



Constituency Meeting

Harford Community Centre

Wednesday 29 July 2026 at 7:30 pm

Chair: Hon. Denis Leo

Secretary: Jessica Sim

Present: Mrs Annabel Palmer, St Helena Police Service
Seven (7) Constituents

1. Welcome

Hon. Denis Leo welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked constituents for attending.

Hon. Leo introduced Mrs Annabel Palmer from the St Helena Police Service, who had been invited to attend to discuss community policing and answer questions raised by constituents.

2. Matters Arising from Previous Constituency Meeting

2.1 Police Body-Worn Cameras

Hon. Leo opened discussion on matters arising from the previous constituency meeting, particularly regarding police body-worn cameras.

A constituent asked whether police officers face disciplinary action if they fail to wear or activate their body-worn cameras.

Mrs Palmer explained that body-worn cameras are primarily used to provide evidence and protect both officers and members of the public. She advised that officers who forget to wear or activate their cameras do not automatically face disciplinary action, noting that younger or less experienced officers may be more likely to forget to switch them on.

Mrs Palmer further advised that there is nothing preventing members of the public from recording incidents themselves if they wish to do so.

2.2 Police Traffic Stops and Drink Driving

A constituent asked whether police officers are permitted to stop motorists at random where drink driving is suspected.

Mrs Palmer explained that police officers can stop vehicles where there is a lawful reason to do so, for example where there is a defective brake light or another traffic-related offence.

Hon. Leo raised concerns regarding the apparent increase in enforcement of defective brake lights and licence plate lights on Friday and Saturday evenings, questioning why these matters appeared to receive greater attention at weekends.

Mrs Palmer explained that defective lights create a greater safety risk during hours of darkness than during daylight, therefore enforcement during evenings is particularly important.

A further constituent commented that traffic stops can often take a considerable amount of time. Mrs Palmer acknowledged that traffic-related incidents can be challenging and time-consuming for officers to manage

2.3. Driving Licence Books

Constituents raised concerns regarding the current driving licence book system, stating that the document is inconvenient to carry and unsuitable for keeping in a wallet.

Discussion followed regarding why a plastic card driving licence system had not been introduced.

Mrs Palmer advised that the main reason was the financial cost involved and that there had not been a willingness to invest in upgrading the current system to a laminated card format

2.4. Bank of St Helena Procedures

Discussion moved to customer service procedures at the Bank of St Helena.

Constituents raised concerns regarding the requirement for individuals who have withdrawn money on behalf of account holders for many years to now have the account holder telephone the Bank before each withdrawal.

Concerns were also raised regarding staff knowledge of authorisation procedures.

It was explained that the additional procedures had been introduced as part of cyber security and fraud prevention measures. Requiring the account holder to contact the Bank before funds are released helps protect customers against criminal activity and financial fraud.

2.5. Community Policing

Hon. Leo asked what the future plans were for community policing on St Helena.

Mrs Palmer advised that the Police Service is currently experiencing significant recruitment challenges, particularly in attracting local applicants.

She advised that recruitment campaigns have included increased advertising through Facebook and other media platforms; however, the Service continues to experience difficulty understanding why more people are not applying.

Constituents raised concerns that they rarely see officers patrolling on foot as was common in previous years.

Mrs Palmer explained that the Police Service does not currently have sufficient officers to maintain dedicated neighbourhood policing.

Mrs Palmer advised that:

- Four UK police officers are currently on St Helena assisting with training and development of local officers.
- There are currently four vacant police officer positions.
- The position of Chief of Police is also vacant.
- The current vacancies are resulting in increased overtime costs for existing staff.

Mrs Palmer advised that overseas training opportunities continue to be promoted; however, a significant challenge is that some individuals who receive overseas training subsequently choose not to return to work on St Helena.

Hon. Leo advised that Council is considering arrangements whereby individuals who receive Government-funded overseas training would be required to remain on the island and work for a minimum period of two years following completion of their training

2.6 Blue Light Cadet Scheme

Mrs Palmer provided information regarding the Blue Light initiative.

She explained that the programme aims to encourage young people to become involved in emergency services and public service organisations, including:

- The Police Service;
- The Fire Service; and
- The Sea Rescue Service.

The initiative aims to strengthen community engagement while encouraging future careers within emergency services.

Mrs Palmer provided her contact details and encouraged constituents to make contact should they have any questions or wish to become involved with the programme

3. Constituency Business

Following Mrs Palmer's departure, the meeting continued with constituency matters.

3.1 Attendance at the Meeting

Hon. Leo noted the lower-than-usual attendance and advised that another public meeting hosted by Mr Jeffrey Ellick regarding the cost of living on St Helena was taking place on the same evening.

Hon. Leo informed constituents that the Chief Minister had provided a written response to Mr Ellick regarding the matters raised.

3.2 Harford Walkway Lighting

Hon. Leo advised that the new walkway lights had arrived and were awaiting installation.

He confirmed that Mr Deon Robbertse would programme the installation works in due course.

3.3 Cemetery Handrail and Water Supply

Hon. Leo advised that he had written to Mr Derek Henry regarding the installation of a handrail and provision of a water supply at the cemetery.

A response was awaited and constituents would be updated once received

3.4 Piccolo Hill Road

Hon. Leo advised that the contact details relating to Piccolo Hill Road had been passed to the Head of the Public Service, Mr Ian Todd. The matter was also discussed with Mr Peter Moss, Chief Medical Officer.

4. Concerns from Meeting Attendees

The following concerns were raised by constituents:

- The standard of roads maintenance across the constituency, including:
 - The height of roadside vegetation and trees.
 - The standard of roadside cleaning undertaken by the Roads Section.
 - Reports of road maintenance staff spraying roadside vegetation while driving without appropriate warning signage.
 - Concerns regarding staff not wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).
 - The absence of warning signs advising members of the public that spraying operations were taking place.
- Confusion surrounding the new Connect utility billing arrangements:
 - Recent bills being significantly higher than expected quarterly payments.
 - Concern that elderly members of the community are becoming anxious about paying larger balances.
 - Standing order payments not being clearly reflected on statements.
 - Lack of transparency regarding outstanding balances.

- A constituent asked how much Government subsidy is provided to Connect. Hon. Leo advised that the subsidy provided is £17200.00
- Concerns regarding whether Connect requires closer monitoring to ensure accountability.
- Whether a contractor had been appointed for renovation works at Harford Primary School.
- Delays in progressing projects on St Helena.
- Agricultural policy and support:
 - Hon. Leo advised that ANRD is developing agricultural policies.
 - The Farming Policy is expected to be completed by October 2026.
 - A Farming Manager position is expected to be established during the next financial year.
- Concerns regarding understanding the role of Councillor Dr Corinda Essex as an Elected Member while also serving as Head of the Chamber of Commerce.
- Concerns regarding missing Farmers' Association tools and equipment.
- Longwood Gate railings:
 - Responsibility for repairs now rests with the property owner.
 - The owner is currently unable to afford repairs.
 - Questions were raised regarding possible Government assistance and previous expenditure of approximately £70,000.
- The condition of bus shelters and concerns that children and members of the public are exposed to poor weather conditions while waiting for transport.
- The deteriorating condition of Jeremy Clingham's Road and adjoining road access.
- Whether the relevant Road Ordinance should be reviewed regarding the Haul Road.
- The increasing cost of imported fruit and concerns regarding maintaining a healthy diet.
 - A pack of four nectarines costing approximately £8.00 was provided as an example.
 - Hon. Leo advised that air freight costs contribute significantly to imported produce prices.
- Medication shortages and concerns regarding substitute medicines:
 - Patients not always receiving sufficient information when medication is changed.
 - Confusion regarding changes in medication strength and quantities supplied.
 - Concerns that patients may become anxious when changes are not clearly explained.

10. Action Points for Hon Leo

- To write to the Roads Section regarding concerns raised by constituents about roadside maintenance, vegetation management, PPE compliance and warning signage during spraying operations.
- To seek clarification from Connect regarding whether utility billing arrangements will revert to quarterly billing and provide an update to constituents.
- To seek clarification from Minister Turner regarding whether a contractor has been appointed for renovation works at Harford Primary School.

- To raise concerns regarding delays in school renovation projects.
- To raise the matter with Councillor Dr Corinda Essex regarding her dual roles and seek clarification for constituents.
- To investigate the whereabouts of Farmers' Association tools and equipment.
- To seek clarification regarding responsibility and previous expenditure relating to Longwood Gate railings.
- To raise concerns with the Roads Section regarding bus shelters, Jeremy Clingham's Road and associated road infrastructure.
- To seek clarification regarding the applicable Road Ordinance relating to the Haul Road.
- To follow up on concerns regarding the increasing cost of imported fruit.
- To raise concerns regarding medication shortages and communication with patients when alternative medicines are prescribed.

11. Closing Remarks

Hon. Leo thanked everyone for their contributions and, there being no further business, closed the meeting.

Meeting closed at: _____

Signed:_____ Date:_____