



Constituency Meeting Notes – Blue Hill Community Centre

Date: 6 August 2026

Chair: Hon. Clint Beard

Attendees: 10 Constituents

1. Welcome

The Hon. Clint Beard welcomed residents to the Blue Hill constituency meeting and thanked those in attendance for their continued interest and participation in constituency matters. He explained that the meeting would begin with a review of matters raised at the previous meeting and updates on issues he had been pursuing with relevant departments and organisations. He noted that several of the concerns raised were common across different districts and that, following the passage of the budget in July, he intended to continue pressing for progress where responses or action had been delayed.

The Chair emphasised that the purpose of the meetings was to provide residents with an opportunity to raise concerns directly and to allow issues to be followed up with the relevant authorities. He encouraged residents to continue contacting him with constituency concerns, including matters requiring further clarification or formal responses.

The Chair informed residents that a police officer was expected to attend the meeting, subject to operational commitments, to provide an overview of the Community Policing Engagement. However, no confirmation was received that an officer would be unable to attend. In the absence of an officer, the Chair provided his own overview of the engagement and the police's efforts to adopt a more community-based approach.

2. Community Policing Engagement

The meeting included discussion on the importance of strengthening the relationship between the police and the community. It was noted that the police were seeking to adopt a more community-based approach and had intended to provide a brief overview of this approach as part of the engagement.

The Chair acknowledged that policing must continue to fulfil its core law-enforcement responsibilities, but expressed the view that the community aspect of policing had previously become less prominent and should be strengthened. He considered the move towards more community-based policing to be positive and encouraged residents to raise any specific concerns they wished to have communicated to the police.

The discussion reflected a broader concern that effective community engagement should involve communication, visibility and responsiveness, rather than only intervention when problems arise. The Chair indicated that issues raised by residents could be passed on to the police and that continued dialogue between residents and the police should be encouraged.

3. Review of Action Points from the Previous Meeting

A substantial portion of the meeting was devoted to reviewing outstanding matters from the previous meeting and reporting on progress.

3.1 Roads and drainage: The Chair reported that Thompson Road and associated drainage remained outstanding. He had continued to follow up with the relevant authorities and noted that the roads budget was limited. An August maintenance programme was understood to include verge and ground clearance and pothole maintenance. Some improvement had been seen through the use of private contractors, although residents considered that further work was required. The Chair undertook to continue following up with the relevant officers, including arranging direct discussions where necessary rather than relying solely on correspondence.

3.2 Road safety was also discussed, particularly visibility, road edges and the need for reflective markers in areas where walls, bends and other features could create hazards for drivers at night. The Chair agreed to raise the matter again with the relevant authorities.

3.3 Renewable energy strategy: The previous request for access to the current Renewable Energy Strategy was revisited. The only publicly accessible document located was dated 2016, despite information having been received that an updated version existed. The Chair confirmed that he would follow up with the Minister to establish whether an updated strategy had been completed and where it could be accessed by the public.

The discussion also considered the wider renewable-energy programme, including the existing solar farm, wind turbines and the potential use of battery storage. There was particular interest in understanding how much electricity the solar installation currently contributes to the grid. The Chair undertook to obtain accurate figures rather than speculate and to seek further information from the relevant officials.

3.4 Connect and electricity billing: Residents raised continuing concerns about electricity costs, the monthly billing system and the effect of the minimum-use charge on small businesses and organisations. The Chair agreed to seek clarification from Connect regarding the £60 charge and the wider tariff arrangements. Concerns were also raised about estimated monthly bills and whether customers could continue to pay over a longer period without incurring penalties. The Chair agreed that clear information should be obtained and communicated to residents, as the issue was causing uncertainty across the island.

3.5 Water supply: Residents sought reassurance regarding the security of water supplies to Blue Hill and surrounding areas. The response received was that Blue Hill would continue to have a water supply, although residents raised questions about the wider water infrastructure and the ability of the system to support future demand, including tourism. The matter was identified as one requiring further clarification.

3.6 Fuel and bulk fuel storage: The meeting noted that a fuel price adjustment was expected, although the precise amount had not yet been confirmed. The Chair explained that the new bulk fuel storage arrangements were intended to increase storage capacity and potentially reduce the frequency and cost of fuel shipments. The additional capacity was viewed as beneficial, although global fuel-price fluctuations would continue to affect costs on the island.

3.7 Airport and air services: The existing Airlink arrangements and the future contract position were discussed. The Chair noted the difficulties of attracting alternative carriers given the island's limited market and operating conditions. Airport improvements had also been undertaken following a previous report. The meeting further discussed the issue of Ascension as a possible diversion airport and the distinction between an emergency diversion and a planned alternate airport. The Chair undertook to seek further clarification on the matter.

3.8 Safety and harbour matters: Concerns previously raised regarding harbour safety and the authority of the Harbour Master were revisited. The Chair reported that changes to the relevant ordinance had reduced the Harbour Master's powers and that work was underway to restore appropriate authority to manage vessels and safety issues.

3.9 Rupert's Jetty: The condition of Rupert's Jetty was also revisited. The Chair reported that he had raised the matter with the relevant officials and had sought confirmation from FCDO. The information received indicated that the structure remained manageable and serviceable, and the Chair confirmed that he retained written correspondence supporting that assessment.

4. Topics Raised

The meeting then moved to wider issues raised by residents and the Chair.

4.1 Cost of living and food security: The increasing cost of living was a recurring concern, with electricity, freight and fuel identified as significant contributors. The Chair raised food security as an issue that warranted greater attention, particularly given the island's dependence on imported goods. He noted the importance of considering what could be produced locally and reducing reliance on external supplies where practical. The existing water subsidy was also discussed; it was confirmed that no increase had been made, although the subsidy was expected to continue for the financial year.

4.2 Sand extraction and construction: Residents raised concerns about the availability and licensing of sand extraction and the resulting impact on construction activity. It was noted that some building work and contractors had been affected. The Chair explained that certain areas were subject to restrictions and that some form of permit or licence was required, although he did not have the full details and would need to clarify the requirements.

4.3 **Crane facilities and lifting capacity:** The age and condition of cranes were raised as a safety concern. Some parts were reportedly difficult to repair or replace, and the reduced lifting capacity was considered a potential hazard. The possibility of acquiring a new crane was identified for further consideration.

4.4 **Employment, recruitment and vocational development:** There was extensive discussion around local employment opportunities and the need to ensure that islanders receive fair opportunities to enter employment and progress into skilled and senior positions. Concerns were raised about imported workers, recruitment practices and differences in remuneration. The Chair stressed that local candidates should be given fair consideration first, while also acknowledging that where suitably qualified locals were unavailable or unwilling to undertake particular work, external recruitment might be necessary.

The meeting also considered training and the responsibility of existing programmes to develop local people so that they can progress into employment. The Chair emphasised the importance of changing attitudes towards work and ensuring that local people take opportunities available to them.

4.5 **Pay parity and TC salaries:** Concerns were raised about differences between locally recruited staff and externally recruited staff, including salaries and allowances. The Chair indicated that he would seek clarity from the Chief Minister regarding the remuneration arrangements and whether allowances created significant differences in overall compensation. The principle of equal pay for equal work and greater transparency in employment arrangements was discussed.

4.6 **Government expenditure and contract management:** Residents questioned whether public expenditure was delivering sufficient benefit to the community. Particular attention was given to consultancy expenditure and the extent to which consultancy work ultimately resulted in completed projects. The Chair stressed the importance of contract management and ensuring that public money produces measurable benefits for taxpayers.

4.7 **Land and funding:** The proposed distribution of approximately £70,000 for land-related purposes was discussed. It was understood that the funding would not be limited to government-owned land and that privately owned land could also be considered. However, the criteria and process for registering interest had not yet been confirmed. The Chair indicated that the arrangements were still being developed, with an emphasis on linking funding to clear obligations and outcomes.

Formal follow-up and accountability: The Chair reminded residents that matters requiring an official response could be raised as formal questions in the House when formal sittings resumed. Such questions would provide a recorded response and require follow-up. He encouraged residents to identify issues where a formal public answer was required.

4.8 **Cost of Living** – Residents raised concerns about the rising cost of living, particularly the impact of freight, fuel and electricity costs. They expressed a desire for more regular and up-to-date information on these issues.

4.9 **Casons Area** – Concerns were raised regarding overhanging vegetation and associated safety issues, with residents questioning why the overgrowth could not be trimmed back to improve visibility and safety.

4.10 **Community Feedback** – Constituents expressed frustration that there was “**too much talk and not enough action,**” emphasising the need for greater follow-through and tangible progress on issues raised.

The meeting concluded with the Chair thanking residents for their attendance and participation. He noted that the strong attendance demonstrated continued community interest in local and island-wide affairs. He reaffirmed his commitment to following up on the matters raised and encouraged residents to continue contacting him with issues requiring attention.