thank you, Honourable Member. Any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Yes, I just would like to respond to my Honourable Friend.

The Chairman –

You needn't stand at this point.

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Just to just to say that, yes, lessons have been learned. We're now moving from two-stroke to four-stroke engines. The four-stroke engines will see us considerably into the future. Obviously, it will reduce the fuel actually required between a two-stroke engine and a four-stroke engine by some 50%, it will also reduce the lubricants that is required within a two-stroke engine. Also within this expenditure head, there is some additional amount for training and maintenance occurred on the engine, so, as you have a new engine, you would have to do a certain amount of maintenance to a schedule to be able to guarantee the engine, so, all of that is included. And, yes, I would imagine by going to a four-stroke engine setup this will be considered an investment that will take us into the lifetime of the boat, which is the main thing to determine and then the engine, if we do pass the life expectancy of the boat, the engine can be used on other boats as well.

The Chairman -

Thank you, Honourable Minister. Any other Honourable Members? Honourable Rosie Bargo?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo -

And going with lessons learned, are we sure that the new engines will fit on our boats? I mean, I don't know technical stuff, but I just want to make sure that we know the engine will support you know, the actual boats we have here?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the Honourable Member and just to give an undertaking that, yes, the expertise within the Sea Rescue Service has given us assurance that, yes, these engines will have no problems fitting on the current boats that we have.

The Chairman -

Thank you very much. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex -

What stage has been reached in the procurement process?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Dr Essex, there's been no stages, this would be the first stage. So the first stage is to have an allocation within the budget to allow them to procure the engines, so if this is passed in the House today, the next stage will start immediately after. Thank you.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex -

How confident are you that the sum would be adequate?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

So this has been, a business case has been supplied to us with quotes and so we are going on obviously, the expertise within this field producing the figures that they would need to maintain the service going forward. And obviously that includes like I said before, the engines and the training that is involved with maintenance of the engines.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex -

Okay, and thank you for your reassurance of the full business case that's been provided. Thank you.

The Chairman -

Anyone else? No? Honourable Karl Thrower?

The Hon. Karl Thrower -

Thank you. So the question, the next question is what happens to the old engines? Obviously, they've got a very significant value. Actually, the fact that you can't get parts actually values them higher, because obviously there will be people around who are looking for parts for those motors who have invested a lot of money just as we did. So is there a chance we can look at basically the maximum, the way that we can maximize our return when we get rid of those assets?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

So I'd just like to say that the plan within the business case, is to sell the two-stroke engines here locally, there might be people on the island who will make use of them and there also might be people on the island who have spares that could probably fit these engines. So yes, once we procure the new engines, the plan is to then try and sell the old, or the two-stroke engines here locally to local marine users and hopefully that will give us a bit of return on the investment that we're making with the new engines.

The Hon. Karl Thrower -

Could I just say to that, that the only problem with that is you, those engines are big, they're bigger than the most of the boats on the island use, it might really be worth also looking at South Africa, because South African boats tend to have much bigger outboards, so you might be able to realise the significance and aid the shipping cost and that with that, but it might be also worth looking in South Africa for getting rid of those assets.

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

I can, I'll take that on board, but I'm also conscious that these parts for these engines is now obsolete, and that will in some way reduce the international value for these engines. On the island, I can see that the value still maintaining, because there could be a certain amount of parts on the island that could be used, but obviously trying to dispose of these engines internationally will incur more costs and I think it will probably be proven difficult given the fact that the rest of the world is not supplying parts of these kinds of engines anymore.

The Chairman –

Minister Scipio?

The Hon. Christine Scipio -

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, just a point of information it is my understanding that most countries now have a law against the sale of two-stroke engines. So just a point of information.

The Chairman -

Thank you very much. Anyone else wish to speak at this time? If not, I put the question that Head 15 - Safety, Security and Home Affairs standing in the amount of £65,000 do stand part of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman -

I put the question that the total of £55,000 do stand part of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

The Hon. Karl Thrower -

Sorry, Mr. Speaker, the amount you just said was wrong. You said £55,000, it's £65,000.

The Chairman -

Did I say that?

The Hon. Karl Thrower -

Yes.

The Chairman -

I put the question that the total of £65,000 pounds do stand part of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman -

Thank you, Honourable Karl Thrower. Thank you, Honourable Members. Now we turn back to the main part of the Bill, the Title, the Enactment Clause and Clause 1.

Title, Enactment Clause and Clause 1.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman -

Thank you, Members. Clause 2 – Consolidated Fund, provision for the financial year 2022/2023. Does any Honourable Member have any proposals or any questions on this? Honourable Christine Scipio?

The Hon. Christine Scipio -

Mr. Speaker, maybe for the benefit of the listeners if we could say what, if the Acting AG would just say what Clause 2 is, because we wouldn't want the public to be thinking we agreeing to something and they as listeners don't know what we're agreeing. Thank you.

The Chairman -

Acting Attorney General? I think Honourable Mark Brooks wants to respond to that.

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Yes, Sir. Just on the back of Minister Scipio, just to say what the Clause is, Mr. Speaker, and the clause is for the withdrawal of £65,000 from this financial year, which commenced on the 1st of April, which is appropriate for the purpose of the service described in Schedule 1 in Ordinance, Sir.

The Chairman -

Thank you very much.

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Thank you, which will include the withdrawal of the £65,000 from the Consolidated Fund.

The Chairman –

Alright, thank you for that. Thank you, Honourable Mark Brooks, and thank you, Minister Scipio. Thank you very much.

Clause 2 - Consolidated Fund, provision for the financial year 2022/2023.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman -

Thank you, Honourable Members. We will go back into formal session now.

Council Resumed.

The Speaker -

Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development to report the Bill, please?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker. I beg to report that the Second Supplementary Appropriation (2022/2023) Bill, 2022 passed the Committee with no amendments and to move that this Council approves the said Bill and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Is there a seconder to this? Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas (Chief Minister) -

Mr. Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Mover, you may speak to the Motion now, if you wish?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

No, just to thank everyone for the support of the Bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Thank you all very much. I put the question that this Council approves the Second Supplementary Appropriation (2022/2023) Bill, 2022 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted. Any Member wish to speak? Not at this point? Mover, you may respond then if you want to. Not at all?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

No, Sir, there's nothing to respond to at this time.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much.

Question that Council approves the Second Supplementary Appropriation (2022/23) Bill, 2022 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted, put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Thank you very much. Next item?

Motion No. 2 - The Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs.

THE PRISONS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2022

The Speaker -

Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick (Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs) -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Prisons (Amendment) Bill, 2022 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas (Chief Minister) –

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I beg to second.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Mover, you may now speak to the Motion.

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick -

Thank you Mr. Speaker. The Prisons (Amendment) Bill, 2022. As most will be aware, the Prisons Ordinance 1960 sets out the legal framework for the management of Her Majesty's Prison in Jamestown, St Helena. However, the Ordinance currently does not provide any specific powers to Prison Officers and as a result, they have been appointed as Police Officers in order, amongst other needs to allow them to carry personal protective equipment.

Prison Officers currently have the full range of powers and obligations despite the fact that they do not receive any training in how to utilise them and as with other Police Officers these powers remain with them whether they are on duty or off duty. It also meant it had the undesirable effect of making Prison Officers subject to the disciplinary code set out in the Police Service Ordinance 1975.

The recent separation of the role of Superintendent of Prisons from the Chief of Police has made this position untenable, as it would require the Chief of Police to adjudicate on any disciplinary issues, despite the fact that they have no management responsibility for the staff.

The Prisons (Amendment) Bill, 2022 will provide Prison Officers with the powers that they require while they are on duty, without requiring them to be appointed as Police Officers. It will also clarify that they are only subjected to the disciplinary rules contained within the Prison Ordinance 1960 allowing the Superintendent of Prisons to efficiently and effectively manage his staff or her staff. As such, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. I put the question that the Prison's (Amendment) Bill, 2022 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council. Honourable Members, the question is now open for debate. Just on a point of information that the debate is to be confined to the principle of the Bill only, and not the details. Any Honourable Member wishes to speak? Honourable Christine Scipio?

The Hon. Christine Scipio –

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the proposed amendments relate solely on internal operation arrangements that provides the provision for Prison Officers to have the appropriate powers, I support the Bill.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Any other Members wish to speak? Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Bill as well for very similar reasons. This makes perfect sense, noting the separation of responsibilities that this amendment been made, so I also support the Bill.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Any further speakers? No, then Honourable Mover, you may respond to the debate.

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to thank the two Members who stood up in support. I hope others will support going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Thank you, Honourable Mover. So I put the question that the Prisons (Amendment) Bill, 2020 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the Whole Council.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member. You may continue.

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick -

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Council do resolve itself into a Committee to consider the provisions of the Bill.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member. Is there a seconder to the Motion? Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas (Chief Minister) -

Mr. Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker -

Thank you.

Question that the Council do resolve itself into a Committee to consider the detailed provisions of the Bill, put and agreed to.

Council in Committee

The Chairman -

We are now in Committee of the whole Council and I put the question that the Title, Enactment Clause and Clause 1 do stand part of the Bill. Any Member wishes to speak? Honourable Karl Thrower?

The Hon. Karl Thrower -

Thank you. I'm quite concerned by it, to be honest, because maybe I don't understand it. So, while on duty, a Prison Officer has the responsibility and the authority of a Police Officer, which sounds all great as long as they're inside the Prison. But since you quite often bump into a Prison Officer while they're on their break and they've gone shopping, they're still on duty, so if a Prison Officer, for example, sees a shoplifter in The Star while they're on their break, they would have to arrest the shoplifter. But then if they're in uniform in The Star after they finish their shift, they don't. And that worries, it worries me why don't Prison Officers just have the duties and the authority and responsibility, why have we got a separate set of authorities and responsibilities for Prison Officers? They're not Police Officers and to say that they've got the authority and the responsibilities of a Police Officer while they're on duty only works except for when they go out of the Prison or they're away from prisoners surely?

The Chairman -

Yes, Honourable Mover, can you respond to that, please?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Yes, so that's the point. We're trying to change this Ordinance here now so that Prison Officers just deal with prisoners, as opposed to the general public, because they're not trained as Police Officers, they just have the powers, but what you will find, if you, like, do some research into the Police Force Ordinance, which was drawn up in 1975, you will note that the Police were responsible for the Prison, Immigration and a whole other loads of tasks, so that they did, they covered most of the laws of St. Helena. So what we're trying to do now is make sure that we have segregation of duties and so forth. So people actually have powers to deal with what they know about and what they're trained in, as opposed to all other aspects.

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

Which I completely agree with, I understand the need for the separation, I'm just saying does this do it, because they've still got, as it's written, they've still got the authority and responsibility of a Police Officer pursuant to section 17, but do you need them to be Police Officers?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

No, the powers of the Police, they won't be Police Officers, they will have powers like Police Officers under section 17 of the Police Force Ordinance. Likewise, Customs have the same sort of powers as well, so it's just similar powers.

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

It's the responsibility I'm having problems with on that, because a Police Officer has to, you've got responsibility of a Police Officer; I can understand the powers, but it's just the responsibility. Like I say, if they're out, a Police Officer has a lot of responsibility when they're out in public, you don't really want the Prison Officers to have all that responsibility do you?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick -

They will only have it in pursuance of the section 17, which is not all the powers of the Police Officers and so forth, so it's for them to be able to affect their duty when in a Prison.

The Hon. Karl Thrower -

And they won't have any powers outside of the Prison?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick -

I wouldn't say they wouldn't have powers outside of the Prison whilst they perform Prison duties, so if they're taking prisoners to the farm, and so forth, they still have those powers, just that they wouldn't be able to use those powers and so forth on the general public, you know, it would be just for the sole purpose of doing their job.

The Hon. Karl Thrower -

Okay, thank you.

The Chairman –

I'm going to call on the Attorney General to assist if, but first of all, Honourable Andrew Turner, you have your light on, do you wish to say anything?

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

Yes, Mr Chairman, I was actually about to do the same thing because as I read it here, it says they have the authority and responsibility of a Police Officer, but the line that I think explains it all here is - and as necessary for the performance of their duties as a Prison Officer, so if they are not acting in their duties as a Prison Officer, they would not have the authority of a Police Officer, slightly confusing.

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

But it says while on duty, that's what I don't get, while on duty.

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

Only as necessary for the performance of a Prison Officer's duties.

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

Okay, so they can see a crime, they don't have to do anything technically as a Police Officer.

The Hon. Andrew Turner -

No more than an ordinary citizen would of course.

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

No more than an ordinary citizen, see that's, yes, interesting.

The Chairman –

Okay? Acting Attorney General, do you wish to make any response? No?

The Hon. Aine Hurley -

Thank you. If it might assist, the, yes, it is correct that the limitation is a Prison Officer while on duty and as necessary for the performance of the duties of a Prison Officer, it is those words as necessary for the performance of the duties of a Prison Officer that's limited. So, for example, if a Prison Officer escorted a prisoner out of the Prison and the prisoner attempted to steal an item, to go back to the example that the Honourable Karl Thrower gave a few moments ago, the Prison Officer would have to intervene in respect of that prisoner because they are responsible and that is necessary for the performance of the duties of a Prison Officer. But, yes, in a situation where a Prison Officer saw another citizen who was not a prisoner, their duties would be limited to that of an ordinary citizen in that situation, the limitation is necessary for the performance of the duties of a Prison Officer. So they have the powers of the Police Officer, but they have them in a limited format, if that makes sense.

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

Thank you.

The Chairman –

All understood, yes? Thank you, Acting Attorney General. No, one else? Honourable Karl Thrower, perhaps you could put your light off now. Thank you for that.

Title, Enactment Clause and Clause 1.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman -

Thank you. I put the question that Clause 2 do stand part of the Bill. Any Member wishes to speak?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Mr Speaker, just to say that basically seeing what we've just been through before, what the Prison Officer was on duty and it's necessary for the performance of duties of a Prison Officer, like the Attorney General just explained, so that's what that section is about.

The Chairman -

Thank you very much. So I put the question, thank you for that. Any Member wish to speak on that? No?

Clause 2.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman -

Thank you for that. So we should resume in House now.

Council Resumed.

The Speaker –

Mover, do you wish to say anything at this stage?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick -

Not at this stage.

The Speaker –

You want to report on it?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Yes, I wish to report. Mr. Speaker, I beg to report that the Prisons (Amendment) Bill, 2022 passed the Committee stage without any amendments, and to move that this Council approves the said Bill and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted. I beg to move.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Is there a seconder, please? Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

Mr. Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Mover, do you wish to speak once again to the Motion?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, just to thank all Members for their support on this Bill. Thank you, Mr Speaker. I beg to move.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. I put the question that this Council approves the Prisons (Amendment) Bill, 2022 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted. Does any Member wish to speak at this stage? No? The House can debate any of the principles. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr. Corinda Essex -

Thank you. I would suggest that when this is publicised, for the benefit of the general public, there is an opportunity for them to be able to actually see Section 17 of the Police Services Ordinance so that they are fully apprised of what we've actually agreed in terms of what Prison Officers, if this is passed, will have powers to do or not, because this document does not actually give the details of Section 17 of the Police Ordinance. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much, Honourable Member. Mover do you wish to respond to the debate or say anything further to add to anything at all?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I take on board what my Honourable Colleagues has to say. I think we'd be happy to give him Section 17. At the moment they have all the powers as opposed to just Section 17 which is quite vast, so, yes, it's just like, I think it's powers of arrest and so forth and search, but we will do that and we'll give an undertaking to publish that as well. Thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much, Honourable Member.

Question that Council approves the Prisons (Amendment) Bill, 2022 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted, put and agreed to.

The Speaker –

Next item of business please?

7.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

The Speaker -

Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas (Chief Minister) -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn sine die.

The Speaker -

Thank you. Is there a seconder to the Motion, please? I do beg your pardon. Honourable Minister Scipio.

The Hon. Christine Scipio -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to move.

The Speaker -

Thank you.

The Hon. Christine Scipio -

Second, I don't know why I beg to move.

The Speaker -

Or you could move if you want. Thank you very much. Thank you. The Motion is that this House do now adjourn sine die. The Motion is now open for debate. Who wishes to speak first? Anybody? I see a light, the Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker; I'm more than pleased to start the ball rolling, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the adjournment. Firstly, Mr. Speaker, as this is the first public opportunity that we have had to do so, I wish to express my deep sadness of the loss of Her Majesty the Queen.

The Speaker -

Thank you.

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

Having grown up with the Armed Forces and subsequently commenced my management career working as an Admin Clerk of Windsor Castle, I have met several members of the royal household, including Her Majesty and the late Prince Philip, both of whom were a personal inspiration to me. My deepest sympathy therefore goes out to His Majesty the King, and the rest of the royal family. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I wish to spare a thought for all of those who have had a rough experience after catching COVID, along with those who are currently at home trying to get over this illness. I have heard both positive and negative experiences from members of the community. However, even those who did have a rough time, have in the main expressed the view that this was a necessary step that the island needed to take, as we simply could not continue to isolate ourselves from the outside world in the manner that we had been. To those who are still suffering, and also to those who have yet to catch COVID, I wish you mild symptoms and a speedy recovery. Mr. Speaker, before moving on from this subject, I would also like to give recognition to the hard work of the medical staff and care workers who have pushed on tirelessly over the past few weeks, despite several of their own number having fallen victim to COVID. I would also like to convey my personal thanks to the Public Health team for the support that I and my own family received during that period of community spread. Mr. Speaker, now that we have opened the island up

again, it is positive to hear from some local accommodation providers that international bookings are already starting to bounce back, so I sincerely hope that we will start to see some benefits from reopening the island over the next few months, especially as weekly flights recommence from next weekend.

Mr. Speaker, it is again regrettable that the revised Standing Orders and the revised Code of Conduct was still not quite ready to be presented to this Council for endorsement, a position that I hope will be rectified before our next formal sitting. Mr. Speaker, at our last formal sitting, I noted that I was pleased to hear that we should soon have sight of the new draft policy and legislative program. However, we have yet to receive this.

Mr. Speaker, whilst it is good to see that a planning application is being progressed for the work required to improve access to this Council Chamber, I must note that I'm extremely disappointed the Supplementary Appropriation Bill to provide the funding for this project has not yet come to this House and we are also still waiting further work to be undertaken at the Elected Members Office that will improve our working conditions there. Again, I hope that these matters will be addressed before our next formal sitting.

Mr. Speaker, we are now a year into our tenure and it has been quite a year that has at the same time flown past. For my own part, it has been an absolute pleasure being the district representative for St. Paul's, and I therefore look forward to continuing to work for the community and support the development of this beautiful island in whatever ways I can. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you Honourable Member. Any other Honourable Member wish to speak? Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to express serious concerns regarding the negative impacts of the current financial climate, which we are already starting to see. It is inevitable that cuts in spending will have to be made and that these will all be painful to some extent, but it is also essential that the need for such cuts is reduced by increasing efficiency in service delivery within St Helena Government, resulting in lower costs to Directorates and also that appropriate criteria exist to determine where cuts will do the least damage. When elected members asked for the reasons for the reduction in student allowances, we were informed that the Education Directorate has to make savings against this recurrent budget of 2.5% and that its allocation for 2022/23 was already £243,000 lower than that for the previous financial year. It was also stated that post 16 Education is a non-core function of the Directorate and it was implied that this was part of the reason why these cuts were made. This is my major cause for concern, as this could set a dangerous precedent. In broad terms, St. Helena largely classifies its statutory functions as being core and the remainder as non-core, but, particularly in the light of the current financial downturn more refined criteria should be developed across all Directorates that take into account the importance of a function in contributing to sustainable development, the Vision, the Sustainable Economic Development Plan, etc. I am not suggesting that nothing is being done in this regard, but there is an urgent need for a comprehensive exercise to be undertaken to re-evaluate and redefine what functions are really core to the future of this island so that these do not get eroded, if not wiped out, by the severe financial pressures that I am afraid we are all very likely to be facing for some considerable time. We all recognise that our young people are the future of St. Helena and therefore must do all we can to invest in them. If post 16 Education suffers because

of lack of finance, we will be seriously undermining any possibility of sustainable social and economic developments. A level studies and higher level vocational courses are vital to enabling our young people to achieve their potential and so is an appropriate well-structured and relevant apprenticeship scheme which is accessible to all. A responsible government must ensure that adequate funding is available to support these activities, even though they're currently classed as non-core. Nursery provision is another case, which currently is classed as non-core, but which is arguably absolutely vital to children's development.

This brings me to another area of uncertainty, that of student scholarships. Although progress has been made in determining that our local students will in fact be eligible under Britain's student finance scheme, which is extremely good news, there is still clarity required regarding details of exactly what will and will not be funded. We have highly intelligent students who achieved well at A level who were aspiring to go to University next year and they need to know sooner rather than later what their prospects are and exactly what will be provided for them.

Mr. Speaker, much is said about the importance of attracting Saints of working age back to St. Helena. When those working overseas who have children are asked why they are not returning, many say, because our offspring have more educational opportunities in Britain, or, indeed, in the Falklands. If we curtail post 16 education here, this will not only deter Saints from returning, but encourage more families to leave. Also, if we're serious about retaining our people and attracting them back, we need to reduce the current three-year period before the spouse or long term partner of a Saint can be free of Immigration restrictions. The Immigration Working Group recommended a reduction of at least one year and when their proposals were taken out for public consultation, there was support for a further reduction. This needs to be borne in mind in the current Immigration Review if Government wants to create an environment that will attract Saints back,

Mr. Speaker, as I've stated many times in this Honourable House, St Helena's sustainable development is dependent upon investment in its own people. Therefore, this must be an overriding priority that is a criterion for determining how the increasingly limited financial resources available to St Helena are allocated. It is also of equal importance that there is an enabling environment that encourages Saints to remain and to return to work on their island.

In conclusion, I wish to pay tribute to all those who have worked tirelessly to make the arrival of COVID-19 as painless as possible. The Health and Social Care Directorate staff, in particular, is to be commended for their dedication and effort, but the entire community has pulled together to maintain business continuity and service delivery. All of those involved deserve praise and recognition for their contribution. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I support the adjournment.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Gilly Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Adjournment. Mr. Speaker, this is our first sitting in the House since the sad passing of Her Majesty the Queen, just short of a month past. Her unwavering commitment and dedication will always be remembered.

Mr. Speaker, food security has been and continues to be of great concern to all of us. Whilst our focus is on growing the economy, we cannot lose sight of securing foodstuffs that provide the staples within our diet. Our farmers have had to bear the loss of certain crops over the wet winter months, which has financial ramifications on them and periods of low stocks of fresh produce in the shops. A question was raised in the House for an update around our local fishing industry, a

really important part of our food security and one that we all as elected members have been very focused on. Tight budgets are, however, not just household concerns. We are aware of the reduction made with our student allowance. Finding the most viable option of payment to students would not have been an easy one for those involved; encouraging students to remain in Education, whilst having to reduce their allowance. Apprenticeship schemes are so beneficial in getting young people on the job work experience. It is, however, important to ensure that schemes such as this are driven by outputs and outcomes rather than simply the inputs, ensuring that these lead to meaningful and lasting opportunities for our young people. Losing the Community Three-day Work Scheme years back was, in my opinion, a disadvantage to the island and whilst I understand the issues of reinstating it, this would provide resources and gainful employment. At our last Elected Members meeting, Mr. Speaker, we were given a presentation on the draft St Helena Marine Management Plan. I mention it today, because it was so clear the amount of hard work that had gone into this or that has gone into this and the level of knowledge and enthusiasm within that team.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot omit to mention today the hard work that has gone on behind the scenes by staff, both clinical and non-clinical, to continue offering services to the public and persons within our care sectors during the on spread of COVID. We know shortage of staff during the period of sickness has impacted on those still at work and I just want to take this opportunity to say thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member, Honourable Andrew Turner?

The Hon. Andrew Turner -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to first echo earlier sentiments regarding the sad passing of our sovereign Queen Elizabeth the Second. The outpouring of emotion from across the world at this time and I think it's a stunning testament to the impact she had on all of us. I'd also like to give my best wishes to our new King and hope that his reign is long and prosperous. Now, before I do anything else, Mr. Speaker, I have to thank all of those who supported the recent petition to the Utilities Regulatory Authority to prevent proposed changes to utilities tariffs. I welcome the decision from the URA and their report, which is well worth reading. I also hope that this saga has shown that we the people of St Helena can stand up and have our voices heard. However, the question that still burns in my mind, how did the proposal get so far? I can understand the Company acting in its own best interest but when the proposal came to our elected representatives in ExCo surely their first duty was to the people? Could we really consider hitting low income families with a massive electricity increase as being in the best interests of our people? While I'm glad the URA stepped in on this occasion, I hope the lessons will be learned so that in the future, they don't have to. Moving on from electricity to COVID-19. Firstly, I'd like to say how proud I am of our community for how they've responded to this. So often in the world, there's been a lot of division that's been caused by COVID-19, you get people arguing you should be wearing masks here, you should be wearing masks there, people yelling at each other in the streets. We've managed to avoid all of that, and, as I say, I think that gives me a great sense of pride. I also want to thank the staff from the Health Directorate for their work when my partner and I had our own bouts of COVID-19. They were caring, efficient, and made the testing process simple. I was glad to hear from our Health Minister that we've likely moved past the peak, but it's still been extremely disappointing to see the mixed messaging from our Government in relation to COVID 19.

Originally, the message was carry on with your normal lives, then we were told we should isolate for five days if we're positive. Lately, this has become requirements for isolating. Originally, we were told the Hospital will be kept as a COVID free site, but now we're seeing that testing will be no longer required for entry. Now, putting aside opinions on which move was the correct one and what the right thing to do or the wrong thing to do was, the problem with our mixed messaging is the confusion it's created, not just for the Government, but for our people, businesses and particularly for employers. Again, we have a learning opportunity here. If we're going to make big changes and there are several big changes we still need to make, we have to ensure we get our communications right so that we can move forward together without all of this tripping up. Mr Speaker, although I'm also disappointed the changes to allow CBD products were not ready in time for this Session of LegCo, with everything that's happened since our last meeting, I think we can all understand why this is the case. I, however, do look forward to seeing those new regulations soon. To end on a more positive note, it's good to see some progress in making this Council Chamber accessible to our whole community. The room we stand in today is the seat of our Government and we govern in the name of the people. It's therefore unacceptable that there are still members of our community physically prevented from participating in their democratic rights and attending these meetings. While I know we're still some way from the finish line on this one, I hope the momentum that started will build and we will soon see the day where our own Deputy Speaker is able to join us in the Chamber. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much, Honourable Member. Honourable Rosie Bargo?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Adjournment. Mr. Speaker, today within my Adjournment, I want to elaborate further on our children. Mr. Speaker, you hear it worldwide, the children are the future leaders and the same goes here for our children on our island, but can we honestly say that we do all we can in enabling this? Mr. Speaker, what message are we sending our children if we continue to deplete our Education budget, to overlook the importance of functioning playgrounds and supporting groups, and why because we are caught up with trying to fix age rooted issues, whilst it appears that our children have to take a back seat. Our children requires structured learning for their development in life and to continue depleting our Education budget means we cannot adequately support our children's needs. Our children also requires unstructured methods of development. And that is why playgrounds are important for our children's development. Playgrounds around the island needs to be restored and maintained. We need to provide playgrounds or play areas where our children feel safe, an area where they can freely express themselves, that allows them to develop important social skills at their own pace without any pressure. Whilst I truly appreciate the Chief Minister rightly saying that with our limited budget, focus needs to be on what is deemed more needed areas and I trust that playgrounds will be part of that needed areas. I understand the critical issues that our island is facing from the high cost of living, the need for Government Landlord housing, COVID-19 which we have done a brilliant job so far, to name a few. However, Mr. Speaker, we cannot lose focus on our children. After all, they are our leaders of tomorrow, so let's give them a foundation that can make them proud of us. In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to express my condolences to the royal family, on the passing of our Queen, whose steadfastness is a testament to us all. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Because we've been given an opportunity, I would like to express my condolences to the royal family on the death of our long serving monarch, the late Queen Elizabeth the Second who passed on the eighth of September. She was an extraordinary woman and Queen who had an extraordinary life who was blessed with 96 years and over 70 years in service. To her people, we can say thank you and now we wish the King well with his loyalty, dignity and love as he serves us. Mr. Speaker, I stand here today, only seven days away from our one year anniversary on first being elected to this Council. It has been a challenging year and not one that I had expected. I was elected to serve you the people of St Helena and as a team would take the Island forward with economic development, improving the people's quality of life, but this has not really happened. It is still in my opinion that the ministerial system in place in St. Helena is not fit for purpose; something is really missing and more changes need to be made to our Constitution for this system to be more workable and of benefit to our people. The system is not working for the good of our island. Mr. Speaker, somewhere there is problem or problems, whether it's between us as elected members, whether it's between the ministers and non-ministers, or between the ministers and officials, but this being not able to deliver on policies, either because of repercussions or lack of dynamics, trading decisions is taking long time and when decisions are made, there are always concerns and things take even longer to get done. We seem to be getting nowhere. St Helena is an Overseas Territory and it's provided for through the FCDO. We are always fighting hard, dotting the I's and crossing the T's. The funding is good, but the money don't seem to be going to the right places where it can make a difference in the lives of the people of St Helena. After one year, Mr. Speaker. we really need to think seriously and make the changes necessary to address the people and the Island's needs now, and then we can no longer live with the status quo. Now, I want to thank everyone who supported the Utilities Petition and those businesses who allowed the petition to be placed in their businesses for the people to sign. The increase of nine p per unit was the wrong time and for domestic households who cannot afford it. Going forward, Mr. Speaker, as elected members we are willing to work with Connect to get the best outcomes for St Helena and its people. Renewable energy is the only way to go and we can achieve this together. Mr. Speaker, another area we need to focus on is food security; we need to be serious about this. It is the first time we don't have a supply of fresh white bread. Are we serious about food security, especially now that things is only going to get worse? Mr. Speaker, we have been pushing hard for land to be released for house building and finally Bunkers Hill was released, but our Saints who are working overseas trying to get the cash to build their own homes don't even qualify for this land, so this is where some changes are needed to help our Saints overseas. Then what about those who cannot afford to build their own houses, especially those with young children? We as a Government need to do more and find the funding to make the changes necessary, leaving no one behind. Mr. Speaker, more help is also needed in providing help for our elderly and the vulnerable. If Government is not responsible, who is? Again, we need to make the changes necessary that only our elderly folk, and the vulnerable is not left behind and show that this Government does care. This includes the continuous assessment of our Island's benefit system, and that the systems are in place that can really help those who genuinely needs the help, including those who have worked years on St. Helena, but still don't qualify for the Basic Island Pension.

Now, Mr Speaker, we come to the Employment, Training and Development Program, opportunities for unemployed and young people. Has the Government done anything to progress this, apart from cutting funding from the Prince Andrew school apprenticeship scheme, our very young people who is tomorrow's future? Where is our commitment to them? Finally, Mr. Speaker, I first would like to pay a tribute to our very own Captain Adam Williams, and our other Captain and crew of the MV Helena who has served us well over the years, especially through this pandemic period. I think at times they go unnoticed, and it's not acknowledged for the sterling work they are doing keeping our lifelines going, well done to them and this challenging time. Thank you. Also a special thanks to those who have supported me in my first year in office as an elected representative, whether it's family, friends, officials, or my fellow colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Martin Henry?

The Hon. Martin Henry -

Thank you, Mr Speaker; I rise in support of the Adjournment Debate. I had planned to say a few other words today in relationship to other topics that I am passionate about, however, I have decided that I will use this opportunity to purely say thank you, as many of my fellow colleagues have already. To everyone who has helped to plan and execute the delivery of the COVID roadmap to the stage of this current first wave, allowing St Helena to reopen its borders and to join the rest of the world. I would like to make special mention of my senior team in Health and Social Care - the Portfolio Director, Tracy Poole-Nandy; the CEO, Peter Moss and the Director of Health, Derek Burke. With the support of the Chief Secretary, Susan O'Bey, who all initiate the very fast roadmap and strategy for bringing our Island out of quarantine through a phased approach. The sheer volume of work in the background, from recruiting doctors and nurses in a global pandemic, to writing the complex operational procedures to reassuring our small community has to be commendable to say the least. It would be impossible for me to name all of the staff who have done an outstanding job over the last few weeks, both the teams in Health and Social Care, from doctors, administrators, care staff, and management pulled together to bring the service through this intense and somewhat worrying period for our community. However, we cannot become complacent as COVID-19 will evolve and along with the ever increasing threat of other similar viruses. Finally, to the Chief Minister, Ministers and Elected Members, the Chief Sec and staff of the wider SHG Departments, to all private businesses, thank you for maintaining the necessary services so that the island could continue to function. And of course, that includes the people of St Helena for standing there and providing these services. This is a fundamental starting point for any future prosperity for our island in this world, which has been rocked by this global pandemic, the unfolding events of climate change and the conflict in Ukraine, to name a few. The latest devaluation of the power and unstable soaring fuel and Global Freight prices has and will continue to add further pressures to this Government and the people of this island. We must now forgo our differences with opening the island, continue to support those who may still need our assistance with COVID-19 and use the same determination, togetherness and support we have harnessed over the last few weeks to grab at any opportunity which may come our way. In the words of Tony Robbins, stop being the chess piece become the player. It's your move. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much. I'll try to remember that bit. Any other member wish to speak? Honourable Karl Thrower?

The Hon. Karl Thrower -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of the Adjournment. Mr. Speaker, once again, between the two formal LegCo's it's been a very busy time for everybody involved. I'd like to start by echoing the points raised by my Honourable Colleagues in regards to the Health Directorate, and all the staff that have supported the route that we've currently taken to COVID. I won't say out of COVID, because hopefully we're towards the end of it, but we're not out of it yet. I also agree with my Honourable Colleague, Andrew Turner, that there are some lessons that should be learnt in the respect of communication. However, there are always lessons to be learned. The most important thing is that the lessons are relatively small, in fact, of what could have gone wrong could have been much, much worse than communications. So let's just take those lessons on but I think overall, the route that you have taken as a Government has been excellent, you know, like I say, a few small hiccups, shall we say along the way, but overall, it's been fantastic. I will actually not only say it to the Health Director, I will say it to all the Ministers, you know, you've taken us out of COVID, we know that the decision to come out of COVID was, there was a few different decisions that maybe could have been different, but the route, the way we got here, it's been fantastic since that decision was made. I'd like to thank you all for that. Now, a few of my colleagues have already raised, the problem with going towards the end is obviously everything's already been raised, so! Reference costs and increasing costs worldwide, you know, we saw a bad decision made by the UK Government by a newly elected Prime Minister that created an enormous loss on the exchange rates, specifically to the dollar. That seems to have hit the freight costs for the next voyage, extremely hard, you know, we're looking at a potential laugh of, or not potential, it's already been announced, that nearly a thousand pound increase in the cost of bringing in a 20 foot container. My hope is that this is short lived, the exchange rates have now returned to just below what they were before that announcement was made in the UK by Liz Truss, so it's my hope that we should see pretty much most of the rates in the next shipment come down for the second shipment. And I think that should be relatively straight, so that's just to say, I know that the merchants are already discussing the rise in prices, that shouldn't worry anybody too much, it should only be for this voyage. Now, the other thing is obviously, I have to mention the Electricity Petition, and I'd like to thank, Mr Speaker, everybody, everybody, every member of the public who backed it wherever they put it in their shop and they supported it, the Independent for putting the letter in. My only regret is that it was necessary to do the petition in the first place and I would echo the Honourable Andrew Turner on this; it's a real shame that it got to that stage, I genuinely don't know how it does anybody, the Ordinance is very specific on what any changes to tariffs have to meet, there is no way that met the tariffs and one of the positive notes is I think the URA have now sent an extremely clear message to both Connect and the Government on where they will go with this in the future. So now we have to do what we should have been doing and I know that a lot of the Ministers, or quite a few of the Ministers, already want to do that, we have to start looking at how to reduce the cost of electricity. And the very clear part thing to target is the twenty-two pence in diesel it costs to produce one unit of electricity. We are six years behind the Energy Strategy, you know, the Energy Strategy was created in 2016. Since 2016, I don't think that the Island, the Government, and that have installed a single extra wind turbine and no more solar panels and I think that needs addressing. I know that we were tied up with the PASH deal, but it seems like we

put all of our eggs in the basket, which became the PASH deal for four years, and then even when that failed, we spent another year trying to resuscitate it with another tender. You know, and I hope that we're at the end of that, I hope we're actually going to now develop a new strategy of how to move forward. So the next thing is, obviously, it's very good news to learn that SHG are finally learning the lesson of lighting. You know, I know it's on a relatively small scale at the moment, but I think the savings speak for themselves, so, hopefully, we can develop that. And the other thing I would really like to say is that with Government Landlord, I got informed today actually at lunch, some very upsetting news for me, that we still seem to be getting in the way of inward investment on this island. So recently, quite a big fuss was made by the Government that it was selling off some of the Chief Sec housing so I now know that two of the properties that were almost sold, have now had extra clauses put on to them, which is putting off the buyer. One of them is that it's been sold with living tenants for two years that they cannot do anything about. Now, I would like to say that this is not acceptable. If you're going to sell a house, you sell a house, you don't then put a clause on it and say, oh, hold on a minute, we've got people in that house, you can buy it now, but they've got to stay in the house for two years. And that's exactly what's happened. And the other thing that's happened that's quite disappointing is that despite us talking about Government Landlord housing earlier, that the CDA at Half Tree Hollow is now locked into a bit of a battle because SHG wants to sell the land for more than £35,000 a plot. Now, once again, we have to look at this, we have to have plots of land on the island for sale that are affordable for St Helenians, you can't just keep, SHG have the land, you cannot just keep making it more and more expensive. Another thing that's happened recently is that the interest, international interest rates have gone up, that will probably get put on to loans on the island sooner or later it should do. And we've got to ensure that we have affordable housing, so maybe SHG should stop being greedy when it comes to the price of land and start really looking at how to sell it so that St Helenians can afford to stay on the island. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much Honourable Member. Any other Honourable Member wish to speak or have we all had the opportunity to? Honourable Minister Ellick?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to be short. First of all, Mr. Speaker, like most Members have done, I would just like to express my condolences to the royal family on the passing of the Queen and wish the King well on his new journey. At the last formal LegCo, I made a statement that I intended to bring a Bill amending the Drugs Ordinance in respect of CBD products. However, it was not possible to do this in the short timeframe and also with the constraints caused by the spread of Covid; therefore, I will strive to present an amended Drugs Bill at the next sitting of formal LegCo. I would also like to advise Members that most of the changes will be done via regulation and I will endeavour for such regulation changes to be done at the next convenient sitting of ExCo. I'd just like to pick up on a point about immigration raised by the Honourable Corinda Essex. All Members are aware that consultation will happen soon, so there will be opportunities for all to express their views and concerns. Mr. Speaker, thank you. I beg to move.

The Speaker -

Thank you very much, Honourable Member. Any other Honourable Member to speak? Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas (Chief Minister) -

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think everybody can hear from the room and probably listening on radio that the voice is not 100%, so I will try and address most of the issues that has been obviously put forward here today. Thanks to Minister Henry for obviously dealing with the one with regards to COVID. It is pleasing to stand here today and know that St. Helena is now open for business, for people to come and visit us, for people to come for a holiday and we are now living with COVID and as Councillor Thrower has said, we're not out of it at the moment and probably never will be, but we have had our first wave and it would seem that everybody has done a spectacular job. I, too, would like to say thank you to everybody on St. Helena, but I do think that the amount of support and information, medical information that was put in front of us has given us a success story thus far. So thank you to all in Health and Social Care, and also within our Public Service for helping us through this. As Councillor Thrower also said and I think possibly Councillor Turner as well, communication is key, it's key in good times and in bad, COVID-19, of course, opening the island was, of course, a very scary time for St Helena, but it was a decision that needed to be taken. It was time for St. Helena; we knew that we had all the, as much as we could put in place to ensure we came out the other side and so far that seems to be working. Yes, there might have been some mixed messaging and there could be some lessons learned, but I am really proud of what we've achieved with our, with the context, I guess, of how we went forward with COVID and I hope we can use that as we move forward with other pressing issues and programs that we'll be putting out. I made mention of the passing of Her Majesty the Queen, I haven't even been on radio, I'd like to have gone on radio to say to the people of St Helena what a momentous occasion it was for the Governor and I to represent St Helena at such a historical moment in time, but as you can hear, the voice is only coming back; since returning, I've had my share of COVID as well, but I think what we can take away from such a sad occasion was just how much St. Helena, the Commonwealth and the British Overseas Territories meant to Her Majesty the Queen. We, as St Helena, sat behind the royal family, just two rows behind ambassadors, and little St Helena was in that third row, so I think that we should be immensely proud of how much, even through her death, Her Majesty showed how much the British Overseas Territories and the Commonwealth meant to her. And from the short discussions and welcoming's that I had with King Charles the Third and his brother and sister, Prince Edward and Princess Anne, St. Helena is not far away in their thoughts and I think that is something we should hold on to. Going away to the UK also gave me the opportunity to meet other Premiers from all the other Overseas Territories and there's definitely a bond that is there and St Helena, I think, should take all those opportunities to ensure that we join together and fighting issues that's just not prominent in St. Helena; it is what happens in Overseas Territories, especially islands. But that said, I'll take this opportunity to confirm that I will soon be leaving to represent St Helena again in the Joint Ministerial Council or Conference and key issues that's been brought up here today will be discussed; climate change the financial climate of the world and as much as I hear all of the things of what is concerning all of us. I'm not going to stand here and say that I think we're doing a great job, and that there's no concerns with regards to our financial limitations, but there are very real financial limitations and restrictions and we're running or working within a budget that we approved since April. We did not know how badly COVID was going to hit St. Helena, we did not know, obviously, about the war in Ukraine and what damages that would have, so all of us, all Ministers here, and all Portfolio Directors and the teams are working immensely hard to try to work within our budgets with, so if I talk about Education, as hard as it is for me to have to stand here and admit that we had to look at the student

allowances, we had fuel prices that hit the bus runs, and I'm not talking a few hundred, to keep the allowances at the level that it was at with just a new Year 11 intake would have cost Education another £40,000. I didn't have £40,000 to give, so we are trying to ensure that our students, even in these hard times, get recognised; they are still important and I'd like to obviously highlight what Honourable Dr. Corinda Essex said, whether they are core or non-core students, and upskilling our people still remains a priority for this Government. I hear Councillor Bargo talk about the playgrounds. As much as I'd like to say to you, yes, Councillor Bargo, I would support you with that, I think, as I said earlier on, some other statements being made, we need to stand firm with our strategic objectives also, because Education and upskilling is definitely in there, Health was number one if you recall, if you look back at our objectives. Number two, most of you will be pleased to know, is Renewable Energy and Renewable Energy will remain the priority now that we've got a more sustainable Health Service. Renewable Energy is also something that we'll be pushing when we go through to Joint Ministerial Conference. St Helena will also be doing, hosting an event and Cloud Forest and what we've achieved there and our blue and green agendas are exactly what we're going to be hosting to ensure that we get people in the room who could potentially help us to get forward in moving our renewable energy forward. We talk about efficiencies; I think that is another key to trying to get ourselves in a better position. However, if we cannot start making our own money, we will always be so heavily reliant on the UK and at the moment, as everybody has pointed out, thankfully it seems to be moving in the right direction now. Again, they're telling it's dropped, now being told it's dropping again, so we'll have to see, but whatever happens within the UK Government, it has an impact, a huge impact on how we do business here on St. Helena if we are not able to start to operate our own businesses and trying to ensure our own future. Food security was mentioned, and, yes, I do agree food security is key and that also is one of our strategic objectives. What I would ask though, is that even though we see all these problems, and there are many, I'd also like to just remind ourselves what's been achieved in one year because it was said that nothing's been achieved. We have a Health Service that is now closer to being fit for purpose. We will have all our specialists coming that we haven't seen since the start of COVID. Cable, there are, we are having teething problems, but we've been here for one year. I think what Minister Brooks has put on the table today tells us telecoms, we are working extremely hard to try and complete and finalise a way forward for our telecoms. We've gone through COVID, we've opened the island, it's only been months, it's gonna take some time to see things moving, but I'm really pleased to hear that the flights are fully booked coming up to our festive season and into the New Year and that yachting will soon see yachts back on our moorings. We've got the environmental projects, the Cloud Forest, and the Marine Management Plan is now out for consultation also, huge steps and there's loads more to do and we need everything behind us to be able to achieve the best. I, too, would like to see the finale of our Standing Orders and Code of Conduct and our Ministerial Code, I'll add on to there as well, but it has been busy and it keeps turning that way. You know, it was a privilege to go away and represent St Helena, but as you all know, it was not planned and now I'll be away again in two weeks, but they are, all of it, is key in making sure that people know what St Helena is all about. We will keep striving for efficiencies. As part of the strategic planning and budget process, the Portfolio Directors are committed to improving ways of working in order to improve our outputs and achieve efficiency. Three areas will be targeted during the next financial year and that is procurement, transport and IT. I'm trying to think what other ones we were talking about, there was some talk, I have to be honest Councillor Thrower, I'd like for you to share with us exactly what you mentioned just then about the sale of the government properties, because I don't know exactly the story behind that, so

I won't make any comments about that. I'd rather just make sure I understand it. I think what we always need to be aware of though, that St. Helena is hit so hard by external factors, and not, most times we don't get the lead in, it just hits us and we need to then deal with it. Councillor Bargo. I'm pleased that you are championing for our children, I need all the help I can when it comes to Education, Skills and Employment, working with you to ensure that we get the best for our young people is indeed of importance to me. Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs talked about the Immigration Policy Review and I know that that is soon going out to public consultation, I'll take this opportunity to encourage the community of St Helena to come out and have your say and understand what it is that we're trying to do to encourage more people to return to St. Helena and new people to come to St. Helena, I don't think there's much more I would say, at this time, other than the fact that we need to continue now. If we use the COVID experience for working together, we must continue to work together because it's unfortunately not going to get easier as we now go through the budget process. So thank you all. And I'm pleased that we all managed today to get through this formal LegCo knowing everybody's coughing and spluttering. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member and thank you all. That concludes the business for today and I thank you all for your contributions and participation here today. I'd like to say just a few words though and whilst we were all thanking each other, I'd like to say thank you for how proud I was able to feel today at this meeting, very constructive, everybody seems to be thanking each other and so on and it is the way it's meant to be, you know, you've all come a long way. It's not one year yet, there's another week to go for one year. I can't imagine you do make much progress in one week though, but, you know, within that year, we wanted to see certain things come about. The Standing Orders was mentioned and the Code of Conduct and I was hoping that at least the Standing Orders would have been available for you to be able to lay on the table today, but that hasn't come about, we hope that's going to happen sooner rather than later though, because within the Standing Orders is of course, the Question Time, which everybody wants to see come about. So you can't have Question Time before you have the Standing Orders laid on the table; that needs to be remembered. Code of Conduct, you know, as well. But a little bit disappointing really. Before that, I think people were talking about the next formal sitting, I'm not saying you're going to get your thing done by the next sitting Honourable Minister Ellick, you may see that there's going to be a formal sitting very, very shortly, just to look at one item, but there ought to be a formal sitting after that. I intend to hold a meeting so that we have every chance of getting the Standing Orders on the table. It's very important to do that, so if we have to hold a special meeting, a separate meeting, I don't mind holding meetings. I know it's more work for our staff here, we work very, very hard anyway, but the Order Paper, now today somebody asked me why was the Order Paper so late? The Order Paper went out yesterday afternoon and you have a meeting today? Yes? So you weren't as well prepared as you could have been although you did a good job today anyway. I would like to see the Order Paper out early. I would like to see the details in the Order Paper out so the public knows what's going to be in the Order Paper. That might mean a week going out before the sitting takes place, we need to find a way to be able to do that because members of the public ought to be able to say to their Councillor I heard what's in the Order Paper, can you address so and so, but you can't do it, you don't, you didn't even know or you had some inkling of it, but, you know, you couldn't put out the Order Paper until yesterday afternoon. And, you know, if I had been a Councillor, I would be complaining about that myself, like I used to. It's not, it's not that

it's happening now it used to always happen, we get last minute papers sent in, Connie and Co keep pulling their hair out. I don't know why they got so much hair still left now, because if they're pulling their hair out because they can't get stuff to put on the Order Paper, so I wish the public to know about that. So we need to all find a way of making certain the Order Paper is done early, that things get to the Office so it can get on the Paper, so that things can be addressed in the public, you know, it is the public, of course, who we are all representing. So that's what I wanted to say about that, I intend to try to ensure that there are ways that we can get the Order Paper out early, I intend to do that. And most importantly though, I think the Standing Orders need to be put on the table to be approved so that all the things that you Members talked about leading up to the general election that you can do, but you can't do it before the Standing Orders arrives on a table and it's approved; it can't happen before then. Alright, so that is perhaps the most important thing to try to get done. I know there's the Code of Conduct and everything else, but we know how to conduct ourselves, but the stuff that's in the Standing Orders need to happen, you know, quickly, we need to get it all done. You know, perhaps I've said enough, you know, it's not easy for me to stay silent. But anyway, thank you all very much I feel proud of, you know, all that was discussed here today. I mean, you've managed yourselves so well and, you know, a lot of a lot of things have happened in the past year regardless of what people may say, you know, I watch you, I watch Connie and Co and I know that things do happen, we need to be a bit, you know, do a bit better sometimes, we need to need to do it, but Honourable Members, that does conclude business for today. So I now put the question that this Council do adjourn sine die, is it the right word, sine die?

Question that the Council do adjourn sine die, put and agreed to.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Members.

Council Adjourned.

Honourable Speaker

Date