

Constituency Meeting

Jamestown Community Centre

Tuesday – 21 October 2025 at 7:30 pm



Chair: Cllr Corinda Essex

Present: 10 Elected Members
7 Constituents

Apologies: Cllr Ronald Coleman, Minister Karl Thrower

Secretary: Anita Legg

Recording: Meeting recorded (no objections raised)

1. Opening Remarks & Apologies

Cllr Essex opened the meeting by welcoming constituents and explaining this was an informal meeting for the purpose of hearing directly from constituents about their concerns and priorities. Ministers were then invited to identify their portfolios.

Apologies were noted from Cllr Ronald Coleman (for obvious reasons) and Minister Karl Thrower (overseas attending utilities & renewables workshop)

She noted that the government was still in the process of re-establishing operations following the recent elections. Select committees had been appointed and were eager to hear guidance from the public on areas requiring focus and scrutiny.

Constituents raised the following:

2. Connectivity and Internet Access

A constituent raised ongoing frustrations about unreliable internet services and lack of communication from Sure regarding fibre-optic rollout.

Discussion

Members acknowledged the problem's complexity, noting SURE's extension rollover contract as a temporary safeguard following the collapse of the Maestro initiative. The government is exploring new options but could not yet confirm timelines but said constituents could absolutely be kept up to date.

3. Fisheries

Concerns were voiced about the decline in local fish availability, the loss of livelihoods and the apparent imbalance between local and South African fishing operations.

Discussion

Ministers confirmed this was a priority. Minister Karl Thrower had already begun engagement with both local fishers associations, reviewing quotas and total allowable catch policies and inviting trading and marketing stakeholders to the table.

4. Cleanliness, Waste, and Abandoned Vehicles

A constituent asked about the abandoned vehicles lying around the island and the need to start a "Keep St Helena Tidy" campaign. Deteriorating state of public areas, litter and untidy streets was also mentioned, particularly as a deterrent to tourism.

Discussion

Members agreed a campaign was overdue to be established and an island-wide beautification initiative should be launched. It was noted that relevant legislation for managing abandoned vehicles already exists but is not being enforced. The entrance to St Helena were also cited as examples of poor maintenance and it was acknowledged Government needs to lead by example in upkeep of their properties.

5. Road Safety, Traffic, and Enforcement

Constituents asked if the public was breathalysed for drugs along with drinking.

Discussion

The Laboratory would need to be upgraded however the Minister for Health agreed to look into these testing facilities.

Discussion also ensued around unsafe driving practices, including babies riding in front seats, lack of seatbelts in older vehicles, and people riding in truck beds; inconsistent police focus, limited enforcement, and outdated road traffic laws were also raised.

Discussion

It was explained that a redrafted **Road Traffic Ordinance** was in progress to address these gaps, introducing fixed penalties and modern safety requirements. Members supported implementing seatbelt and child-seat laws and discouraging unsafe transport habits. These issues are supported by schools through Life Skills education.

Actions

- Minister Martin Henry to look into testing facilities
- Minister Gillian Brooks - Completion and enactment of the new Road Traffic Ordinance to be prioritised.

6. Public Transport and Night-time Travel

Constituents expressed concern about the discontinued late-night bus routes and the need for reliable, affordable public transport to support safety and nightlife. It was noted businesses could also be impacted.

Discussion

Members agreed that government intervention in provision of public transport should only be temporary and encouraged private sector engagement. Carpooling initiatives and designated-driver culture was also proposed through awareness campaigns.

7. Business Development and Support

Strong concern was raised about the lack of business advisory services following the closure of Enterprise St Helena (ESH). Attendees stressed the need for guidance on business planning, statistics, and access

Discussion

Members acknowledged this gap both in government and the private sector, which was a barrier to entrepreneurship and small business sustainability.

8. Payment Systems and Modernisation

Residents requested progress on introducing card payment platforms such as Square and Wise, noting lost opportunities from tourists unable to use international cards.

Discussion

Members agreed the island must transition toward a cashless economy. Technical challenges with mail delivery and ID verification had hindered rollout, but existing systems such as “Ryft Pay” were already in limited use.

9. Parking and Traffic Congestion in Jamestown

A constituent questioned what was the benefit in the cone-placing in Jamestown. Several attendees highlighted ongoing congestion and misuse of parking areas, including taxi rank and disabled bays.

Discussion

Members felt there was some benefit in cones but acknowledged they might be excessive. Enforcement was limited until the new Road Traffic Ordinance and fixed penalty system are enacted. Acknowledged that vehicle ownership now far exceeds available parking capacity.

10. Health Services

A constituent raised concerns about delayed emergency medical responses and the absence of doctors during night shifts.

Discussion

There are 4 doctors in post currently. It was explained that doctors no longer sleep in the hospital when on-call, trained nurses and paramedics now provide much of the immediate emergency care, with doctors on call for escalation. Staffing shortages and the global recruitment market continue to challenge long-term consistency.

It was asked whether SHG would put extra professional resources into mental health.

Discussion

It is difficult to recruit a psychotherapist and Health intends to develop a strategy. Children’s Champion said she also wanted to visit schools to initiate discussions.

11. Rupert’s Beach Access

Constituents asked about Rupert’s Port. Questions were raised about restricted vehicle access to Rupert’s Beach when ships are docked.

Discussion

Members said there were no major problems with Rupert’s Port, including clarification that vehicle access is restricted only during active cargo operations for safety, but pedestrian access remains open. Miscommunication at gate level was acknowledged as a problem.

12. Closing Remarks

Cllr Essex thanked everyone for their contributions, emphasising that meetings like these are vital for shaping the government’s priorities and strengthening accountability. Councillors undertook to follow up on all issues raised and provide updates at subsequent constituency meetings.

Meeting concluded: 9:45 PM