

Constituency Meeting

Jamestown Community Centre
Wednesday 11 February 2026 at 7:30 pm



Chair: Councillor Corinda Essex

Present: 9 Constituents

Secretary: Anita Legg

Recording: Meeting recorded

1. Welcome & Review of Previous Action Points

Councillor Corinda Essex welcomed all attendees and opened the meeting with confirmation that the minimum wage would be placed on the agenda as requested at the previous meeting. Constituents agreed to first receive updates on previously raised issues before progressing to new business.

2. Connectivity and Internet Access

Constituents were advised that no final decision has yet been made regarding the way forward on connectivity and internet provision as options are still being reviewed. Constituents expressed concern about the lack of visible progress and clarity on timelines.

Outcome: Matter remains under Ministerial consideration.

3. Fisheries Review

It was reported that a comprehensive fisheries review is to take place, examining all aspects of the sector with the aim of determining the best long-term approach. A working group will be established to conduct the review and produce recommendations.

Constituents noted that detailed and informative discussion had already taken place in Legislative Council but raised concerns that repeats of those sessions are not announced in advance.

Action: Councillor Essex to request that advance notice be given for repeats of Legislative Council hearings to improve public access to information.

4. Keep St Helena Clean

This was a good idea but not a high priority for government at the moment, although not forgotten.

Concerns were raised regarding derelict vehicles and untidy areas. While some improvement has occurred, enforcement is limited due to gaps in legislation and funding constraints.

Action: Raise need for stronger legislative enforcement powers with AG Chambers.

5. Road Safety, Traffic Congestion and Enforcement

Road congestion, parking chaos, and traffic management remain pressing concerns. There is increasing urgency due to the growing number of vehicles on the island and limited parking availability. Speeding through Jamestown was also raised as a concern.

The Road Traffic Ordinance (2016) has not been enacted and the Attorney General is working with the Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs to prioritise and fast-track key enforceable elements if a full revised ordinance cannot be brought into force immediately. The Attorney General had expressed reservations about fixed penalty notices, suggesting alternatives such as installing more street furniture (e.g., bollards). Members strongly disagreed with this approach, describing it as impractical for Jamestown and insufficient to address enforcement needs. Portfolio responsibility for FPN is still being decided.

Action: Councillor Essex to ask Member Reps to take forward the issue of speeding to the Police Forum.

6. Legislation Backlog and AG Chambers Capacity

Discussion ensued on the significant legislative backlog, despite some progress. The core issue identified is limited drafting capacity within AG Chambers. Recruitment of two legislative drafters is underway, which is expected to improve throughput, though progress will take time. There was open frustration regarding structural governance challenges creating barriers to accountability and delays in legislative reform. Concerns also included: lack of performance management and succession planning and high turnover of overseas officers causing institutional instability.

Outcome: Ongoing engagement with Chief Secretary and Governor; longer-term consideration of constitutional reform (noted as complex and UK-dependent).

7. Business Development and Economic Support

Discussions were held with the FAM team who was supportive of tourism development. While some financial support for entrepreneurs may become available, it was emphasised that money alone is insufficient. Entrepreneurs lack structured business advisory support (e.g., business case development, viability assessments, accounting preparation).

Action: Further engagement with Economic Development and Financial Services Regulatory Authority during upcoming visit.

8. Payment Systems Modernisation

Some businesses have implemented alternative payment systems, but none fully meet operational needs. Regulatory and technical challenges remain.

Action: Raise concerns with Financial Services Regulatory Authority during upcoming visit.

9. Mental Health Provision

It was noted that specialist psychiatric advice is available via UK video link. Feedback from some constituents indicates this has been helpful.

10. Minimum Wage Consultation

Four options were presented:

1. No increase (remain at £4.50)
2. Increase to £4.70

3. Increase to £4.85
4. Increase to £5.00

After robust discussion, the majority of attendees supported Option 4 (increase to £5.00), acknowledging affordability risks but prioritising workers' welfare.

Action: Feedback to Employment Rights Committee reflecting majority support for Option 4.

11. Temporary Contract Staff (TCs) and Succession Planning

Significant concern was expressed regarding disparities between local workers and TCs, particularly in relation to inducement packages and cost-of-living allowances. Constituents highlighted:

- Lack of transparency in advertising inducement packages.
- Need for diaspora outreach.
- Weak delivery of succession planning.
- Monitoring of TCs targets.
- Constitutional limitations preventing elected oversight of HR.

Outcome: Ministers had indicated intention to pursue improved publicity of recruitment packages.

12. Public Transport Service

The promised public transport review has not yet occurred but is expected soon. Concerns were raised regarding limited-service schedules (particularly Saturdays), inadequate bus stop signage, and limited route information.

Action: Councillor Essex to follow up with relevant officials

13. Tourism Signage and Visitor Information

Members expressed concern over poor signage, lack of visible tourism information, inadequate walking route leaflets, limited bus service coordination for tourists and better wi-fi hotspots.

There was agreement that even small improvements (clear bus stop markers, printed walking guides, signage on the seafront) could significantly enhance visitor experience.

Action: Councillor Essex to follow up with Tourism and explore allocation of ring-fenced funds for signage improvements.

14. Openness and Transparency

Concern was expressed about limited information contained in official "top lines" released following Executive Council meetings. It was noted this concern has already been raised with Ministers, who indicated intention to gradually expand information disclosure.

Action: Continue pressing for clearer public communications and advance notice of Ministers' radio programmes.

11. Airport Operations Crisis

A substantial portion of the meeting focused on the ongoing airport disruption caused by fire engine failures.

Key updates provided: parts ordered from Germany; specialist engineers being flown in; medevac flights operating with reduced capacity; repairs expected before week's end.

However constituents raised serious concerns about: financial losses incurred by travellers; inconsistent treatment of passengers; insurance complications; lack of clear guidance; perceived inequity in assistance provided to different groups.

A specific personal financial hardship was shared, resulting from cancelled flights and accommodation losses and Councillor Essex strongly recommended the affected individual meet directly with the Chief Secretary to present their cases face-to-face, as formal policies on compensation were unclear.

Outcome: A future independent inquiry into the airport failure was anticipated once operations stabilise but operational repair remains immediate priority.

Action: Affected individuals were advised to escalate directly to Chief Secretary

12. Closing

The meeting concluded with agreement that while significant progress is being attempted in several areas, systemic structural issues — legislative backlog, HR governance constraints, enforcement funding, and communication gaps — continue to impede responsiveness.

Councillor Essex thanked attendees for candid contributions and committed to carrying forward the agreed action points.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9:05 pm.