

Constituency Meeting Notes – Levelwood Constituency



Date: 29 July 2026

Chair: Hon. Ronald Coleman

Attendees: 6 Constituents, and Acting Chief of Police Mr Julian Pezzanni

1. Welcome

The meeting was opened by the Hon. Ronald Coleman, who welcomed those present on what was described as a cold evening. A particular welcome was extended to the Acting Chief of Police, Julian Pezzanni, who had attended to speak with residents about the introduction of neighbourhood policing and to respond to any questions or concerns relating to policing in the community.

2. Community Policing Engagement

The Acting Chief explained that he had been serving in the acting role for approximately four months while arrangements were being made for a permanent Chief of Police. He advised that a new appointment process was underway and expressed hope that a permanent Chief would be in place within the following two to three months.

The Acting Chief provided an overview of current policing priorities and developments. He reported that anti-social behaviour was showing a downward trend, although it remained an issue requiring attention. A dedicated neighbourhood policing team had been established, comprising local officers with knowledge of the island and its communities. The intention was to localise policing and strengthen the relationship between officers and residents.

Particular emphasis was placed on engagement with young people through schools. The police community team was working in schools to promote appropriate behavioural standards, encourage positive citizenship and provide support to young people. The police were also adopting a more proactive, problem-solving approach to anti-social behaviour, looking beyond individual incidents to understand and address wider underlying issues.

The Acting Chief reported that overall crime detection rates were approximately 60%, with around 80% of cases reaching conviction where they proceeded to court. However, He identified online crime as an emerging concern. Residents were advised that criminals outside the island were increasingly able to target people through mobile phones and online platforms, including through account takeovers and demands for money or other actions. He stressed that education and awareness were particularly important in protecting children, young people and families from such threats.

The meeting also heard that the police workforce remained relatively young and inexperienced, and that efforts were being made to increase the experience and confidence of officers and improve their visibility in communities. Officers were being encouraged to be more public-facing, including in rural areas, and the Police Service was making greater use of social media to engage with the public.

Residents raised the importance of friendly and approachable police officers and noted the value of officers visiting communities simply to speak with residents and provide reassurance. The Acting Chief agreed that community interaction was an important part of effective policing and encouraged residents to work with the Police Service by providing information and raising concerns.

Recruitment was identified as a significant challenge. There were four vacancies for local officers, with recruitment also taking place for tutor constables. There were additional vacancies at sergeant level

and for the permanent Chief of Police. The Acting Chief explained that senior ranks had been reduced in order to place greater emphasis on frontline policing and visibility. He noted that there were local candidates available for the four local officer vacancies and expressed optimism about the recruitment process.

The importance of recruiting the right people for the island was also discussed. The Acting Chief advised that all incoming officers would receive a briefing on expectations and the particular requirements of policing on Saint Helena, while enhanced vetting procedures were also being introduced.

The policing discussion concluded with an invitation for residents to raise any concerns directly with the Police Service rather than waiting for future meetings.

3. Review of Action Points from Previous Meeting

3.1 Cost of Living

One continuing concern was the cost of living, including fuel, utilities and other essential goods. The meeting noted the pressure being experienced by households as fuel and other costs continued to rise. Cllr Coleman explained that work had been undertaken to increase fuel storage capacity, with the aim of improving resilience and helping to manage fuel costs.

3.2 Agriculture and Support

Agriculture and support for local farmers also remained an ongoing issue. Residents raised concerns about access to land, the fairness of agricultural support, the availability and cost of inputs, breeding support and water costs. Cllr Coleman indicated that concerns about agricultural support could be raised as part of the development of the agriculture policy, with an emphasis on support being linked to production and productive use of land.

3.3 School Transport

School transport was another continuing concern. Residents referred to previous discussions and commitments regarding supervision on school buses, particularly for children travelling long distances and for children with additional needs. Concerns remained that some routes did not have appropriate supervision and that there could be difficulties if a bus broke down or a child required assistance during the journey.

The meeting also revisited concerns about the wider school reorganisation and the time being taken to complete works and implement arrangements. Residents expressed frustration that issues affecting children and families had remained unresolved for an extended period.

4. Topics Raised

A wide range of community matters was raised during the meeting.

4.1 Cost of living and household expenses featured prominently. Residents discussed increasing fuel prices, LP gas, utilities and the cost of essential food and household items. Cllr Coleman explained that elected members had been seeking measures that would provide more targeted assistance to lower-income households, people receiving income-related benefits and pensioners. He also referred to proposals concerning income-tax thresholds and service taxes on utilities, insurance and internet services.

4.2 Agriculture and food production generated extensive discussion. Residents raised concerns about agricultural land, access to farm support, the availability and cost of seeds and other inputs, livestock breeding, water costs and the need to encourage greater local production. There was a general view that increasing local production could help reduce reliance on imported food and provide greater resilience against international price increases and supply disruptions. The potential for local production of fruit, vegetables, herbs and meat was also discussed.

4.3 School transport and children's welfare remained a major concern. Particular attention was given to the lack of supervision on certain bus routes, the needs of children with disabilities and the arrangements that would apply in the event of a vehicle breakdown or other emergency. Residents stressed that children should be properly supported and safeguarded while travelling between rural communities and schools.

4.4 Medical services were also raised. A resident described concerns regarding a child's referral for specialist eye treatment in Cape Town and stated that the child had initially been referred to the wrong specialist. The matter had subsequently been reviewed locally, with concerns about the child's condition and the need to ensure that the correct specialist care was obtained. Cllr Coleman advised that the matter should be raised urgently with the relevant health authorities and that the medical records and documentation should be retained.

4.5 Employment, population and young people leaving the island were discussed in the context of recruitment difficulties and the wider cost of living. Concerns were expressed about families and skilled people leaving the island, with wages, housing and the general cost of living identified as factors. The meeting recognised the importance of creating conditions that would encourage young people to remain on or return to Saint Helena.

4.6 Employment schemes and support for low-income residents were also discussed. The possibility of reintroducing a three-day employment scheme was raised, with reference to its previous use in areas including social services, education, the hospital and prison. The scheme was described as having provided work experience and training and, in some cases, helped people progress into full-time employment. The implications of human rights and employment legislation were also noted.

The meeting concluded with the Cllr Coleman thanking residents for attending and encouraging people to raise concerns directly between meetings rather than waiting for the next constituency meeting. He emphasised that continued community participation was important in enabling councillors to understand local concerns and seek appropriate support or solutions.