

Constituency Meeting

St Michaels Church, Ruperts
Wednesday, 29 October 2025



Chair: Councillor Corinda Essex

Attendees: 7 constituents

Secretary: Morgan Thomas-Henry

Recording: Meeting recorded

Opening and Introductions: The meeting commenced with the Hon. Dr. Corinda Essex inviting Elected Members to introduce themselves and state their current roles on the new Council. The Ministers stated which portfolios they hold. Councillors outlined their involvement as Champions and Select Committee Members, as well as District representation, and any new duties since the last term. Notably, Dr. Essex now represents Jamestown constituency which includes Rupert's. Several Councillors are also involved in key committees/boards such as Safeguarding, and Employment.

Safeguarding and Governance: Minister Martin Henry provided clarification on the Safeguarding Board, describing it as a multidisciplinary body involving police, health, social care, and education, responding to incidents involving vulnerable adults and children. In relation to Scrutiny Committees, Dr. Essex highlighted issues with scrutiny over Corporate Support due to delays in revising the Select Committee Establishment Order and expressed the need for urgent completion., as such governance hurdles affect the Council's ability to exercise oversight and ensure accountability.

Shipping, Customs, and Local Commerce: Constituents and Council members discussed the frequency of ship arrivals, cargo volumes, and challenges concerning out-of-date stock in stores. There was a debate regarding the feasibility of increasing the interval between shipping calls to allow for larger shipments and lower costs, but this was weighed against the risk of running out of important goods and the complications with perishables. The Chief Minister and other members noted logistical, financial, and warehousing challenges for businesses, compounded by rising global costs.

Policing and Community Relations: Concerns were raised about the perceived aggressive conduct and heavy-handedness of the police, particularly related to traffic stops and drink-driving enforcement. Cllr Derek Thomas stressed the negative effects of such incidents on public confidence and local businesses as people avoid socialising. The Chief Minister recommended the use of police body cameras to increase accountability and encouraged residents to pursue complaints through district representatives or the Police and Crime Panel. Councillors reported that concerns have been relayed to the police and some improvement in attitudes has been apparent.

Tourism, Social Media, and Economic Development: The potential of social media and modern marketing to promote St Helena was discussed, with Councillors noting the success of inviting social media influencers to the island. These influencers provided international exposure at lower cost, and collaborative initiatives involving sports and tourism were highlighted. The value of leveraging digital platforms for broader outreach and economic

development was recognised, as well as the importance of partnerships between government, tourism, and local businesses.

Agriculture, Food Security, and Farming Support: Constituents cited ongoing difficulties in the farming sector, such as coordination problems between agencies, lack of clear support structures, and dissatisfaction with current outputs despite significant investment. It was emphasized that finalizing and implementing an updated Agricultural Strategy is critical for improving productivity and communication across stakeholders, including ENRP and Connect.

Energy, Infrastructure, and Utilities: The discussion shifted to electricity supply issues, delays in wind turbine repairs, and challenges with capital investment from the UK. Members noted that past funding levels and technical limitations prevented the installation of better wind turbines. There was consensus on the need for improved long-term planning to stabilise fuel costs, enhance renewable energy, and overhaul current infrastructure for greater reliability.

Sewage Systems and Housing Connections: Councillors addressed questions about the costs and procedures for residents to connect to the new sewage lines. There were concerns over equity, transparency in fees, and the adequacy of initial infrastructure provided. Follow-up with Connect to clarify these issues was agreed upon.

Fishing Industry and Canning Facilities: Several speakers described tensions, unmet promises, and operational confusion between STC and Green Fish in the fishing and canning sector. This has caused uncertainty among local fishermen and highlighted the need for more support, clear contracts, and better infrastructure to ensure sustainable operations and fair competition.

Closing and Next Steps: Dr. Essex thanked everyone for their input, acknowledging persistent and emerging challenges across sectors. She committed to ongoing quarterly meetings and maintaining open avenues for public feedback. Participants agreed to follow up on issues discussed and actively pursue solutions.

Action Items:

- Continue to press for improvements to the electricity supply, including the repair and replacement of wind turbines. (Minister Andrew Turner)
- Raise the concerns about the police approach and the drink-driving limit at the next Police and Crime Panel meeting. (Cllr Derek Thomas)
- Follow up with Connect on the status of the sewage system and the costs for residents to connect. (Cllr Julie Thomas)
- Check if the EDIP Cargo Handling Project included funding for private sewerage connections. (Cllr Dr Corinda Essex)
- Ensure the new Agricultural Strategy is finalized and implemented to address issues in the farming sector. (Minister Karl Thrower)
- Investigate the issues in the fishing industry and the competition between STC and Green Fish and seek to resolve any unfair practices. (Cllr Robert Midwinter)