



**St Helena
Government**

**ST HELENA GOVERNMENT
PROCEEDINGS OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
MONDAY, 29 SEPTEMBER 2025
FIRST SITTING OF THE SECOND MEETING**

LAYS UPON THE TABLE 5 FEBRUARY 2026

ST. HELENA
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

THE SPEAKER

The Honourable Maureen Thompson

EX-OFFICIO MEMBER

The Honourable Acting Attorney General, Mr Andrew Dawson

ELECTED MEMBERS

The Honourable Clint Richard Beard
The Honourable Gillian Ann Brooks
The Honourable Dr Rebecca Elizabeth Cairns-Wicks
The Honourable Ronald Arthur Coleman
The Honourable Dr Corinda Sebastiana Stuart Essex
The Honourable Martin Dave Henry
The Honourable Denis Karl Leo
The Honourable Robert Charles Midwinter
The Honourable Julie Dorne Thomas
The Honourable Karl Gavin Thrower
The Honourable Andrew James Turner

OVERSEAS

The Honourable Derek Franklin Thomas

CLERK OF COUNCILS

Miss Anita Legg

PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Monday, 29th September 2025

The Council met at 10.00 am

at the Council Chamber, The Castle Jamestown

ORDER OF THE DAY

1. **Formal Entry of the Speaker**
2. **Prayers**
3. **Elections:**

Members of Public Accounts Committee

The Speaker -

Honourable Members, as you are aware, the Governor appoints the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee. So we are required to elect three members to serve on the Public Accounts Committee. I now call on you for your nominations. Can we have the first nomination please? Honourable Minister Henry.

The Hon. Martin Henry -

Good morning, Madam Speaker, I'd like to nominate Honourable Dr Corinda Essex as Chair of the Public Accounts Committee, as member sorry, of the Public Accounts Committee.

The Speaker -

Could I have a seconder please? Honourable Minister Brooks.

The Hon. Gillian Brooks -

Madam Speaker, I would like to second.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Dr Essex, do you accept your nomination?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex -

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thanks to my nominator and seconder, I accept with pleasure. Thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you. Further nominations please. Honourable Midwinter, oh sorry, Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Hon. Julie Thomas -

Thank you, Madam Speaker, I would wish to nominate Honourable Derek Thomas as a PAC member.

The Speaker -

Is there a seconder to that nomination? Your Mic not working. Honourable Rob Midwinter.

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

Thank you, Madam Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker -

The Honourable Julie Thomas, would you on behalf of Derek Thomas accept his nomination?

The Hon. Julie Thomas -

Thank you, Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Honourable Derek Thomas, I will accept the nomination on his behalf to become a member of the Public Accounts Committee.

The Speaker -

Are there any further nominations please? Honourable Minister Brooks.

The Hon. Gillian Brooks -

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to nominate the Honourable Clint Beard.

The Speaker -

Could I have seconder please? Which out you two gonna second? Okay, Honourable Rob Midwinter.

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

Thank you, Madam Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker -

Honourable Clint Beard, do you accept your nomination?

The Hon. Clint Beard -

Thank you, Madam Speaker, I accept and excited to take on this role.

The Speaker -

Are there any more nominations? *(Pause)* No? Because there's no other nominations, I put the question that Honourable Dr Corinda Essex, the Honourable Derek Thomas and the Honourable Clint Beard be duly elected as members of the Public Accounts Committee.

Question put and agreed.

Chairpersons of the Select Committees

The Speaker -

I now move on to selecting the Chairs of Select Committee One and Select Committee Two. Are there any nominations please? The Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Hon. Julie Thomas -

Thank you, Madam Speaker, I would wish to nominate Honourable Robert Midwinter for the Chairperson of Select Committee One.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Thomas. Is there a seconder for that nomination please? Hon Ronald Coleman.

The Hon. Ronald Coleman -

Thank you, Madam Speaker, I wish to second Honourable Robert Midwinter for the Chair of Select Committee One.

The Speaker -

Thank you. Are there any other nominations for Select Committee One? Honourable Midwinter, do you accept this nomination?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

Madam Speaker, I'd be very pleased to accept the nomination.

The Speaker -

Thank you. Congratulations to you, Honourable Midwinter, for being the Chair of Select Committee number one. Now we move on to the Select Committee number two for nominations please. Any nominations? Honourable Minister Turner.

The Hon. Andrew Turner -

Thank you, Madam Speaker, I'd like to propose the Honourable Dr Corinda Essex for the Chair of Select Committee Two.

The Speaker -

Thank you. Is there a seconder please? The Honourable Karl Thrower.

The Hon. Karl Thrower -

Thank you, Madam Speaker, I'd like to second the Honourable Dr Corinda Essex for Chair of Select Committee Two.

The Speaker -

Are there any other nominations? The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex, do you accept your nomination?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex -

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I accept my nomination, and I'm very glad that for continuity purposes, the same two Chairs are being re-elected this morning. Thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex, I also congratulate you for being the Chair of Select Committee number two.

The Hon. Attorney General -

Sorry, Madam Speaker, can I just point out to you Order five, Rule 23, you do formally need to put the question in relation to both the Select Committee Chairman's for one, at committees one and two. The words are there in rule 23, so if the number of candidates proposed for election do not exceed the number of vacancies to be filled, the Speaker shall put the question that such a candidate be duly elected. And then we need to hear the ayes and the nays.

The Speaker -

So I put the question then that Honourable Rob Midwinter, be Chair of Select Committee number one, and the Honourable Dr Corinda Essex be Chair of the Select Committee number two.

Question put and agreed.

The Speaker -

Maybe I should have done that separately. Can I call on the Clerk for the next item of business please.

4. Address by the Speaker

The Speaker -

Honourable Members, ladies and gentlemen and those listening to the radio, good morning and welcome to the session, the first of the second meeting of Legislative Council. Firstly, may I thank the Honourable, the Lord Bishop of St Helena, who has again opened our meeting with the benefit of prayer and for the support that he has given this Council to date. We extend our thanks to Mr. Keith Brinsden for being our Mace Bearer during today's meeting, and the staff members of SAMs radio for providing support to the listening public. Councillor Derek Thomas departed the island on Saturday 27th of September to attend the 68th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Barbados, funded by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. We wish him safe travels, and look forward to his return, when he will be able to share his experience with the Honourable Members. Honourable Members, this is the final LegCo meeting, formal LegCo meeting, sorry, at which our current Attorney General, Andrew Dawson, will be attending as he will be completing his contract with the St Helena Government soon, and is due to leave the island shortly. On behalf of all Elected Members, I thank you for your invaluable work with the Legislative Council and wish you every success in the future with whatever path you take. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the unwavering support and encouragement I receive from so many members of the public before and after my election to the role of Speaker. I am overwhelmed by your reaction and express my sincerest appreciation. Honourable Members, we now turn to the business before this House today. We've had the elections for the Public Accounts Committee and the elections for the chair of the Select committees. There are three sessional papers, followed by the traditional adjournment debate. I wish all Members a successful session today, and without any further delay, I invite the Clerk to call the next item of business, please.

5. Papers

SP 48/2025 – The Hon. Attorney General

The Speaker -

The Honourable Attorney General.

The Hon. Attorney General -

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I beg to present Sessional Paper, number 48 of 2025, entitled Immigration Amendment Ordinance, 2025, Rectification Order, 2025. If it may assist, I can briefly describe this particular paper to you. The Attorney General has the power to correct minor typographical errors in ordinances, and the method of doing so is by making a rectification notice. It has to be presented to this Honourable House, and that it is a matter for this House whether or not, ultimately it accepts this or not. You have the ability to negative the rectification notice should you wish to do so. In this case, the rectification notice sought to correct the typographical error in the Immigration Amendment Ordinance 2025, concerning the date of commencement, which was incorrectly stated as 7th of July, and it now states as provided for in section 1 (1). It would be somewhat strange if I didn't actually make the reference to the fact that the commencement order for this particular ordinance has itself been revoked. So this particular change is something of a formulaic matter at the moment and will have no practical effect until the Immigration Amendment Ordinance is looked at again. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ordered to lie on the table

SP 49/2025 – The Hon. Clint Beard

The Speaker -

The Honourable Clint Beard.

The Hon. Clint Beard -

Madam Speaker, I beg to present Sessional paper 49 of 2025, entitled St Helena Legislative Council Panel of Investigators 2025.

Ordered to lie on the table

SP 50/2025 – The Hon. Attorney General

The Speaker -

The Honourable Attorney General.

The Hon. Attorney General

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I beg to move Sessional Paper number 50 of 2025 entitled Legislative Council Remuneration Review Report, August 2025.

Ordered to lie on the table

The Speaker -

The next item of business please.

6. Adjournment Debate

The Speaker -

The Honourable Chief Minister.

The Hon. Chief Minister -

Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until the 24th of October 2025.

The Speaker -

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

The Hon. Andrew Turner -

I beg to second.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Members, the motion is now that this Council do adjourn until 24th October 2025. The motion is now open for debate. Just a little reminder that for those who are new here that you may speak for 10 minutes. Honourable Midwinter.

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the adjournment. Firstly, Madam Speaker, I would like to acknowledge all of those who took part in showcasing the island's tourism hospitality offering on World Tourism Day this year. Whilst I was unfortunately unable to attend the event in the Castle Courtyard on Saturday evening, I have heard that it went very well. That noted, since re-election, I have already been contacted by various members of the public regarding matters that seem not to be going so well at the moment, in particular matters that seemed to be on course prior to the dissolution of the previous Legislative Council, but would appear to have drifted off course during the period of the General Election. In this respect, I hope that the newly appointed Ministerial team will quickly get to grips with the issues being raised and bring these back on course, unless, of course, they believe that there should be a change in direction of travel. This, Madam Speaker, is the main question that has been aired with me over the past couple of weeks, namely, whether the vision is still the same under this new government, or if there are going to be significant changes, and what the new Ministerial team intend to do on matters relating to openness and transparency, in particular, the opening up of ExCo, which some of my Honourable colleagues campaigned on, and sorting out the islands fishing industry. I have also received concerns regarding qualified young members of the public service heading off island for better wages. So I look forward to hearing how the new team propose to stem the out-flow. Madam Speaker, these are only some of the areas that I hope the newly elected Chief Minister will be looking to share with the public quite early on in her tenure, in order that the community knows exactly where it is that she and her team intend on taking us over the next few years. Madam Speaker, I'm pleased that we have managed today to have elected the Chairs of the two Select Committees, along with Members that will sit on the Public Accounts Committee. And I would like to take this opportunity to thank those colleagues who have again placed their trust in me to chair Select Committee one. Now that this election is out of the way, I look forward to moving forward and working with colleagues in picking up on the various areas of scrutiny that were undertaken by this Committee and investigating other areas of government activity. Madam Speaker, the Attorney General laid the Legislative Council Remuneration Review Report today. This report has raised a number of concerns by members of this Honourable House, and I myself have already responded regarding comments made in respect of the Select Committees, as I do not feel that the contents of the report accurately reflect the work undertaken. Madam Speaker, I will probably speak further on this when the draft Bill is presented to this House. Madam Speaker, I think that I will leave it there for today. However,

I look forward to being able to ask questions at our next formal sitting. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Midwinter. Honourable Clint Beard.

The Hon. Clint Beard -

Thank you Madam Speaker. For me, I'm going to say I'm very excited to be representing Blue Hill and Sandy Bay. I'm looking forward to that task at hand, and the engagement that will happen, and how that can be fed into the Council, to the wider Council, and to the improvement of the islands and the ability to deliver. I'm also happy to be elected on as a member of the PAC. I've been a member of PAC before, so I'll be asking some questions about, not just about us, but about even the accountability of every single element that needs to happen, because we are all accountable. Some of the hot topics at the moment is the School reorganisation and the Rupert's Facility. And all I can say is I hope everything goes well in the coming months. I think there has been communication. I think we need to just steadfast and keep going on that communication to the public on what is happening, so that parents can be enabled to know how they can adapt, because adaptation to changes, especially when you're young, is quite difficult, so parents need to be engaged as far as possible. The Induction programme has been quite a few sessions. We haven't completed it, but I think I must commend all that have done presentations. I think some of the teams have been brilliant in what they've put forward. And even as far as the progression that some have done within the organisation is such, is great to see, and long may it live. I think the remuneration I read, what was put down, I think all I can say is, when you have any kind of commission that's looking at something they need to look at what they are tasked to do, and not put down, there's a few assumptions that have been put down which is not really good. Accountability and communication again, vital. It's been vital for the last few weeks, it's going to be vital in the next few years, as we all work together, so let's not ease up. I think we're going to have to even work harder at it, because people are expecting us to deliver, and we cannot let individuals down or the community down. I think it also going to be cognisance of good governance, as well as good decision making for the future. And just to let the wider community know that the issues regarding medication has been dealt with through Health, as we've been told, and we also are busy with air freight cargo, that backlog that's also been dealt with. So that's good, positive moves that it's been dealt with, and I think that can, that must be communicated to the community. And finally, I just want to say again, as although we have the Ministers on my left, us Legislators, on our right, we are a team of 12. Let's not forget that, and we need to call on each other more and more and remember that all of us need to do that, because we all are going to be accountable for people who voted for 12 individuals, they never voted for a Chief Minister, Minister, or whose Legislators, they voted for 12 individuals. So let's work together, as we've been doing from the word go, and let's keep going. Thank you, ma'am.

The Speaker -

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex -

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I first wish to declare my interest as President of the Chamber of Commerce and as an importer and a retailer. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the adjournment. Today's sitting has been constructive in that the Chairs of both Select Committees have been elected so scrutiny in accordance with the Select Committee Establishment Order 2022 can start again, but it is very disappointing that the amendments to

that Order that were identified during the previous government have not yet been made. These amendments will enable more robust and efficient scrutiny to take place, and are needed urgently, as the current version of the Order has significantly impeded the work of the Select Committee over the past two years. It is also disappointing that bringing the revised Immigration Ordinance into force will be delayed because fresh eagle eyes, legal eagle eyes, spotted some ambiguities in the version passed in this Honourable House last year. The public, however, can rest assured that the delay does not reflect any change in Elected Members priorities or views regarding immigration, but is only to provide time for some amendments to be made and passed so that interpretation of the wording of the ordinance is easier and clearer, thus reducing the risk of challenges and confusion when it is finally implemented. The final stage of deciding which recommendations of the independent governance review should be implemented and within what time frame is about to begin. This is a very important exercise, and I encourage the public to make as much input as possible. Please take the time and trouble to engage with the Commission, which is soon to be appointed, as the recommendations selected will have a big influence on how the Ministerial system will function going forward, and so will affect all on St Helena. Madam Speaker, there remains considerable concern regarding the rushed move of cargo handling to the new Rupert's facility, which gave inadequate notice time to key stakeholders and took place before the sewage treatment facility has been commissioned, or a robust, permanent fire safety suppression system is in place. Although I have been informed that an interim fire safety system is in place, I also hear, although it has not been confirmed, that some key elements of this are not yet fully operational. If this is the case, then it's cause for concern. The new charges associated with the port were also announced extremely late, indeed, not until after the Karoline had already left Cape Town and most invoicing for freight and pricing of incoming goods was already concluded. I raised the implications of this on behalf of importers and consolidators, and it is very pleasing the St Helena Government has agreed to waive the customs charge of £2.50 per cubic metre for this voyage. However, I reverted last Monday afternoon to ask that consideration be given to waiving, or at least lowering, all additional charges on this occasion, but I have not even received an acknowledgement of my request to date. Madam Speaker, it was extremely pleasing to see the confidence, professionalism and expertise shown by local middle management staff during their delivery of the Elected Members Induction programme. Negative comments are often made about the lack of skilled Saints and how this is hampering St Helena Government's ability to meet its objectives, but it was very apparent that despite the brain drain, we still have a number of committed, competent persons in post who are capable of leading St Helena towards a better future. It is the responsibility of St Helena government to recognise their current contribution, as well as their potential for further development, and to support and facilitate their endeavours in an encouraging environment. I urge the current government to focus on nurturing and incentivising whenever and wherever possible St Helena's most valuable source, which, as I have always maintained, is its own people. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Denis Leo.

The Hon. Denis Leo -

Madam Speaker, I rise to support the adjournment debate. Madam Speaker, as someone who's taking my first steps in politics and the inner workings of St Helena Government, these first few days in office has given me an interesting insight into the workings of SHG Portfolios. It has been a privilege officially meeting everyone and to learn about the strategic goals of the portfolios and the limits of their budgets. As well as giving me perspective, it has also

reinforced what is clear, that if we want to deliver more for the people of St Helena, we need to bring in new money and investment into SHG and into the wider Island economy. Before I continue, I would like to thank the Portfolios for giving up their time to come and meet us. There are several areas that I feel should be forefront on the road map of where we need to go now. Utility costs, both electricity and water, are a concern for households and businesses alike. Lower utility costs through greener, more sustainable energy solutions will make a real difference to households, and lowering commercial water costs is clearly needed to create the right environment for local enterprise to survive and grow. Beyond utilities the areas I believe we must prioritise, as I said during my campaign, sustainable farming is key. We need to grow more of what we eat, reduce imports, and become more self-reliant but this will not happen overnight. It means supporting farmers to expand, ensuring they can survive financially, while scaling up and coordinating what crops we grow and when, so there's a consistency of supply. Tourism is another area where I believe we can achieve more. We need to make tourism that works for St Helena, Tourism that is based on who we are, not on copying models that don't fit. Our history, our rolling global events, our unique environment and our culture, are things we should be building on, niche tourism markets, whether it's heritage, environmental or cultural tourism, and where we can find opportunity that brings sustainable benefit to our island. I know there are more difficult conversations to be heard about revenue streams. During my campaign, I spoke about exploring cannabis both as a local licencing opportunity for personal growers, and as a potential export tied to our reputation for quality. This may not be straightforward, but if done properly, it could be quite a valuable income stream, both on Island and beyond. Alongside economic development, I also want to highlight the Portfolios I have been given responsibility for. I've been appointed Sports Champion and Cultural Champion. I see these as vital roles, not just extras, but central to the health of our island. Our culture tells our story and belongs in our schools and in our communities, it is about who we are as Saints, and about what we pass on to the next generation. By investing in our cultural heritage and encouraging creative expression, we are not only keeping traditions alive but also giving ourselves a stronger sense of identity and belonging. The more our young people know and celebrate our heritage, the stronger the sense of belonging will be, and culture is not just about the past, it is also about encouraging creativity, storytelling and pride in who we are as Saints. In the same way, sport is more than competition. Sport is about well-being, discipline and community spirit. They give our young people healthy opportunities, but they also keep our older generation active and connected. We have seen how sport can bring the Island together, and I would like to see it return as a regular and active part of our community life. This is not only about physical health, but also about building resilience, confidence and unity across generations. Madam Speaker, as this is my first time in politics, I know I have much to learn, but I believe solutions come from within our people, local knowledge combined with shared strength of this Council will be key if we are to make real progress. So, as we move forward, my hope is that this Council works together with one voice to tackle the issues that matters most. If we can do that, then in four years' time, we will not be looking back and asking 'why was nothing done', but instead, we will see a framework built, momentum created and progress made. And lastly, I thank the constituents for placing their trust in me, my colleagues for the welcome I've received and the staff who have already helped me to begin and understand the work ahead. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker -

Thank you Honourable Member. The Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Hon. Julie Thomas -

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise in support of the adjournment debate and wish first to place on record my business interests in retail and my husband's profession as a long-standing commercial fisherman. In addition, I would also like to place on record, like many of us are doing today, my appreciation to the Public Service for the Induction briefings provided to Members. These sessions have both been informative and constructive in preparing us for the responsibilities ahead. In just a few days, this Council would have been elected for one month, a reminder of how quickly time passes. With the Ministerial team now in place, Councillors have commenced the process of selecting district representatives. I take this opportunity to acknowledge my own district, Alarm Forest. I'm looking forward to engaging closely with you to strengthening our relationship and working together for the greater good of our district and our island. With the appointment of Select Committee chairs and PAC members now complete, Madam Speaker, I am eager to see the membership of Select Committees finalised. These roles are critical to ensuring proper scrutiny and oversight of government business. Once these are confirmed, we will also be able to announce our respective champions, as well as representatives to vital boards and working groups. I welcome the opportunity for this important work to begin. Madam Speaker, I believe all of us in this chamber recognise that the next four years will be vital for the success of our island, the world around us is uncertain and ever changing. Now, more than ever, it is our duty to do all we can to become more self-sustaining, with urgency placed on building a more secure economic and social future for St Helena. I therefore look forward to the publication of the Ministerial vision, which will set out the priorities and objectives of this government. It is essential that these are clearly aligned with the needs of our people and supported by transparent mechanisms for delivery. As this is my second term in office, Madam Speaker, I am mindful of a number of issues that were being progressed during my first tenure, which I would wish to see addressed without delay. Bunkers Hill residential development - as district representative for Alarm Forest, I can almost guarantee an update on this will be requested. So I request that an update on the current status and forward planning of this project, noting that legal advice had already been offered on next steps. Fisheries - at the PAC's live hearing last term, serious concerns were raised in relation to the Audit Report on the Fisheries Operations Agreement. At that hearing, PAC member now Minister for ENRP and Economic Development, hence has responsibility for fisheries, described the relationship as convoluted. This unfortunately remains the state of affairs, and in some respects have worsened, as since then, further issues have arisen regarding the operation of the MFV St Albatross. I therefore, respectfully ask the Government to provide an update on this investigation and advise when stakeholders and the public can expect an outcome. I also remind the House that the promised business plan from PQ Trading St Helena or Saints Tuna Corporation, due on 30th June, remains outstanding. It is worth remembering that the livelihoods of many in the sector have been in limbo for five years now, with the unfulfilled promise of an improved and brighter future, this uncertainty must end. Farming and Food Security - agriculture is another sector critical to our sustainability. Having access to fresh food should be at the heart of our existence and if this can be achieved locally, this would be an added bonus. However, despite an investment of 380,000 during the last four years, progress appears limited. I ask the Government to clarify why this is the case, given the emphasis which was placed on monitoring, evaluation and collaboration when these funds were approved. Access to affordable fresh food is central to our well-being, and this goal remains far from being achieved, if conversations that I have been privy to recently are to be relied upon. I too would wish to add on Rupert's Port. Shortly after returning to Office, it became apparent that the move to Ruperts Port was imminent. While this was welcome news recognising the strategic importance of the Port to our economic development and the monumental investment made, it has since emerged that critical fire safety procurement has not been completed. I request clarity on who authorised this move before the necessary safety measures were in place.

noting that the procurement of this vital equipment was fundamental to the decision taken by Ministers prior to dissolution. Minister's caveat at the move until procurement was made. This has clearly been ignored. Papers that we've laid today – two important papers for table today, the Remuneration Review Report and the revocation of the, is it revocation, I think it probably isn't? It's the Rectification of the Immigration Ordinance. Both require timely attention. With respect to the Remuneration Review, I wish to advise the public that Members will respond formally, addressing both recommendations and a number of inaccuracies within. Regarding Immigration, I was and remain deeply concerned and disappointed that the Ordinance has been revoked after so much work was undertaken to ensure it was fit for purpose and essential to addressing population decline. I therefore urge that the necessary refinements to ensure that the legislation is fully aligned with the policy intent be completed without further delay, so this legislation can be brought back to this House at the earliest opportunity, to ensure that it does provide the very best service to the public, as was intended. Madam Speaker, noting that, what has just been highlighted, I wish to acknowledge the valid concerns recently raised in the press by Mr. Cyril Leo, reflecting the frustrations of the public over wasted public funds, poor planning and repeated admissions of mistakes being made and lessons being learned by SHG officials, when responding to inquests held publicly. As implied by Mr. Leo, this demonstrates a Public Service evading direct accountability. Such failures not only burden taxpayers here and in the UK, but also undermine our islands development and the livelihoods of local businesses. This cannot continue. In closing, however, I would like to highlight positive developments. On Saturday, we celebrated World Tourism Day, and I take this opportunity to commend the businesses that contribute to this vital sector. Your resilience and innovation are helping to build a brighter future for this island, which is imperative. Looking ahead I also draw attention to the upcoming Agricultural Show planned to be hosted in November. Public engagement has already been encouraging, and I urge everyone to get involved. These events are valuable opportunities to showcase local skills, creativity and enterprise, all relevant attributes if we are indeed committed to improving our economic and social status. Finally, Madam Speaker, I will take this opportunity to reaffirm my commitment to listening to and engaging with the community, ensuring that their concerns are heard and represented in this house. And I would just like to say a personal farewell to the AG when he leaves us shortly and thank you for all your support during my time as the inaugural Chief Minister. I thank you for the opportunity, and I beg to move.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Ronald Coleman.

The Hon. Ronald Coleman -

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I raise in support of the adjournment. In my last adjournment, I mentioned that there was going to be many challenges, and I hope that together, we can find solutions as far as possible, through openness and transparency, using all of the Council and where possible consulting and debating with our people. Let's hope St Helena will have, apart from funding, the capabilities and capacity to deliver on behalf of our island. As we start our journey for the next four years, I want to ensure the people of St Helena that I will always do my best for them, making sure that the decisions we make will be in their best interests and for taking our island forward, and that the decisions we make will include everyone. Saturday night, I bumped into a man who asked, what we are going to do for the people this time. He asked me to think about the people working in the private sector and try to do something about raising the income tax threshold from the £7000. He said that with the increases in prices and having to pay taxes every time he makes something over the £7000 threshold, we are pushing people further and further in all types of poverty. He said you cannot afford to have children

anymore. So I will say to you and anyone else, 'I hear you' and I will continue to fight for raising the income tax threshold year by year, to improve the quality of life for everyone. And I think all of us want to do that to improve people's lives. So finding money to allow us to raise the income tax should be one of our priorities. One other concern at this time is the port in Ruperts, which is being brought into operation, even though it's not completed. I believe the project is well overspent, but there seem to be still health and safety concerns and access into Jamestown via Napoleon Street is also still a concern. Madam Speaker, I'm happy to also be a Rep for the Levelwood District, as I found that I've become out of touch over years. I'm also now a member of the National Trust, representing Legislative Council, and I'm happy to do that as I was a founding member of the National Trust. I'm also Champion for the Charities on the island. We celebrated World Tourism Day on Saturday, and I'm also making myself available to be a member of the Tourism Committee to raise that again. Thank you, Madam Speaker, and the concerns that were raised by the people. Thank you.

The Speaker -

Any other Honourable Member wish to speak? The Honourable Gillian Brooks.

The Hon. Gillian Brooks -

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the adjournment debate. And I would firstly like to congratulate the newly elected Public Accounts Committee Members and Chairs of the Select Committees. During my tenure on the previous Council, I served as a member of the Public Accounts Committee and on Select Committee One. And both of these committees prove invaluable in enabling scrutiny and raising public awareness and accountability. I was very recently appointed as the Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs, and I take this opportunity again to thank the Chief Minister. It will be a steep learning curve for me, and the Portfolio has many challenges ahead. This weekend saw cargo operations started from the new port in Ruperts, a project that started several years back. This is such a huge change to what has been our normal for so long. There will be teething problems to get all implemented, but I want to thank the staff for all that has been and is being done for the transition. We are undergoing an induction programme. And I would also like to extend my thanks to all of the portfolios for how informative these sessions have been to us. And I'll leave it here. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member. The Honourable Martin Henry.

The Hon. Martin Henry -

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I also would like to rise in support of the adjournment debate and just to speak to couple of the comments that my Honourable colleagues have just mentioned. But firstly, accordingly so, I am the survivor, coming from someone who I consider to be a survivor themselves. I would just like to reinforce the few points that my Honourable friends have just mentioned, which is a team of 12. Yes, scrutiny committees is important. Yes, being challenged is important, I have spent four years being challenged by Members on this side and on the other side today. But what is important is that as we move into the second term of the Ministerial Government, we will now be able to see with new Members on each side, what I consider to be the difficulties in running St Helena in the middle of nowhere and with aid dependency and a very limited budget. It will bring new perspectives to what we and the previous Ministerial team did, because now we will have Members that now will go through that process again and hopefully reinforce some of the things that has been done and some of the limitations we do have as a community. I think, for these four years as well, we also need

to be honest as a team about those limitations. There is no blue skies, there is no 'we must have this' and there is certainly no 'you have to find the money from somewheres'. This is the reality of living on St Helena. We are faced with the reality as many small islands are faced now with population decline. I only read a report on the weekend about New Zealand, a very big island with population decline because of the similar reasons to what we have. So this isn't unique to St Helena. How we challenge the future for the next four years is unique to St Helena, however, and it is unique to St Helena by the people we have around this table, first of all, leading the charge, but also from the Public Service, who we've all had really good presentations with over the last two weeks, and will continue to do so. And as one member highlighted earlier, the passion that lies within our own Public Service is there. We need to bring that to the forefront, and we need to bring that to the top as well. Passionate people need to lead this island, as well as people who are committed to planning and following strategy, because passion alone won't do it. We have to rely on all of our elements. I will just speak to a small part of where I see a team of 12 pushing forward with my own personal agenda, which is to develop and have, not only a better health service for St Helena, but also to be able to move us from the current statistics we see today. These statistics aren't just numbers. They are people who are affected by poor health and their poor health, you know, those statistics are increasing. We will not be able to afford as a health service going forward, to be able to address all of these things, if we don't change the trajectory of the health of the population of this island. But as Members highlighted earlier, you know, we will have a chair, we will have a Member that will support as the Children's Champion. We will have one that doing sports and culture. We also, we're talking about, you know, growing local et cetera. Without those elements, I can't achieve my goals. And it's important that we all understand that this isn't about me and this isn't about this Council, but this is about St Helena. We only can achieve that particular goal as a group of 12, but there are loads more that we only can achieve as a group of 12. I leave it there, Madam Speaker, I will have something more prepared for next time. But just to say well done to the Tourist team for Saturday's event, that was brilliant, and also, again, to members of the SHG who have been coming around and doing all of the induction programmes, which I think we've all found really useful as we go forward. And finally, to the Select Committee members that we have just elected today. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Andrew Turner.

The Hon. Andrew Turner -

Thank you, Madam Speaker. So firstly, Madam Speaker, I want to welcome the newly elected Chairs of the Select Committees and the members of the PAC, in particular the Honourable Dr Corinda Essex, who I greatly enjoyed serving with in Select Committee two in the previous term. These roles and the scrutiny they provide are so important to ensuring that government and the public service are working efficiently, effectively and in the best interests of the public. I'm now looking forward to engaging collaboratively and proactively with the scrutiny process in my new role. So as I rise today for the first time on this side of the table as Minister for Education, Skills and Employment, I'm deeply grateful for the trust that has been placed in me at this pivotal moment, and thank the Chief Minister for her confidence and for entrusting me with a portfolio that shapes not just policy but the lives and futures of everyone across our island. I want to really acknowledge the exceptional staff in this portfolio. Their expertise and dedication have been indispensable as I'm finding my feet in this new role. To the teachers who spark curiosity in every classroom, to the parents who partner with us in nurturing young minds, and to the pupils whose ambition and energy remind us of our shared purpose, thank you, and I look forward to meeting many more of you in the weeks and months ahead. I also wish to

recognise the contributions of my predecessor, the Honourable Julie Thomas. Under her leadership, the Primary school reorganisation was set in motion, a monumental undertaking. Seeing this project through will not be easy, and I thank Councillor Beard for his words on this. But I am committed to sustaining the momentum, and I welcome your insights and support alongside those of all Honourable Members, as we advance this important work. Madam Speaker, I'd like to thank Members from both sides of the House for their warm welcome and support, and I eagerly anticipate the robust debate and the genuine collaboration as we work together to empower every child and every adult to reach their fullest potential. Finally, I wish to give my thanks to the Honourable Attorney General for all his valuable work during his time with us. I have enjoyed working with him as a LegCo Member and quizzing him over the detailed nuances of legislation and as a Minister where he's given valuable advice as we all navigate our new roles. I wish him all the best and hope he will keep St Helena in his mind and perhaps even work with us again. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member. The Honourable Karl Thrower.

The Hon. Karl Thrower -

Thank you, Madam Speaker. First of all, I'd like to start by thanking and welcoming Members, new and old. We've now got two completely new members. One is obviously the Honourable Chief Minister, and the other one is the Honourable Denis Leo, who's smiling right now across the room at me, so I'm not sure he still realises what he's let himself in for on that one. So first of all, obviously, today we elected the Chairs and the members of the PAC and Scrutiny Committee One and Two. I'm not going to go over what people have already said about the importance of scrutiny, I've said it often enough, but one thing I do think we need to move forward with on scrutiny is that we need to start doing it before the fact. It's one thing that we do after the fact scrutiny, but I think we need to have more before the fact scrutiny, so that we can avoid making mistakes rather than fix them after we've already made them. I would like to thank the AG, I've been a pain to him in the very short time since taking up my post, and he's been extremely helpful. I will certainly miss him, although he does assure me that the person coming to replace him is equally as talented as he is, if not more so. But we'll see how that goes. We know where we've been with AGs before. I would like to thank all of the people involved in the tourism event on Saturday night, including the people who sent in the 650 photographs that were received on this. I have been told how they judge them and how they split them into groups, and that. It was enormously complicated and certainly a huge amount of work, so I would like to thank the judges on that as well. Hopefully, I've already spoke with the Head of Tourism about maybe making this more of an annual thing. It went extremely well, so we'll look into that. I would like now to address some of the problems or some of the issues that have already been raised. So with utility costs, obviously we're moving forward with that. I haven't had a substantive meeting on it yet. It's planned for this week and next week, but obviously we've already been talking about it, where I've been going around and meeting the directorates. The farming does need addressing and is being addressed. The Agricultural Policy will be carried on and brought to the House in good time. I do think there might be a little bit more work that needs to do to that, and I would like to actually set up a working group and invite some of the Members, Councillors to be members of that and go back. Tourism is the big one, isn't it? It was always seen as the way forward, central to the economy developing. We know that that hasn't delivered how it was first seen, and obviously now the job is to move forward and include it and start it growing, although we know it will be a slower burn than what was originally envisioned when we're talking about 30 tourism a year. The Port development, I am very happy to say, is outside of my portfolios. Bunkers Hill will need to be

picked up, absolutely, we need to sort out where that is. And fishing, so fishing I have, I'm attending a meeting this week with the fisher folk, and I think that's going to be my first significant meeting with them. We're going to go out and talk about the Jack quotas with them. I will say now that I've actually already said, that for that first meeting I will be there in an observer position, rather than participating fully in that debate. That debate needs to be held between the Marine team and the fishermen and the fisher ladies, if there are any there. Now, you know fishing, yeah it's a mess. We all know it's a mess. I stand by what I said, I think the contract is convoluted, I think there's actually stronger words you can use for it. We have to come up with a way to sort that out, and it's certainly something I will bring up very quickly with the new AG, when he arrives. I'm very happy to say, yeah oh, sorry! I didn't know! So he's actually behind me. So yes, we'll arrange a meeting about that very shortly. So that's it from me. So I raise in support of the adjournment, Madam Speaker. Thank you very much.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Attorney General.

The Hon. Attorney General -

Thank you, Madam Speaker. As you realise, this will be my last opportunity to address you from this position. Can I thank everybody for your very kind remarks. Whether I deserve them or not, is a different question, but they are very gratefully received. I've had a heck of a roller coaster ride in the last eight months. If you remember, when I first stood up in this House, I actually quoted from Shakespeare, and that was, 'let's kill all the lawyers'. I actually got the play wrong, it was Henry the sixth, not Henry the fourth, but nonetheless, it felt a very appropriate remark to make at the time, as I was hearing lots of criticism of what was happening in Chambers. I am glad to reflect that you might have reduced the volume of criticism, because I certainly do not hear it to the same extent as I did, but we have achieved a lot in the eight months that I have been here, for example, 36 separate bits of legislation of one form or another since March. Now, I have to say to you that is a programme that I don't suggest you repeat, because it's extraordinarily difficult to achieve. I've got some fantastic colleagues in Chambers, and it's appropriate for me to acknowledge them here today and to thank them for all their efforts. I also need to thank Elected Members, both past and present, for the kindness and support that you have shown me, including I will vividly remember to my dying day the presentation of the Communications Bill, when I was suffering with whatever was the respiratory illness that was going round at the time, and I was being supported both by the Chief Minister, then Chief Minister, and one of the other Ministers being cropped up with paracetamol and cough sweets. And it's not every day that happens to you, but we got through it, and we got it enacted and it's one of those successes that we can chalk up to the to the period in question. I also need to reflect upon the support that I have received, and more particularly, Chambers has received from the Governor, from the Civil Service, the Government itself and we can see that by the fact that we have been supported to expand in our numbers. We're going to recruit a Solicitor General, we're going also to recruit two new Legislative Drafters. I don't want to compare us constantly with the Falkland Islands, but I do, because obviously that's where I have been, and I'm very familiar with what happens there. We will now have an establishment that roughly equates to the establishment in the Attorney General's Chambers in the Falkland Islands. But our demands are very different. Our demands are very different because Chamber services three territories, not just one, and also the sheer volume of litigation we are managing here is not replicated in the Falkland Islands. In fact, when I was in position there, I didn't have to deal with any civil litigation to speak of at all. Now we have a case load of at least 200 matters on and going forward. Can I formally introduce you to my successor, Mr. Andrew Duncan. The advantage of having yet another Andrew and a guy with a surname

beginning with D is that you can just refer to AD the AG and it continues. In fact, it was quite funny, because a member of the public approached me last week and congratulated me on my appointment. And I had to say, well, funny, you should say that I'm the guy on the way out, and that that is truly the situation. I have literally just started my 39th year in legal practice. I have worked all over the place. I've worked in major international law firms. I've been a senior partner in some of those places. I've run my own legal business. I've worked in local government in the UK. Can I tell you, this eight months has been the hardest job I've ever done in my life, but equally, this last eight months has been the most rewarding job I've ever done. And Members, you are a key part of that. Our history is fascinating, our laws are sometimes bemusing, but crucially, they always keep you intellectually engaged and challenged, and that's something I'm clearly looking for. I failed retiring once, you brought me back into very much in harness. I'm going to attempt some form of semi-retirement, although I will be working three days a week, but as I need to be kept busy and if you want me, more importantly, if my successor wants me, I would always be here for you because I've got a huge place in my heart for St Helena. I love the island, I love the community, I love what you do, and more importantly, I love the kindness of the people, and the kindness has been shown to me in my eight months. So Madam Speaker, thank you for the privilege that I've been given to work amongst you and support you, and I wish all of you the best for the future. Thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you. (*Applause*) All Honourable Members have now spoken so I have, Honourable Mover do you wish to respond to the debate?

The Hon. Chief Minister -

Madam Speaker yes, I would. So firstly, perhaps again, congratulations to all the newly elected Honourable Members, to the chairs of the PAC and the Select Committees. As the Honourable Members have already contributed and applauded, commented on and applauded today, over the last two weeks and as described, Members of Legislative Council have been engaged in an intensive induction programme, giving us an introduction and up to date briefings on the working of all sectors of government. I take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed their time and expertise during this induction, including the portfolio directors and their senior management teams for briefing us on the current priorities, policies and legislative matters in their respective sectors; the St Helena Audit Service or the Audit Office for updating us on governance and financial oversight issues; His Excellency, the Governor and the Governor's office for providing insights into the governor's role and the current initiatives. And thank you to all, even those we have not yet met because the programme is not yet complete, for your willingness to engage and inform us as we settle into our new roles. The induction has been extremely helpful and informative. The frank and open discussions between officials and the Members of Legislative Council throughout the whole process has been greatly appreciated. We now look forward to working collaboratively with all of you for the betterment of St Helena in the weeks and months ahead, in particular, as we progress our strategic objectives and priorities, through the strategic objective framework and move into the upcoming budgetary negotiations. I also want to reaffirm the strong commitment to more open, transparent and accountable government. We recognise that achieving this relies on improving our communication. In practice, this means the information that is shared is informative, accessible and as detailed and practical as possible, helping people make informed decisions and building trust and accountability. We are now taking firm steps to enhance communication and content in recognition of how important good communication is to our work and expected by the community. Once our Communications Strategy is in place, we will inform everyone of how we intend to improve communications going forward. I'd also like to express sincere gratitude

and commendation for the hard work and dedication of everyone who has been involved in the completion of the new cargo handling facility at Rupert's and the monumental effort to relocate all of the port facilities, port and related services from the wharf in Jamestown to the new facilities. The new cargo handling at Rupert's became operational last week, and we saw the first unloading of cargo at Ruperts on Friday under the new arrangements, a significant coordinated effort that involved multiple teams. There will no doubt be some challenges to solve as the new facilities, operations and procedures are put into practice and use for the first time. However, it is important to note that this modern port was designed to provide a safer working environment for all. It is also a deeply historical event. For the first time in the island's history, Jamestown Wharf is no longer the main point of entry for the import and export of goods from St Helena. As Rupert begins its new role as the main port of entry, we can begin to imagine a new future for the wharf in Jamestown, one that opens up opportunities for redevelopment and new uses. This marks an end of an era and the start of a new chapter in St Helena's maritime history. I would also like to support the statements that have been made during the debate, and I want to clearly reaffirm that there will be no changes to the priority in updating the Immigration law, nor any change the policy behind the legislation. The decision taken by Executive Council last week to revoke the Commencement Order, for the Immigration Ordinance 2025, which had been set to come into force on the 1st of October 2025, was made purely to address a legal interpretation issue and avoid unintended consequences. It does not signal any loss of momentum or importance in our immigration reform. I extend thanks to Andrew Dawson our AG for his services in this House. I wish you safe travels, but also hope that we will have the opportunity to work with you again in the future. And finally, thank you as a team of 12, I am excited to be working with you all to address the matters, or to consider and address the matters that you've raised during the debate today and beyond and to progress good governance of our island for the better future of St Helena. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker -


Thank you, Honourable Chief Minister. Thank you, Honourable Members, that concludes our business for today. I now put the question that this Council do adjourn until the 24th of October 2025.

Question put and agreed.

The Speaker -

Thank you. Enjoy the rest of the day.

Council adjourned.


Honourable Speaker

5/2/2026

Date