

Alarm Forest Constituency Meeting

Jamestown Community Centre
Monday 16 February 2026 at 7:30 pm



Chair: Councillor Julie Thomas

Present: 15 Constituents
Cllr Clint Beard
Head of Public Service

Secretary: Anita Legg

Recording: Meeting recorded

1. Welcome & Purpose

Councillor Julie Thomas welcomed all attendees and introduced the Head of Public Service (HoPS), Mr. Ian Todd, attending his first Alarm Forest constituency meeting. His visit formed part of a wider island engagement programme to understand concerns, operational gaps and opportunities for improvement across government functions. Residents were encouraged to raise issues openly and constructively.

2. Road Closures, Poor Coordination & Cargo Collection Disruption

A major topic was frustration around the Longwood Road closure, which clashed with cargo collection schedules. Constituents explained that after a week-long delay in offloading the ship, Tuesday and Wednesday were the only days available for the public to collect goods — but these were the very days the road was closed. Whilst residents accepted the need for roadworks and appreciated the quality of work undertaken, the lack of coordination between the Roads Section and Customs created unnecessary hardship.

HoPS acknowledged that roads and customs had been working in isolation, with good intentions but poor communication. He committed to addressing this at leadership level.

Actions:

- HoPS to speak with Customs and the Roads Section about improving coordination and explore options for extended or adjusted customs hours.
- Assess whether short-term adjustments to road closure schedules are possible when delayed cargo arrives.

3. Air Freight Reliability & Saturday Collection Issues

Constituents reported ongoing uncertainty about air freight arrivals and being sent to the Airport unnecessarily due to last-minute changes, such as freight not being loaded in Jo'berg; they asked if air freight could be collected on Monday or Tuesday instead.

The HoPS recognised communication remains unreliable and real-time updates are needed for merchants and individuals.

Actions:

- HoPS to review freight communication processes with Customs and Airport teams.
- Investigate how to guarantee same-day information when aircraft depart or offload cargo.

4. Access to Rupert's Beach during Cargo Operations

Residents expressed concern that the island's only safe swimming beach becomes inaccessible for long periods whenever the ship is in port; they questioned whether closures are proportionate to actual risks, given the large new port area and additional container storage.

Clarification was requested on what constitutes a "Level 1" access day and how often the beach can be safely opened.

Actions:

- HoPS to meet port management to understand operational decisions.
- Review criteria for beach closures and Level 1 access.
- Report back on whether closures can be reduced.

5. Rupert's Beach Facilities – Showers, Privacy & Safety

While residents welcomed the upgraded toilets, they described significant privacy and safeguarding concerns regarding open shower areas. Women in particular felt unsafe, with no enclosed changing spaces or privacy screens. Simple improvements, such as partitions, enclosed cubicles, hooks and sheltered changing areas were requested. Concerns extended to beach safety, uneven steps, and lack of a designated path to the beach.

Actions:

- HoPS to review feasibility of installing privacy screens or enclosed cubicles.
- SHG to explore minor works to improve path safety and changing facilities.

6. Fisheries Sector – Accountability, Culture & the Albatross Licensing Issue

A lengthy discussion focused on the lack of accountability within SHG, using the recent Albatross incident as a case study. Residents argued the vessel should never have been treated as a local boat when it was South African-flagged, and policies requiring an access agreement were clear and longstanding. Many saw the official explanation of "misinterpretation" as implausible. Mistakes in fisheries have real economic consequences, including lost investor confidence.

HoPS explained his management philosophy: accountability must address system failures as well as individual performance. He stressed that blame-first cultures cause staff to hide errors, while candour helps prevent recurrence. Residents insisted, however, that unless senior officers are held accountable, the culture will not improve. HoPS said he wanted to get to a point where the fisheries review is carried out, and the sector is up and running as a sustainable economy.

Actions:

- HoPS to ensure Minister Thrower's fisheries review is genuinely open minded.
- Encourage cultural change within SHG to promote early disclosure of errors.
- Continue dialogue with fishers to rebuild trust.

7. Bunkers Hill Development – Road Damage, Safety Risks & Lack of Answers

Residents revisited a four-year issue regarding the Bunkers Hill access road, damaged by developer works. The road is eroding, with deep gullies forming; families fear driving at night, and emergency vehicles may struggle to access properties. Community members stressed they have been promised updates for years with no clarity and conflicting information persists between SHG, the developer, and Councillors. Residents have spent personal funds patching the road, only for the work to fail due to unresolved drainage issues.

Actions:

- HoPS to coordinate with Minister Throver to deliver final determination by end of March.
- SHG to ensure decision aligns with budget capacity for next financial year.
- Drainage and road integrity concerns to be incorporated into the assessment.

8. Waste Management – Broken Bins & Animal Scavenging

Residents described broken communal bins near the top of the road entering into the Bunkers Hill vicinity, with rubbish frequently scattered by animals. They requested either replacement bins or a single large container.

Actions:

- Councillor Thomas to check with Waste Management on the possibility of replacement bins.

9. Roads Ownership, Classification & Past Upgrades by Residents

Questions were raised about the policy for maintenance of roads and SHG adopting privately built roads without offering support at the time. HoPS explained there is a definitive GIS map showing government-maintained roads, and a Roads Team Officer inspects all government roads monthly. There is no funding for private or community roads.

Actions:

- SHG to review individual road ownership cases highlighted at the meeting.
- Councillor Thomas to check with the Roads section on a specific matter i.e. if anything could be done about water running into the resident's property.

10. Telecommunications – High Prices, Poor Speeds & Contract Renewal

A resident expressed frustration with Sure's high pricing, poor speeds and inconsistent service. HoPS explained that the Sure contract is nearing end-of-term and negotiations with potential providers are ongoing. It was acknowledged it was a difficult market due to the island's isolation and not an easy fix.

Actions:

- SHG to continue contract negotiations to achieve faster, cheaper, more reliable internet.
- Ensure transition planning protects low-use customers from price spikes.

Mr Ian Todd then left the meeting and discussion moved to matters arising from the previous meeting.

11. Consumer Protection & Short Shelf-Life Goods

Residents noted that goods sourced by middlemen often arrive close to expiry, leaving consumers disadvantaged. They expressed strong support for modern consumer-protection policies and agreed that consumer protection remains a priority topic for residents. Councillor Thomas said the response to a question in LegCo was that Government has yet to prioritise this.

12. Youth Behaviour, Social Issues & Safeguarding Board

Councillor Thomas reported slow progress on youth behaviour initiatives due to safeguarding board restructuring. A multi-agency meeting on social media risks was planned for the end of the month. Concerns were raised about the school's reluctance to adopt AI-based learning tools, despite student interest. There is a need to ensure youth voices are included in upcoming forums.

Residents highlighted growing social challenges and inconsistent discipline.

13. Social Benefits, Employment & Casual Work Rules

Residents noted inconsistencies in how casual work affects benefits, particularly compared to temporary arrangements in social care. Some felt the benefits system creates disincentives to work and there is a need for clearer, fairer rules recognised.

Actions:

- Councillor Thomas to discuss pathways for policy adjustments with Ministers and seek clarification on legal constraints.

14. Post 16 Opportunities & Inclusion

Cllr Turner had talked about post 16 opportunities during LegCo and Inclusion is also being looked at. Councillor Thomas also explained about the pure maths issue that she was looking into, which was currently only being offered to certain students.

15. Tourism Signage & Public Toilets

Residents highlighted outdated, inconsistent, or poorly located signage, as well as a shortage of public toilets at key visitor sites. While some signs are being repainted and new ones are in development, progress feels slow and unclear.

Actions:

- Councillor Thomas to obtain detailed updates on specific signage queries.
- Raise issue of additional tourist-area toilets with relevant departments.

16. Proposal for an Alarm Forest Community Centre & Community Willingness to Assist with District Improvements

Residents expressed strong support for establishing a local community centre, possibly the old Police Post or Judges Lodge. They stressed the need for a gathering point for all ages and suggested the community could assist with refurbishment. Alarm Forest has strong community spirit. They noted that if government provided permissions or materials, locals would volunteer labour for small works like steps, paths, or minor improvements.

Actions:

- There was majority interest in a district community centre and Councillor Thomas to explore feasibility with SHG.
- SHG to explore a flexible approach allowing small community projects to proceed with appropriate support.

17. Closing Remarks

The meeting closed with a renewed commitment from both the Head of Public Service and Councillor Thomas to deliver clearer communication and firmer timelines. Residents reiterated their desire for action after years of delays in multiple areas.

Councillor Thomas thanked everyone and there being no further business, closed the meeting at 9:50 pm.