

**ST. HELENA**  
**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

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**THE SPEAKER**

The Honourable Eric William Benjamin

**EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS**

The Honourable Chief Secretary	-	Mrs Susan O'Bey
The Honourable Financial Secretary	-	Mr Dax Richards
The Honourable Attorney General	-	Ms Sara O'Donnell

**ELECTED MEMBERS**

The Honourable Clint Richard Beard  
The Honourable Gavin George Ellick  
The Honourable Corinda Sebastiana Stuart Essex  
The Honourable Anthony Arthur Green  
The Honourable Lawson Arthur Henry  
The Honourable Kylie Marie Hercules  
The Honourable Brian William Isaac  
The Honourable Cyril Kenneth Leo  
The Honourable Christine Lilian Scipio O'Dean  
The Honourable Derek Franklin Thomas  
The Honourable Russell Keith Yon

The Honourable Cruyff Gerard Buckley (Absent)

**CLERK OF COUNCILS**

Ms Lydia Buchanan

## **PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2018

The Council met at 10.00 am  
in the Council Chamber, Jamestown

(The Speaker in the Chair)

### **ORDER OF THE DAY**

**1. FORMAL ENTRY OF THE PRESIDENT**

**2. PRAYERS**  
(Father Dale Bowers)

**3. ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT**

Honourable Members, Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning and welcome to this first sitting of the fifth meeting of formal Legislative Council.

First, I must thank Father Dale Bowers for attending this morning to open this session of Legislative Council in prayer.

Next I wish to thank all who have contributed in any way to make it possible for this special meeting to take place today. They include our Honourable Members who cooperated fully in allowing this House to proceed on very short notice with the business that is before this House today. I am grateful to Honourable Members for their agreement also to limit the business on this occasion to the essential business for which this meeting was called, even though this is likely to be recorded as the shortest ever meeting in this Council. In recognition of this I have agreed to set the next normal session before the end of this month. Thank you Honourable Members.

Joining us in the meeting today is our newly-appointed Chief Secretary, Mrs Susan O'Bey who I congratulate and welcome on behalf of this Council. We look forward to working with you. Since our last meeting of the Council, the Honourable Christine Scipio O'Dean has attended the British Islands Mediterranean Region Commonwealth Women's Parliamentary Meetings in London and she will be reporting back to the CPA to the local branch at a meeting later today. Thank you for representing St Helena and welcome back, Honourable Member. We shall look forward to your report.

I have indicated that our meeting today is expected to be a short, but, nevertheless, an important one in which the Honourable Members will be invited to consider, in particular, an amendment to the Marriage Bill. We shall hear more about that from the Honourable Mover of the Bill,

Anthony Green. In addition, we have included on the Order Paper a number of Sessional Papers which are required by our laws to be tabled today. Finally, our meeting will close with the usual Adjournment Debate in which I have invited the Honourable Mover to fix the date of the next meeting of this Council so that you can be sure that that meeting is coming ahead soon. Thank you, Honourable Members. I'll call on the Clerk to announce the next item of business.

#### **4. PAPERS**

##### ***SP 19/2018 – The Honourable Anthony Green***

The Speaker –  
The Honourable Anthony Green.

The Hon. Anthony Green –  
Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper No. 19/2018 – The Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2018. Mr Speaker, I have with me a Certificate of Urgency from the Deputy Governor. Due to the urgency of these amendments contained in the Bill she has issued a certificate in accordance with Standing Order 12 (1) to enable the Bill to be presented as Government business at this meeting this morning.

The Speaker –  
Thank you, Honourable Member.

**Ordered to lie on the table.**

##### ***SP 22/2018 – The Honourable Financial Secretary***

The Speaker –  
The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –  
Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 22/2018 entitled St Helena Government – Pensions (Amendment) Regulations, 2018.

The Speaker –  
Thank you, Honourable Member.

**Ordered to lie on the table.**

##### ***SP 23/2018 – The Honourable Financial Secretary***

The Speaker –  
Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –  
Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 23/2018 entitled St Helena Government – Financial Statements 2016/2017.

**Ordered to lie on the table.**

***SP 24/2018 – The Honourable Financial Secretary***

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 24/2018 entitled - St Helena Government – St Helena Audit Service - Management Letter – Financial Statements 2016/17.

The Speaker –  
Thank you, Sir.

**Ordered to lie on the table.**

***SP 25/2018 – The Honourable Financial Secretary***

The Speaker –

The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 25/2018 entitled – St Helena Government – Currency Fund – Annual Financial Statements 2016/2017.

**Ordered to lie on the table.**

***SP 26/2018 – The Honourable Financial Secretary***

The Speaker –

The Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 26/2018 entitled – St Helena Government – St Helena Audit Service – Currency Fund 2016/2017 – Management Letter.

**Ordered to lie on the table.**

***SP 27/2018 – The Honourable Financial Secretary***

The Speaker –

Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 27/2018 entitled – St Helena Government – Withdrawal Warrant 1 of 2017/2018.

**Ordered to lie on the table.**

***SP 28/2018 – The Honourable Financial Secretary***

The Speaker –

The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 28/2018 entitled – St Helena Government – Enterprise St Helena – Financial Statements and Report.

**Ordered to lie on the table.**

***SP 29/2018 – The Honourable Financial Secretary***

The Speaker –

Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 29/2018 entitled – St Helena Government – Procurement Regulations.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Sir.

**Ordered to lie on the table.**

The Speaker –

Clerk, call the next item, please?

**5.**

## **MOTIONS**

***Motion No. 1 – The Honourable Anthony Green***

### **THE MARRIAGE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2018.**

The Speaker –

The Honourable Anthony Green?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2018, be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Is there a seconder for this Bill?

The Hon. Cyril Leo –

Mr Speaker, I second the Bill.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much, Honourable Member. Honourable Mover, would you like to speak to the Bill?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. The Marriage Ordinance 2017 makes provision for civil marriages to be performed at the Registrar General's Office as did the previous Marriage Ordinance of 1851. The Registrar General's Office was originally at The Castle. It then moved to Essex House

and later to the Post Office Building, but civil marriages continued to be performed at The Castle. It is proposed that the Ordinance be changed to state that civil marriages are to take place at The Castle rather than the Registrar General's Office. In order to address any marriages that took place at The Castle before this amendment, a transitional provision is proposed to state that The Castle is deemed to be the Office of the Registrar General for the duration of the ceremony of any marriages solemnised before the date of the commencement of the Ordinance. In order to address any marriages that were registered at the Office of the Registrar General under the old Ordinance, a transitional provision is proposed stating marriages could be registered wherever the Office of the Registrar General was situated at the time of the registration. The Bill also clarifies that the Registrar General and the Registrar appointed under the old Ordinance are deemed to have been appointed under the new Ordinance. Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Members, I put the question that the Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2018, be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council. Honourable Members, the Motion is now open to debate. Is there any Honourable Member who wishes to speak to the Motion? Honourable Brian Isaac?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Mr Speaker, I stand to support this Motion. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

I likewise stand to support this Motion, Mr Speaker, very minor amendments from the original Bill passed last year. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Any other Honourable Member wish to speak to the debate? Honourable Derek Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Mr Speaker, likewise I rise in support of this Bill.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Any other Honourable Member wishes to speak to the debate? Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I stand in support of this Bill, although, in effect, it is retrospective legislation which is something that should be avoided wherever possible and I would not normally necessarily speak in favour of retrospective legislation. I think in going forward it is very important to ensure that all the i's are dotted and all the t's are crossed before legislation is passed within this Honourable House so that this kind of situation can be avoided further down the stream. Perhaps I ought to declare my interest, because I was married in this very room, but that was thirty-three years ago nearly, so I think I am safe. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Is there any other Honourable Member who wishes to speak to the Motion? No other Member? Honourable Mover, would you like to reply, please?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. If I may, I thank the Honourable Members for their support and for the other associated comments and so I beg to move.

The Speaker –

Then, Honourable Members, I put the question.

Question that the Bill be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council, put and agreed to.

The Speaker –

Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Council do resolve itself into a Committee to consider the detailed provisions of the Bill.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Is there a seconder to the proposal?

The Hon. Cyril Leo –

Mr Speaker, I second the proposal.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member.

Question that the Council resolves into a Committee, put and agreed to.

### **Council in Committee.**

The Speaker –

I'll move into Committee stage. We're a little more relaxed in Committee of the Council, so if you want to chirp in with any questions, just feel free to do so.

The Chairman –

Looking at your Bill now, Honourable Members. I put the question that the Title, the Enactment Clause and Clause 1 do stand part of the Bill.

Title, Enactment Clause and Clause 1.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Clause 2. We need some explanation from that, Mover? Would you like the Attorney General to help and assist?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, may I ask the Attorney General?

The Chairman –  
Attorney General?

The Hon. Sara O'Donnell –

I'm delighted to assist. In respect of Clause 2, the clause is to amend an error, to place in the Marriage Ordinance 2017 at section 5 (b) (i) which refers to the Registrar General's Office as the permanently approved venue for civil marriages. The Registrar General's Office was historically located at The Castle and therefore rather than naming The Castle as the main venue for civil marriages the legislation referred to the Registrar General's Office. That office had moved and is now located above the Post Office. The current office is clearly not a suitable venue for the solemnisation of marriages and in any event it was always the intention of the legislature that The Castle would be the official, permanent venue for all civil marriages and this oversight is now being corrected and it is The Castle is and will remain the principle venue for civil marriages and that is the purpose of that section.

The Chairman –

Thank you for that explanation. Any questions on that, please? Honourable Gavin Ellick? You may sit, Gavin.

The Hon. Gavin Ellick –

So all those marriages that have taken place before, are they still good or they not so good, cause unless it will be lot of problems for the people?

The Hon. Sara O'Donnell –

The purpose of the amendment is to ensure that there is no question raised about the validity of those marriages.

The Hon. Gavin Ellick –

Okay, I was hoping that we have a mass wedding, like, you know, everybody renew their vows. Thank you.

The Chairman –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Is there any other Honourable Member wish to raise a question on this section? No?

Clause 2.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Clause 3. Attorney General?

The Hon. Sara O'Donnell –

These provisions are what are known as transitional provisions which are there to smooth the process when one piece of legislation is repealed and a new Ordinance is enacted in its place. There are a number of anomalies which were not addressed when the new Marriage Ordinance was enacted and I will deal with each of the subsections in turn to assist, dealing first with 3 (1). It had not been noticed that under the Marriage Ordinance 1851 that there had to be a



Registrar General's Office located at The Castle and that marriages had to take place at that Office. The Registrar General's Office moved out of The Castle many years ago and this created what is known as lacuna in the law and it went unnoticed until very recently. Under the new Ordinance the same error was made, naming the Registrar General's Office as the official, permanent venue for civil marriages. This provision just affirms that The Castle was and always will be the authorised venue, subject to a change in the law in future, during the time when a Registrar General's Office was not operating out of The Castle, and this is, and there is a deeming provision which deems that in effect the Office of the Registrar General would have been at The Castle whilst the ceremony of marriage took place.

The Chairman –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Any questions on that section in Clause 3? No questions.

Clause 3.

Question put and agreed to.

**Council Resumed.**

The Speaker –

Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Mr Speaker, I beg to report that the Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2018, has passed Committee without amendment and to move that this Council approves the said Bill and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted.

The Speaker –

Yes, okay. I think I threw you out because I have not returned back to formal LegCo, so return me to formal LegCo, please? It's a little different with the earlier situation where you actually see the Speaker move from position to position, this is a little different. Okay, thank you very much. Is there a seconder to that proposal from the Mover?

The Hon. Cyril Leo –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second the proposal.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. I put the question that this Council approves the Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2018 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted. The Motion is now open to debate. Any further debate? You have a further opportunity for the debate. No debate. Then I put the question that this Council approves the Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2018 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much Honourable Members, the Bill has passed through this House. As you know about Bills, they have to pass the three stages before they can be presented to the Governor and for the Governor to bring it into operation and I took notice of what Dr Corinda Essex says about retrospective legislation, we don't make a habit of doing that, it so happens that this one needs to be amended, so thank you both for that. Clerk?

## 6. ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

The Speaker –

Yes, Honourable Chief Secretary?

The Hon. Susan O’Bey –

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until 29<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much, Honourable Member. Is there a seconder to that proposal?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. The Motion, standing in the name of the Honourable Chief Secretary, that this House do now adjourn until 29<sup>th</sup> June 2018. The Motion is now open to debate. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I wish to start by declaring my interest as President of the Chamber of Commerce and as an importer.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Mr Speaker, it is a sad reality that far from experiencing the anticipated growth following commencement of scheduled air access, St Helena is currently in decline, both in terms of its economy and the morale of its people. With flights only starting last October, it is still too early to be reaping benefits fully and we are already seeing some positive outcomes, such as the ability of Saints to return home on holiday, who previously did not have time to do so because of the short periods of leave which they can actually claim and also the faster transfer of medical referral cases. These are obviously very big pluses and as we go forward more benefits should start to become visible. However, the current situation is serious and its seriousness cannot be underestimated. The entire private sector is struggling; the hospitality industry is facing near collapse due to the low tourist numbers with several businesses on the verge of having to close. The construction sector is already having to reduce its working hours and downsize, largely as a result of the continuing absence of a capital programme while retailers are having to cope with missed transshipment links, longer offloading time for cargo, reduced shipping calls and higher freight rates. Other sectors are feeling the knock-on effects and are equally facing negative consequences. Raised expectations and a willingness to make a significant investment in order to make a difference to grow our economy and to reduce our reliance upon aid have turned to ashes leaving businesses in debt or having severe cash flow problems and in some instances both. The public is also suffering in the face of increasing prices, less readily available goods in the shops, and, for many, low pays or pensions. Their spending power is decreasing and this is causing a decline in living standards for many households and also causing further negative impacts on the private sector which experiences

a reduction in the purchase of its goods and services. A vicious circle is created, Mr Speaker, as the private sector is forced to charge more to try and cover its overheads which reduces affordability to the public even further. Mr Speaker, we are all fully aware of the constraints upon financial resources at this point in time, but I am pleased to say that there are ways in which a more supportive and positive ethos can be established without having to have additional money to throw at it. Improved working relationships, better communications, willingness to listen and learn, openness to suggestions and a genuine desire for constructive dialogue with stakeholders do not come with a high price tag, but go a very long way to boosting morale and confidence as well as facilitating positive outcomes. The old saying “A problem shared is a problem halved” is still very true. A new Sustainable Economic Development Plan that focuses on import substitution and the need to keep wealth generated locally on island has just been approved, but its aims will not be achieved unless key issues currently having a negative impact on the development of industries such as fishing and farming are addressed. The development of sector strategies and enabling policies and legislation, again, should not have big financial implications. That can go a long way to strengthen the sectors and boost production. It is of particular importance that when policy changes are made, such as for the provision of long-term leases or licenses for agricultural purposes, which were made possible by the 2016 Land and Buildings Disposal Policy, these are made known to the key stakeholders and implemented.

Obviously, Mr Speaker, the private sector must also play its part and recognise the constraints within which St Helena Government is having to operate, but considerable improvement can be made to the current untenable situation within the resources available if all those within St Helena Government make a concerted and sustained effort to do so and Her Majesty’s Government recognises and supports the role of the very private sector that it rightly insisted must be grown and strengthened to reduce the dominance of the public sector. As I have stated previously within this Honourable House, increased understanding and support of both St Helena Government and the British Government are crucial during this critical transition period, post the introduction of air access and without it St Helena will decline further instead of being able to prosper, even when the opportunities to do so eventually present themselves. Mr Speaker, we must all work together to ensure that this does not happen as it would not be in the best interest of any of the parties concerned and would negate any possibility of reduced dependence upon aid and the sustainable economic and social growth. We all owe it to St Helena to prevent this happening. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise in support of this Adjournment Debate and would first of all like to make a statement in respect of my stepping down as Chair of the St Helena Fisheries Corporation Board and also as a Member of that Board. I want to make clear that this decision was not taken for any other reason than to allow for a new Chair and one we hope with a sound business background. There is no malice or story in this other than for the good of the Corporation. I will continue my role as Chair of the Economic Development Committee, which has political oversight of the Fisheries and will continue to give my full support to this organisation. An enormous amount of work has been going on behind the scenes by a number of people in an effort to set the Fisheries on a strong footing and one that will have the future and bring much anticipated prosperity to the industry and to our hardworking fishermen and all the staff at the Corporation. I will continue to give the industry my full support, but for now, from a distance. I would also like to thank all my

fellow Board members for their support and to also thank those many hands who have put in so many hours in the various working groups to find a model for our Fisheries that will finally bring the industry out of economic decline. I am confident that this will happen if we all work together. I wish you all the very best with your continued efforts.

Mr Speaker, I now turn to raise, with concern, the state of our economy and the fact that this Government is continuing to struggle to find a balanced budget. I have lost count of the number of hours elected members have sat with officials to try and find ways where we can continue the level of service of Government with less money and at a time when the British Government has made one of the largest investments in any of its territories. £285m and still rising and yet HMG has not been forthcoming in providing the small millions that will not only protect the huge investment in our airport, but one that has the potential to give us all some hope for a prosperous and sustainable future and one where there is some hope too of eventually bringing us off grant in aid. It is very difficult to comprehend and reconcile that an overseas territory of Her Majesty's Government in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century had to be treated in this way. There has been a complete failure in assessing the reasonable needs of a small, isolated island where all the services has to be provided by the Government and there is no central government to turn to. One that has an ageing population, a shrinking tax base, rising costs that is beyond the control of anyone, where we are transitioning from over five hundred years of sea access to one of air access. Her Majesty's Government has ignored the real issue of the enabling infrastructure required to make this transition. They are aware of it but have chosen to ignore it. We have a wharf at Ruperts that cost in the region of £22m but there is no funding for the enabling infrastructure. The result of this is that we now have to ferry all imports from there to Jamestown at huge cost but with no recognition from HMG to cover this additional cost when, in fact, it was officials from DfID who insisted that cargo operations should be moved to Ruperts in the first place. There is still no decision on the capital programme.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I would like to wish our colleague, Councillor Derek Thomas, safe travels when he leaves on Sunday to attend the JMC on Brexit and in his talks with Ministers and our All Party Parliamentary Group in London on the state of our economy and the apparent lack of interest by HMG to protect their own investment in the airport. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move and support this Adjournment Debate. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Is there any other Honourable Member who wishes to speak to the Adjournment Debate? Honourable Derek Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Mr Speaker, I rise in support of the Adjournment Debate. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you will be aware that I will leave the island on Sunday for the UK and will be away for a period of two weeks to attend the Joint Ministerial Council Meetings. The main issue for St Helena will be the issues relating to Brexit: the loss of EU funding and what arrangements the British Government will put in place to support this type of funding to the Overseas Territories, Freedom of Movement by British passport holders, job opportunities and exports into the UK, such as fish and coffee, in relation to St Helena. There's also the issue of Constitutional relationship. Our Constitution, which was enacted in 2009, is in need of review. I look forward to attending the two-day Conference and I trust that I will be able to make relevant interventions which will stand to benefit St Helena. I will also have bilateral with the DfID Minister, Lord Bates, FCO Minister, Lord Ahmed and Andrew Mitchell. These meetings will focus on the serious financial position we find ourselves in with no capital programme, a jetty, which my Friend, Councillor Henry, alluded to, at Ruperts, which cannot be used to its full potential for the proper use of offloading cargo; St Helena Government has to pay a substantial amount of

money in transporting cargo into James Bay from a budget proposed settlement which is already limited to what can be achieved with limited scope to achieve any form of meaningful development. Private sector businesses are experiencing real financial difficulty, including the high cost of living; many people are really struggling to make ends meet. We are seeing low numbers of passengers arriving at our airport; we need support from Her Majesty's Government in addressing these issues. There are other major type projects which require capital programme support. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I hope some good will come from these meetings. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Is there any other Honourable Member who wishes to speak? No? Honourable Mover, are you ready or would you like some time? You're ready. Thank you. The Honourable Chief Secretary?

The Hon. Susan O'Bey –

Mr Speaker, I thank Honourable Members for their contributions to the debate this morning. I'd like to thank, in particular, the Honourable Councillor Essex who speaks very eloquently in relation to the lack of visitor numbers to the island at this current time and the impact, of course, which this is having on the tourism industry, and, indeed, on the wider private sector. We agree that some benefits from the new air service have been realised and are in evidence, but we continue to experience difficulties, particularly from the lack of visitor numbers, in the short period since the service started. I'm most encouraged to hear the points that the Honourable Councillor has raised in relation to how we can all work together to alleviate some of these impacts and already there is evidence, in terms of the work that is taking place, of collaborative working to support and provide interim support to the tourism and the wider private sector industries as we go through this period of transition. We've seen collaboration and ongoing collaboration between the Bank of St Helena, Enterprise St Helena and SHG in terms of developing packages to support the private sector, particularly the accommodation sector, we have also seen recent meetings which have been held with accommodation providers, farmers and fishermen in terms of how we can better work together to make these sectors feel more supported and also to make them more viable.

In terms of working relations, we accept that improved communications is always going to be the key to working together and I'm encouraged by the steps that have been taken so far to ensure that there is this wider stakeholder engagement and I will ensure that this continues to happen.

Members will be aware that there are discussions ongoing with both the air service provider and Her Majesty's Government as well as the local Tourism Association to seek ways to increase visitor numbers, especially during off peak times, because, of course, the lack of numbers will continue to impact negatively on these businesses. We're very, very pleased to say here today that, of course, we have been given approval for the second flight to take place from December this year and we hope that this will be an ongoing service, addition to our service.

I'd like to take the opportunity to also thank Councillor Henry for the work that he's done as Chair of the St Helena Fisheries Corporation, I think we all understand that that has been an extremely challenging role, particularly in the last few years and Councillor Henry we take this opportunity to thank you for your leadership during this particular period.

I'd also like to echo the Honourable Member's thanks to the Working Groups, again, another example of collaborative working here and the tremendous amount of work that has been done by the Manager of the Fisheries Corporation in both highlighting the lacks, if you like, of the current operations there and in working with both the fishermen and officials and the wider

stakeholder groups to develop a sustainable model for our fishing industry. I think we all recognise the importance of this industry and the long-standing, historical links that we have as well and we would like to see this industry continue well into the future.

The Honourable Member also talked about the tiring and tedious period that we've been going through in terms of trying to reach a balanced budget. This continues to be an issue for everybody and the risk to both sustainable development for the island and the considerable investment made by Her Majesty's Government and also this Government continues to be impacted by low funds, low visitor numbers and everything else that has been mentioned today. I'd like to also take this opportunity to thank our Finance Team and our Directors who have been working tirelessly to try to see how we can make efficiencies without compromising the quality of the service that we want to deliver. That work has been considerable, it has taken many, many hours and I would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody who has been involved in that process. We will continue to work with members to make Her Majesty's Government aware of the pressures that we are experiencing in terms of being able to deliver our services.

We continue to also press to seek support for funding in order to be able to continue with our infrastructure programme. The lack of a capital programme has seriously impacted the private sector and also the works that we need to do in order to be able to fully realise the benefits, if you like, of the significant investment in terms of the Airport Project. Members have mentioned already the Ruperts development and the impact that this is having and as soon as we can address this and move towards being able to have a fully operational wharf I think we know that this will make a huge difference to the way in which we're able to operate, so we will continue to work to make sure that HMG is aware of the need for funding for this very significant area of work.

Finally, I would like to say a big thank you to all elected members for the diligent way in which you've worked with us in terms of trying to bring us to a position where we will be able to approve, we hope, a budget that will meet the needs of the island going forward. I'd like to also take the opportunity at this time to wish Councillor Thomas well for his forthcoming mission, it is a very, very significant time for us and we know that he will do everything he can to fully represent us and to make sure that our voice and our needs are heard in the UK.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Yeah, I would add my congratulations that you've been chosen to represent us at JMC and also for the work you're going to undertake there, Councillor Thomas, I wish you well with the Brexit deal.

Honourable Members, that brings us to the end, I have to put the question. The question to the Motion is that this Council, this House do adjourn to the 29<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

Question that Council adjourns to 29<sup>th</sup> June 2018, put and agreed to.

The Speaker –

Just to remind you that you have fourteen clear days to get your questions and motions before the Clerk to fit in with the 29<sup>th</sup> June meeting, yes? Thank you all very much indeed. Enjoy your day.

**Council adjourned.**