

Constituency Meeting

Jamestown Community Centre
Monday 27 July 2026 at 7:30 pm



Chair: Councillor Corinda Essex

Present: 5 Constituents + Police Representative

Secretary: Anita Legg

Recording: Meeting recorded

1. Welcome

Councillor Corinda Essex opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees, in particular Acting Police Sergeant Graham Lane, of the Royal St Helena Police Service, Neighbourhood Police Team. She advised that the first half hour of the meeting would be set aside for discussion of policing matters, after which the meeting would move on to other business.

2. Neighbourhood Policing and Community Safety

The Police representative gave an update on the recent work of the Neighbourhood Policing Team. Key priorities include improving community visibility; strengthening public trust; reducing anti-social behaviour; protecting vulnerable people; improving engagement with schools, young people and parents; also working collectively with Elected Members. The team has increased their use of social media, is restructuring shift patterns to allow better weekday engagement, and is working more closely with multi-agencies, including the Youth Parliament. A major focus was early intervention, especially with children and young people; also developing a youth safe space. The school liaison role was discussed in detail, including how it supports schools, parents, and safeguarding concerns. Constituents raised whether this role could also help address school absenteeism, similar to the former school attendance officer role. The Police representative agreed to research this further.

Constituents were happy to report that anti-social behaviour seem to be decreasing, with improved police visibility and community engagement seen as contributing factors. They also discussed the importance of changing public attitudes over time, including around littering and respect for shared spaces.

Action: Police to research the former school attendance officer role and how it relates to current school liaison work and report back.

Cllr Essex thanked Acting Police Sergeant Lane and he then left the meeting.

3. Access to Constituency Meeting Notes

Constituency meeting notes are now being placed on the SHG website. Not everyone can access or navigate the website easily therefore it was suggested notes are also placed on the LegCo page. Hard copies will be placed in the Public Library and Cllr Essex offered to send notes by email however constituents needed to provide their email addresses.

4. Review of Action Points from the Previous Meeting

Councillor Essex revisited concerns raised at the previous meeting and provided updates:

4.1 Connectivity and Telecoms

Negotiations are ongoing, but there is no clear timescale. Constituents expressed frustration that the island is not making full use of the undersea cable. Questions were raised about whether there is a Plan B, whether alternative providers are being considered, and whether spare cable capacity is being advertised internationally.

Action: Cllr Essex stated that she would check regarding advertisement of spare capacity

4.2 Fisheries Review

The fisheries review is still at the situational analysis stage, with options expected to be developed later for which it was hoped there would be full public consultation.

Cllr Essex had asked Minister Thrower what monitoring is carried out to ensure Saint Tuna Corporation Ltd is complying with its agreement with SHG and he was working on a response. Concern was also raised around why the STC fishing boat appears underused.

Action: Cllr Essex to find out from Minister Thrower if this information will be made public

Discussion also ensued around why substantial investment and multiple fisheries initiatives over many decades have not resulted in a sustainable, thriving local fishing industry, and stressed the need for inclusive planning, fair access to opportunities, and long-term sustainability.

4.3 Advance Notice for Repeats of Legislative Council Meetings

Councillor Essex reported that following her requests, SAMS now does give advance notice, whenever they can, on when LegCo meetings are going to be repeated over the radio.

4.4 Legislation, Enforcement and Public Cleanliness

The need for stronger enforcement around littering, traffic, and public spaces was discussed. A legislative work plan has been produced, showing priorities but not yet firm dates. Constituents felt this should be made public so they can monitor progress and hold government accountable.

There has been little progress on fixed penalty notices, although they may soon be introduced for environmental offences. Speeding in Jamestown had been taken forward and was noted as having improved.

The backlog in legislation remains a concern and the Attorney General was considering options such as using smaller select committees to review bills, to try and get these through the House more quickly. Constituents raised further concern that Legislative Council is not fulfilling its core responsibility of considering and passing legislation in a timely manner.

Action: To seek publication of the legislative work plan once finalised.

4.5 Business Development and Economic Support

The budget includes £50,000 to support new businesses with business plans and related costs but could be too limited to meet private sector needs. Banking reforms were said to focus mainly on mortgages rather than wider business development.

4.6 Mental Health Provision

Provision is in the budget and mental health services are expected to receive increased staffing and funding.

4.7 Succession Planning

Succession planning remains a major issue, but now that HR has a full team, this should progress.

4.8 Public Transport Service

A public transport review had taken place, though some constituents felt the survey was inadequate. However, SHG did receive some feedback and hopefully improvements will be made. Bus stop signs are expected to become legally enforceable once changes are made to the Schedule, to the Road Traffic Ordinance.

4.9 Tourism Signage

Tourism signage is also expected through tourism development project funding and hopefully will be in place soon.

4.10 Airport Closure Investigation

An independent technical forensic adviser was expected to arrive to investigate the recent airport closure. The investigation will focus on technical causes, after which a decision will be made on whether further investigation is needed.

5. Matters Raised by Constituents

5.1 Jonathan the Tortoise

A member of the public challenged public claims about the age and history of Jonathan the tortoise, arguing that he should only be 90 years. His school day accounts suggest a different history. It was agreed to ask officials what proof exists to support Jonathan's stated age. The discussion also highlighted the importance of preserving and teaching local oral history.

Action: To ask about evidence supporting Jonathan the tortoise's stated age

5.2 Budget Funding and Conditionality

A major discussion focused on UK Government funding conditions and the lack of public explanation. It was explained that if SHG does not overspend its budget by more than £250,000, it may receive an additional £1 million the following year. If the condition is not met, the uplift may be withheld. Other directorate-specific conditions were also mentioned, including Immigration legislation, the LDCP, Health service standards, and Education targets.

Constituents expressed concern that this approach could be unfair, especially where overspends arise from unavoidable areas such as health, overseas medical treatment, or air access. There was also concern about whether the MoU had been signed.

Action: To clarify UK Government funding conditions and ask the Chief Minister if this could be publicised

5.3 Tax and Child Allowance and Concessions

Constituents discussed the personal income tax allowance and noted SHG is considering options, including changing tax bands or increasing the threshold more meaningfully. A child allowance is also being considered, but details are not finalised, including whether it will be means-tested. Similar concerns were raised about concessionary bus passes, arguing that benefits should be targeted at those most in need.

5.4 Utilities Bills

There was discussion about utility billing and the move toward monthly billing. Some welcomed clearer bills showing actual charges, but concerns were raised about public confusion, interest charges, and whether people should still be able to pay quarterly if they prefer.

5.5 Jamestown Activity and Community Life

Constituents reflected on the reduced number of people seen in Jamestown on a Sunday evening. Some linked this to lack of money, while others suggested there are fewer community activities and less incentive for people to come out.

5.6 Renewable Energy and Capital Projects

Constituents noted that renewable energy plans are expected to take a phased approach, starting with more solar panels if funding is approved through EDIP however there is no clarity on EDIP yet. Constituents asked for a clearer pipeline of future capital projects.

Action: To follow up on EDIP capital project pipeline for the outer years.

5.7 Seafront, Wharf and Boat Management

Concerns were raised about the condition and management of the Jamestown Wharf area, especially after cargo operations moved to Rupert's; this was intended to be a recreational area. Discussion included deteriorating boats, limited space, lack of enforcement, and the need for clear rules around how long boats can remain ashore. There was support for a better-managed boat repair and storage system.

5.8 Open ExCo Meetings and Public Trust

A constituent raised concern that some Ministers had previously promised not to accept ministerial roles unless open Executive Council meetings were introduced, but this has not happened. He felt that those Ministers had not adequately explained the change to the public.

5.9 Shipping

A constituent asked about "option A" for shipping, involving large container ships passing St Helena and a barge system to offload containers, described as potentially reducing freight costs. Cllr Essex stated that no detailed work had been done on this yet.

5.10 Companies Register and Financial Services

A query was also raised about progress on the Companies Register and Financial Services legislation. It was noted the updated Companies Register has been delayed, and further legislation was needed but was included in the programme of backlog legislation (as stated in 4.4 above).

6. Closing

Councillor Essex thanked constituents for attending and for the good discussion.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9:40 pm.