



ST HELENA AMBASSADOR

JUNE 2026



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Welcome to the June edition of the St Helena Ambassador!

Jacob's Ladder's lights have been refurbished and reopened, now featuring modern LED installations that enhance safety, cut energy costs, and protect its historic character. The successful project reflects both strong community collaboration and impressive technical ingenuity.

St Helena Day on 21 May brought the island together under the theme "St Helenian Food." Families enjoyed novelty sports, stalls, and a food competition featuring local favourites like fishcakes, cheese straws, and pumpkin fritters. The float parade added colour and creativity, with Longwood District taking first place, followed by music, entertainment, and fireworks.

World Oceans Day on 8 June marked 10 years of the Blue Belt Programme. The event celebrated St Helena's Marine Protected Area with speeches, displays, and a photo competition, alongside the unveiling of a new logo and the release of the 10-year impact report.

The St Helena Government has also launched a Communications Survey, inviting feedback on how news and updates are shared. With both online and paper copies available, the survey aims to make government communication clearer, more reliable, and accessible for all. Everyone is encouraged to complete the survey and share their views.

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If you'd like to contribute a story to the St Helena Ambassador or have suggestions for future editions, please contact katelyn.benjamin@sainthelena.gov.sh or call 22470.

JACOBS LADDER RELIGHTING



Jacob's Ladder, built between 1829 and 1831 under Governor Charles Dallas, has now been reopened to the public following the refurbishment of its lighting system, preserving one of St Helena's most iconic landmarks. Originally designed as an inclined plane with rollers spaced at 20 feet to carry a haulage chain, it remains a remarkable feat of engineering that continues to inspire residents and visitors alike.

By 2025, the lights installed in 2000 had deteriorated, becoming costly to maintain and failing to provide adequate illumination, so their replacement became both a safety necessity and an opportunity to honour heritage. The new LED lights, spaced at 20 feet to echo the Ladder's original rhythm, provide even illumination, reduce energy costs, meet Dark Skies criteria, and enhance its night-time appearance.

Community collaboration was central to the project. A full-size wooden mock-up helped visualise the proposed luminaires and consultations, with the Heritage Society and other stakeholders ensuring that heritage values were respected. Funding was secured, and Solomon & Company (St Helena) Plc, undertook the challenging installation. On the Ladder's steep 40° slope, they crafted hinged moulds for concrete plinths, ensuring each lamp stood perfectly upright.

The funding for the restoration work and purchase of the lights was made possible through a kind donation by Lord Ashcroft via the UK St Helena Heritage Trust. The installation costs were met through the Economic Development Investment Programme (EDIP), representing a significant investment in preserving the island's heritage.

The new LED lights reduce energy costs, meet Dark Skies criteria, and enhance the Ladder's night-time appearance. Their switching on during St Helena's Day was a fitting tribute, marking not only the completion of a technical upgrade but also a celebration of heritage, community, and pride. Jacob's Ladder now shines brighter than ever, and is now open to the public.

ST HELENA'S DAY - "ST HELENIAN FOOD"



On Thursday, 21 May 2026, residents from across the island gathered at the Sea Front in Jamestown to celebrate St Helena's cherished national day. Organised by the St Helena Football Association together with the St Helena National Trust, this year's event carried the theme "St Helenian Food," honouring the island's deep connection to its cultural heritage.

The day opened with the traditional morning service, a ceremonial start that brought the community together in reflection. It set a respectful tone, reminding everyone of the island's history and identity.

Immediately afterwards, the opening of stalls and the children's novelty sports brought energy to the seafront, with families gathering to watch and take part. A significant number of stallholders fully embraced the theme of the day, adding colour, character and a strong sense of community spirit to the event. A wide selection of delicious St Helenian foods and treats were available for purchase, allowing both residents and visitors to sample and celebrate the island's unique culinary heritage throughout the day.

By one o'clock in the afternoon, attention turned to the food competition, where cooks presented a variety of dishes inspired by local traditions and creativity. In the Best Beverage category, the Stevens family won first prize for their homemade wine, while Deborah Fowler took first place for her ginger beer, with Busisiwe Ramaru awarded second prize.

The Best Savoury category saw Deborah Fowler's tomato paste and Marilyn Pidgley's fishcakes claim top honours, while the Youth Parliament secured second place. In the Best Treat category, Diana Roberts impressed with her cheese straws and pumpkin fritters, winning first prize in both, while the Youth Parliament again took second place. These competitions added flavour and excitement to the day, showcasing the island's culinary pride and talent.

The celebrations continued at 2 o'clock with a secondary school performance, including songs from their local band. Then, at 3 o'clock, the much-anticipated float parade commenced, filling the streets with colour and creativity. The four float entries were equally impressive, with participants making a tremendous effort to incorporate the theme into their designs and presentations. Longwood District emerged as the winner, followed by St Paul's District in second place, and Peter and Charlene Young in third. The creativity, colour and attention to detail displayed by the floats added greatly to the celebratory atmosphere and demonstrated the enthusiasm and community spirit that contributed to the overall success of the event.

Music and entertainment carried through the afternoon and evening, with performances from local bands and DJs keeping the atmosphere lively. At 6 o'clock, Jacob's Ladder was lit up, followed by the annual fireworks display at 8pm, generously sponsored by the St Helena Football Association. The official programme concluded by 11pm, giving the community time to wind down after a full day of celebration.

ST HELENA MARKS WORLD OCEANS DAY AND CELEBRATES 10 YEARS OF THE BLUE BELT PROGRAMME



This year is an especially exciting one for marine conservation, not only on St Helena but across many other UK Overseas Territories, as we celebrate 10 years of the Blue Belt Programme.

The Blue Belt Programme was established to support the UK Overseas Territories in protecting and sustainably managing their marine environments, helping to create and maintain healthy and productive marine ecosystems for future generations.

On World Oceans Day, Monday 8 June, we gathered at Ann's Place to celebrate our ocean, our heritage, and 10 years of the Blue Belt Programme's contribution to St Helena's Marine Protected Area (MPA).

World Oceans Day was the ideal occasion to mark this milestone, uniting people around the globe in action to protect the ocean. The 2026 theme, "Strong Marine Protected Areas for Our Blue Planet", closely reflects the work being carried out in St Helena and across the Blue Belt Programme.

The event showcased the Blue Belt Programme's achievements in St Helena and celebrated the collective efforts that are continuing to help protect our marine environment. Guests heard speeches from His Excellency the Governor, Minister for Economic Development and Environment, Natural Resources and Planning Portfolios, Karl Thrower, and Head of Nature Conservation, Elizabeth Clingham, followed by the ceremonial cutting of a celebration cake shared with attendees. Displays also highlighted the areas of work Blue Belt has supported in St Helena since the inception

of our MPA in 2016, alongside a 10-year impact report showing work carried out across all UK Overseas Territories.

The celebration included the unveiling of the new Blue Belt logo, and a free shirt raffle held every half hour, with all attendees automatically entered for a chance to win a shirt featuring the new logo design. We also announced the winners of the World Oceans Day photo competition, which captured the vital relationship between St Helena, its people, and the ocean around us, while showcasing our strong MPA in line with the World Oceans Day theme.

The competition winners were 1st place, Megan Young; 2nd place, Tyanne Williams; and 3rd place, Colby Thomas.

Five honourable mentions were awarded to Danni Thomas, Terri Clingham, Jolene Thomas, Tracey Williams, and Damien Stevens.

Guests also enjoyed complimentary canapés and drinks. As we celebrate 10 years of the Blue Belt Programme, we look ahead with renewed commitment to safeguarding St Helena's marine environment for future generations. We would like to thank everyone who attended the event, as well as all those who continue to help keep St Helena's MPA strong. We were delighted to mark this important milestone together.

The Blue Belt Programme 10-year impact report can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a2576428e85b4e5346ac04e/10 Year Blue Belt Impact report_final.pdf

ST HELENA NEWS, UPDATES AND COMMUNICATIONS SURVEY



On 8 June 2026, the St Helena Government (SHG) launched its News, Updates and Communications Survey. Shared through a press release and on social media, the survey invites everyone to take part online and share their thoughts on how government communicates with the community.

The survey looks at how accessible, reliable, proactive, and easy to understand SHG's updates are. It also asks how people usually receive government news, whether through local radio, social media, or the SHG website and where improvements could be made. The feedback will help SHG see what's working well, what could be better, and how to keep the public more informed.

The Comms Hub team has already been out in town, talking with people face-to-face and collecting surveys. A sit-down session in the market and at The Casnister also gave the community a chance to share ideas while filling out the survey in paper or digital form. These in-person opportunities are especially helpful for those who don't use social media or prefer to give feedback directly.

Paper copies of the survey are available in familiar places such as the public library, the tourist office, the post office, and several shops across the island, making it easy for everyone to take part.

What makes this survey valuable is that it's building a clearer picture of how the community wants to be kept informed. Every response helps SHG understand how people feel about the way information is shared, and every suggestion points to ways communication can be clearer and more useful. All are encouraged to participate, whether online or on paper, so that every voice can be heard.

By completing the survey, people can help shape how government news and updates are delivered, ensuring communication is straightforward, reliable, and accessible for everyone on St Helena.

A digital version of the survey can be found here: [Comms Survey - Survey Monkey](#)

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