

ST. HELENA
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

The Honourable John Gilbert Cranfield

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

Mrs Carol George

PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Friday, 29th June, 2018

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

(The Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

ORDER OF THE DAY

1. FORMAL ENTRY OF THE PRESIDENT

2. PRAYERS
(Father Dale Bowers)

3. ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT

Good morning, Honourable Members of Legislative Council, ladies and gentlemen, I bid you all a very warm welcome to the first sitting of the sixth meeting of Legislative Council. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Honourable Speaker for giving me the opportunity to preside over this meeting. It is, indeed, an honour for me to do so and I will endeavour to keep it as professional as I can.

Honourable Members, the main functions of any Legislative Council are to check and challenge the work of the Executive, make and change laws, debate important issues and check and approve Government spending. All this is done in the best interests of transparency and democracy. Whilst on the subject, I cannot fail to emphasise the importance that all members are duty bound to uphold with respect the inner workings of Standing Orders and the Code of Conduct for members of Legislative Council whilst in session.

We welcome back Councillor Derek Thomas from his Joint Ministerial Conference in the UK and we hope your meeting, Councillor Thomas, with the JMC members was a fruitful one and we look forward to your full report in due course.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Father Dale for giving us the benefit of prayer and I would also like to thank Mr Merlin George for his continued support as our Mace Bearer.

I also believe that this could very well be the last meeting for Lydia Buchanan, our Clerk of Council, she's not here today, she's not well, so we've got Carol George filling in for her today and I would like to pass on our sincere thanks and appreciation for the outstanding support she has given to this Council during her tenure of office. Her enthusiasm and commitment given to this Council will be sorely missed. We all take this opportunity to wish her every success in her future endeavours.

I would also like to pay tribute to the late Mr Reginald Legg who passed away at his home last Saturday. As you all know, Mr Legg was the Mace Bearer for Legislative Council for quite a number of years. Unfortunately illness prevented him from continuing this role, one which he thoroughly enjoyed. Our sincere condolences go out to his wife, Sylvia and the rest of his family. May he Rest in Peace and Rise in Glory.

Honourable Members, for this session we have four Sessional Papers, three Questions, three Motions followed by the traditional Adjournment Debate, all of which I'm sure will have a significant impact on our good governance. I wish you all a successful session today and I now call upon the Clerk of Council to announce the next item of business.

4. PAPERS

SP 20/2018 – The Honourable Anthony Green

The Deputy Speaker –
The Honourable Anthony Green?

The Hon. Anthony Green –
Mr Deputy Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper No. 20/2018 – St Helena Government – a Bill for an Ordinance – Births and Deaths (Registration) (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 21/2018 – The Honourable Anthony Green

The Deputy Speaker –
The Honourable Anthony Green?

The Hon. Anthony Green –
Mr Deputy Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper No. 21/2018 – St Helena Government – a Bill for an Ordinance – Liquor (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 30/2018 – The Honourable Chief Secretary

The Deputy Speaker –
The Honourable Chief Secretary?

The Hon. Susan O'Bey –
Mr Deputy Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper No. 30/2018 – St Helena Government – Proceedings of the Legislative Council – Friday, 19th December 2017 – First Sitting of the Second Meeting of Legislative Council.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 31/2018 – The Honourable Chief Secretary

The Deputy Speaker –
The Honourable Chief Secretary?

The Hon. Susan O’Bey –

Mr Deputy Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper No. 31/2018 – St Helena Government – Proceedings of the Legislative Council – Friday, 25th January 2018 – First Sitting of the Third Meeting of Legislative Council.

Ordered to lie on the table.

The Deputy Speaker –

The next item, please?

5.

QUESTIONS

Question No. 1 – The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex to ask the Honourable Financial Secretary

The Deputy Speaker –

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Will the Honourable Financial Secretary tell this Council what is the latest situation regarding approval by the Department for International Development of capital funding for key infrastructure projects required to enable economic development?

The Deputy Speaker –

The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I’d like to thank the Honourable Member for her question, however, Mr Speaker, I must say that unfortunately at this time there’s no further updates in terms of having any approval for a capital programme or any indication from the Department for International Development as to how much will be included in a capital programme for St Helena.

The Deputy Speaker –

Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

I thank the Honourable Financial Secretary for sharing the bare news.

The Deputy Speaker –

The next item, please?

Question No. 2 – The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex to ask the Honourable Chief Secretary

The Deputy Speaker –

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you. Will the Honourable Chief Secretary tell this Council why are relatively small items of non hazardous air freight being bumped off flights to St Helena that are far from full in terms of passenger numbers?

The Deputy Speaker –
The Honourable Chief Secretary?

The Hon. Susan O’Bey –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker and I thank the Honourable Member for her question. With the exception of an over-fuelling incident at OR Tambo Airport in Johannesburg on 23rd July 2018, which, regrettably caused cargo to be removed from a flight, there’ve been no other reports made to the Airport Directorate of instances when cargo has been bumped. Mr Deputy Speaker, since the beginning of commercial scheduled air service operations, members might be interested to know that over 20 metric tonnes of cargo have been flown to St Helena and over 3 metric tonnes of cargo have been flown to South Africa. During the peak season when flights to St Helena were either full or very nearly full the carriage of passengers and their baggage was prioritised over non essential cargo which resulted in non essential cargo remaining at the airport to await the next available flight. However, since 10th March 2018, aircraft with uprated engines have been operating the air service to St Helena and this has enabled the carriage of more passengers and cargo to and from the island. At the same time as the peak season has drawn to a close a reduction in passenger numbers has allowed for an increase in cargo capacity. There are a number of factors that can affect the actual amount of cargo carried, including the predicted weather conditions en route on flight day, it is also essential that cargo meets the necessary safety and security criteria to be air freighted to St Helena. The reasons for cargo not being admitted on flights include – it’s packaging does not meet international standards or regulations and this is regardless of whether it’s a dangerous good or not, it does not arrive at the cargo depot in time to be processed and put on to the aircraft, on occasions missing or incorrect information on the air weigh bill causes delays or non acceptance or results in cargo going to the wrong location or on to the wrong flight or South African Customs requirements and paperwork have not been met, the veracity of the sender or consignee cannot be verified, the maximum permitted weight and/or dimensions of packaging has been exceeded or payment for the carriage of cargo is late or has not been made. There have also been occasions when couriers claim to have delivered packages to Airlink for freighting to St Helena, these claims have turned out later to be incorrect. Ultimately the safety and security of the aircraft and its passengers and crew is of paramount importance. Neither Airlink nor SHG wish to compromise on these and as such cargo will not be accepted on to flights unless it meets international aviation standards and requirements. Mr Deputy Speaker, a good working relationship has been established and is maintained with managers in the cargo department of Airlink to allow for effective and rapid communication and troubleshooting to ensure that cargo bound for St Helena can be successfully boarded at OR Tambo Airport in Johannesburg. Indeed, Airlink has been extremely supportive and helpful and have worked hard with local South African Authorities to get cargo on to flights when queries and problems have arisen. Issues that do arise are dealt with as quickly as possible to ensure cargo can reach St Helena. Checks for cargo space availability are undertaken prior to and on the days of flights to ensure that cargo is not left behind. However, there will be occasions when factors, such as the weather on flight day determining the amount of fuel required and thus impacting on cargo capacity in terms of weight. Mr Deputy Speaker, if the Honourable Member has specific instances of cargo not being admitted to a flight I would welcome further information on these specific events so that they can be investigated. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker –
Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
I thank the Honourable Chief Secretary for her extremely lengthy reply, I would ask what immediate steps should a consignee take if they're informed that their cargo has been rejected?

The Deputy Speaker –
The Honourable Chief Secretary?

The Hon. Susan O'Bey –
Mr Deputy Speaker, they should contact Airlink Cargo in the first instance.

The Deputy Speaker –
The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Where would a business be able to obtain the details for Airlink Cargo immediately?

The Deputy Speaker –
Honourable Chief Secretary?

The Hon. Susan O'Bey –
Mr Deputy Speaker, I believe that these details are on the Airlink website and also on the SHG website.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Thank you for that, Honourable Chief Secretary. If cargo has been bumped from a particular flight, what is the next step with regard to ensuring that it is conveyed on the next available plane to St Helena, what process is followed, Honourable Chief Secretary?

The Deputy Speaker –
The Honourable Chief Secretary?

The Hon. Susan O'Bey –
Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. My understanding is that if cargo is bumped it is held and then providing all of the requirements are met it is put on the next available flight.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Thank you, Chief Secretary. In the event that the reason for it bumping is because, for example, there is some problem with regard to the paperwork, is the consignee informed of this and at what point?

The Hon. Susan O'Bey –
Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. My understanding is, yes, they are informed and as soon as they understand what the deficit is in this particular instance.

The Deputy Speaker –
Are there any other questions from Honourable Members on this topic? Okay, next question, please?

Question No. 3 – The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex to ask the Honourable Chairman of the Economic Development Committee

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Will the Honourable Chairman of the Economic Development Committee tell this Council what action has been taken by St Helena Government in collaboration with its partners with the aim of maximising occupancy of seats on scheduled flights to St Helena?

The Deputy Speaker –

The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker and I also thank the Honourable Member for her question. SHG is working with Enterprise St Helena to enhance its tourism marketing strategy to increase the number of visitors to the island throughout the year. The strategy focuses on marketing St Helena along three core product experiences of adventure, natural beauty and heritage and culture with emphasis being placed on specific products such as Napoleonic heritage, diving and walking with the aim to making St Helena an all round destination. St Helena now has forty-four operators selling packages. This is in addition to the direct marketing being done through the various international publications including a number of newspapers targeting regions such as the UK, France and South Africa. A number of film crews have also visited the island since the opening of the airport and St Helena has gained significant coverage as a result. St Helena also had a presence at a number of international travel shows with significant interest from a number of tour operators and agents. SHG and ESH are also working with Airlink on marketing the route to St Helena. Airlink have their own marketing strategy designed to dovetail with similar work on the island. Most recently?... recommencing 18th June, Airlink went on a UK/African showcase and was promoting the destinations they fly to which includes St Helena. ESH worked closely with Mantis Collection and Airlink and discussions are held on a monthly basis to understand their marketing outcomes and future plans. We are also really pleased with the appointment by ESH of the new PR Agency, the Brighter Group, the Brighter Group will work on initiatives with the key stakeholders on St Helena to continue pushing positive stories in the international trade media which can all assist in improving the occupancy level of newly established air service to St Helena. Having said all of this, St Helena is still in its first year of having an air service and it is accepted that there will be a bedding-in period. This is commonplace in all new destinations. Furthermore, it is recognised that our tour operators require at least a one-year lead time when advertising tourists to new destinations so current marketing efforts will not show immediate results. It is also obvious that passenger bookings are seasonal and whilst passenger bookings to St Helena have reduced during the current low season, May to November 2018, there is already a significant number of bookings for the upcoming peak season December 2018 to April 2019. This builds on our experience during the period December 2017 to April 2018 when the majority of flights were fully booked. It is anticipated that this will continue to be the trend during the peak season. For this reason, DfID approved an additional mid week flight throughout the peak season and further work is being undertaken to market this. As mentioned earlier, the Tourism marketing strategy for the island will promote activities all year round, obviously it will highlight what activities and products are available for both summer and winter seasons. ESH has confirmed that they will be carrying out additional work to detail the attractiveness of some

products for the winter season. However, for the current peak season, SHG, together with ESH, Bank of St Helena and the Tourism Association are currently working on two proposals for this interim period where it is reported that the visitor numbers are really low. The first proposal is to provide a business support package for tourist accommodations that are struggling financially to stay open during this critical period. The second is to look at a low season visitor package with Airlink and local accommodation providers which include discounted flights and accommodation for new bookings. This is currently under urgent discussion between SHG, DfID, ESH and Airlink to understand the commercial and technical implications of such an offering although there is early support from all parties to the principle of promotional offers. Simon Walker, Aviation Adviser to SHG, met with Airlink in Johannesburg on this matter earlier this week and work is underway to further develop these proposals. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you. Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

I thank my Honourable Friend for his response. Can he please confirm that the discounted offer will be available to St Helenians and not purely tourists?

The Deputy Speaker –

The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, and I thank the Honourable Member for her further question. The answer is, yes.

The Deputy Speaker –

Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you for that response. Can you also confirm that announcement of these packages if when approved will take place as soon as possible in order that they can be marketed and that the take-up can be maximised?

The Deputy Speaker –

The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Yes, that will be the case, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you. The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Can the Honourable Chair give any indicative timeframe as to what the hoped for anticipated date is likely to be?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

I would not be able to give an indicative timeline, but what I can say, Mr Speaker, that the work undertaken is priority for this Government and our partners and as soon as the appropriate approvals is received then we will publicise that. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker –
Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Is my Honourable Friend fully aware that if these packages are not released until considerably into the lean period they are not going to achieve the desired effect?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –
Yes, I think we all fully understand that, Mr Deputy Speaker, and that is why this piece of work is being given our top priority. Thank you.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker –
Any other Member have any questions for the Honourable Lawson Henry? No? Okay, next question, please? Sorry, the next item of business on the Order Paper.

6. MOTIONS

Motion No. 1 – The Honourable Anthony Green

THE BIRTHS AND DEATHS (REGISTRATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2018

The Deputy Speaker –
The Honourable Anthony Green?

The Hon. Anthony Green –
Mr Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the Births and Deaths (Registration) (Amendment) Bill, 2018, be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council.

The Deputy Speaker –
Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –
Mr Deputy Speaker, I beg to second.

The Deputy Speaker –
The Mover, you can now speak to the Motion.

The Hon. Anthony Green –
Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The Births and Deaths (Registration) (Amendment) Bill is needed because our Births and Deaths Registration Ordinance only allows for a birth that takes place here on the island to be registered. There are now many more babies born outside of St Helena as more pregnant women are sent overseas, mainly to South Africa, for medical reasons.

At present, a birth that takes place overseas can, for instance, be registered in South Africa or the UK, but not in St Helena. This does not impact on the child's immigration status, but does create practical problems. The most common problems, say, for a birth occurring in Cape Town, are that it is very difficult to get a copy of a birth certificate and for an unmarried father to get parental rights over the child. The South African authorities require an application for a copy of the birth certificate to be made in person and so it would be necessary to travel to South Africa with a child to apply. It may then take weeks for the certificate to arrive. There would be costs associated with all this. If the parents are unmarried, the father will only be recorded on the birth certificate if he is present when the birth is registered. If the father has not travelled to South Africa for the birth he cannot appear as the father on the birth certificate. If he does not appear on the birth certificate he would have to go to Court to get legal parental responsibility of the child. It is less common, but there is also a problem if the child's name is changed as the South African authorities will either issue a birth certificate in the name of the child that it had at birth. Apparently there was a case where the person had to change the name back in order to get travel documents. The Bill therefore before this House today seeks an amendment to the present Ordinance to permit the birth of a child born overseas to be registered in St Helena provided that one parent was ordinarily resident here at the time of the birth. A child born overseas will be registered upon the production of a birth certificate from the country of birth and upon the Registrar being satisfied that one parent is ordinarily resident in St Helena. If this Bill is enacted, the birth will need to be registered within twenty-one days of the child's arrival on the island.

There is also a transitional provision to allow a birth overseas in the five years prior to the enactment of the Bill to be registered. Honourable Members may wish to be reminded about the definition of "ordinarily resident" and I suggest that this can be raised during Committee stage. This Bill also amends the Ordinance to permit the registration of a death overseas of a person who was ordinarily resident on St Helena or has assets on St Helena as this is likely to become more common in the future and could cause difficulties for the family when administering the estate. If the law is changed, then the death that occurred overseas can be registered upon production of a death certificate from the country where the death occurred provided the Registrar is satisfied that the deceased was ordinarily resident in St Helena or had assets in St Helena at the time of the death. If this is approved, after the date of enactment a death will need to be registered within twelve months. There is also transitional provisions to permit the registration of a death overseas in the five years prior to enactment of the Bill. A birth or death could also be registered outside the prescribed periods mentioned in exceptional circumstances. This proposed legislation could provide significant cost savings for all those affected. In summary, Mr Deputy Speaker, if this Bill is passed, births and deaths occurring overseas can be registered in St Helena and there would be a transitional period to register births and deaths that occurred before the date of enactment. The Bill also amends a provision relating to the Registrar's seal of office. Mr Deputy Speaker, I beg to move.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Anthony Green. I now put the question that the Births and Deaths (Registration) (Amendment) Bill, 2018, be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council. The question is now open to debate. The Honourable Brian Isaac? Just on a point of information that the debate is to be confined to the principle of the Bill only and not in detail.

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise in support of this very important amendment and I wish to thank the Chairperson of the Social and Community Development Committee and the Attorney General's Chambers for their support in this amendment which will support many unpleasant situations, especially in a foreign country, if these occasions arise. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I also rise in support of this Bill and as outlined by the Honourable Mover at present the Births and Deaths Registration Ordinance only permits a birth that occurred on St Helena to be registered. As he also said, more births are occurring overseas as a result of medical referrals. Births can be registered overseas, but not on St Helena and this does have an impact and creates practical problems for parents, although it does not affect the child's status on St Helena. The proposed amendment will remedy this by allowing births that occur overseas to be registered in St Helena. The Bill also makes provision for deaths that occur outside of St Helena to be registered in St Helena. I therefore fully support these amendments and beg to move.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. The Honourable Derek Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I rise in support of this Bill, it is a sensible Bill, it will stand to benefit the people of St Helena in relation to births that occur overseas, mainly due to medical reasons and as well as deaths, so I give my full support to this Bill. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. The Honourable Gavin Ellick?

The Hon. Gavin Ellick –

I stand in support of this Motion as I'm part of the Social and Community Development team. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Is there anyone else wishes to speak on the Bill? The Honourable Mover might want to reply?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, simply to say that I thank my Honourable Colleagues for their support.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member.

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

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Mr Deputy Speaker, if I may, may I just say that I beg to move that this Council do resolve itself into a Committee to consider the detailed provisions of the Bill.

The Deputy Speaker –
Do we have a seconder?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –
Mr Deputy Speaker, I beg to second.

The Deputy Speaker –
Thank you very much indeed.

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

Council in Committee.

The Hon. Anthony Green –
Mr Deputy Speaker, would I, with the AG's permission, kindly ask the Crown Counsel... You're dealing? Okay, I do beg your pardon. Thank you.

The Hon. Sara O'Donnell (Attorney General) –
Mr Chairman, I would invite the Crown Counsel, Christine Cooper, to sit at the table to assist in respect of this matter.

The Chairman –
By all means, yes. Christine?

Ms Christine Cooper (Crown Counsel) –
Thank you.

The Chairman –
I put the question that the Title, Enacting Clause and Clause 1 do stand part of the Bill.

Title, Enacting Clause and Clause 1.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –
So we move on to Clause 2.

Ms Christine Cooper –
This Clause 2 is just adding into the list of register of books that the Registrar must keep books for overseas births and overseas deaths.

The Chairman –
Any member have any questions on Clause 2?

Clause 2.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

We move on to Clause 3.

Ms Christine Cooper –

Clause 3 is the operative bit of the amendment so it inserts two new sections into the Births and Deaths Registration Ordinance. The first is 16 (a) and this is the clause that will provide for births outside of St Helena to be registered here if all the conditions in (a), (b), (c) and (d) are met. I should say at this point that in (b) there is an amendment to the date where it says the 13th March 2023, that should be 13th July, so the four requirements are – that the child is still a child and is physically present on St Helena; that the application to register the birth has been made within the appropriate time and there is a five-year period, retrospective period, so any child born in the five years before this Bill comes into effect can still be registered. Children born after the Bill comes into effect, and it's intended it comes into effect on the 14th July, have to be registered within twenty-one days of arriving on the island and that mirrors the provision that a child born here has to be registered within twenty-one days of the birth. There is a provision in exceptional circumstances for longer periods just to deal with those unforeseen things that we haven't yet thought of, but it should be registered within twenty-one days of the child arriving here. The Registrar must be satisfied that at least one parent of the child was ordinarily resident on St Helena at the time of the birth. Ordinary residence is a concept that is used throughout our Ordinances: welfare, benefits, pensions, etc, all apply to people who are ordinarily resident here, so although it's not a black line division between whether somebody's ordinarily resident or not it is a concept that we use a lot. Broadly speaking, somebody who has come here and intends to be here for a reasonable period of time, and the Courts are generally settled on about six months, will be ordinarily resident here, whereas somebody who has just come for a two-week holiday is not ordinarily resident here. There was a lot of debate in the Social and Community Development Committee about which children should be included in this, because we know a lot of St Helenians work overseas for a lot of their time, but the Committee settled on ordinary residences as being the best way of identifying those children who should have their births registered here and the Registrar must be satisfied as to the identity of the child, production of a UK or a South African birth certificate, for example. If a child has been born somewhere where the birth certificate is not in English then there has to be a certified translation. And then Clause 16 (a) (ii) makes the provision that the Registrar may then register a birth if all of those conditions are met.

We then insert into the Ordinance a section 16 (b) which deals with deaths overseas and, again, there are four conditions that must be satisfied. For deaths occurring after the enactment of the Bill, the request to register the death has to be made within twelve months of the death, and, again, that mirrors the provision in the existing Ordinance for deaths that occur on the island. The deceased must either have been ordinarily resident here or have assets on the island, so it will be possible to register the death, even if the person was ordinarily resident, say, on Ascension, if they had property here, because these provisions are really about making it simpler to administer the estates on St Helena, so that's why that is there. And the Registrar must be satisfied as to the facts of the death by the production of the death certificate. Now, there's a requirement in here for a thing called an apostil if the death didn't occur either in the United Kingdom, an Overseas Territory or a Crown Dependency. Most of the world uses these apostils as a way of verifying the document because you're dealing with a death, you're going to allow somebody to deal with the assets of the estate, you need to be certain that the document you've been presented with is, in fact, the death certificate, so if it's come from a non British territory then it will require an apostil as well. Subsection (2) then gives the Registrar the power to register the death if those conditions are met and then subsection (3) deals with

transition period and there's a correction to the date again in subsection (b) there, that should be the 13th of July 2019. Again, there's provision for deaths occurring up to five years before the Bill is enacted, but the application for registration must be made within a year of the Bill being enacted and the other documentary requirements have to be met. So those are the operative parts of the Bill that actually amend the Ordinance.

The Deputy Speaker –

Honourable Members, I put the question that Clause 3 do stand part of the Bill. Any member wishes to speak to that clause?

Ms Christine Cooper –

Mr Chairman, I think you'll have to deal with the amendments.

The Deputy Speaker –

Oh, the amendments, sorry, yes. Okay, I put the question then that Clause 3 with two amendments do stand part of the Bill.

The Hon. Christine Scipio O'Dean –

Excuse me, Deputy Speaker, you asked if we had any questions, I put my light on, I thought that members would have the opportunity to ask questions....

The Chairman –

Yes, that's what I, sorry, I just wanted to refer back that we had two amendments, now I'm going to open it up for members to speak to the Bill, to the amended Bill. Sorry, the Honourable Christine Scipio O'Dean

The Hon. Christine Scipio O'Dean –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Chairman. Can I ask for the benefit of our listeners what is the rationale for the date, the 14th July 2018, why 14th July 2018 and not the 30th July or September, just for the benefit of the listeners?

Ms Christine Cooper –

The purpose for setting that date was just to allow the Registrar enough time between the enactment of the Bill and the start of people coming in and making applications to register.

The Hon. Christine Scipio O'Dean –

Thank you, Deputy Chairman.

The Chairman –

Any other Member have any questions to this Clause? No? Okay then, we move to Clause 4. Sorry, I haven't put it.

Mr Dax Richards –

Can you confirm the amendments, Mr Chair, first before you move on to.....

The Chairman –

Then I put the question that Clause 3 do stand part of the Bill, as amended.

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Mr Deputy Speaker, may I respectfully recommend and propose these two amendments?

The Chairman –

Oh, sorry, yes. Okay, can we have a proposal for these two amendments, please?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Mr Deputy Speaker, may I propose that under 16 (a) (i) (b) we delete the date 13th March 2023 and insert, is it 14th July?

Ms Christine Cooper –

13th.

The Hon. Anthony Green –

13th July 2023, that's my proposal.

The Chairman –

Can we have a seconder to that proposal?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Mr Chairman, I beg to second.

The Chairman –

Thank you very much. Then I put the question that the dates be changed from 13th March to 13th July 2023, that this do stand part of the Bill.

Question on amendment, put and agreed to.

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Mr Deputy Speaker, may I also, with your permission propose an amendment to 16((b)(iii)(b) for the deletion of the date 31st March 2019 and to replace it with 13th July 2019.

The Chairman –

Is it the 13th or 31st?

Ms Christine Cooper –

13th.

The Chairman –

13th. Okay, then, do we have a seconder to that proposal?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Mr Chairman, I beg to second.

The Chairman –

Thank you very much indeed. Then I put the question that the amendment to Clause 3, 16 (b) be changed from 31st March 2019 to 13th July 2019.

Question on amendment, put and agreed to.

Clause 3 (as amended) –

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Can we move on to the Clause 4 now, that it do stand part of the Bill?

Ms Christine Cooper –

This clause is simply tidying up a strange anomaly that we found in the Ordinance. At the moment, section 19 refers to documents being used in evidence from the Registrar's Books and they say that provided a certified copy on the hand of Registrar shall not be received in evidence by any Court unless it is sealed or stamped with the Registrar's seal of office prescribed by regulations made under this Ordinance. Well, there are no regulations made under this Ordinance so none are required, the Registrar has a seal, so we're just deleting those words "prescribed by regulations under this Ordinance".

The Chairman –

So I put the question then that Clause 4 do stand part of the Bill. Any member wishes to speak?

Clause 4.

Question put and agreed to.

Council Resumed.

The Deputy Speaker –

The Bill to be reported, please, by the Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I beg to report that the Births and Deaths (Registration) (Amendment) Bill, 2018, has passed Committee with two amendments and to move that this Council approves the said Bill and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted.

The Deputy Speaker –

Do we have a seconder to that, please?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Mr Deputy Speaker, I beg to second.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you very much. The Mover, you wish to speak to the Motion?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker, I have no further comments.

The Deputy Speaker –

Then I put the question that this Council approves the Births and Deaths (Registration) (Amendment) Bill, 2018 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted. Any Members wish to speak? Sorry, as amended, sorry, I do beg your pardon. Do any Members wish to speak to the Motion? No? The Honourable Mover wishes to speak?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

No further comments, thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker –
Okay.

Question that Council approves the Bill and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted, put and agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker –
The next item of business, please?

Motion No. 2 – The Honourable Anthony Green

THE LIQUOR (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2018.

The Hon. Anthony Green –
Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Liquor (Amendment) Bill, 2018, be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council.

The Deputy Speaker –
Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Kylie Hercules –
Mr Deputy Speaker, I beg to second.

The Deputy Speaker –
Thank you very much. The Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Anthony Green –
Mr Deputy Speaker, I would first like to explain the reasons for this Bill, the Liquor (Amendment) Bill, 2018. The Liquor Ordinance 1988 makes provision for an Occasional Licence to be issued to allow the sale of alcohol on the occasion of any entertainment or special occasion. The law at present requires a separate licence for every entertainment or special occasion covering a maximum period of two days. £10.00 has to be paid each time an application is made and a further £10.00 is payable when the licence is issued. The relevant law is section 8 of the Ordinance and this places a substantial burden on any business providing a bar service for any entertainment and special occasions. To give an example, if a business attends sporting events at Francis Plain every weekend, so during the football season over a period of twenty-six weeks, the business owner has to make an application to the Magistrates Court every week for a licence. In practice, these applications and licenses that are issued are identical except for the date. Administrative processing and Court time required for each application places a burden not only on the business but also on the Court. There is no obvious benefit to anyone for applications like these having to be made on each separate occasion. The extra cost is considerable and, if, for instance, eighty applications had to be made in the year it would cost £1600. This could be compared with the cost of a licence for a tavern, hotel or restaurant which is £125. The cost of setting up business without fixed premises is also more than operating from a fixed location. The Bill before you today, Honourable Members, proposes to amend section 8 of the Liquor Ordinance to permit an application to be made on the occasion or occasions of any entertainment or special occasion provided that upon all

occasions for which the licence is granted the location and other arrangements for the sale and consumption of alcohol are identical and also the licence so granted is valid for no more than twenty-six specified occasions covering no more than two days in any seven day period and no more than two consecutive days. At present, twenty pounds has to be paid for identical events that take place over different dates. If the law is passed, a business would pay one fee for a series of up to twenty-six identical occasions. It would reduce the amount of fees collected, but this will be balanced by a reduction in the work needed for processing fewer applications. Approving this proposal will remove a barrier to encouraging investment. In processing this Bill to this stage the Social and Community Development Committee consulted the Judicial Services, the Chief Magistrate, Crown Estates and the Police, all of whom were supportive. Mr Deputy Speaker, I beg to move.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Then I put the question that the Liquor (Amendment) Bill, 2018, be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council. The question is now open to debate. Honourable Derek Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise in support of this Bill. Again, this issue has been around for the best part of two years and as a member of the Social and Community Development Committee we've been trying to look at a way around this because we know there are business providers who provide this valuable service to the community, so for me, I am extremely grateful for the guidance and the work done by Crown Counsel, Mrs Christine Cooper, in finding a solution to this problem in a quick time and I'm sure the business providers themselves will be extremely grateful for this. As we heard, this will allow for a period of time, up to twenty-six occasions, where a provider can provide the service for no more than two days. We have our football season, cricket season, members of the public enjoy taking part in these events and enjoying the service that is provided, so this is a really good piece of legislation that will support economic growth to a certain degree, so I give my full support to this, and, again, I would like to thank the Crown Counsel for her support on this issue. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Any other Member wishes to speak? Councillor Brian Isaac?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker and I wish to thank the Honourable Chairman of the Social and Community Development Committee and the Crown Counsel for bringing this piece of legislation to the House. In my former life as the Chairman of the Social and Community Development Committee I was strongly lobbied by small businesses in the community who provide this service to have this amendment made. Unfortunately other priorities in legislation took higher priority and this was pushed back for reasons, small businesses were explained that, but I'm pleased that it's been presented here today, it will have a lot of benefits, it will have lots of benefits financially to the small businesses, unfortunately we will lose some revenue that we really need, but we will make up for that in other areas and I give my full support to this amendment. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I also rise in support of this Liquor (Amendment) Bill, 2018. As already explained, it makes provision in the Liquor Ordinance for an applicant to be able to apply on one occasion for a longer period for this and this is welcome I know by the business community who provide these services and I give my full support to it.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

I rise in support of this Bill, it is one that the Chamber of Commerce have been lobbying to bring to this House for some considerable time, but as the Honourable Derek Thomas has already stated, until the Crown Counsel was able to identify a way forward this has been kicked around in the long grass for a long time and I'm therefore extremely pleased that at last it's going to be resolved. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. The Honourable Gavin Ellick?

The Hon. Gavin Ellick –

I stand in support of this Motion and I would like to thank Christine Cooper for all her hard work in getting it done. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Kylie Hercules?

The Hon. Kylie Hercules –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I also rise in support of this Motion. Social and Community Development Committee has been talking about this amendment for a while now and it is with thanks to Christine that this has come before the House today.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Are there any other Members who wish to speak? The Honourable Mover, you wish to reply?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. May I thank my Honourable Colleagues for their support and may I also take the opportunity to echo the Honourable Derek Thomas's appreciation to Crown Counsel for her support and also I'd like to thank my Committee for their support as well. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I beg to move.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member.

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

The Hon. Anthony Green –

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

The Deputy Speaker –
Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Kylie Hercules –
Mr Deputy Speaker, I beg to second.

The Deputy Speaker –
Thank you very much.

Question that Council do resolve itself into a Committee, put and agreed to.

Council in Committee.

The Chairman –
Honourable Members, we're now in Committee stage.

The Hon. Sara O'Donnell –
Mr Chairman, may I invite Crown Counsel, Christine Cooper, who you have already heard has been very important in this matter, to sit at the table and assist?

The Chairman –
Okay, by all means. I put the question that the Title, Enacting Clause and Clause 1 do stand part of the Bill. Any Member wishes to speak?

Title, Enacting Clause and Clause 1.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –
I put the question that Clause 2 do stand part of the Bill.

Ms Christine Cooper –
This is the clause that changes the operative part of section 8 of the Liquor Ordinance so where it currently allows a Liquor Licence to be granted only for one occasion and an occasion may only last for a maximum of two days the new provision which replaces it will allow licence to be granted for up to a maximum of twenty-six occasions provided that all the other details are identical other than the date.

The Chairman –
Any Member wishes to speak on this Clause? Sorry, Honourable Christine Scipio O'Dean?

The Hon. Christine Scipio O'Dean –
Thank you, Mr Chairman. Again, I will ask just for the benefit of the listeners why a maximum of twenty-six specified occasions, not fourteen, thirty, just for the benefit of our listeners, please?

Ms Christine Cooper –

What we did when looking at what the right numbers were there we looked at the licenses that were being granted and the lengths of the sporting seasons and twenty-six weeks would permit a business if it were going to appear at every sporting event for the whole season to have one licence for the whole season, so that's why it's twenty-six weeks.

The Hon. Christine Scipio O'Dean –
Thank you.

The Chairman –
Any other Member wishes to speak to Clause 2?

Clause 2.

Question put and agreed to.

Council Resumed.

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

The Deputy Speaker –
Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Kylie Hercules –
Mr Deputy Speaker, I beg to second.

The Deputy Speaker –
Thank you very much. You may wish to speak to the Motion, Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Anthony Green –
Nothing further, thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker –
Thank you, then I'll put the question that this Council approves the Liquor (Amendment) Bill, 2018 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted and I now invite Members to speak to the Motion. Honourable Mover, you may wish to respond?

The Hon. Anthony Green –
Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I have no further comments.

The Deputy Speaker –
Okay, thank you. Then I'll put the question that this Council approves the Liquor (Amendment) Bill, 2018 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted.

Question put and agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker –
The next item of business, please?

Motion No. 3 – The Honourable Anthony Green

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this House expresses concern about the economic impact affecting St Helena arising from the reduced services provided by the airport and the associated island infrastructure projects and requests our Government to invite Her Majesty's Government to undertake an assessment thereon without delay and to share the findings of this Council.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Is there a seconder?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you very much. Honourable Mover, you may wish to speak to the Motion?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. As you know, and as Honourable Members have been aware, I originally submitted this Motion more than three weeks ago. Some things may have moved on since then, but the key underlying issues remain the same. The trigger for this Motion is the present financial and economic circumstances on the island, in particular, based on current figures for our grant-in-aid settlement, we have a problem with producing a realistic budget for public services to meet all our needs. Equally, if not more so, the private sector is also suffering. Likewise, the impact is being felt by many throughout the island. We, as elected members, still have to make decisions in compliance with policies designed for this very moment in time, a time which we had expected to be one of a significant upturn in our financial fortunes. I believe that to a significant degree our financial problems are due to the reduced services provided by the airport and the associated island infrastructure. This is in addition to the hope that we had that by now investors would appear over the horizon once our airport started operating. A key factor in our current situation is the significant low numbers of visitors, that of returning Saints and tourists, against the high numbers originally forecast by experts. Numbers and timings which formed the backdrop as to what measures the island had to sign up to before any decision was taken to give us an airport. This Motion this morning concentrates on just one element of the problem, that of significant reduction in visitor numbers which is having a major economic impact. A new air service intended to transform the economy would always need a period of transition. The higher expectations are not materialising. Let's not forget that we have for years been bearing the burden by continuing to fulfil our part of the bargain which the two parties, HMG and SHG, signed up to in a Memorandum of Understanding. This Motion intends to give an indication of what appears to me to be some of the key underlying issues. Firstly though, St Helena owes Her Majesty's Government huge thanks for agreeing for St Helena to have an airport. It already has had a number of positive effects, particularly regarding overseas medical referrals and quicker access to and from the island. It's right to recognise again the wonderful billing we have as an airport terminal and applaud the people who laboured skilfully and for long hours and they have to be highly commended. We have a terminal to be extremely proud of. That said, the low number of visitors is causing difficulties. Let's briefly then look at some of the issues that preceded the situation we now find ourselves in. In 2011 when it was finally agreed for St Helena to

have an airport, the proposed size of the runway was reduced by twenty metres. As a consequence instead of being able to cater for a Boeing 737-800 as had been previously suggested, this was changed to Boeing 737-700. This in turn altered the passenger capacity from 180 down to 125 for each flight. Following discovery or re-discovery of wind shear at the proposed runway site, we now have Embraer 190 operating with a capacity only of around 70 passengers. After a reasonably good start using this aircraft, the Embraer 190 also had some weeks ago a number of flight delays for bad weather. Not good for business, nor for building confidence in the service. Of course this can't be helped, but it needs to be borne in mind when calculating our potential financial benefits. When plans for our airport were being developed, what number of visitors were expected? It was stated at the outset that we would need thirty thousand visitors to make St Helena self sustaining. At the time, possibly around 2010, that this number was to be achieved over a ten-year period and would need daily flights. Some years back, commenting on any possible failure in achieving the expected numbers, the Social and Economic Plan for 2012/13 through to 2021/22 stated that if this does not happen with the opening of the airport not only will this significantly increase the requirement for overseas aid, but it will affect the overall viability of St Helena establishing itself in the global tourism market. It further stated, and I quote, "it will then be difficult to build visitor numbers". A report, probably around late 2011, said that in Year 1, the forecast passenger numbers were 5,530 Saints and 1,493 visitors, a total of 7,023 facilitated by just one aircraft a week. That would have been based on using a larger aircraft. These numbers roughly equate to about 135 passengers a week and that's assuming the aircraft will be full, which itself, was only about half of that earlier forecast, but significantly, it was about half the number that had been forecast at the time the terms of the agreement were drawn up for St Helena to have an airport, I refer to the MOU. In a moment, I'll come to the number of visitors we've had since the airport was opened. If they are not one hundred percent accurate they should at least convey a message. For St Helena to receive approval to have an airport built, it had to sign up to the Memorandum of Understanding, the MOU. This formed the basis of a significant number of reforms which affected everybody. For example, land and tax laws had to be modified, we did that. Policies on subsidies had to be changed, we also did that. These remain in place today and we are feeling the effects, but where are the tourists? Obviously St Helena not all offers necessary in the initial requirements of the MOU which led to the approval being given in October 2011 for an international airport to be built. Many of you will know what happened since then. Shorter runway, smaller aircraft, less visitors, made up of both visiting Saints and tourists, only one flight a week which amounts to less business. Less business equals less money, less money means slower economic growth. Inadequate financial support could now lead to an economic crisis. It was noted around 2011 that in order to carry the same number of passengers it would need an increase in the number of flights. Yes, that was said in 2011, that assessment did not have to wait on real data, but was simply a logical conclusion. Smaller aircraft would lower passenger capacity needs higher ticket costs. There is no subsidy even for our transitional period. In addition, many Saints and apparently potential visitors do not also favour Johannesburg as the hub. Further, some years ago, the decision was taken to move from the public to private sector driven economy. Islanders were actively encouraged to become entrepreneurs, they spent money and time upskilling themselves, many took the plunge and invested, some heavily, on the promise that the opening of the airport St Helena would be hosting the ever increasing number of tourists that the experts had predicted. Not only have there been low numbers, the start of the airport operations were significantly delayed. All this is having a major impact on everybody. With potentially an inadequate budget and no confirmed signs of any capital budget we are facing grave difficulties. We know we have to do more with less but our starting point is that we do not, we have not been operating for years in a state of economic stability. Instead, lack of a capital budget affects particularly the

construction industry. Insufficient budgetary aid will also lead to further dilution of service at a higher cost affecting most people, including the vulnerable. Lower numbers of visitors directly affects revenue and also indirectly through taxation. Low numbers also affect businesses, particularly those who have recently taken the plunge having been enticed to do so and some, no doubt, are now faced with the loan repayments and not having the level of business that that had been forecast. We have to convince the British Government that the problems with the airport, despite its fantastic structure and ambience, but because of low visitor numbers they need to step in and support us now. We surely have the data to support that, no way would we have been able to move immediately into self sufficiency, but now with reduced air service arising from issues with the airport is not and will not provide adequate funding for St Helena. Failure to increase the indicative grant-in-aid funding and hesitate or refuse capital funding could see the beginning of all that has been achieved, lost. People will leave, confidence will disappear and forever the elephant in the room will then be the airport, so can we put a figure to our lost earnings? The terms of the MOU and agreement between SHG and HMG was predicated on an economic basis of thirty thousand tourists a year albeit growth would be over many years. Such figures on the arrival by air at our St Helena Airport were: November 2017 – 208; December 2017 – 338; January 2018 – 370; February 2018 – 320; March 2018 – 353; April 2018 – 312. If one analyses, say, the April figures of 312, it was made up in its arrivals of 90 were connected with employment and business, 62 were visiting Saints, 81 were returning Saints and 78 were tourists. From this example, it suggests to me two things. Firstly, you see that April figure the average 80 tourists a week. Secondly, Saints made up 46% of that figure. This, once again, shows that our own people make the biggest contribution to our economy as they have done over many, many years when they built their own homes and boosted the economy with their hard earned income. Britain may also be taking account of the money they have invested in other projects in connection with the airport such as the BFI which has still not been commissioned, but that is not an issue. With a smaller aircraft, less aviation fuel must be needed, which presumably could be catered for through fuel being brought in by tanktainers, so wind shear has also affected others. The Haul Road is obviously not complete. The road from Ruperts to Jamestown is in a poor state. The wharf area at Ruperts is not complete and this is costing the St Helena Government loads of money in having to transport cargo round to Jamestown. I hope that one of my colleagues might explore this in more detail. I've just touched on one or two topics as examples. Arising from all this the question has to be is Her Majesty's Government, through DfID, fully conscious of the reality of the situation we find ourselves in. They know, because we told them. The effects on Government services, the plight of private sector, the lack of inward investment at this crucial time could result in throwing the baby out with the bath water if we don't get financial support crucially needed at this moment of time. In summary, Mr Deputy Speaker, Her Majesty's Government approved an airport based on certain assumptions and applied certain conditions. St Helena has largely delivered on its commitments to those conditions as part of that agreement. HMG has subsequently provided air service but considerably less than promised. The consequences of the reforms of the MOU that have been in place for many years continue to have an impact. That impact affects all. Going forward, to have a meaningful dialect with Britain, this needs to be supported by facts, a dialogue where we need to seek support from their politicians who have an understanding of our situation. Honourable Members will also recognise that in view of our economic development, that is much slower than expected, we are constantly faced, as Members, with the reality of its consequences while being obliged to carry out our statutory obligations in raising revenue. Britain has an obligation to us under UN Charter 73 that the interests of the inhabitants of Overseas Territories are paramount. I therefore invite Honourable Members to agree to express concern about the economic impact affecting St Helena arising from the reduced services provided by the airport

and the associated island infrastructure projects and request our Government to invite Her Majesty's Government to undertake an assessment thereon without delay and to share these findings with this Council. This should provide the evidence. The findings could also lead to a revised agreement between the two governments based on reality and not forecasts that have not materialised. To get the process underway I commend the Motion to Honourable Members. Mr Deputy Speaker, I beg to move.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Members, the Motion is that this House expresses concern about the economic impact affecting St Helena arising from the reduced services provided by the airport and the associated island infrastructure projects and requests our Government to invite Her Majesty's Government to undertake an assessment thereon without delay and share their findings with this Council. The Motion is now open for debate. Councillor Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I rise in support of this Motion and as stated by the Honourable Mover this Motion was triggered by the current financial downturn on island. It is understandable that we are at the early stages of the transition from sea to air access and the impacts of this, this is having on the island due to low tourist numbers and this was predicted by HMG when they signed up on the airport. I have said previously in this House we accept this, but we do not accept is the current Minister at DfID not honouring his predecessor's commitment of ongoing support to the island during the transitional period. Ironically the Minister who signed off on our airport said at the time that HMG would have to continue to provide financial support to St Helena during the transitional period because of some, yes, only some of the circumstances we are now facing. That Minister at the time was the Right Honourable Andrew Mitchell who visited the island a few months ago following a similar Motion in this Honourable House for him to do so. He said the same words here that he did in 2011 that HMG must continue their support. He added to those words by saying that HMG have spent the big millions but they must now spend the small millions to join up the dots. Mr Mitchell has had a number of meetings with the DfID Minister since his return to Parliament and we still await the outcome. Councillors have also invited Lord Bates, the current DfID Minister to visit the island so that he can see firsthand the situation on the ground and the risk he has taken in Her Majesty's investment in the airport by not now spending the small millions to join up those dots. What was not predicted in the business case for the airport, however, and which has been so eloquently set out by the Honourable Mover is some of the factors that we are now facing which in all probability was caused by poor decision making during the construction of the airport, which I have highlighted in this Honourable House many times, but will not repeat today. As a people, we have had to accept all of this none of which was of our doing or that we even contributed to. The fact is we were never privy to any decision making with regard to the airport, we have been told only what those involved wanted us to know. Mr Deputy Speaker, what we cannot accept however, nor should we have to, is for us as a people to have to suffer the consequences of those events and decision making in error by officials during the construction of the airport. The Honourable Mover has pointed out that this now means we have a smaller aircraft, less capacity for passengers, higher fares and no ability for a larger aircraft. St Helena and St Helenians during the construction phase of the airport and before it started have done everything that HMG has asked of us. There were gaps in the DfID business case for the airport too, as it was predicated that once the contract was signed investors would be queuing up to invest in the island, in particular in accommodation for tourists. This too never happened. HMG was warned of this as far back in 2013 by leading hoteliers,

including the CEO of Mantis. Who filled that gap? Yes, the people of St Helena did, so did our own Government by building the Mantis Hotel. I can say we were encouraged by this Government, and, indeed, DfID to do so. I fully accept and appreciate that DfID has in some respects responded to the market request for the second flight during the peak period and there was support from them for a low season visitor package with discounted fares. I spoke earlier of a support package to accommodation providers which is being finalised and will be implemented shortly. DfID, in principle, said they would look to support this also. The island fully appreciates and is grateful for this support. However, the economic climate on the island and the extremely low tourist numbers passing through the airport has placed an additional burden and pressure on the island economy. There is also growing evidence that the low numbers of tourists can be attributed to the hub where the flights to St Helena originate. The market is constantly telling us this and unless this is seriously considered in St Helena's best interests, and I would wish to emphasise, St Helena's best interests, then it is difficult to see if the interventions we are now making will make any difference, only time will tell, but this too is one way out for us. It is worthy of mention that our people, both on and off island, have raised the issue of the hub many times. Elected Members have also done so and, indeed, protested against the hub being in Jo'burg, but as is the case with anything airport no-one seems to be listening to us. The simplest thing to do to change this, given the aero political issues with Airlink, the current service provider, is to expose to ..?.. Namibia is for Airlink to move their maintenance for their service to the island to Cape Town. This is what the Saints want, so too the tourists. All of the island's links in Africa have been with Cape Town for so many years. Saints also live there and a real bond has been built up over many generations which should not be severed lightly. The risk in insisting that the hub for our air service should be in a place that the users of the service do not want, but is being forced upon us is very likely in the long term going to cause reputational damage to our fledgling tourist economy. I hope therefore that the much awaited review of the air service contract will take this into account. SHG nor Airlink have any control nor can we influence the process in which the aero political process is undertaken, nor should we want to continually wait whilst this is sorted, it has not happened in the years that it has been ongoing, so why should we have to wait. If Airlink is truly committed to the service they are providing for the island, and I'm in no doubt they are, then they should do the right thing for the island and that is to move the maintenance for the service to St Helena to Cape Town so that they can originate the flight there to the island. Another issue that the market is continually telling us is the high cost of the ticket. We believe this is directly attributed to the low numbers we are experiencing and the fact that we have to use a smaller aircraft, but this is not of our doing, so surely an indicator such as this should be to lower the price of the ticket. Against this background I would argue that HMG has a duty to support the island given the circumstances they have placed us in. There is still no capital programme to enable us to do some of the major projects that still need to be done if we are to get the best benefit from the investment in our airport. Such a programme would bring significant stimulus to our economy and put the island back on a course for a much brighter future that would in a short period of time bring us out of economic decline. The situation we find ourselves in at Ruperts with regard to having a wharf and no capital programme to make it for the operation can also be linked back to DfID and poor decision making and broken promises. The breakwater was intended to be built in Jamestown, but at their insistence it was agreed to be built at Ruperts with a promise that they would provide funding for the enabling infrastructure. This has sadly not been forthcoming. It is these issues and short sightedness that makes one believe that HMG is not meeting the reasonable needs of the island, but is instead on a course to bring further poverty to the island. One of the consequences of not having Ruperts as a fully operational port is that cargo has to be ferried back to Jamestown at huge cost to SHG whereas this funding could be going to other priorities. The island has seen

significant increases in cost of living, there is no longer any shipping subsidy and this has also caused further increase in freight adding to the serious financial downturn in the economy. At the same time, SHG is expected to raise the same level of taxes against a background of swinging tax base and an ever increasing elderly population. All these issues were highlighted to the DfID Financial Aid Mission team on their visit to the island earlier this year, but sadly this was never reflected in the financial settlement offered by HMG. I will come back to this issue during the Adjournment Debate. Mr Deputy Speaker, I cannot emphasise any stronger that unless HMG change their stance by providing further financial support that will adequately provide for the reasonable needs of St Helena they will not only be doing reputational damage to our fledgling economy, but will seriously jeopardise the huge investment of the British taxpayers money in the airport. The continuing downturn in our economy will also likely to force young Saints to leave the island to seek a better standard of living overseas. The consequences of this with an ageing population will put the future of our island in further jeopardy and in all likelihood of Her Majesty's Government having to put significant further financial support in terms of contingent liability. No-one wants to see this happen, no more so than Saints and, indeed, the British taxpayer whose money was spent on the airport. HMG needs to act and do so now before we are lost in the might of the Atlantic Ocean. They have already taken away our rudder and we cannot steer the course that so much anticipated prosperity we were promised and have looked forward for for such a long time. Why, why why? Mr Deputy Speaker, I beg to move and commend the Honourable Mover for his Motion which I fully support. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I wish first to declare my interest as President of the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I commend my Honourable Colleague for bringing this Motion to the House as it is clear that St Helena is not experiencing the much wanted economic boost that was projected as a result of the Airport Project, but instead the reverse scenario. I wish to focus on the detrimental impacts of the continuing absence of capital programme funding which would enable the Wharf infrastructure works at Ruperts and would therefore enable the works that have already been completed to deliver value for money, something that they're clearly not able to do at this present time. I will leave the air service related issues to my Honourable Colleagues to cover as otherwise I would exceed the time permitted for each intervention. It is astounding that the British Government has still not provided the additional, relatively modest, capital funding to enable a return to be made on its own investment in Ruperts, particularly when it is aware of the additional expense that is being incurred for cargo operations as a result. This situation did not appear logical or advisable from its own perspective let alone that of St Helena. Perhaps there are valid reasons, but if so one wonders why these have not been shared. The island is suffering as a result as there is currently no certainty as to if, when or how this will change. The Honourable Financial Secretary this morning has confirmed that there is currently no good news on this front. How did we get into this situation? As my Honourable Colleague has alluded, the history is well known to most of us, the European Union allocated funding from the 9th European Development Fund for the construction of a sheltered landing based at Jamestown Wharf. When international tenders for the required works were sought these came in above the level of funding available. As the European Union will not provide top up funding under any circumstances and the gap was too large to be met from within St Helena's own Consolidated Fund the only option was to

approach the Department for International Development. DfID refused to make any contribution to works in Jamestown but stated that they would be very willing to contribute to work in Ruperts. In order not to lose the EU funding component, in my capacity as Territorial Authorising Officer, I had to persuade the EU to transfer the funding for use in Ruperts instead of Jamestown, which they agreed to do. DfID's rationale for wanting the development at Ruperts had some merit as it was intended to enable cargo handling to be transferred out of Jamestown so congestion would be reduced and other development could take place there and to facilitate the establishment of an industrial hub at Ruperts. However, this vision cannot be achieved without the required level of funding and this is what has not been forthcoming despite all the expectations that were raised at the time that the change in location was approved. As a result, St Helena has an expensive asset that cannot fulfil its intended role and instead of cargo operations being improved the situation is now worse than it has been in living memory. Under such circumstances, Mr Deputy Speaker, it is no surprise that morale is low and the public's patience is wearing thin. The inability to develop a coherent and realistic timeline for the development of Ruperts as a cargo port and a handling area, due to the continuing uncertainty regarding the approval, timing and level of funding that will become available for this purpose, is becoming a major source of frustration and deep concern not only to importers, but to other enterprises wishing to develop businesses in the area. In the current depressed economic climate, making the right business decision is all the more crucial, but this is virtually impossible to do when there are so many critical unknowns and the longer the delay the greater the pressure that will be placed upon the relevant businesses. There is also an urgent and wider need to finalise and deliver all aspects of development within Ruperts, but this can only be addressed if the necessary financial resources are in place, so, again, we are back to the same stumbling block. If capital funding is eventually forthcoming for infrastructure at Ruperts, the amount required will exceed that which would have been necessary at an earlier point, because not only will project costs have increased due to inflation, higher freight rates, etc, but the extent of the works required will be greater as existing infrastructure has deteriorated in the intervening period. The longer works are delayed the more they will cost and in these times of austerity the more unaffordable they will become. Surely it is being penny wise and pound foolish not to make the required investment now and, indeed, not to have it made it some years ago. It seems that once again St Helena may end up as the victim of questionable decisions totally beyond its control that result in suboptimal solutions having to be accepted in order to put something that is workable in place. Mr Deputy Speaker, St Helena has suffered too much from this too long and it is time that action is taken to see that this is not a part of our future going forward.

Members of this Honourable House and officials have lobbied strongly for a capital programme for well over a year, but without success. One wonders why there has been no tangible progress. What else needs to be done to convince the British Government to release the necessary funds? I wish we could get some feedback on this issue, but to date it's just like a big, black, dark hole with no clear output at the end.

On 15th December 2017, I moved the following Motion in this Honourable House, and I quote, "That this House formally places on record its grave concerns relating to the continuing absence of an agreed capital investment programme to address the essential development needs of St Helena after 1st January 2018 and request that Her Majesty's Government be fully informed of these". This Motion was carried unanimously and the Chief Secretary informed me that this had been conveyed to the British Government. Since then there has been no response and no evidence of further action. It appears that the content of Motions passed within this Honourable House is being brushed aside or overlooked. If, indeed, this is the case, it is an insult to this Honourable House, Mr Deputy Speaker, and also to the people of St Helena.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I trust that the Motion that we are debating now will not meet a similar fate and that the assessment requested will go ahead as speedily as possible if this Motion is carried. Even more importantly, I hope that the sentiments expressed in this House today will be heeded and that the seriousness of the current situation and the yet more serious consequences of it continuing will be fully accepted and speedily addressed. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker –

Any other Member wishes to speak to the Motion? The Honourable Brian Isaac?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise in support of this Motion and thank my Honourable Friend for bringing it to this House. I also support the exposition of my colleagues and the full heartily contents what they reveal here this morning. Mr Speaker, I hope that this Motion will enlighten the British Government to undertake a review of our current situation that we find ourselves in, because impacts are more than what I can explain here today. Mr Speaker, I have nothing more to add at this moment but I will touch on some of these core issues during my Adjournment Debate and I thank my Honourable Colleagues for their support. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Any other Honourable Member wish to speak? Honourable Gavin Ellick?

The Hon. Gavin Ellick –

I stand in support of this Motion, I think it's a really good one and I think it's about time that the British Government should start listening to us and thank you Mr Green for bringing it to the table. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. The Honourable Derek Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise in support of this Motion. I would first like to congratulate the Honourable Mover for the comprehensive research he's put into his exposition to this Motion. Mr Speaker, it is fair to say that the people of St Helena are extremely grateful to Her Majesty's Government for the significant investment they've put into our airport, but the partnership with SHG and Her Majesty's Government in relation to the MOU that was set with conditions imposed where St Helena was expected to engage in a number of activities – land, immigration, taxes and investment policies, St Helena Government has done their part and it's not, the result of which is not what anybody expected in terms of economic growth and development and it is a shame, to a certain extent, that we are in this situation that we find ourselves in and I have to say it's not been for the lack of communicating the difficult situation to Her Majesty's Government, this Council has done all within its powers to convey the situation we find ourselves in. A lot has been down to the lack of a capital programme, we have essential infrastructure which we've heard, especially with Ruperts, the budget allocation was not what we expected yet we are expected to use funding from within that budget to do things like, for instance, transporting containers from Ruperts across, which is a significant amount of money, and we also have to pick up the cost of the airport associated costs as well, so to a certain degree, Her Majesty's Government has been really slow in reacting to the crisis we find

ourselves in. We've had setbacks from Day One, I mean, you know, the morale among people initially was good, people were encouraged, our local people were encouraged to invest into the hospitality sector, accommodation and they did this expecting to see a return on their investment that the airport would bring, but we had difficulty from Day One, the plane that we had, we had to settle for, the Boeing 700 would not work due to wind shear so that was difficulties, there were setbacks, we had to collect data and settle for a smaller type plane that would handle the conditions, so it's sad that all of this has not been taken into account. I know that Her Majesty's Government has been supportive in funding the data and the technology work that needed to be done to get to where we are, but what did not help the situation was the fact that we were left without a capital programme to take care of our essential needs and St Helena people were encouraged by the British Government to invest and rightly so at the time, and to grow our private sector and we now see that the private sector businesses have grown, but they're struggling because of there's no capital programme, so we are in a critical situation and an assessment into this, as my Honourable, the Mover says, an assessment into this can only add value to our shortfalls, but not only to our shortfalls, it will also protect the British Government in the significant investment they have made, because nobody wants to see our airport fail, so the findings of the assessment will lend itself to supporting the areas that we need support and the evidence is already there, but it will then perhaps convince the British Government that, hold on, we need to look closer at this, and we need to provide the support that is needed to protect their huge investment they have made into our airport, so I give my full support to this Motion, Mr Deputy Speaker and I only can see goodness coming from such an assessment. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you very much, Honourable Member. Honourable Christine Scipio O'Dean?

The Hon. Christine Scipio O'Dean –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Firstly, I would like to commend the Honourable Mover on his exposition and the fact that he has virtually left no stone unturned. I can only reiterate a few of the public concerns raised by the Honourable Mover. The cost related to transferring of cargo from Ruperts Jetty to Jamestown has to be met from our own budget, which could be used for more substantial infrastructure and the lack of capital funding for the Ruperts infrastructure, the increased freight and handling charges, the low numbers of visitors by air, especially the tourists, the high cost of tickets to fly from Johannesburg to St Helena in comparison to flying from the UK to Johannesburg. We and the rest of the world know that Cape Town should be the hub for St Helena's air service and there could be potential spin offs from the Cape Town tourist industry. The delays caused to cargo being shipped from the UK, the current state of affairs with the Fisheries Corporation, the long delay in bringing the new Bulk Fuel Installation online, which could significantly reduce diesel fuel costs for both the commercial sector and power generation. It has been said on numerous occasions that the airport and the tourist industry must be about Saints, yes, this is one time I can confirm it is about Saints, because we are suffering the consequences. The breakdown in communications and the delayed budget approval by DfID further destroys the confidence of the private sector in St Helena Government. All of this is just the tip of the iceberg, the general public is clearly despondent and struggling to deliver its full potential at a time when the goose has supposedly laid the golden egg. Mr Deputy Speaker, I beg to move.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. The Honourable Russell Yon, sorry.

The Hon. Russell Yon –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I rise too in support of the Motion, tabled by my Honourable Friend, Councillor Green. As stated, it is evident and for all to see how the proposed increase in services from our airport is not forthcoming at this time and how damaging it has become. The effects are felt throughout the island and together with the increase in prices is making it unbearable for all of us. The financial and economic thrust to be expected has not been fruitful and therefore we have almost come to a standstill. Supporting the island's infrastructure projects is also detrimental and no-one is feeling it more than those in the private sector. Some employers are adjusting work hours to complement keeping their staff on the payroll, others have had to make the ultimate decision in reducing their workforce, there simply is not enough funds for all the work that we need to be done on this island although we seem to have the projects in the pipeline, financially we cannot support these projects. All of this has a knock-on impact across the island and is felt by all. The air service promised so much, yet so far has delivered very little to boost our economy. Mr Deputy Speaker, the Mover and fellow members who supported this Motion, has provided enough details to support this request. It should be taken further and not just heard and shelved. The progress needs to be in earnest. Mr Deputy Speaker, I support the Motion.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Any other Honourable Member wishes to speak? Honourable Cyril Leo?

The Hon. Cyril Leo –

Mr Deputy Speaker, I share my Colleagues concerns and therefore fully support the Motion and await the results of the assessment with great interest. In 2004, DfID commissioned a full feasibility study into future air access arrangements for St Helena. This concluded that only the introduction of air access had the potential to support meaningful economic growth and reverse, reverse, economic and population decline. It is still early days since the start of air access and, in particular, we cannot overlook the invaluable medical advantages air access has provided. However, there are clear warning signs that the current structure of air access, inadequate budget provision, the lack of capital funding, further neglect of the island's infrastructure and the rapidly increasing cost of living on St Helena will all consequently lead to greater economic and population decline. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak to the Motion? The Honourable Kylie Hercules?

The Hon. Kylie Hercules –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I would like to express my huge thanks to my Honourable Colleague, Honourable Anthony Green, for bringing this Motion to the House today. My colleagues have given a comprehensive explanation as to what is going on in our current economic climate which I also fully agree with. Therefore, I'd like to fully support this Motion, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. If no-one else wishes to speak then does the Honourable Mover wish to respond to the debate?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. First, I would like to thank those Honourable Members who have shown and demonstrated their full support for the Motion. I'd also like to thank them for expanding upon some of the points that I made in putting this Motion forward. I would commend to this House and the listening public the feelings that Members have vented regarding the whole situation which is now leading to some frustration and it is, of course, not of St Helena's making that we find ourselves in this predicament and as has been indicated, I urge Honourable Members to support me in making sure that we follow up and if this Motion is passed we obtain quick and regular responses, because without that, we possibly could be doomed. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I beg to move.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Mover. Honourable Members, the Motion is that this House expresses concern about the economic impact affecting St Helena arising from the reduced services provided by the airport and the associated island infrastructure projects and request our Government to invite Her Majesty's Government to undertake an assessment thereon without delay and share their findings with this Council.

Question on Motion, put and agreed to.

The Motion is carried.

The Deputy Speaker –

Honourable Members, I'm conscious that it's lunchtime and we have one more item on the Agenda, do you wish to continue and....yeah? Would you please announce the next item of business, please?

7. THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

The Hon. Susan O'Bey –

Mr Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn sine die.

The Deputy Speaker –

Okay, any Member wishes to speak? Oh, sorry, do we have a seconder?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Deputy Speaker, I beg to second.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you very much. The Honourable Derek Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise in support of the Adjournment Debate. Mr Deputy Speaker, Honourable Members, you will be aware that I recently attended the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, which was held in Lancaster House, London from 13th to 14th June 2018. Although I will be making a full report to the Council, I feel it's an opportunity to report on some of the details to the Council now as well as the listening public. Mr Speaker, the focus around the issues which mainly applied to St Helena were the Brexit issues, disaster preparedness, Constitutional relationship, the environment, health and education. Mr Deputy Speaker, Minister Robin Walker from the Department for Exiting the European Union,

reported that significant progress had been made. He reported that business will continue in the EU until the end of 2020. From then on, those persons with British passports, their movement into the EU will not be affected, including work opportunities and apprenticeship schemes. The next few months negotiations will be held on what the future will look like; establishment of new partnership with the EU and amendments to the White Paper. The FCO Minister, Lord Ahmad reported that negotiations are underway on market access for trade to continue in the EU. There is a sense to negotiations that Overseas Territories will be allowed to continue to do business in the EU provided where there are clear benefits and no hindrance. This will impact heavily on the Falklands and Tristan da Cunha who relies heavily on the EU since a good proportion of their funding comes from the export of fish direct into the EU and in going forward we must ensure that our policies are in line with potential exports into the EU in relationship to fish and coffee and our voice are properly heard to reflect this. There is also the concern of the loss of EDF funding once Britain exits the EU. Again, strong cases were made to reflect this and assurance was given that such issues will form part of the future negotiation plans and Her Majesty's Government will be exploring what financial assistance can be put into place as a result of the loss of EDF funding. We must ensure that we are continued to be represented on these key issues. Alison **Roar** from Public Health, England, reported that they are examining the National Health Scheme quota system where OTs in receipt of grant-in-aid are allowed for up to four patients a year to receive medical treatment in the UK. Since this quota has been in place for over thirty years they are hoping that this quota system can be increased where St Helena will stand to benefit. The disasters in the British Virgin Islands and Turks and Caicos with the hurricanes last year where both islands were heavily affected through destruction and will take years to recover were an issue of lengthy discussions in relation to lessons learned and the measures which can be put into place to mitigate and for Her Majesty's Government to provide improved levels of support in the event of future type disasters for the Overseas Territories.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Honourable Members, you will be aware that I had bilateral to the DfID Minister, Lord Bates, the FCO Minister, Lord Ahmad and Minister Andrew Mitchell. The bilateral proved to be useful, the main focus being the lack of a capital programme for St Helena. This issue has led to continued dialogue and it is hoped that a capital programme will soon be forthcoming. Talks were also around the difficulty we are experiencing in low passenger numbers on the weekly flights which will be the trend for the coming months and the possibility of lowering the flight fare during the off peak seasons. I understand that progress has been made in this area. Inadequacy of the present proposed budget settlement and in going forward St Helena would prefer to see a three-year budget settlement which would be of greater benefit to St Helena. Again, Lord Bates gave an undertaking to investigate and work with St Helena in taking this forward. The meeting with Lord Ahmad from the FCO, the FCO Minister, proved to be quite encouraging. He agreed to see what he can do at ministerial level to unlock the issue of a Fifth Freedom of Rights with Namibia. Any issues with the exit of Brexit which will require legislative changes, he gave an undertaking that FCO will provide St Helena with this technical support. He also said that he would consider a Trade Union visit to St Helena from a delegation once we have the second flight. This was a meeting that he recently conducted in the Caribbean which proved to be extremely successful. Under the Global Britain funding he said that the FCO would consider funding a project as a showcase for the Liberated African Remains. Again, these are projects and requests that would need to put to him. Andrew Mitchell, in the meeting with Andrew Mitchell, he's being very supportive in raising the need and urgency for St Helena to have a capital programme.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it was clear from these high profile bilaterals that in going forward all Ministers gave an offer that St Helena should be able to come direct to them with

issues and that is very encouraging to hear, so in terms of a communication link, on the basis of what they have said, there shouldn't be great difficulty with our communication lines.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the last week of my travel was in Johannesburg with Dr Akeem where a review was carried out on the medical services there and also I assisted Dr Akeem with carrying out a review on Medical Service Organisation, MSO, who has the contract to manage our medical referrals. A full report of this will be made available to the Public Health Committee and to this Government by mid August and in relation to the health issues, a presentation will be made to the Public Health Committee as well as the whole Council.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my report on my recent visit will be made available early next week. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise in support of this Adjournment Debate and wish to raise the following matters. I mentioned in an earlier exposition that I would come back to the budget process in this debate and I do so now. Mr Deputy Speaker, Honourable Members, one of the issues I raised earlier this year with the Financial Aid Mission, FAM, was there was no longer any partnership approach to the discussions that leads up to ministerial approval to our aid settlement and one of the missing links to this is that there is simply no policy document that clearly sets out the parameters and importantly and agreed criteria and formula that takes into account how the settlement is reached and what is taken into account in reaching that settlement and one that it can clearly demonstrate and meets the reasonable needs of the territory based on the evidence provided and can clearly show that HMG is meeting its statutory obligation. There is simply no system to that approach that is taken or if there is one DfID have not been willing to share this. Ironically, when we were discussing this issue with the FAM team there was a Governance Adviser, it was confirmed that no such policy existed but there is a need for one. I raise this matter here today as we will soon be approaching the time to begin the budgetary process for 2019/20. This is now the end of June and SHG still do not have an approved budget for 2018/2019. The current process for the award of the island's settlement is not working. SHG has to provide all the documentation, we simply speak to this to the FAM team, we could ask loads of questions and we do not hear anything further, although, as a result of the most recent discussions and in raising this issue and in the spirit of partnership, openness and transparency Members requested that DfID share with us the business case they would put to the Minister recommending the settlement. This was not done, but we were able to have a video conference with Lord Bates before he signed off on the settlement. There is no further discussion with the FAM team and elected members after they leave here, so we are not aware of what they tell the Minister or what is recommended or what is taken into account to reach the settlement. What we do know is that even though we had a video conference with the Minister prior to him signing off on the settlement it was far from satisfactory and although I believe we made a very strong case for an uplift and, indeed, a capital budget, this was not forthcoming. In the absence of any real openness and transparency in the process with the FAM after they leave the island and the failure to share information and with no policy document that sets out how the settlement is reached and because we do not see what the FAM team are recommending to the Minister, one can only assume that the evidence St Helena provides is not fully understood or taken fully into account and that the settlement is not based on the reasonable needs of the island, that a given sum in the round of the overall DfID Aid budget is awarded. This position goes to the core of good governance and the

partnership values, there is simply no fairness in the process and I cannot therefore understand how HMG can think that they uphold the values of good governance. This approach must change so that St Helena's future is assured and we are given every opportunity and support for a prosperous future. We cannot do this if HMG is not prepared to deal with us as a real partner and not see us as a burden. I hope therefore that the discussions will start now between officials here and in DfID to include elected members that in going forward a policy document will be developed in the spirit of good governance, and, importantly, the partnership values set out in our Constitution to which both HMG and SHG and the people of St Helena signed up to so that future planned negotiations can be carried out using such a policy that will create a level playing field for the island and that the settlement is based on agreed criteria and formula that is open and transparent and that the sharing of information is done in the spirit of the partnership values so that both parties can see how the settlement is reached and that it fairly reflects the evidence provided and meets the reasonable needs of the island and HMG's statutory obligation. Mr Deputy Speaker, I therefore move that the Mover of this Adjournment Debate start a discussion with DfID on such a policy document.

Whilst speaking on the budget issues, the House will be only too aware of the financial position and the shortfall in the settlement from HMG. Everyone on the island is feeling this pressure. We have this situation with regard to the proposed increase in water tariffs and whilst SHG has responded to this by putting some money aside to cushion the impact and will do an uplift on the benefits to help those on low wages this is just one of many increases we have had to face this year and as I have already said we are expected to raise the same amount of taxes and more. I do not think it is fully understood in Whitehall nor is there sufficient knowledge of how a small, isolated island functions where the Government has to provide all public service and where there is no central government to turn to and that we have a shrinking tax base, small population, an ageing one and where there is huge diseconomies of scale. It feels like we have been abandoned by HMG at a time when we are most vulnerable and this is what politics do when poor decisions are made without a full understanding of the consequences, something which we have had to shoulder for many years. How can a British Overseas Territory of the 21st Century be treated this way? HMG have for some years failing to meet the reasonable needs of this island, as a consequence, we as a Government are failing the people who we represent. Mr Deputy Speaker, I beg to move and support this Adjournment Debate.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. The Honourable Brian Isaac?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, and I support the Adjournment Debate and I wish to address some of the concerns that are constantly shared with me by members of the public and most of these concerns reveal frustration, anger, remorse and despair, to describe some of their emotions. The overarching worry that most people have is the high cost of living on the island as they are very apprehensive as to what the future holds. The unease in the community in respect of the proposed water tariff has sparked much discontentment island-wide. I fear that unless we see some growth in the economy and budgetary aid that supports our needs we will continue to see much more opposition when increases are proposed in tariffs and revenue. Mr Deputy Speaker, I've lived most of my life on the island, but I've never seen or known of the state of our affairs that we are experiencing day to day. DfID insists that air access would be the main driver to kick-start the tourist industry. There were also much emphasis on the high value low income tourist and the need for a four or five-star hotel. Inward investors would see the island as a potential haven for investment, the new Bulk Fuel Installation would provide for much cheaper fuel, renewable energy would bring much cheaper electricity, commercial

shipping would bring cheaper freight, fish exports would increase with commercial boats going to offshore and the privatisation of Government services would bring a stronger private sector which in turn would grow a stronger economy. We must not forget the SHELCO proposal, the development of the Ladder Hill Fort, the bamboo houses and the list goes on. Yes, we do have a commercial airport that most of our Saints cannot afford to use to get off the island because of the high ticket fares. We do have a hub for connecting flights that do not fully support our tourism industry. Our four-star hotel which is struggling to survive has never seen full occupancy. The commercial freight service is choking the economy and a jetty that is not fit for purpose. I do understand the economic global climate in Britain and the rest of the world, but we have been forced to make many decisions that we knew as Islanders would not benefit the island and the expected growth. Two major components that come to mind is the alignment of the runway in respect of the environmental impact and the jetty at Ruperts to be the better location than Jamestown. Council was never a part of the decision making in these two major projects and local advice was ignored by DfID. We, the people of this island, are suffering because of mistakes made by DfID officials in the early days of the airport development. In the early days, most people were made to believe that the hub would be Cape Town where we have such strong connections with Cape Town for hundreds of years, to be later told that Jo'burg would be the hub. Again, Council were never involved in this decision making and we now see the impacts that we have to live with. The costs involved for tourists to use Jo'burg hub has been confirmed by the major tourist PR companies that tourists will not travel from Jo'burg to St Helena. The impacts this is having on our accommodation providers is devastating, some business have not had any occupancy and many are struggling to make their loan repayments because of the low tourist numbers. Mr Deputy Speaker, I do not want to stand here and appear to be negative, because there have been many good positive developments over the years and the outcomes have been very beneficial, but we are still struggling. Directorates have been asked to make cuts in producing a balanced budget. These proposals will affect frontline services, they will impact on staff development, schools, the hospital, care in the community and residential for our elderly and disabled. Mr Deputy Speaker, we are three months into a new financial year and we're operating on a rollover budget and no indication when or ever we will receive a capital programme. If we do not get an increase in grant-in-aid funding and a capital programme I can see that St Helena will never strive to be more sufficient in the future. The optic cable will be another major development for the island and our appreciation to the EU for providing the funding, but if DfID do not support the island's infrastructure this project will be doomed.

In concluding, Mr Deputy Speaker, I will again make a mention of the high cost of living on the island, which is impacting on the livelihood of many low income pensioners and social recipients. From time to time I have visited many of these people and it's difficult to understand how many of these people are able to survive on £60.00 a week, especially when living alone. It is becoming more and more difficult for them to survive. There are also people in the community who cannot get any state benefits because of flaws in the benefits policy and legislation that prevent them from qualifying. These people have to depend on family members for handouts. Many people are neglecting themselves. Is this how we as a Government wish to treat our senior citizens? The answer is, no, but without an increase in grant-in-aid and a review of such policies and legislation these people will continue to suffer. We do not want a community where the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Mr Deputy Speaker, I support the Adjournment Debate and I beg to move.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Cyril Leo?

The Hon. Cyril Leo –

Mr Deputy Speaker, standing on the stern of the ship, albeit the Good Hope Castle, the Southampton Castle or the RMS St Helena and looking back as we sailed away from St Helena, I could not help but feel as though a part of me remained behind. It was never easy watching this beautiful island protected by the vast South Atlantic Ocean, the only place in the world that I called home, slowly fade out of sight. As the years went by, I always looked to the day when I would return to St Helena permanently and hopefully do my bit at Council level for this island. Relatively unknown to the electorate of St Helena, I was humbled and honoured to be elected on 26th July 2017 to serve the people of St Helena. I remain determined to serve to the very best of my ability, but try as I may, now one year on, I feel that I have achieved very little on behalf of the community. It has been extremely difficult to make any substantial economic and social improvements or any progress of significance on behalf of the people of St Helena. With such severe, limited financial resources it is virtually impossible to even enhance the lives of those less fortunate and the vulnerable people within our community. The taxpayers of the United Kingdom have now provided St Helena with the airport that was crucial to the future development and prosperity of St Helena. Therefore, St Helenians should now be inspired and striding with enthusiasm, confidence and innovation into the future, but in reality St Helenians are disappointed, frustrated and demoralised. Most of the first year of this Council has seen elected members having to address matters and issues brought about by avoidable mistakes that St Helena just could not afford to make. The poor decision making by DfID on the major projects that were supposed to collect **a bring** prosperity and economic sustainability to the people of St Helena is directly responsible for the setbacks and failures to deliver. At huge expense to the British taxpayer, DfID insisted on having dominant control over shaping the future of our community, failed to properly consult locally and there is no accountability forthcoming for the mistakes. This approach by DfID is consistently hindering the progressive social and economic development of St Helena and undermining the true potential of the St Helenians. The preamble to the St Helena Constitution describes the people of St Helena as resourceful and we have to ask ourselves then why is it that here we are in the 21st Century and St Helena is struggling to make real progress on so many levels in so many areas – agriculture, fishing, housing, tourism, infrastructure and Government Finance are but a few examples. The lack of adequate funding from the United Kingdom is an overriding factor but crucial to meaningful progress for our children and for future generations will be St Helenians applying ourselves to the full, taking ownership of St Helena’s destiny and thereby reaching the very maximum of our true potential. Going forward, I hope the Department for International Development, St Helena Government officials and elected representatives will make a special effort to work together in the best interests of all the people of St Helena, especially our vulnerable. The obligation to do so is of paramount importance. There is now a desperate need for St Helena and the United Kingdom to work together in the true spirit of the partnership values, according to the St Helena Constitution. St Helenians must have more autonomy if we are to have reliable and sustainable development. The UK Government’s 2012 White Paper on the Overseas Territories states, and I quote, “Each territory has a unique community and it is for the territory to shape the future of its own community”. I therefore use the opportunity of this Adjournment Debate to call on the DfID Minister, the Right Honourable Lord Bates, to ensure that a more professional and constructive level of communication and working relationship for successful outcomes are established between DfID and local elected representatives based on the UK Government’s 2012 White Paper and also in accordance with the United Nations Charter, Chapter 11, Article 73. Thank you, Deputy Speaker. I would just like to add that on behalf of the St Helena people I will request that the local DfID Representative, Jo Cheeseborough, will kindly deliver this statement in the form you choose to the Minister of DfID and I have to say also that having listened to statements from my

colleagues I would strongly recommend that they too include their statements for the Minister. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Like my Honourable Colleague, Brian Isaac, I take this opportunity to bring to the attention of this Honourable House the serious level of public uneasiness and unhappiness that exists at this point in time. This results from the current uncertainties, pressures and changes that are impacting on us all. Mr Deputy Speaker, change is always uncomfortable and the discomfort is increased exponentially if one doesn't have the tools to deal with it and to alleviate some of its repercussions. We all want to see a better St Helena, we all have a vision for a better St Helena, we are all trying to work together and strive to achieve a better St Helena, but we can only do so if we have the tools to make that possible. We all know the old saying "If wishes were horses then beggars would ride" and I'm afraid that is a reality, wishes will only go so far, there has to be beyond those wishes the necessary resources to turn them into reality. In the last Adjournment Debate in this Honourable House, I focused on the situation of the private sector, so my comments today are more relating to the general public at large. To the man and woman on the street there have been two very positive developments resulting from air access. These are - faster medical evacuations and more possibility of friends and family working overseas having the time to come home on holiday. These benefits are very much appreciated. However, the reality is also that most of the general public is being hit by a number of negatives. As we've already heard today, freight increases, purchase prices of goods overseas increasing, adverse exchange rates, local fees and charges having to increase to meet budget requirements, but in most cases where there have been increases in income these have not kept pace with the other increases and so the actual purchasing power of families has declined. Alongside this, and worryingly, unemployment is starting to increase as projects are completed and, as we have heard also earlier today, businesses are having to reduce hours or reduce staff in order to keep their overheads lower. These are worrying trends and certainly a quickly approved labour intensive capital programme would do a lot towards helping to alleviate it.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the current unrest regarding the proposed Utilities tariff increases is only a symptom of a far more wide reaching loss of morale, feeling of disillusion and disappointment. It is just the tip of an iceberg and that needs to be recognised. In recent years, the public's expectations have been raised and then dashed; matters of great importance to the public have had to be put on hold due to resource constraints, activities of Government that are very much appreciated by the public and very much missed when they are not present, like decent roads, have had to become a thing of the past because there is just not the money to maintain and repair them to the standards that are expected by the public. In the words of Jim Reeves, the public have endured about as much of this as they can stand and any further burden will exacerbate the situation. We have recently developed a Ten-Year Plan and a Sustainable Economic Development Plan with full public support and buy-in. This level of engagement is commendable and must be sustained. It is now our duty to see that we can deliver against those documents or we're going to have more expectations dashed, more disillusion, more disappointment, more cynicism, more unrest. There is a crying need to build public confidence in St Helena Government although many of the issues that we are facing are not of St Helena Government's making. It is our duty to work together to achieve this, putting the needs of Saints first, protecting their rights and doing all we can to ensure that their quality of life is not further eroded. Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to stress the importance of St Helena Government

and its partners listening to the priorities and aspirations of the people of this island and doing all they can to ensure that these can become a reality. Also, to value the contribution of the people of this island, because something, which I'm sorry to say, there is sometimes a lot of evidence does not happen. As I have stated on many occasions within this Honourable House, our people are our most valuable resource, they are the key to our sustainable development going forward and therefore it is essential that they are central to our planning, our policies, our strategies and our priorities. As has already been stated in the House this morning, we have been faced with a very difficult budgetary situation in which the offer that was made to us did not meet the full needs of the people of this island. When we requested an uplift this was rejected. Once again my greatest concern is that there was no explanation given for the rejection. There may well have been good reasons, these were not communicated. No reasons were communicated, it was just a blunt refusal and quite frankly I think it is unacceptable for organisations that are supposed to be working in partnership to treat each other in that manner. St Helena Government secured what was requested of us with regard to the budget settlement, Directorates had to make cuts, these had to be scrutinised and prioritised through endless days of meetings between officials and elected members, hours of time and effort went into this to try and achieve the best possible outcome for St Helena. Again, as is the norm, St Helena Government did what was asked of it and what was expected of it and I think for the outcome of that exercise to have been just a blank refusal without any explanation or any sort of justification being provided was a slap in the face to St Helena and I feel that going forward that sort of situation should not arise again. We all recognise the importance of working together, we all recognise the importance of partnership, let us all please respect each other and treat each other as partners. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. The Honourable Clint Beard?

The Hon. Clint Beard –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise in support of this Adjournment Debate. It has been a long few months on Council, highs and lows, but still we carry on with the hope that this group of Council will muscle together and create a change and look at decisions that will favour the island and its people. The more and more you get in just seems like you're plugging holes that have been created and you're trying to manage decisions made previously as so far no real decisions have come past this Council, all that we are doing is trying to get the answers to things that have come into place already. We have contracts and services that were signed up for previously and to make sure that Saints get the best out of these at all times. Even though there are grey areas we need to make sure that we look at these and we try to ...?... these as best as possible. It is no easy challenge and you cannot possibly please everybody all the time. As a team of Councillors there are times of tension and anxiety within those meetings, but we just have to go with what is on the table and the options that are available and I know we are answerable to the constituents, so there is the hard part, but I will admit we all try our best and look at the most appropriate decisions for that issue at hand and they are piling up day on day. You think you have just sorted out one thing, the next one crops up to deal with and sometimes I think what is next to crop up. Delivery of outcomes should have been done and been in motion already, but yet we still sit with issues. Air access, for example, I still feel strongly about Cape Town route and that the flight should be more looked at arriving Wednesday, Thursday and not on Saturdays only, I have said this before. I feel that this will give the tourists and our private sector more benefits in increasing spend on island. We need more money coming and being spent on the island, is this the solution we should be looking at? But it seems we are still looking at Johannesburg as the hub, even for the second flight, even though after

four months of being using this route and the results is in the public and with advice given that Cape Town should be looked at as it is a major tourist hub we still are snookered in a corner and as we still have to keep Jo'burg as the hub and mainly because our provider cannot service the aircraft in Cape Town. Is that our problem or should Airlink come up with a solution? They have the contract now, we still have to deal with issues that are things that they do not have in place. Just a few weeks ago, I was told to look at about Cape Town as a hub for now by an official. The same individual who gave the option of flying to Johannesburg or Cape Town just a few months ago, must have been October, and might I say I do highly respect this official as one of our Saints who is a role model not just for you, but also for me and not sure who else around this table. How much attention is cruise ships and yachts getting as an opportunity to raise revenue for SHG and also for the island as a whole? I again will reiterate that we have an air service and so far there are so many grey areas that we are working on, but one being the travel from St Helena to Cape Town as our present service goes to Johannesburg it seems data has shown that most passengers are still coming from Johannesburg Airport to St Helena, but nonetheless, people of St Helena want to fly to Cape Town and we need to see how best we overcome this and engage the people in getting the best outcomes and the best spend for their hard earned money. I have sent around a thought of getting a Petition going to support and show how we can get people and make Cape Town the hub of travel, but I have not really had an update from those who you think that could be a good idea. It makes me wonder, but I need to look at options and see how I progress this. We also need to progress the export of fish by air. Even the freight has increased as close to 25%, so how does this affect our day to day living? Have you looked at the Motion Honourable Derek Thomas looked at as getting supplies from Brazil, how far are we with this? Less words and more action and just a feeling that the people of St Helena's concerns are being addressed and the best possible solutions with trying to attain the least negative implications to the lives of the people of the island. As decisions are made this will implicate not only now but for the future. Again, these words are important as when we discuss and have to make decisions with officials it is not as easy as it seems with tight budgetary constraints and **spends** my main focus is creating and making sure my decision does include all people on island and we manage not to disadvantage anybody. I owe this to all constituents and will continue to fight for the fair treatment for all. We have so many aggrieved people who have come to their last in accepting and now will want more care and transparent knowledge of how we have come to decisions and how resilient we have taken and looked at options and how we have come up with those decisions and how best we can mitigate and make sure the rest of the community is minimal as possible in these changing hard times and a climate of increase in basically everything at every time you look. Price increases are inevitable in the world we live, but it is how those increases occur, how they are managed and how they affect the public and how will it improve or enhance the island and not just an increase with nothing to show for them. Our financial battling becomes even worse with no capital funding, but again, we are at the mercy of those who release funds at the present. The industries are battling and again there is a constant ask about capital funding and no real direct answers of it coming, but I did hear in media that something positive to say and the news was that we would hear something in a few weeks. Again, we are beaten to the news, but at least it's out there. With the lack of capital funding it is and will cause social impacts and we need to make sure we mitigate against things happening and make sure our economy is strong enough to withstand this. We need capital funding signed as soon as possible. We have had meetings with accommodation providers, agriculture, even someone in fishing. Having put their cases forward and again each meeting was beneficial and enlightening to hear, but with the constraints financially listening was the heartbreaking thing to do as that was about all that could be done at that time with no budget and not even enough to keep a going economy as it is. Our budget does not allow much room to service the infrastructure we have presently, but

it is going day on day, more houses, roads, facilities, etc, and also with the limited budget that the Directorate has, but they are doing what they can with the resources they have, but it will soon come to a head that quick fixes although necessary now is not always the best option long term and it means fixing a fix after a while. Housing is an issue and I know that it's being worked on and to make sure we increase the housing capacity we hope all will be going to plan and I can confirm I will support any initiative that is brought to the table that will improve, enhance and make sure Saints has the opportunity to live and have proper facilities.

I would also like to congratulate students and educators and all the related services in our Education System. You are commended and appreciated. There's lots of you working with limited resources and day by day the work that they churn out to allow our students the best possible opportunities. Teachers are stretched, sometimes to capacity, filling in and I hope and let them know that they are doing a sterling job. You can expect support in getting increased capacity to assist as this will allow if we increase our resources to create and increase our skills base on St Helena thereby allowing our island to have skills in the years to come and to allow us to manage and progress the island to the benefit of the island.

I will now touch on Health, there are lots of financial constraints in Health. We need to make sure that the healthcare is all and it offers an appropriate level to all Saints with improvements being looked on at all times. We've got to make sure that our medical referrals are looked after when they do leave the island for treatment. I do know that Johannesburg hospitals have been looked at as an alternative. Me, personally right now, if it does not offer a huge financial gain to SHG I will not support Johannesburg, I will still support Cape Town.

Sotion? The Sainsbury Review presented to Legislative Council in Jan and Feb of 2013, these reviews and consultants are there to be looked at and the payment of consultants it would be thought that their recommendations would be used to improve the social system and people that are on it on the island. By saying this, we need to also be realistic and look at it financially as it's no good passing recommendations when years come down the line it's a battle to keep these going, so the question is, how far has these recommendations gone and how far has it been implemented? Now, over five years down the line a few implementations is the counting years of work for people over sixty-five better life allowance, carers allowance, we do not calculate anyone's salaries of anyone in the household that's under twenty-one. Lots of standard issues are coming up are historical and just coming up in this Council's tenure, but we are addressing it as best we can. Look at the proposed tariff of water, so from 2012 the charges were 79p and now we are looking at a proposed rate in 2018 of £1.39, but also bearing in mind that increases have been approved year on year since 2013, so the term 'what are Councillors doing' is that a fair comment? People have now set up a petition and they will march to hand this over on Saturday. Is this how far we need to go? We also need to remember that we all will need some sort of assistance as we get older and as we do we need to adjust ourselves to be open to sacrifice now to get those services when we will need them towards a common future that is something we must work towards with a common goal for the future is to allow us to focus on planning and a vision that is achievable to make St Helena a place where everybody can be looked after be it young, old, female and male and we must take everyone onboard so we all can have a better future that will enhance and prosper our goals which are stated in the Ten Year Plan – Altogether Healthier, Altogether Better for Children and Young People, Altogether Wealthier, Altogether Safer, Altogether Greener.

My last comment will be who do we blame, but blame or not resolve the situation we are in, we need to find solutions. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. The Honourable Christine Scipio O'Dean?

The Hon. Christine Scipio O’Dean –

Thank you, Deputy Speaker, I rise in support of the Adjournment Debate. Mr Deputy Speaker, the recent Government Press Release advising that airmail service via South Africa to the UK including other destinations will take approximately six to eight weeks, I’m amazed that St Helena who just recently entered into air travel, it appears that our mail service dates back to the days of sail and steam, which is, in my opinion, is no progress at all. In this House on 25th January 2018, the Acting Financial Secretary stated a trial for an airmail service from St Helena to other destinations via South Africa will take place in February 2018. Did this happen and was the public informed of the outcome? Given the undertaking that airmail service from St Helena would be given priority by the Post and Customer Care Centre knowing that we have weekly flights, can the Honourable Chief Secretary say when we can expect the service to commence? I beg to move.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. The Honourable Russell Yon?

The Hon. Russell Yon –

Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise in support of the Adjournment Debate. Recent events on and off island has made me realise that all is not well. When we look around the world and see that financially everyone is having to take a hit in their pockets. Brexit is hampering Europe, Britain and even St Helena. The world’s leading countries, to include the USA, China, India, along with those in Europe, are struggling to meet trade agreements and migrant movements. Families are being pulled apart and many from lesser wealthier countries attempt to cross borders and oceans to seek a better future. Here at home, Mr Deputy Speaker, we too are having to deal with our own issues. Financially we seem to have hit rock bottom. We are asking almost everyone to pay more in increased fees and taxes. Given the upbeat lifestyle and hype placed around the airport construction only a few years ago and the plan of energising St Helena’s economy through tourism, it’s simply not forthcoming. Only time will tell, but whilst we wait for that to be fruitful we simply are requesting a lot from our small workforce and ageing population. Our future is bleak; we need all of us to rally the troops, so to speak, not raise expectations, but to give them the full face value.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this has been my very first time to witness the FAM team visit here to work with elected members and officials threshing out the proposed budget for the island. At the end of their visit I was upbeat knowing we had pitched very good documents backed by face to face discussions to enable that team to take away information to make an informed and in-depth presentation to DfID Ministers of our financial requirements to enable us here on the island to move forward in the right direction. Mr Deputy Speaker, what has happened since I have found to be none more than frustrating and demoralising. If this is the future we are expecting for our island then it might be best if the UK Government consider moving us all to the UK and slam the door shut on St Helena, but knowing the resolve of our Saints we won’t want that to happen. However, we will need to use our resolve and pull together, show our resilience through thick and thin and make St Helena great again. The place we call home and mesmerise our visitors so that they too can tell our story when they leave our shores. Our future is in our hands, it’s our destiny, but without the support we will struggle to achieve. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Any other Honourable Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Gavin Ellick?

The Hon. Gavin Ellick –

Thank you, Deputy Speaker, I support the Adjournment Debate, not to repeat what other Members have said. The last few months things are looking very grim, but we are the leaders of our community who have a collective responsibility for our people and should be working as a team. We should be saying that we as a Council are doing all things to help. Lately we've been hearing the words 'not possible, lack of'. Why? This bothers me, are we sending out the right messages? We should, as a team of twelve, along with the officials, administration and DfID, be working together to do everything in our power to help our people, to show that we are listening and do care. I beg to move.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. The Honourable Anthony Green?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker, surely by now with the emotional speeches that my Honourable Colleagues have made, the stark message will go away to DfID and also be understood and accepted by everyone around us. I look forward, before this meeting concludes, to confirmation that the Motion No. 3 today, which was unanimously passed, will be conveyed to DfID without delay and a promise that we will be updated regularly with regard to progress. I just have three other very small points and the first is to actually pay tribute to Reginald Legg, he has actually been a work colleague of mine for many years, he's been my boss, he's been my subordinate, but he's always been a friend. He has been the Mace Bearer for many years and the Mace signifies the authority that is held by the Speaker and he did that with grace and dignity and our thoughts are with his wife and family.

The second point I'd like to mention is our Clerk of Council who is unfortunately sick and not with us today, but ably deputised by Mrs Carol George, but as we heard, the Clerk of Councils will be leaving us soon, I believe she's done a very good job and I wish her well, on behalf of Members if I may, in whatever is ahead of her.

The final tribute I'd like to pay is to the Director of Safeguarding, Matt Ansell, who leaves us in a few days time, he's been an excellent working colleague over the last eleven months since we were elected. He's put a tremendous amount of work into what needs to be done and I really feel that he's going to be sorely missed. Equally, I feel confident that his replacement, Steph Jones, will carry on the good work that Matt has done. So thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I support the Adjournment.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Are there any other Honourable Members wishes to speak? Honourable Chief Secretary, do you wish to respond?

The Hon. Susan O'Bey –

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all Members for their contribution to the Adjournment Debate.

Mr Deputy Speaker, there have been very strong expositions made here today and I think that the listening public can be under no, there can be no doubt in the minds of the listening public of the strength of feeling expressed by Members in relation to the current economic climate, the budget settlement, the lack of a Capital Programme and the lack of partnership working with HMG. I've been asked to ensure that these concerns are brought to the attention of our colleagues in HMG and I give a commitment here today that this will happen. I also give a commitment that the sentiments expressed in the Motion brought forward by the Honourable Tony Green will also be brought to the attention of our colleagues in DfID.

I'd like to start first by perhaps addressing some of the direct questions which were made and in no particular order I'll start perhaps with the question in relation to the Postal Service. I'd like to say that various options, as Members are aware, and as set out in recent Press Releases, various options have been explored and I know that my colleagues in the Finance Section have been working unceasingly on this, simply because we are aware of the great need and the expectations of the members of the public. Unfortunately their efforts to date have revealed that no organisation has come forward willing to service St Helena. I am aware that there is one possible option which the Finance Directorate is progressing at the moment and I give a commitment on behalf of the Finance team that the priority continues to be to secure our mail, so whilst we share the frustration that mail services and the delivery of mail to the eventual destination is taking an inordinous amount of time we also want to ensure that services are secure and this will continue.

I'd also like to just touch on some of the work that Councillor Thomas referred to, particularly during his recent visit to Johannesburg together with Dr Ali, the Director of Health, and I know that there have been some explorations made there in relation to medical overseas referrals. I would like to say that, again, we need to ensure that any decisions made there are evidence based and that they are going to be in the best interests of the public and I know that that is certainly the desire of the Chair of the Public Health Committee and so therefore it's important that decisions need to be made based on evidence and at this point I don't believe that their evidence has been fully brought to the attention of the Committee so it's important that we don't jump the gun on this one and not hear the outcome of this particular mission in Johannesburg.

I'd also like to thank the Honourable Derek Thomas for his useful overview of the discussions which were held at the recent JMC and look forward, along with the rest of you I know, to receiving the full report of this mission in due course.

Mr Speaker, we've heard a lot today about the challenges that our community is facing. We know that there are very strong public concerns regarding the various price increases, we are also aware of the low morale and of the tensions resulting from this and I'd like to just use this opportunity to reflect on a very strong point which was made by the Honourable Dr Essex in the last Adjournment Debate which took place earlier this month, or was it last month, when she referred to collaboration and I think it is really important here to reinforce that point, because it is only with collaboration that we can possibly attempt to overcome some of these challenges. I stress the need for that continued collaborative working, both between elected members and officials and the various partners that we have. I stress the need also for collective responsibility regarding decision making and I stress the need for continued strong leadership from yourselves to reassure and to guide our electorate during this period of transition and, of course, the challenges that have been highlighted so far. We've heard a lot about the challenges today, but I would like to also take this opportunity, Mr Deputy Speaker, to highlight some of the opportunities which have been realised as a result, not just of air services, but also to give examples of the collaboration that has taken place over the last year. I'd like to take this opportunity to highlight the work that is being done by our frontline services supported by elected members. We saw this year for the very first time orthopaedic surgery, in the form of joint replacements being carried out on St Helena. That is a first and is testament to the commitment which you gave in this House and also in various other forums to ensuring that funding for this venture could take place and could be approved and we see the results of that with successful surgery taking place to date. As a result of your endeavours we see increased use of our recently opened Community College and in conversations with the Director of Education I know that we will soon hear of increased opportunities which will be available through online courses for members of the island to be able to take advantage of.

Since the airport was certified this year we marked one hundred flights to the island. I would say that's a pretty good record for what has been coined the world's most useless airport.

I would like to also pay recognition here to the sterling work that was carried out recently by both elected members and officials in making sure that the cuts made as a reprioritisation of the draft budget meant that members took every possible opportunity to ensure that risks to service delivery are kept to a minimum.

We recently signed a funding agreement for the funding of the Sub Sea Cable, again, a huge step forward for us and, of course, both Councillor Thomas and I were very privileged to launch the recent Health Promotion Strategy on St Helena Day earlier this year. These are all opportunities, opportunities which will allow us to develop and for our economy to grow. We've heard today that we will still be beset by challenges, but I would urge everybody here today also to recognise that whilst we still have a considerable distance to travel we must not ignore the considerable progress that has been made. Mr Deputy Speaker, I beg to move.

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you very much. Honourable Members, I put the question that this House adjourns sine die.

Question put and agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker –

Honourable Members, the Meeting is adjourned. Thank you.

Council Adjourned.