



**St Helena
Government**

GOVERNMENT OF ST HELENA

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL –
FRIDAY 28TH FEBRUARY 2020 – FIRST SITTING OF THE
FOURTEENTH MEETING**

ST. HELENA
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

THE PRESIDENT

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 Acting Attorney General	-	Mr Allen Cansick

ELECTED MEMBERS

The Honourable Clint Richard Beard
 The Honourable Cruyff Gerard Buckley
 The Honourable Gavin George Ellick
 The Honourable Jeffrey Robert Ellick
 The Honourable Corinda Sebastiana Stuart Essex
 The Honourable Anthony Arthur Green
 The Honourable Lawson Arthur Henry
 The Honourable Cyril Kenneth Leo
 The Honourable Derek Franklin Thomas
 The Honourable Russell Keith Yon

The Honourable Brian William Isaac	-	On sick leave
The Honourable Christine Lilian Scipio	-	Overseas

CLERK OF COUNCILS

Mrs Connie Johnson

PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Friday, 28th February, 2020

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

(The Speaker in the Chair)

ORDER OF THE DAY

1. FORMAL ENTRY OF THE PRESIDENT

2. PRAYERS
(The Right Reverend Bishop Dale Bowers)

3. ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT

Honourable Members, ladies and gentlemen, radio listeners, good morning and welcome to this first sitting of the fourteenth meeting of Legislative Council. As is customary, the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop, Bishop Dale, has again attended our meeting to open it with the benefit of prayer, I would like to thank him for the support that he has given to this Council. It is also pleasing that Mr Merlin George has responded so willingly once again to perform the ceremonial duties of Mace Bearer and for that I express my thanks. I also express my thanks to the staff members of SAMS radio for providing support to our listening audience at this meeting.

I would like to welcome back the Honourable Dr Corinda Essex from her recent CPA Conference on Sustainable Development that took place in Malta, I have every confidence that Dr Essex found this to be of benefit to herself and St Helena as a whole. We look forward to her report in due course.

Honourable Members, this brings me to the business of this Honourable House today. There are seven Sessional Papers to be presented, four Questions for oral answers and four Motions for debate. The meeting will conclude with the traditional Adjournment Debate. I wish Honourable Members well in your deliberations. I would also like to thank the staff of the Castle for making sure that everything is in place for our meeting today, they work hard behind the scenes and they need to be thanked. So, without further delay, I will call on the Clerk to announce the next item of business, please?

4. PAPERS

SP 3/2020 – The Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Speaker –
The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –
Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 3/2020 entitled First Supplementary Appropriation (2019/20) Bill, 2020. Mr Speaker, I also can confirm that the authority to proceed under section 73 (2) of the Constitution from the Governor along with a Certificate of Urgency.

The Speaker –
Thank you very much.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 4/2020 – The Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Speaker –
The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –
Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 4/2020 entitled First Supplementary Appropriation (2019/20) Estimates.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 5/2020 – The Honourable Jeffrey Ellick.

The Speaker –
The Honourable Jeffrey Ellick?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –
Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 5/2020 – St Helena Public Accounts Committee – Report on the Government Response to PAC Recommendations in Sessional Paper 03/19 and 23/19 as at 4th November 2019. Mr Speaker, this Report to Legislative Council reviews Government's response to previous PAC Recommendations Sessional Paper 03/19 and 23/19. In due course, the Financial Secretary will convey a response to Legislative Council in accordance with section 69, subsection 9 of the Constitution.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 6/2020 – The Honourable Anthony Green.

The Speaker –
The Honourable Anthony Green?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper No. 6/2020 - Employment Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 7/2020 – The Honourable Russell Yon.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Russell Yon?

The Hon. Russell Yon –

Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper No. 7/2020 entitled Burial Grounds (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 8/2020 – The Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Speaker –

Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 8/2020 entitled St Helena National Trust – Annual Report and Financial Statements 2018/2019.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 9/2020 – The Honourable Derek Thomas.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Derek Thomas

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper No. 9/20 – Port and Aerodrome (Health) (Amendment) Bill, 2020. Mr Speaker, I have in my possession a Certificate of Urgency from His Excellency the Governor.

Ordered to lie on the table.

The Speaker –

Next item of business, please?

5.

QUESTIONS

Question No 1 – The Honourable Jeffrey Ellick to ask the Honourable Chairman, Economic Development Committee.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Jeffrey Ellick?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Will the Honourable Chairman of the Economic Development Committee tell this Council what is the total funding allocated to the fishing industry from 1st February 2020, for fish processing?

The Speaker –

The Honourable Chairman of Economic Development Committee, the Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Honourable Lawson Henry –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for his question. The allocation for the fishing industry and, in particular, for operating the fish processing plant on an interim basis would have cost SHG on average £20,000 per month. This does not include it was taken for SHG Officers to put in place the interim arrangements. Mr Speaker, for completeness, I can confirm that the funding used by the St Helena Fisheries Corporation for the period 1st April 2019 to 31st January 2020 totalled £372,000. There is also an allocation of £30,000 in this year's budget for the winding up of the St Helena Fisheries Corporation. Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. The Honourable Jeffrey Ellick?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Mr Speaker, can the Honourable Chairman of EDC provide a breakdown on what and how this money will be spent or is being spent?

The Speaker –

The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

I thank the Honourable Member for his follow-up questions; this information has already been provided to all Committee members.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Jeffrey Ellick

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Mr Speaker, can the Honourable Chairman of Economic Development Committee tell this Council if his Committee met to discuss the level of support and the funds that would be required by this Government to support fish processing from 1st February?

The Speaker –

Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

No, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –
Honourable Jeffrey Ellick?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –
Thank you, Mr Speaker. Can the Honourable Chairman of Economic Development Committee tell us why this did not happen as Fisheries falls under Economic Development Committee?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –
Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have here the Constitutional Order and whilst the Economic Development Committee is responsible for policy and the Member's question is about finance and the Economic Development Committee do not have political oversight of finance. Thank you.

The Speaker
Thank you. The Honourable Jeffrey Ellick?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –
Thank you, Mr Speaker. Can the Honourable Chairman tell this House if the costs have been greater, less or the same had Government tasked St Helena Fisheries Corporation to provide the same level of service that is now in place for fish processing?..... account, most of the same people are employed and using the same facility as that of the St Helena Fisheries Corporation?

The Speaker –
Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –
Mr Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for his follow-up question. There is a reduction in costs, but I wouldn't be able to answer that question here today. Thank you.

The Speaker –
The Honourable Jeffrey Ellick?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –
Thank you, Mr Speaker. What I'm trying to ask here, Mr Speaker, is currently what we want to know is the services provided now compared to if the Fisheries Corporation had provided that same service.

The Speaker –
Is that a point of information or a question?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –
No, that's the question, Mr Speaker, I would expect the Honourable Member for Economic Development Committee to know the exact figures of providing the service, so he should have known what the figures are for Fisheries Corporation as well, the same service that is being provided now.

The Speaker –
Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Can I just say it, Mr Speaker, that it is operated with a reduced budget to whatever it was ...?...it was the St Helena Fisheries Corporation. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you.

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

And I have already answered that question.

The Speaker –

Honourable Jeffrey Ellick?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. A point of information, you see the Councillor has provided, as far as I can see, Mr Speaker, I don't see any real evidence to show that it has reduced, because we're talking about the service, we're not talking about the whole operation of the Fisheries Corporation before, we're asking to do the same thing that has been happening now, it there has been a difference. I can't see a difference; all I can see is more costs because we're actually leasing assets from the Fisheries Corporation. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Any more questions? The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Mr Speaker, on a point of clarification, will the Honourable Chairman confirm that the figure stated for expenditure up to current date also includes repairs to the Corporation equipment in addition to the operational costs?

The Speaker –

The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

I am advised that that is correct.

The Speaker –

Any other questions for the Honourable Member? Next question then, please?

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

The Speaker –

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the Honourable Chief Secretary tell this Council what action has been taken and what further action is envisaged in response to the Motion relating to water security which I brought to the December 2019 sitting of this Honourable House and was passed unanimously?

The Speaker –
The Honourable Chief Secretary?

The Hon. Susan O’Bey –

Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the Honourable Member for her question which gives me an opportunity to update this House and also the listening public on this very important issue. I can confirm that initial discussions have taken place with representatives from Connect St Helena, the Environment and Natural Resources and Planning Directorate and the Emergency Planning team to discuss the current issues and implications with water security in the future. It is recognised that a water strategy needs to be developed by SHG in conjunction with Connect St Helena, which takes account of the following issues: the impact of climate change in light of current drought patterns, St Helena’s long-term plans for growth, understanding current borehole characteristics and ascertaining the resilience of the aquifer and the ability of the aquifer to replenish, understanding ground water/surface water quantities, understanding sea water parameters in relation to the potential for reverse osmosis desalination solutions, understanding storage needs and incentivising and encouraging the re-use of water. This list is not **exhausted**? It is recognised that in order to develop resilience and substantially reduce the likelihood of severe water restrictions in the future, St Helena’s water strategy will need to be based on diverse water resources, which could potentially include ground water, desalinated water, cloud forest water and water re-used. The strategy will assess the cost effectiveness of various options to ensure that safe, reliable water is affordable to all, both now and in the future. The next steps are to draft terms of reference for the?....?....., ascertain the technical resources required to carry out this work and to develop a timeline for completion. A Working Group has been established to take this forward and it is anticipated that draft terms of reference will be shared with Elected Members for their comments during March. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –
Thank you very much. The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the Honourable Chief Secretary say whether this policy?.....
.....?..... further development of the strategy?.....of the strategy?

The Speaker –
The Honourable Chief Secretary?

The Hon. Susan O’Bey –
The development of the strategy we see as being a national, an area of national concern and as such will be SHG’s responsibility to develop the strategy, but in association with the utilities provider, Connect St Helena.

The Speaker –
The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Will the Honourable Chief Secretary give an assurance that public consultation will form part of the development strategy?

The Speaker –
The Honourable Chief Secretary?

The Hon. Susan O’Bey –
Absolutely, yes, I can give that assurance.

The Speaker –
The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Can the Chief Secretary indicate at what point of the development the public consultation will take place?

The Speaker –
Honourable Chief Secretary?

The Hon. Susan O’Bey –
I would say it would form part of the options that would be generated.?.....sorry, obviously we will ensure that it’s?..... take place at every stage, at the initial, once the terms of reference have been approved by Elected Members, we will then establish a timeline and we will ensure that Elected Members are aware of the key points during the strategy when we will go out to public consultation, so it will certainly be at the initial stages, as work progresses and then ...?... as once options have been established to get an understanding of?.....particular options.

The Speaker –
Any other..... Councillor Buckley?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –
Can the Honourable Chief Secretary say if there are any foreseeable costs associated with development of the strategy?

The Speaker –
The Honourable Chief Secretary?

The Hon. Susan O’Bey –
I can confirm that there will be costs, I can’t give an indication of what these are likely to be, but the early indications are whilst we do have some resource locally it is likely that we will need to be getting further, additional technical resources and this will have a cost. Obviously with options developed and agreed as a result of the strategy, we’ll also know the costs attached to it.

The Speaker –
Councillor Buckley?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –
Can the Honourable Chief Secretary give an assurance that the costs will be proportionate with the envisaged engagement of local ...?.... and local expertise?

The Speaker –
Honourable Chief Secretary?

The Hon. Susan O’Bey –
Yes.

The Speaker –
The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex? Oh, sorry. Any other Member wish to put any questions to the Chief Secretary? The next question then, please?

Question No. 3 – The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex to ask the Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Speaker –
The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the Honourable Financial Secretary give this Council a progress update relating to the Economic Development Investment Programme, including an outline of activities planned for the next financial year?

The Speaker –
The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –
Thank you, Mr Speaker. I’d like to thank the Honourable Member for her question, it will also give us the opportunity to update the listening public in terms of the progress on the Economic Development Investment Programme.

.....?.....approved the £30m Economic Development Investment Programme in April 2019 with the overall objective being to support economic development in St Helena through enhanced policy reforms, infrastructure development through enhancing private sector investment opportunities. The £30m investment is split into two parts with £15m for the first three years, which ran from 2019/20 to 21/22 followed by a **break point** review to unlock the remaining £15m investment and that will?..... for the following three years 2021/22 to 2023 to 24/25. The 2019/20 Year 1 of the Programme, the budget allocation was £2.7m and a number of the projects were approved by Executive Council following extensive discussions with our FCO and DfID colleagues. What has been made explicitly clear by the UK Government is that EDIP is not like previous capital programmes and it should not be considered as such funds to deliver maintenance related activities, but projects that will have a positive economic benefit to the wider community and the island as a whole.

If I can move on to some of the progress updates, Mr Speaker.

The Rockfall Protection works. After a competitive?.... exercise, SHG has led to a contract with Canne SA, better known as Canne France,?..... last year to implement the island’s Rockfall Mitigation?..... Canne France have been appointed as the contractor to install the netting and fencing and Fairhurst has been appointed as the supervisory engineers, overseeing and managing the works on behalf of SHG. As a reminder, the project will see the implementation of rockfall protection measures to be installed in?..... in lower Ruperts, Ladder Hill road, Upper James’s Valley to include Maldivia, Estcourt Gardens areas, James’s Wharf area, specifically the Munden’s wall as well as the area above the Haul Road.

Both teams were mobilised in 2020 and works commenced shortly after. A base camp has been established in Ruperts, all scaling works above Ruperts wharf is complete, drilling and grouting of all catch fence anchors in the lower Ruperts is also complete and works are progressing well in Upper Ruperts. Drilling has been ongoing on Ladder Hill road above the junction at Shy Road, drilling has been carried out using one on slope rig and one machine mounted rig. The machine mounted rig can access?.....locations lower down on the slopes and drills faster than an on slope rig.

A number of St Helenians continue to be employed on the project via the subcontractor Isaacs Contractors. The helicopter and crew is expected to arrive in March of this year. The works has progressed in line with the programme and no significant delays have been reported to date.

SHG's IT Infrastructure. Ageing IT infrastructure and increasing demand for internet band width and Directorates needs present significant challenges to the SHG. Approval was given in August 2019 for SHG's Corporate IT to purchase new servers which would allow SHG to add additional users securely and efficiently ...?... increasing quantities of electronic data and protect standard operators more efficiently and reliably. The servers and associated fixtures and components have now been received and IT will?..... installing these?..... to ensure that the equipment is operational before 31st March 2020.

Mr Speaker, turning to the EDF Programme Support. One of the challenges faced by St Helena Government in previous capital programmes was the upfront?.....capabilities to support a project through the design, costing and implementation phases. We have been dependent on a small team of resources within the Infrastructure and Transport Directorate who are also responsible for balancing their normal workload to do project workloads. SHG and DfID identified this as a significant risk, especially with the impending £30m investment plan. For this reason, approval was given to support the recruitment of EDIP's own technical resource. Initially there were four posts identified; a Chartered Engineer, an Architect, a Quantity Surveyor and a Construction Project Manager. We have recruited to the Engineer and the Architect positions with both officers now on island and based in the PMU Office. Unfortunately, we have not been successful in recruiting in to the Quantity Surveyor or the Construction Manager positions. However, given that two of these roles have been filled and the skills which these two individuals bring to the table we are looking at how we can resource the two remaining positions or similar roles with a view of employing locally skilled individuals. It is envisaged that we can find the?.....forward within the next two weeks.

Moving on to Ruperts Development. As Honourable Members will be aware, operationalising Ruperts is a fundamental project and this is a key strategic objective for SHG and the UK Government under the EDIP. Under the previous capital programme, we had contracted **Royal Pasconie** to progress designs and plans for operationalising Ruperts and we were able to progress to outline design stage. Since the recruitment of the Chartered Engineer and Architect, we have relooked at our approach and the basic infrastructure requirements need to operationalise Ruperts. This is in consultation with the key stakeholders and merchants as well as the Chamber of Commerce. Our EDIP support team has realised that we completed the designs which now present a cost effective and workable solution for all parties. This was discussed with Elected Members, Chamber of Commerce and other key stakeholders and users earlier this month with everyone in agreement with the revised layout and the design is now progressing into detailed and technical design stage with a view of physical works commencing in the second part of next financial year.

Turning now to the micro projects, St Helena Government realise that smaller non-complex projects would not necessarily be smaller than the overall Economic Development Investment Programme process as they would not necessarily be economically viable. Approval was given for a small tranche of funding to be allocated from this year's budget to support these types of projects and include the refurbishment of public toilets, installation of solar lights in Jamestown and the production of costings for the rolling out of heritage sites, which are linked to the Napoleonic bicentenary commemoration. Three public toilets, notably the Duke of Edinburgh, Ladder Hill and Half Tree Hollow public toilets, were?..... refurbished through works that commenced in November 2019. The refurbishment works included replacement of the domestic standard toilet systems for more durable and ...?.... stainless steel toilet systems, sinks and auxiliaries. Duke of Edinburgh and Half Tree Hollow toilets are now complete and the Ladder Hill toilet will be completed within the next week. There are plans also to look at other toilets around the island.

Jamestown street lighting. The rationale to approve this project was to reduce the electricity costs and enhance the tourism experience on the island, specifically in Jamestown. A total of seventy-eight lights have been procured, forty-five of these for areas identified outside of the heritage zones with the remaining twenty-three heritage lights for installation in the heart of Jamestown. The procurement of a contractor to install the solar lights has been completed and a preferred contractor has been identified. The contract will be signed shortly. In terms of the costings for the Napoleonic heritage sites, 2021 marks the 200th anniversary of Emperor Napoleon's death. Napoleon is one of St Helena's main tourist attractions and as such the bicentenary presents a great opportunity to commemorate his life and death and to use the occasion to grow the tourist industry for the benefit of the island. This event presents a key opportunity to raise external funds for the restoration of important Napoleonic heritage sites in St Helena. Proposals for a number of projects are being developed, this information will be used to inform proposals that the SHG External Funding Coordinator, James Bramble, will use to raise off island funds for the restoration of these important heritage sites.

Brent Cornberry, an Assistant Professor from Texas University, was able to visit the island in January and completed surveying of a number of sites and we are expecting a comprehensive conservation report by the end of March. This, again, will be used in the fundraising efforts. Also under the micro project budget is the Harford Primary School replacement of windows and doors. This project was approved by ExCo in January, the preferred contractor has been selected to ensure that the windows and doors are manufactured before 31st March 2020. Installation will be met from the Infrastructure and Transport Directorate in the next financial year. From the total budget for Year 1, £2.7m, we are expecting expenditure in the region of £2m. The remaining funding will not be lost but will be reallocated into future years.

Turning now to activities for 2021 and 2022. It is essential that SHG continue to work with key stakeholders and the local private sector to ensure that necessary physical, social and economic infrastructure is developed so that St Helena can start to realise the benefits of the significant investment made by HMG. To make best use of the £30m investment, the Economic Development Investment Programme is centred on four key things, which are intended to anchor investments in island that will make the most of the opportunities provided by the airport and the impending arrival of the?..... These things will improve projects...?... which will allow further progress towards developing the island's transport and logistics infrastructure, developing the island's tourism product, developing the island's business sector in human capital, developing and modernising how the island functions in the 21st century. The overall vision is for the island to generate ...?.... in local revenues by growing its sectors and trade base. This will ...?.....sustained and improved economic development support by targeting social investment and underpinned by?....., facilitative and efficient

public service. The programme for years 2 and 3, still to be approved, however, an initial internal prioritisation exercise has been completed, based on Directorates submissions. Whilst not yet approved, it is anticipated that the programme for the next two financial years will be approved projects related to operationalising Ruperts, water security, priority places which could encompass comprehensive development areas and the associated services that are needed to facilitate these developments, such as sewerage, the major road networks, enhancing Jamestown to include works related to the development of amenities in the waterfront. We are mindful that the new financial year will soon be upon us so we need to ensure that we are in a position to deliver these key activities. We expect to have a prioritised list agreed with all stakeholders before the end of March 2020. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Financial Secretary. The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Speaker I'd like to thank the Financial Secretary for giving a detailed response which actually dealt with a number of the areas that I was going to ask supplementaries on and I'm afraid you didn't quite exhaust them all, so can the Honourable Financial Secretary please give an outline as to why the under-spends occurred in Year 1?

The Speaker –

The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, the £2.7m indicative budget that we had given was done prior to being able to have a clear list of projects that we were going to be able to develop in Year 1 of the Programme. In addition to that, Members will be aware that ExCo did give approval for taking the designs of Ruperts via **Royal Pasconie** through the next phase, obviously we now have the resources in-house to be able to relook at that and therefore it's a significant saving by not contracting that exercise out to **Royal Pasconie** by looking to do it in-house with our own local resources.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you very much.

The Speaker –

Dr Corinda Essex

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Will the Honourable Financial Secretary tell this Honourable House what action has been taken to speed up the decision making process going forward?

The Speaker –

The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, I think we all agree that?..... and the process for?..... of all the projects will be a lot more slick. As I mentioned in my exposition, the process for bringing projects on to this capital programme is completely different to what was done on previous capital programmes, so we are ironing out a few issues that run the process. We do, as you will be

aware, a high level panel that looks at the specifics and interventions of SHG and DfID and FCO are looking to approve under the capital programme. We are looking to have a high level planning meeting in the next few weeks to try to give some more certainty around how we take forward the Year 2 of the programme.

The Speaker –

Thank you. The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Will the Honourable Financial Secretary state if there will be provision made for small micro projects in the after years or it will only be in Year 1?

The Speaker –

The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, it is the intention of SHG to have a micro budget in at least the next two financial years and possibly throughout the duration of the whole?.....programme.

The Speaker –

Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I know I shouldn't really be using names here, but the Honourable Financial Secretary did and I can't remember the gentleman's official title, so can the Honourable Financial Secretary state whether **James Bramble** has yet identified any substantive additional sources of funding for St Helena?

The Speaker –

Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, James has identified lots of additional sources that we can tap into, unfortunately, getting access to it isn't as straightforward as we might have originally thought, so Members will be aware that we have to set up a charity in the UK of which we have to have a number of patrons to be able to support that charity, so any funding that is raised on behalf of any of the projects in St Helena has to go through that UK charity and therefore it is taking time to address that. The charity was set up in December of this year, we have some very well-known patrons who are actually members of the charity and we would expect that to generate some revenues within the next financial year.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Will the Honourable Financial Secretary give an undertaking to prepare a paper for Elected Members relating to the charity, and, indeed, some of the doors it is hoped that it will open up with regards to future funding opportunities?

The Speaker –

The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

I'm not saying he has to do it by tomorrow (*laughter*)

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, I will give an undertaking to provide that information to Members.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much indeed. Any other Member..... The Honourable Cruyff Buckley?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

Can the Honourable Financial Secretary say if the EDIP programme includes any recommendations for parking?

The Speaker –

The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, I'm not aware if specifically, a project has been put forward for EDIP in relation to parking, I am aware Members have expressed concerns about parking in certain areas, particularly in Upper Jamestown region. One of the proposals is that perhaps next year's micro project could be used to facilitate some of those proposals.

The Speaker –

Any other Member wishes to speak? Can we move on to our next item, please?

Question No. 4 – The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex to ask the Honourable Chairman, Economic Development Committee.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the Honourable Chairman of the Economic Development Committee tell this Council what is the outcome of the recent proposals relating to the St Helena fishery and what requirements will be put in place to ensure that the fish supply to the local market is not jeopardised by the new operation?

The Speaker –

The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Mr Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for her question. Members will be aware that in December SHG issued a Press Release which invited proposals to take forward the St Helena fishery on the back of SHG's decision to bring St Helena Fisheries Corporation to a close on 31st January 2020. This resulted in a number of proposals being received, which were then collaborated and the preferred proposal was supported by ExCo subject to certain clarifications.

ExCo has since received the clarifications and agreed that the preferred proposal should be progressed which will allow discussions with key stakeholders. This proposal does provide a solution to continued supply of fish to the local market as well as the ability to generate export revenue. Until the necessary licenses are issued to the new operation the interim arrangements in supplying fish to the local market will continue. With regard to the preferred proposal, the model is to undertake pole and line fishing with additional effort to land fish from the sea mounts and the focus on the?..... There will be an opportunity for local fishermen to join the investor as shareholders within a cooperative which means that they will share the profits of the enterprise. There will be a Press Release issued imminently which will provide more information on this part of the?....., including its aspirations, its contribution to develop the science and how local fishermen can get involved should they wish to. Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you. The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, I thank the Chair for his response. Will the Honourable Chairman inform the House whether or not it is envisaged that commercial fishermen will be required to offer their catch to the new entity as they were to the Corporation?

The Speaker –

Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Mr Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for her question. Those details will form part of the negotiations with the new?.....?.....

The Speaker –

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Will the Honourable Chairman confirm if there will also be discussion with key stakeholders as part of those negotiations?

The Speaker –

The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

I have already given that information in my original response when I said that discussions with key stakeholders and the provider will be undertaken.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Will the Honourable Chairman explain what measures are likely to be put into place to ensure that the local market continues to have priority in terms of supply and species mix.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

That will form part of the discussions and negotiations between the local stakeholders and the preferred bidder, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you. The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Will the Honourable Chairman state if the new entity will be using the current ex Argos fish processing facility?

The Speaker –

The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

I didn't quite catch the last part of that, could you repeat, please?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Certainly. Will the Honourable Chairman state if the new entity will be using the current ex Argos fishing processing facility?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Yes, I can confirm that, Mr Speaker.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you.

The Speaker –

Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Will the Honourable Chairman state if St Helena Government will be providing any subsidy to the new entity?

The Speaker –

The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

No, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Will the Honourable Chairman state how political oversight of the entity will be ensured?

The Speaker –

Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Fishing will remain the responsibility of the Economic Development Committee for political oversight.

The Speaker –

Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the Honourable Chairman say what steps will be taken to ensure that the detail of the contract with the new entity reflects lessons learned from that signed with the previous company?

The Speaker –

The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

I'm sure that will be the case, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Any other Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Cruyff Buckley?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

Will the Honourable Chairman of Economic Development Committee state if the TAC, the Total Allowance Catch for major species will be determined and precede the discussions around the recent proposals?

The Speaker –

The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon Lawson Henry –

Those discussions will take place and will form part of the contractual arrangements that SHG sign up to.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Our next item of business, please?

6.

MOTIONS

Motion No. 1 – The Honourable Financial Secretary.

THE FIRST SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (2019/20) BILL, 2020

The Speaker –

The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the First Supplementary Appropriation (2019/20) Bill, 2020 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council. Mr Speaker, as I have given you the authority to proceed earlier, along with a Certificate of Urgency.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Do you have a seconder to the Bill, please?

The Hon. Susan O’Bey –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

The Mover, do you wish to speak to the Motion?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I beg to present the First Supplementary Appropriation (2019/20) Bill, 2020. In accordance with section 9 (5) of the Constitution, this Supplementary Appropriation Bill is presented following the work undertaken by Corporate Finance, the Accounting Officers and their finance teams to form part of the Revenue and Expenditure outturn for the 2019/20 financial year. The Bill seeks to authorise additional expenditure for both under the capital and recurrent budgets totalling £1.089,000. This is broken down as £752,000 for capital and £337,000 for recurrent. Mr Speaker, when we get to the Committee stage, I will be seeking a number of amendments to the Bill to reflect the latest forecast positions received from Accounting Officers. This will see an overall reduction in the amount authorised to be from the Consolidated Fund.

Mr Speaker, Supplementary Appropriation Estimates comprise the additional expenditure requests and whilst we go through these in detail in the Committee stage, I would like to highlight some of the big ...?.... items. First, Mr Speaker, as has been reported throughout the year, SHG revenues are forecast to be down against the overall budget mainly due to under collections in Customs duty of nearly £750,000. This has a direct correlation with the volume and value of imports to St Helena which are down compared to previous years. Whilst it does not impact on the Supplementary Appropriation Bill itself, this will be a significant component of the capital deficit in 2019/20. In terms of expenditure, the key components of the appropriation is the additional £500,000 on the capital which, if authorised, will be used to be pay a loan to the Bank of St Helena on behalf of the St Helena Development?.... This is in line with the terms of the letter of intent issued by the Governor on the advice of ExCo in 2018. This funding will be exchanged for a further equity stake within the St Helena Hotel Development Limited. Other capital expenditure is being funded, in most cases, from savings within the recurrent budget of the same Directorate. For example, within Health they are looking to replace essential medical equipment that was not originally budgeted for in this financial year’s budget, but now has become urgent. One of the Members will be seeking to illustrate the nature of the request and how quickly we need to respond in order to induct impact on service delivery. Under recurrent expenditure, most of the projected overspends are in relation to employee costs and are beyond the control of Directorates, especially where vacancy savings have not been recognised. Health, however, are projected overspends in both overseas medical referrals and medical evacuation budgets of around £320,000 in total. This has been offset by underspending in some areas of the main budget and DfID has agreed in principle to allow the pulldown price to be used to offset this additional essential spending.

Mr Speaker, whilst the Constitution does allow for the supplementary appropriation process to be brought to this House, I’m aware that Members do have some concerns with the process and, in particular, the timing, as it has been suggested that this could be seen as a rubber-stamping exercise. I have agreed to look at the current process to see what improvements can be made to ensure greater political oversight through Council Committees and to assure this is not perceived to be a foregone conclusion. To that end, we will be working with the

Directorates and Accounting Officers to improve the process going forward. In addition, SHG Directorates will also need to do more to clearly separate the difference between the current and capital expenditure prior to the next annual budget being approved in this House.

Turning to the 2020/21 budget, which we hope will be presented later in March, will show a clearer designation between capital and recurrent expenditure. I will, however, reiterate that the Constitution does allow this important piece of good housekeeping and financial management to be undertaken and ensures that all expenditure is duly authorised.

Mr Speaker, we will go through the detailed provisions of the Bill in Committee stage and I therefore recommend to the House that this Bill is referred to the Committee stage.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Members, I put the question that the First Supplementary Appropriation (2019/2020) Bill, 2020 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council. The question is now open for debate. Any Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Derek Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I do rise in support of this First Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2019/20. The Financial Secretary alluded to the fact that the process needs to be tightened and we as Members raised concerns and we do look forward to the documents that will be presented to ensure that these appropriations are properly approved by respective Committees and not seen as a rubber stamp exercise. I do hope that this will be the last time we are asked to do this. There will be concerns, public concerns, about the withdrawal of £500,000 for the payment of the loan to Bank of St Helena for Mantis Hotel, but we as a Government was well aware of this when we allowed, made the decision for the Hotel to continue. Mantis themselves are no way in the position to fund this themselves so this was, er,?.....could foresee this, but what I will say on what has been presented, the accounts and the plan that Mantis have is that they certainly on the pathway for the level of subsidy to be reduced over the coming years with a view of becoming a, not relying on subsidy because this certainly cannot continue. When Government took the decision to build this facility, that wasn't er, no-one in the private sector or any investor rise to this opportunity hence the reason Government step in and build the hotel themselves, we will need to have that sort of brand when we trying to encourage visitors to the island, many visitors will expect that type of branding and many have said without the Mantis facility they simply would not come, so we have to give it a chance, in my view, and we have done that and like I say, the Council do scrutinise the running of Mantis Hotel, we get regular updates and we were quite impressed with the plan they have in place to reduce the level of subsidy, because, like I say, this cannot continue, so they are on the pathway of reducing the subsidy. I thought I'd mention that and I give my support. Thank you, Sir.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Any other Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I rise in support of this First Supplementary Appropriation (2019/2020) Estimates. Mr Speaker, I'm pleased that the Financial Secretary recognised and told the House today about the previous discussions that we had in relation to the processes in which these Appropriation Bills is brought before the House. I think there is an immediate solution going forward for the remainder of the life of this Council to let the Governor, if he so chooses, could constitute a provisional Committee specifically with oversight for finance. It was recognised in Executive that the Financial Secretary has undertaken to review and tighten

up on the processes. I think St Helena is in a very different place now to when the elections were held in 2017. Elected Members are expected to be fully accountable to the electorate and this is a gap where we don't have the whole political oversight directly over all Directorates where a Committee specifically for finance. I understand, before my time in the Government, that there was such a Finance Committee and that that worked to good effect. This is not to say that the systems is not working now, what it would do, it would bring to the table that closer scrutiny of the overall Government finances whereas now the Committee's that we have there is no one Committee doing just that, so my proposal in going forward is that we should ask the Governor to consider a constitutional committee with political oversight specifically for finance. Mr Speaker, thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Any other Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Anthony Green?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I support the Supplementary Bill, I too support the fact that we need to up our obligations with regard to matters, I think my Honourable Friend, Councillor Thomas, already mentioned in detail, I'd rather not repeat that. I also welcome the Financial Secretary's commitment to look at the processes, because it is important that everything is done in a better and timely fashion and so that is very necessary. I think it is important because I can recall when we did have a Finance Committee and now the things tend to come directly to ExCo or to the whole Council, it makes it very difficult for us to keep across and actually get down to the details, so that I think is very important. There is, in the Supplementary Bill, a figure of £39,000 required for capital for the Children and Adult Social Care and I thought it may be just important to highlight the fact that really there is a need nowadays and a growing need for Home adaptations to be made where particularly people come out of hospital, there's a need for wet rooms, there's a need for wheelchairs and it's important that these things be done otherwise we'll be faced with the possibility of litigation. It's also about the age demographics where there is a growing aged population as we are all aware and we are unable to actually identify all the needs upfront, so it's also been necessary to look at how we directly respond, particularly the need for casual staff, because the idea is we try and ensure that the care is done at home rather than at Community Care Service, so I will pay tribute to the Directorate for trying to maintain the standards, but without the support of staff and because of the inability to be able to allow for new posts then casual staff have to be used. What I can say though is that the funding required of £39,000 is more than offset by additional revenue that is **raised** by the Directorate, so thank you, Mr Speaker, I support the Bill.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. The Honourable Russell Yon?

The Hon. Russell Yon –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise in support of the First Supplementary Appropriation (2019/20) Bill. I see this as not only a tidying up process, but one where it highlights the financial pressures for Directorates to operate within their current budgets. Circumstances arises which have not been previously accommodated for or unexpected occurs and needs to be addressed as emergencies which would not have been provided for. However, I also see the need for Directorates to be managing their budget more closely and not seeing this format as an easy way out fund for additional works carried out within their Directorates. It is also a credit to the Financial Secretary for recognising that the current procedure should be addressed and a more

viable solution to be put in place, so I fully support the Supplementary Appropriation Bill. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Any other Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I support this Bill. I'm extremely pleased the Financial Secretary has explained the action that has already been taken to try and avoid a repetition of some of the previous issues reflected here in future years although I'm afraid it's inevitable there will always be a supplementary appropriation, because no-one with the best financial resources in the world would ever be able to get through a whole year without needing to make any adjustments. However, that said, I do wonder whether there is a need for some revision and update of the Financial Management legislation, both primary and also the secondary regulations to strengthen the processes and procedures going forward. They have been in place for quite a long time and I note the Financial Secretary shaking his head, so he's not replying to what I mean by "quite a long time", they certainly weren't introduced within the last two years or so, so I think that there is a need to revisit them and ensure that they are, indeed, fit for purpose, not just now, but to a certain extent the future too with developments that are likely to affect St Helena over the forthcoming two years. With regard to the question of the Hotel at 1 2 3 Main Street, to which some of my colleagues have alluded, I would most definitely not have supported additional funding. What has happened in this instance is that what was provided as a loan has now been taken over in the form of shares for which SHG has provided funding. This has not actually increased the amount of overall funding at disposal of the institution. I believe very strongly, and I've raised Motions and Questions to that effect in this House on many occasions, that there needs to be a clear exit strategy. PAC undertook an investigation last year and they wrote an extremely confidential report outlining the way forward and actually indicated that there's a need to give the institution a slightly longer period to be able to deliver and that was echoed by the independent consultant who also undertook a study of the Hotel and its management, but, I do wish to formally state that I will not support further financial support on basis in years to come. There has to be an end to that piece of string just as there had to be an end to other pieces of string where there had been heavy Government involvement. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Any other Honourable Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Clint Beard?

The Hon. Clint Beard –

Mr Speaker, I rise in support of the Supplementary Appropriation. I think also we need to be?.....from finances on our budget, we need to make sure that processes are in place, but we also need to make sure that we have the finances to offer the appropriate service delivery for this island, that is so important. I believe we do have a scrutiny in the Public Accounts Committee, I do believe that the association of a further committee should be looked at, I think also we need to be reminded that financial management is so important and although we will always have a need, we will never be able to really have accurate budgets, we need to make sure that we spend wisely at all times. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you. The Honourable Cruyff Buckley?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

Just a point of information, Mr Speaker. This Government used to have a Finance Committee.

The Speaker –

Any other Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

A point of information, Mr Speaker, this Government have not had a Finance Committee, it was formed in 2017.

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

A point of information, Mr Speaker, the former Government had a Finance Committee.

(Laughter)

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

A further point of information, Mr Speaker, the former Government didn't either.

The Speaker –

Thank you. The Honourable Financial Secretary may wish to respond?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the Members for the support, for those who have given their support. I just want to, I think Councillor Essex and Councillor Yon have basically summed up what I was going to respond to Councillor Thomas and they?..... that this won't be the last time that we have supplementary appropriations. The Constitution is quite clear that there is a process there for people and for Directorates?.....additional finances, so I can assure you it definitely won't be the last time I bring in a supplementary appropriation process to this House, but points around ensuring that we have the right controls in place, I?.....

The reason why I was smiling and shaking my head, Councillor Essex, around the update to the Public Finance Ordinance and the Finance Regs, we actually do regularly review the Finance Regulations with the?..... and we've just issued a revised set of Financial Regulations and the last three months, so we do that on an annual basis to make sure that we're actually up to date in terms of where we are, we're working to the Chief Auditor also, for example, in potentially having to move certain elements out of the Public Finance Ordinance, there'll be a separate Audit Bill going forward and, again, at that stage we will also take that opportunity to review the Public Finance Ordinance.

I just want to reiterate that we will go through the detailed provisions of the Bill in the Committee stage and look forward to your support. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Members, I put the question that the First Supplementary Appropriation (2019/20) Bill, 2020 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker –

Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

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

The Speaker –

Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Susan O’Bey –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you.

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

Council in Committee.

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Chairman, I would like to request if I can ask the Deputy Financial Secretary to join us at the table?.....details of the supplementary estimates.

The Chairman –

Yes, of course. Honourable Members, as this is an Appropriation Bill, the Schedules are considered before the Clauses and the special rules of procedure are set out in Order 13, Rule 2. So, we’ll begin with Schedule I. Head of Expenditure 12 – Corporate Services – Supply, Policy and Planning, standing in the sum of £93,000.

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, if I can, please, just to say the first amendment that I would like to propose is to actually amend Head 12 to reduce the expenditure requirement from £93,000 down to £61,000 and the Deputy Financial Secretary will go through the details of what’s?.....

The Chairman –

Do we need a seconder for the amendment? Do you have a seconder for the amendment, please?

The Hon. Susan O’Bey –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Chairman –

Thank you very much.

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Would you like to have the details of the changes first and then put the vote?

The Chairman –

Yes, please.

Mr Nicholas Yon (Deputy Financial Secretary) –

Thank you, Mr Chair. So, just to say that if you could, Members, to look at the Supplementary Estimates at the same time as we look at each line of the Bill and the last column to the right you will have additional details as to what column of numbers I've written down. As the Financial Secretary has pointed out, the request is that £93,000 is reduced to £61,000 and I can explain how this £61,000 additional funding required is made up, so, firstly, there is employee costs of £27,000 that is required for Head 12, so this is in instances where vacancy savings that are built into the budget when the budget is put together is not achieved, so as we prepare the budget at the beginning of the year we apply a percentage vacancy savings recognising that during the year you might have vacancies, but if during the year in particular the Directorate doesn't actually have vacancies, they have a full complement of staff, the full cost is required so what this is is ensuring that the original reduction that we gave at the beginning is now put back to allow all salaries to be paid and also automatic increments that are awarded, this is additional funding that's provided to ensure that those automatic increments can be funded and these are costs that are covered by the central funding held under payments on behalf of the Crown under Finance and that we're now reallocating it out to different departments. In addition to this, legal expertise for litigation cases, the funding now requires £14,000 for the rest of this financial year and the costs associated with the second visit of the Chief Justice in the Supreme Court £21,000 and the Court costs itself; additional salary costs for additional staff member employed in the AG's Chambers in respect of increased workload £6,000; additional equipment required for staff in relation to AG's Chambers and increased workload £10,000 and the cost for the joint JMC meeting in London, which was not budgeted for, it's the cost of travel and accommodation and finally where previously we had requested a handrail for disabled pathway at Plantation House - £2,000, that's no longer required and so now that has now been removed. Overall, those changes mean that £61,000 is required as opposed to the original £93,000.

The Chairman –

Any Member wishes to speak to the amendment? So I put the question that Head 12 – Corporate Services, Support, Policy and Planning, standing in the sum of the amended £61,000...No?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

No, we have to agree the amendment.....?.....

The Chairman –

Honourable Members, I put the question that Head 12, as amended.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Now I can go ahead and.....Honourable

The Hon. Dax Richards –

I think, Mr Speaker,?.....

The Chairman –

Sorry, thank you very much for that, Honourable Financial Secretary. Honourable Members, I put the question that Head 12, as amended, do stand part of the Bill, as amended to £61,000.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Can we move to Head 19 – Economic Development, standing in the sum of £17,000?

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Thank you. So, under Head 19, Economic Development, there's additional funding that we're proposing to transfer to Enterprise St Helena to support the Bicentenary Steering Group in the work to put forward the programme for 2021 and this is additional funding for International Coordinator to come and provide training and support in the preparation works and this is funding that was previously held again under Payments on behalf of the Crown?.....the ..?....costs budget line and it's now been requested to be allocated under Head 19 from Head 17.

The Chairman –

Are there any questions on Head 19, Honourable Members?

Head 19 – Economic Development - £17,000.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Head 22 – Education, standing in the sum of £67,000.

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Thank you. So, Head 22, Education, under the recurrent budget, basically all of these costs, £67,000, relates to staffing costs, so it includes localisation of TC posts that wasn't agreed at the beginning when the budget was originally put together and also includes vacancy savings that could not be achieved or was not achieved during the year and also salary increases in respect of ...?.....of service, so where that specific cadre for the teaching, the teaching cadre has staff members achieve their competencies, those linked amounts and others is funded to allow them to be able to fund those increases in salaries, so all of the costs of £67,000 is related to staffing costs.

The Chairman –

Any Member wishes to speak?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Chairman, it may be helpful if I could just...?....little bit of explanation on why we are moving the amount for the TCOs, what was localisation of TC posts, so, just in the way of background here, that we had agreed that the post is localised from the....?.....we reallocated from the TC pot to be able to cover or contribute to the cost of localisation of the post, so just for a bit of background information for you.

The Chairman –

Thank you very much indeed.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

And may I ask in response to that.....?..... (inaudible).....

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Well, we did a transfer from TC posts so we reduced down the?.....ceiling for the TC reflect the additional funding and the head for Education the ceiling will also go up by?.....

The Chairman –

The Honourable Cruyff Buckley?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

Further clarification, Financial Secretary, does that reduction, is that in perpetuity?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

In what respect?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

The TC reduction?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Yes, so you reduce TC and increase the Education....?....

The Chairman –

Any other questions?

Head 22 – Education - £67,000.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

We move on to Head 23 – Health, standing in the sum of £72,000.

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Thank you, Mr Chair. So, in relation to Head 23, Health, and the additional request for recurrent expenditure, there's, solely in relation to projected overspends on the overseas medical treatment and aeromedical evacuation budgets that we allocated for during the year and what we have agreed is that they will continue to monitor that budget throughout the year to understand how the spend is made. These two budgets are demand led and so we only can make an estimate at the beginning of the year, it really depends on the number of cases we have, the number of and the complexity of those cases really determines what the actual expenditure is, so as far as possible we make a projection, and this is basically?.....second flight to say so far ...?.....we make an estimate of what we require at the end of the year, so this amount is required for those two budget lines.

The Hon. Dax Richards –

It may be helpful, Mr Chair, if we also just say Members will be aware that in the current 19/20 budget there's £1.5m pulldown fund that was agreed that it will be as part of the previous settlement and we will remember £500,000 was earmarked for Health, £300,000 for overseas medical referrals and £200,000for overseas medical evacuations, along with £200,000 for a hotel in the event of ...?.... there, this is not actually pulling down against the £500,000 that has been?.....

The Chairman –

Any Member wishes to speak?

Head 23 – Health, £72,000.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

We move on to Head 26 – Environment, Natural Resources and Planning, standing in the sum of £7,000.

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Thank you, Mr Chair. Head 26, Environment, Natural Resources and Planning, £7,000 additional is the allocation requested for costs associated with the LEMP project and you will note that this is funded through additional revenues that have been received from the St Helena National Trust, so in order to fund that £7,000 there's also £7,000 additional revenue that's coming in?..... that's offsetting that ...?..... so there is no overall impact on the bottom line for SHG.

The Chairman –

Any questions, Honourable Members?

Head 26 – Environment, Natural Resources and Planning, £7,000.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Head 27 – Infrastructure and Transport, standing in the sum of £40,000.

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Thank you, Mr Chair. So, Head 27, Infrastructure and Transport at £40,000 is made up of two elements, so the first one, similar to other Directorates, there are vacancy savings that could not be achieved in this financial year and in addition the increments that were awarded in October, as in other Directorates, that were not budgeted for during the year, so that totalled £18,000 in relation to staffing costs and in addition to that £22,000 allocation for the cost of works carried out by the Roads Section for external customers. This is where the Roads Section does work not just for SHG but for entities outside of SHG and they charge for that work, so what you will see is corresponding additional revenue that would be received, or has been received, that will cover that additional cost of £22,000.

The Chairman –

Any Honourable Member wishes to speak?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Yes, Mr Chair. I'd just like to draw attention to the fact that although vacancy savings are built in prior to appropriation that we have to avoid hoping these will be achieved. Failure to do so is positive, because it means that we've retained staff. Staff attrition would not be excessive within that Directorate and that is, in fact, something that we should be pleased about!

The Chairman –

Any other Member wishes to speak?

Head 27 – Infrastructure and Transport, £40,000.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Head 29 – Children and Adult Social Care, standing in the sum of £41,000.

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Thank you, Mr Chair. So, in relation to Head 29, the recurrent budget, there's an additional request of £30,000 for home adaptation grants, so basically the budget that was originally agreed at the beginning of the year for home adaptation grants was insufficient to meet all of the costs for clients that had been referred to the service and the expenditure is in relation to alterations to client's homes and includes the wet rooms and other changes needed to their accommodation, so this is grant funding that is provided by the Children and Adult Social Care Service and is an additional £30,000 required. In addition to that, there's a £8,000 request for the hire of a private sector car for community outreach programmes and also £3,000 for additional casual workers for provisional service.

The Chairman –

The Honourable Derek Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Thank you, Mr Chairman. The community outreach, that's very important to the service, but £8,000 for the hire to the private sector for car hire, wouldn't it be better, best value if we take that £8,000 and buy a vehicle, a decent vehicle, £8,000 should get a decent vehicle, a basic Ford to allow the service to continue, because, I mean, this is the service that I see continuing and we're gonna be spending £8,000 for car hire, you'd be better placed to allow the Directorate to purchase a decent type vehicle. Thank you.

The Chairman –

Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Thank you, Mr Chair. I don't know if the?..... basic use, is this for one vehicle, so, because of the size of this outreach programme, it's actually five vehicles and the reason why the hiring is being done from the private sector is because there is no additional availability in the SHG fleet, so it wouldn't be just one vehicle that is needed, we're talking about a significant number of vehicles that is being currently used to be able to facilitate and able to deliver the programme.

The Chairman –

The Honourable Anthony Green? Sorry, the Honourable Derek Thomas would like to speak.

The Hon. Derek Thomas

No, that's fair enough, because I was under the impression it was just one vehicle, but if it's a number of vehicles I can see that.

The Chairman –

The Honourable Anthony Green?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Yes, thank you, Mr Chair, just to put additional information, I would say private hire car is actually cheaper by £4.00 per day, by using the private sector it doesn't impose the restrictions that you have if you got a fleet vehicle.

The Chairman –

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you. Can the Financial Secretary explain why the expenditure in excess process was not followed instead of Supplementary Appropriation?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

The Expenditure in Excess ...?..., Mr Chairman, is worst case scenario, I would,?....we should, as a responsible Government,?.....appropriate funds that we need to deal with capital expenditure, especially given that we know that these are expenditure requirements for the Directorate. If it was the 30th March and something came up that is out of the control of SHG and that is the time when we use the?.....(*inaudible*).....

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Is that the(*inaudible*).....?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

That's why, going back to my earlier exposition, this is a process(*inaudible*)....Constitution, it is an important process and it will continue, even if we tighten up the methods by which Directorates are actually able to ask for additional money, this process will continue.

Head 29 – Children and Adult Social Care, £41,000.

Question put and agreed to.

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Chair, as a result of the amendment to Head 12, I'd like to propose an amendment to the total amount under Schedule I and the amendment currently, well, the current total is £337,000 and as a result of the amendment to Head 12 the new total should be £305,000.

The Chairman –

Do we have a seconder for the amendment, please?

The Hon. Susan O'Bey –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Chairman –

Thank you. Honourable Members, the first Schedule now has been amended, the overall amount has been amended from £337,000 to £305,000, so I put the question that the first Schedule, the total amount of £305,000 do stand part of the Bill, as amended.

Schedule I - £305,000 (as amended).

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

We turn to Capital Expenditure – Schedule II. Head 15 – Police, standing in the sum of £35,000.

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Chair, can I ask for a possible amendment?.....to the process? It's just that I note the Director of Police is not here to be able to assist in answering any questions?..... and I have some requests?.....the House and if it's procedurally possible, could we discuss 17, 22, 23, 29?

The Chairman –

Fine, Attorney General?

The Hon. Allen Cansick (Attorney General) –

.....(*inaudible*).....

The Chairman –

Okay, thank you. Okay, we'll begin then with Head 17 – Corporate Services, Corporate Finance, standing in the sum of £500,000.

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Yes, Head 17 to that request for Capital Expenditure is £500,000 investment to be made in the St Helena Hotel Development Limited that £500,000 investment will be exchanged for, SHG will receive shares in the Company and also that funding will be used to repay £500,000 loan to the Bank of St Helena that the Company has currently.

The Chairman –

Any Honourable Member wishes to speak?

Head 17 – Corporate Services – Corporate Finance, £500,000.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Head 22 – Education, standing in the sum of £18,000.

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Head 22, Capital Budget request, £18,000, the replacement of Primary School in ...?.... server, that is a piece of IT equipment replacement costing £18,000.

The Chairman –

Any Honourable Member wishes to speak?

Head 22 – Education, £18,000.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Head 23 – Health, standing in the sum of £160,000.

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Chair, I would like to propose an amendment to Head 23 under Capital which currently reads £160,000 and I have authority from the Governor to increase Head 23, Health, by £15,000 and this is in relation to a very urgent request that Members will be aware of for a specialist piece of surgical equipment that has unfortunately become broken and needs to be replaced urgently and so I would like permission, Mr Speaker, Mr Chair, to increase that £160,000 to, sorry, increase Head 23 from £160,000 to £175,000 and I do have the authorisation?.....to?.....

The Chairman –

Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Susan O’Bey –

Mr Speaker, I second the amendment.

The Chairman –

Honourable Members, I put the question then that Head 23, Health, is amended from £160,000 to £175,000.

Question on amendment, put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

The Honourable Deputy Financial Secretary?

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Thank you. So, in relation to that capital, I can give a breakdown of that capital expenditure of £175,000. So, there’s an anaesthetic machine is required, a replacement of £51,000, there’s a ...?.....camera that is required, £47,000, a G Expert is in relation to laboratory equipment and there’s a USP required for the Oxygen plant, £24,000 and the additional £15,000 required is a electroscopic equipment to allow them to undertake keyhole surgery here on the island, so altogether that’s an additional £175,000.

The Chairman –

Honourable Members, any questions? No?

Head 23 – Health, £175,000 (as amended) –

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Head 29 – Children and Adult Social Care, standing in the sum of £39,000.

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, I’d like to propose an amendment to Head 29 – Children and Adult Social Care and as you quite rightly say in Schedule II has £39,000 and I’d like an amendment to reduce the £39,000 to zero, there will be no appropriation under Capital for Children and Adult Social

Care, that is based on the latest?..... received from the Directorate, the Accounting Officers and the Infrastructure and Transport Directorate will be funding the additional capital works out of their capital budget, budgets that have already been approved as part of the main 2019/20 budget.

The Chairman –

Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Susan O’Bey –

Mr Speaker, I second the amendment.

The Chairman –

Honourable Members, I put the question then that Head 29 – Children and Adult Social Care be reduced from £39,000 to zero, amended from £39,000 to zero.

Question on amendment, put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Head 15 – Police, standing in the sum of £35,000.

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Thank you, Mr Chair. Head 15 for Police, £35,000. What you’ll notice is that the Police have relooked at their recurrent expenditure budget and in our forecast management accounts there’s an underspend projected on their recurrent budget which will be used to fund the expenditure proposed to be used to fund their expenditure under the capital budget and the capital request of £35,000 will be made up as follows and includes equipment for the Fire Tender, it includes capital appropriation for the Fire and Rescue for which the original budget was insufficient for road traffic collision tools and so additional funding is requested of replacement of hydraulic spreader and cutter costing and there’s the toilet block and the kitchen at Coleman House, £13,000 and then there’s also disabled access at Coleman House of £5,000 that has been requested to remove from their recurrent budget to the capital budget of £35,000.

The Chairman –

Any Member have any questions? The Honourable Cruyff Buckley?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

Was disabled access originally incorporated in the original designs for Coleman House?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

I’m informed that, yes, it was approved in the original designs but was not in the actual?.....

The Chairman –

Any other questions?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Can I ask how they came to be omitted?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

I'm not quite sure, Dr Essex, but you will be aware of the report that was undertaken by the Chief Auditor and his team on Performance Report on the Coleman House project and coming out of that was a number of failings that were identified in terms of the management and the?.....of that programme, those recommendations have been taken forward and PAC have considered that report and we have given our management responses to show how that will no longer happen under the new procedures and processes that we have today in supporting the capital programme, so whilst I can't give you the details of why that might have happened at the time, I can give you assurances now that the new process and new governance regulations that came out of that PAC report has been completed.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

So, were the toilets and the kitchen additional components?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

I'm led to believe, Mr Chair, that the toilets were included in the original?....., but the kitchen was not.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Surely this should have been identified by project management?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

These were, Members, would be additional to what was there because they are definitely?....., but again, as I suggested, they have already been the subject of a very long Public Accounts Committee session and lessons learned and I believe?.....to be dealt with to make sure that it no longer have to.....?.....

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

So, can I ask what funding is being used?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

In terms of?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

The additional works.

The Hon. Dax Richards -

My understanding, Mr Chair, is that the majority of the?.....will be actually funded through the?.....programme, there will be a need to?.....some additional pop ups, but we will?.... that into the?.....budget.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you for that assurance.

The Chairman –

Thank you.

Head 15 – Police, £35,000.

Question put and agreed to.

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Chair, I would like to make one more amendment. As a result of changes to Head 23 and Head 29 the total of Schedule II needs to be amended. The Schedule currently reads £572,000 and needs to be amended to £728,000.

The Chairman –

5, er 7.....sorry?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Sorry, £752,000 to £728,000.

The Chairman –

Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Susan O’Bey –

Mr Speaker, I’d like to second.

The Chairman –

Thank you very much. Honourable Members, I put the question then that the overall Capital Expenditure under Schedule II now stands at £728,000 as opposed to £752,000.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Now we can move on to the Bill itself. Honourable Members, I put the question that the Title, Enacting Clause and Clause 1 do stand part of the Bill. Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker,?.....as a result of the other changes that have been made to Clause 2.

The Chairman –

Okay. Any Honourable Member wishes to speak to the Title, Enacting Clause and Clause 1?

Title, Enacting Clause and Clause 1.

Question put and agreed to.

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, I’d like to make a proposed amendment to Clause 2 and to request the other amendments that was made to Schedule I and Schedule II to read a sum not exceeding, which was £1,089,000, now it is changed to £1,033,000 and the wording that reflects that changes also to reflect £1,033,000.

The Chairman –

Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Susan O’Bey –
Mr Speaker, I second the amendment.

The Chairman –
Okay. Honourable Members, there’s been an amendment to Clause 2 that the amount not exceeding £1,033,000 from £1,089,000. Then I put the question that the amendment to Members.

Question on amendment, put and agreed to.

Clause 2 (as amended) –

Question put and agreed to.

Council Resumed.

The Speaker –
Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Dax Richards –
Mr Speaker, I beg to report that the First Supplementary Appropriation (2019/20) Bill, 2020 passed the Committee with seven amendments and to move that this Council approves the said Bill and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted.

The Speaker –
Thank you very much. Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Susan O’Bey –
Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –
I put the question then that this Council approves the First Supplementary Appropriation (2019/20) Bill, 2020 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker –
Next item of business, please?

Motion No. 2 – The Honourable Anthony Green.

THE EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2020

The Speaker –
The Honourable Anthony Green?

The Hon. Anthony Green –
Thank you, Mr Speaker. I beg to move that the Employment Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2020 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council.

The Speaker –

Do you have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

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

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Mr Speaker, I present this Bill, the Employment Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2020. It is based on proposals made by the Employment Rights Committee, a statutory committee in its own right whose recommendations were considered and supported by the Social and Community Development Committee and more recently by the Executive Council in December 2019. I first wish to express appreciation for the work done by Employment Rights Committee under the Chairmanship of Councillor Cruyff Buckley. Any separate publicity will be carried out by the Employment Rights Committee. This Bill seeks to amend the principle Ordinance, the Employment Rights Ordinance 2010 as follows: to increase the number of persons which make up the Regulating Authority from one to three; to introduce remuneration for certain members of the Employment Rights Committee and Labour Regulating Authority; to amend enabling provisions for regulations to be made under the Ordinance with respect to maternity, parental and adoption leave.

First, the proposed increase in membership of the Labour Regulating Authority. The Labour Regulating Authority has a duty, amongst other things, to investigate and determine claims made by employees under the Employment Rights Ordinance and to prepare and publish guidelines on best practice and codes of practice in employment protection for employers, employees and workers. The Labour Regulating Authority currently comprises solely of the Chief Magistrate who deals with complaints related to the Employment Rights Ordinance. Being one person doesn't always enable things to be seen from all angles. It is therefore proposed that the Labour Regulating Authority be made up of three persons, including the Chief Magistrate. The two other persons should ideally be an employee representative and an employer representative. Another role of the Labour Regulating Authority is to promote and protect the rights of employees granted under the Employment Rights Ordinance. There was a concern as to whether the Labour Regulating Authority is able to do a promotional role as it is also meant to be an impartial arbitrator focused on encouraging people to make claims against their employers, which may be contrary to impartiality. The Employment Rights Committee currently exists to make recommendations on remuneration, work hours and leave periods. The second proposal is that the promotional role will move from the Labour Regulating Authority and become the responsibility of the Employment Rights Committee.

The third proposal is that members of the Labour Regulating Authority, other than the Chief Magistrate, should be made remuneration for their time and that members of the Employment Rights Committee, other than the Legislative Council Members and SHG officials, be paid remuneration for their time. Because promotion responsibility would move from the Labour Regulating Authority to the Employment Rights Committee the Employment Rights Committee would be given a small annual budget for promotion.

Furthermore, a member of the Chamber of Commerce will be invited to join the Employment Rights Committee as an additional member to support promotional activities.

The fourth proposed amendment is to section 27 of the Employment Rights Ordinance of the right of an employee to be paid an unpaid maternity or paternity leave, also to extend the scope of the regulatory power to cover maternity, parental and adoption leave. Currently, it is not the

statutory requirement for any employer in St Helena to offer maternity, parental or adoption leave, although we know that many employers do offer this benefit. In an environment where we have an ageing population, we want to provide support to people who give work to and adopt children in order to help promote sustainable population growth.

Mr Speaker, it may be of benefit if I said a few words about what is proposed if the principle Ordinance is amended to enable regulations to be made for the introduction of statutory maternity, paternity and adoption leave and pay periods. The full details would be in regulations that would follow with a big?.....background may assist. The International Labour Organisation, the ILO, created the first global stand in 2019 aimed at protecting working women before and after childbirth. The paternity protection convention was formed. The standard was revised in 1952 and now called for a minimum of twelve weeks leave although a fourteen week leave period is recommended. This proposed amendment to the legislation is long overdue, Mr Speaker. Under the Ten-Year Plan goal Altogether Better for children and young people, SHG has stated that we will introduce paid maternity, paternity and adoption leave on the island. The assertion sits within the wider intention to encourage St Helenian relations to increase; currently there are more deaths than births and to ensure that any family considering having or adopting a child is not at risk of poverty or unemployment as a result of that decision.

In considering this proposal, it is recognised that the introduction of statutory maternity, paternal and adoption leave and pay will protect parents on St Helena from poverty. Many employers on St Helena already have their own maternity and paternity leave policy although there are some differences between businesses and some businesses do not offer these types of leave because currently it is not statutory, that is, not required by law. Making these types of leave statutory sends a signal that we are moving with the times. The proposed changes would allow the following: that an allowance of four weeks adoption leave becomes statutory of which four weeks is paid at full pay; that the relative allowance is given as normal if the baby dies or a baby is stillborn after the twenty-fourth week of pregnancy; that the full pay allowance for maternity, parental and adoption leave is provided after twenty-six weeks of pregnancy which is normally deemed to be the preparation period. Parents should have the right to request additional maternity, parental or adoption leave and the ability to return to work on a part-time basis. Requests should be made to the employer at least twenty-eight days in advance of the expected return date in order that the employer can fully consider and plan for implementation of such request and an allowance of two weeks paternity and parental leave will become statutory of which two weeks is paid as full pay.

Consultations by the Employment Rights Committee were carried out in late 2018 with employers and the public and the responses have been used to develop these recommendations. The statutory leave periods and payment periods chosen in the recommendations are precisely reflective of what employers and the public have told us, balancing the need to protect parents from poverty, encourage strong relationships with new parents and children whilst ensuring that the statutory levels are affordable and for business. The detailed proposed changes would come into force on 1st April 2020 by regulations made by the Governor in Council, although it is subject to whether it is agreed today to amend Clause 27 of the Employment Rights Ordinance 2007. Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. I put the question, Honourable Members, that the Employment Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2020, be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council. The question is now open for debate. Any Honourable Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Cruyff Buckley?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. As the Chairman of the Employment Rights Committee, I rise in full support of this Bill, I think it will now demonstrate that this Government is now taking a no-nonsense approach when it comes to the rights of the individual. In this case it is the employment right individual and I hope that these provisions will help to not only enforce, but raise awareness in the public sector as well as, most importantly, in the private sector and I hope that we all can work together to ensure that our St Helenians get a good deal. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Any other Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Mover wishes to reply, oh, sorry, the Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Just to say I rise in support of this Bill, Mr Speaker, and it's a very important?.....increasing the rights that other countries enjoy with employees and I fully support this Motion.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. The Honourable Member may wish to respond?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, just to thank the two Members, particularly the Chairman of the Employment Rights Committee, for their support.

The Speaker –

Honourable Members, I put the question that the Employment Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2020 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker =

Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

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

The Speaker –

Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you.

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

Council in Committee.

The Chairman –

Okay, Honourable Members, we're now into the Committee stage. I put the question then that the Title, Enacting Clause and Clause 1 do stand part of the Bill. The Honourable Attorney General?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Mr Speaker, it's self-explanatory?.....

The Chairman –

Any questions, Honourable Members?

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. Attorney General?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Clause 2 primarily meant composition of the Labour Regulating Authority. At present it's just one person from Government, which, by convention has become that of the Chief Magistrate. This amendment expands the Labour Regulating Authority to three members, one of which must be the Chief Magistrate. The other two members are lay persons?..... A further amendment?.....introducing the remuneration of £600 for two?....., regulations allows the Governor in Council to increase.....?.....

The Chairman –

Honourable Members, any Honourable Member wishes to speak on, sorry, Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

.....?.....ask the Attorney General, Clause 3 (2), it say the?.....Regulating Authority?..... 3 ? (a) it say that the Chief Magistrate and I wondering if that?.....(*inaudible*).....

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Yes, that comes out of the original Ordinance?.....governing.....?..... The current Regulator?.....Chief Magistrate.....?.....(*inaudible*).....find yourselves in the position as members.....?.....proceed.....?.....

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Thank you.

The Chairman –

Any other Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
How was the amount of £600 per annum arrived at?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –
.....?.....obviously?.....

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Sorry?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –
It would be more a matter of policy.....?.....?..... *(inaudible)*.....

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
I consider the amount of £600 to be derisory for membership of a body as important as this. I know I can't suggest an increase with budgeting the way it is, but individuals, also, for example?

The Hon. Dax Richards –
My understanding is that it's going to be a retainer fee, so it might be the case that the Authority?..... actually....?.....so?.....think of it as a retainer and this would be in line with other?.....

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Is that the basic ..annual. retainer with additional remuneration depending upon the number of meetings?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –
.....?.....*(inaudible)*

The Chairman –
The Honourable Cruyff Buckley?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –
There has been a recommendation that the two further members appointed to assist the Chief Magistrate should ideally be a member of private sector employees as well as a member on an organisation a representative of employers and I notice the Bill makes mention of two at the discretion of the Governor, I just wonder if we should be giving some indication that we aim to first find those two individuals?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –
.....?.....?.....*(inaudible)*.....

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –
I understand the constraints on a small island, Mr Speaker, but ideally, we would like to have representation as far as we could, I suppose in this instance we would have to trust in the Governor's discretionary abilities. Thank you.

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

Clause 2.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Can we move to Clause 3 and 4, Attorney General?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Let's deal with just Clause 3 in itself....

The Chairman –

Okay.

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

....?....amendments to remuneration....?..... At present none of the members?..... receive remuneration....?.....remuneration all members, except those who are members of Legislative Council or?.....remuneration of £450 per annum.

The Chairman –

Any questions on Clause 3, Honourable Members?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

I'll just say again this can be increased by Governor in Council.

Clause 3.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

I put the question that Clause 4 do stand part of the Bill. Honourable Attorney General?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Yes, Mr Speaker, Clause 4 amends powers ...?.... regulations, particularly?.....maternity/paternity leave. At present the regulations?.....only allows?.....maternity or paternity leave. In terms of paternity leave, we want to change to paternity to prevent?.....adoption also intoterms of leave.?.....Members would have heard the detail?.....Councillor Green?.....

The Chairman –

Any Member wishes to speak to Clause 4? No?

Clause 4.

Question put and agreed to.

Council Resumed.

The Speaker -

The Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Mr Speaker, I beg to report that the Employment Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2020 passed the Committee with no amendments and to move that the Council approves the said Bill and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you. The Honourable Mover, you may speak to the Motion?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I have no further comments.

The Speaker –

Thank you. I put the question that this Council approves the Employment Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2020 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted. Any Honourable Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Cruyff Buckley?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

I would just like to thank the Chairman of the Social and Development Committee for elevating this Bill to the House and for your information, Mr Speaker, we hope to go out on the radio sometime soon in the near future to discuss the parameters of what is proposed, although Councillor Green has done a fine job relaying that to the public and I hope that the public will be interested in this, but more importantly, employers take heed of this and we move St Helena into the twenty-first century. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Any other Honourable Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Mover wishes to respond to the debate?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I have nothing further to add. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Then I put the question that this Council approves the Employment Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2020 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker –

Honourable Members, I think this would be an appropriate time now to break for lunch and we will resume again at 1.15. Thank you, Honourable Members.

Council adjourned.

Council resumed.

Motion No. 3 – The Honourable Russell Yon.

THE BURIAL GROUNDS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2020

The Hon. Russell Yon –

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Burial Grounds (Amendment) Bill, 2020 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council.

The Speaker –

Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

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

The Hon. Russell Yon –

The Burial Grounds Ordinance was enacted in 1895. In June 2019, a new burial ground at the Dungeon was proclaimed and it was recommended by the Environment and Natural Resources Committee that legislation concerning burials be updated. The current Burial Grounds Ordinance 1895 states in section 9 (2) that the approval of declarations as to the use of a dis...?.... burial grounds by the Council Committee could be obtained from the Secretary of State. The Environment and Natural Resources Committee deemed this to be an out of touch approach and that this approval should be obtained by the Governor in Council. This Burial Grounds (Amendment) Bill, 2020 is seen as a modernisation exercise and reflects that such matters should not need Secretary of State approval. The matter was referred to the Office of Secretary of State and approval was received for the amended change. Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Members, I put the question that the Burial Grounds (Amendment) Bill, 2020 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council. The question is now open for debate. Any Honourable Member wishes to speak to the Motion? The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Mr Speaker, there's not very much more I can say other than to rise in support of the Bill. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you. The Honourable Derek Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

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

The Speaker –
The Honourable Gavin Ellick?

The Hon. Gavin Ellick –
I rise in support of the Bill.

The Speaker –
Thank you. The Honourable Cruyff Buckley?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –
Thank you, Mr Speaker, I rise in support of this Bill. I think death is inevitable for each one of us here, so I think it's important that we make provisions for it and I will make mention now that we're all well aware of St Helena's limits in the amount of land that perhaps in the future we'll be standing here and considering other options such as cremation, it's not that, a particularly interesting topic, but I think it's one we will have to face in the future. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –
Honourable Mover may wish to respond to the debate?

The Hon. Russell Yon –
Thank you, Mr Speaker. I do not have anything further to add, but to thank my colleagues for their support.

The Speaker –
Thank you. I put the question that the Burial Grounds (Amendment) Bill, 2020 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker –
The Honourable Mover?

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

The Speaker –
Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Gavin Ellick –
I beg to second, Sir.

The Speaker –
Thank you.

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

Council in Committee.

The Chairman –

Okay, we'll start with the Title, Enacting Clause and Clause 1 do stand part of the Bill.
Attorney General?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Mr Speaker,?.....

The Chairman –

Any Honourable Member wishes to speak to the Title, Enacting Clause and Clause 1?

Title, Enacting Clause and Clause 1.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

I put the question then that Clause 2 do stand part of the Bill.

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Mr Speaker, the current Burial Grounds Ordinance contains a provision for the relevant Council Committee to give directions what disused burial grounds that was not a churchyard to be used for ...?.... purposes. The Committee currently is able to give such directions?.... religious building, school or a dwelling house, however, at present, if no direct for another purpose it must be approved by the Secretary of State. What this amendment does is simplify matters by removing the requirement of Secretary of State approval and instead give that approval to Governor in Council.

The Chairman –

Any Honourable Member wishes to speak to Clause 2? Honourable Cruyff Buckley?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

I take it this amendment was deliberated with the current Secretary of State?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Yes, I contacted him and asked him permission to change it from Secretary of State to Governor in Council and he's agreed.....?.....ExCo.

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Chairman –

Any other Honourable Member wishes to speak?

Clause 2.

Question put and agreed to.

Council resumed.

The Speaker –

Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Russell Yon –

Mr Speaker, I beg to report that the Burial Grounds (Amendment) Bill, 2020 passed the Committee with no amendments and to move that this Council approves the said Bill and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted.

The Speaker –

Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you. The Mover may wish to speak to the Motion?

The Hon. Russell Yon –

Mr Speaker, I have no further comments.

The Speaker –

Thank you. I put the question that this Council approves the Burial Grounds (Amendment) Bill, 2020 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted. Any Honourable Member wishes to speak? No, I have to put it back to the Mover then, if you wish to speak, Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Russell Yon –

Mr Speaker, I have nothing further to add.

The Speaker –

Thank you. I put the question that this Council approves the Burial Grounds (Amendment) Bill, 2020 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker –

Next item of business, please?

Motion No. 4 – The Honourable Derek Thomas.

THE PORT AND AERODROME (HEALTH) (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2020

The Speaker –

The Honourable Derek Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Port and Aerodrome (Health) (Amendment) Bill, 2020 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council.

The Speaker –

Do you have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –
Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

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

The Hon. Derek Thomas –
Mr Speaker, the proposed amendments to the Port and Aerodrome (Health) (Amendment) Bill, 2020 is seen as urgent amendments as a result of the Coronavirus and, indeed, any further outbreak of virus. Members will be aware that the Coronavirus is spreading around the world and St Helena needs to take measures to prevent the risk from outbreak of virus on St Helena and should the virus come here be able to take measures. So, there are three proposed amendments to this Bill; the first one is to appoint Justices of the Peace, to include Justices of the Peace in addition to the Chief Magistrate. At the moment the Ordinance provides for makes provision for the Chief Magistrate alone and the Chief Magistrate is not always going to be available, in actual fact now, he's left the island on business or leave or whatever is the case, so this will include any Justice of the Peace so there won't be any delays should the need arise. The other one is, the amendment is to appoint proper officers and at the moment the officers appointed under the Ordinance is the Chief Medical Officer, the Chief Veterinary Officer and Environmental Protection Officer. Again, Mr Speaker, if a number of cases arrive at the same time the requirement will be for a greater number of people, of trained people to be appointed to be able to deal with such an incident and the proposal is that the Governor found the recommendation of the Director of Health can appoint proper officers and the third amendment, Mr Speaker, to this Bill, is to provide for extension of detention times, make provision for the period to be extended. Again, should the number of cases arose at the same time the authority, medical authority will need time to be able to deal with these individuals so, again, this proposal for an extension. It is proportionate because any request for an extension must be justified to the Justice of the Peace. So those are the proposed amendments which will help the Directorate in the event that an outbreak of the Coronavirus occurs, or, like I say, indeed, any other type of virus. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –
Thank you very much indeed. Honourable Members, I put the question that the Port and Aerodrome (Health) (Amendment) Bill, 2020 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council. The question is now open for debate, Honourable Members. Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –
Thank you, Mr Speaker, I rise in support of this Bill, it's a very necessary ...?...amendments and?.....to prepare St Helena as best we can to deal with such an outbreak of the virus. Thank you.

The Speaker –
Thank you. The Honourable Jeffrey Ellick?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –
Mr Speaker, I rise in support of the Bill. I did have concerns about the definition of Chief Magistrate, Mr Speaker, but the Honourable Attorney General has assured me that my concerns will be addressed and that I don't really have concerns in this respect. I?.....the Bill.

The Speaker –

Thank you. The Honourable Cruyff Buckley?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I rise in full support of this Bill. There has been concern in the public who say it's not a question of if, but it's now a question of when the virus arrives on the island and I do hope that with these provisions St Helena will be ready. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. The Honourable Clint Beard?

The Hon. Clint Beard –

Mr Speaker, I rise in full support of this Bill, I think these measures are necessary to protect the island, I think that is very important. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Councillor Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I give this Bill my full support, it's essential that we have all our ducks in a row in case we do get exposed to Corona 19 and the provisions of this Bill will help to ensure that there won't be any loopholes that would prevent the required emergency response.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. The Honourable Gavin Ellick?

The Hon. Gavin Ellick –

I rise in support of this because it is necessary, so bring it on. Thank you very much, Sir.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Russell Yon?

The Hon. Russell Yon –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I rise in support of the Bill. I see this as an important amendment in such a time that protection is needed for this island and for the individual. I support the Bill.

The Speaker –

Thank you. The Mover wish to respond to the debate?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I would like to thank those colleagues who rise in support of the Bill. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. I put the question that the Port and Aerodrome (Health) (Amendment) Bill, 2020 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker –
Honourable Mover

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

The Speaker –
Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –
Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

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

Council in Committee.

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

The Hon. Allen Cansick –
Again, self-explanatory, Mr Speaker.

The Chairman –
Any Honourable 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. Attorney General?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –
Yes, Mr Speaker, the ...?....that Clause 2 does is expand the definition of Chief Magistrate and it expands it only for the purpose of this Ordinance and it expands it to include the definition of Justices?....in the Magistrates Court. Justices in the Magistrates Court?.....to include many Justices and ex officio Justices who are the Chief Magistrate and the Chief Justice. So, all of those Justices can sit?.....and exercise the powers that the Ordinance?.....
Chief Magistrate. The second definition is to change the definition of proper officer. At present proper officer is defined as?.....in the Public Health Ordinance and that limits it to just three officers, the Chief Medical Officer, the Chief Veterinary Officer and the Environment Protection Officer. It deletes that?.....defined by section 3(a) which will come into full strength.

The Chairman –
Honourable Members, any questions? The Honourable Jeffrey Ellick?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Just to indicate concerns. In the Magistrates Ordinance, the Chief Magistrate is appointed under section 7 and specifically states that such person shall be qualified and my concern is not ...?.....publicly, just so I could elaborate how that creates concerns.

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Mr Speaker, if I could just ask you to speak up and then I can understand what you want.

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Just to indicate concerns outside of this meeting.....?.....concerns under section 7 of the Magistrates Ordinance says that the Chief Magistrate is to be a qualified person. By implementing this section it means some of the jurors are not qualified persons in respect of Chief Magistrate?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Yeah, the only thing you could?..... the Chief Magistrate as per the current?.....or the Chief Justice.

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you.

The Chairman –

Any other Member wish to speak?

Clause 2.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

I put the question then that Clause 3 do stand part of the Bill. Attorney General?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

There's a new section 3(a) inserted into?.....will be appointed by the Governor before any regulations?..... It goes on to?.....for and?.....functions specified?.....

The Chairman –

Any Member have any questions?

Clause 3.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

I put the question that Clause 4 do stand part of the Bill. Attorney General?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Yes, Clause 4 extends the possible periods of detention before full application is made to the Court. At present the proper officer can detain for six hours if a medical assessment is to be made and after that can detain for a further five hours in order for an application to the Court

can be prepared and heard. This provision extends those periods?.....to the period for medical examination by an additional six hours and for preparing?.....applications an addition of seven hours?.....for those extensions to take place an application has to be made in Court and will have to demonstrate an application has insufficient resources to carry out those functions.....?..... The Court also adds power for the Court to request specifically information from the proper officer who is making application on behalf of the?.....officer and, in addition, on receiving that information?.....vary.....

The Chairman –

Any Honourable Member wishes to speak?

Clause 4.

Question put and agreed to.

Council Resumed.

The Speaker –

Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Mr Speaker, I beg to report that the Port and Aerodrome (Health) (Amendment) Bill, 2020 passed the Committee with no amendments and to move that this Council approves the said Bill and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted.

The Speaker –

Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

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

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Nothing further to add, Mr Speaker, just to again thank the Members and the Attorney General for putting this Bill through in a short length of time.

The Speaker –

Thank you. I put the question that this Council approves the Port and Aerodrome (Health) (Amendment) Bill, 2020 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted. Any Member wishes to speak? Do you wish to say anything else, Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Mr Speaker, nothing else to be said.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Then I put the question that this Council approves the Port and Aerodrome (Health) (Amendment) Bill, 2020 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Members. Next item of business, please?

7.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

The Speaker –

The Honourable Chief Secretary?

The Hon. Susan O’Bey –

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until 27th March 2020.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Russell Yon –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you. The Motion is that this House do now adjourn until 27th March 2020. The Motion is now open for debate. The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I rise in support of this Adjournment Debate and wish to put forward a number of points for consideration. As we approach the winter months and the low season in our tourist calendar, we expect to see a lower number of passengers arriving on our weekly flights. I see this as an opportunity for more fresh produce that is not readily available on the island to be airfreighted and request that our airport’s contract manager and Enterprise St Helena be tasked with taking this opportunity forward with Airlink and local merchants and consideration could also be given during this time for preferential freight. Secondly, I would like to comment on the agreement that we have reached to recruit a Social Policy Planner, I believe the whole House will welcome such an appointment. I would wish to see the first task of this post-holder is to carry out a much needed and overdue social impact assessment on the 2011?.....reforms. This House has been calling for such an assessment for some time. As I understand it, the last assessment was done in this field in 2012. A lot has happened then and some would argue a lot that should have happened has not. I therefore seek the assurance from the Mover that this much needed piece of work will be the first task of the Social Policy Planner once in post.

Finally, although I have raised this matter informally, an issue that is of concern to many of our private sector businesses, in particular the construction section, given the downturn in our economy, the need for SHG and its only owned state entities to ensure that any service that are to be contracted out is done by open tender and not by all their contracts using the preferred contractor list, unless, of course, the work required is of a specialist nature. This would ensure that during the downturn in our economy, a wider range of contractors can bid for work. I would like to see specific directions given to Directorates and all their state-owned entities in this respect, therefore creating a level playing field for this sector. St Helena has a small and fragile economy and given that public funds are being expended one wonders whether the use of a preferred contractor list should be used at all unless, as I mentioned previously, that work

or service is required is of such a specialist nature. I look forward to the Mover's response on this issue so that the sector is aware of SHG support in this matter. Mr Speaker, I beg to move and support this Adjournment Debate.

The Speaker –

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

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. First and foremost, I wish to state how pleasing it is the St Helena Government has at last been able to call for tenders for the construction of new Government Landlord Housing after a delay of many years. This is a huge step forward and all those who have contributed to making this possible deserve recognition, especially the Technical and Lands teams who have undertaken all the background work to enable this point to be reached. We all know that there are many within our community who are in need of social housing and the construction sector has been struggling without a capital programme, so building Government Landlord housing will be beneficial in both ways. This is the kind of win win situation that is good for St Helena and I hope to see far more of these types of opportunities come online in the months to come.

Mr Speaker, the extent of social hardship within our community should not be overlooked and this does not just relate to housing; there are individuals and families on low incomes who are faced with increases in the prices of essential items, including water. Although there was discussion about options for freight, subsidy potentially, and also once again it has been decided that half of the increase in water will be handled and to achieve this by increase in subsidy by SHG so that only half is passed on to the consumer. In addition, I am informed that the income of those on Income Related Benefits and the Basic Island Pension will be raised to cover the potential impact on them.

Mr Speaker, in your opening words, you made reference to my attendance at the Sustainable Development Workshop in Malta. This was an extremely interesting and potentially beneficial event. As time is limited, I will now focus on three elements only. The first is water security, which was a key topic discussed and I was able to establish direct contact with the Head of the Water supplying Company on Malta who relies on the reverse osmosis desalination for a minimum of 60% of its water supply. He gave me an assurance that he would be happy to assist St Helena with advice and information. Secondly, climate change. This was another extremely relevant and pertinent topic for St Helena and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association has developed a climate change toolkit for parliamentarians which was launched during the Conference and which I will present to all Elected Members in the upcoming weeks as I believe it will be very informative and interesting to all and I think it will provide opportunities to further debate and development. The third topic that I would like to raise is the fact that unlike most Commonwealth Parliamentary Association gatherings, at this one it was decided that further recommendations would be compiled relating to the items that were discussed and debated and that these recommendations will then be spearheaded by the CPA Small Branches Division in order to assist the small jurisdictions. As soon as the finalised list of recommendations is received, I will be sharing these widely.

The budget settlement from the Department for International Development, DfID, is still not finalised and the clock is ticking. It can only be hoped that there will not be a need for a rollover budget. The fact that it is now almost certain that the settlement will only be for one year yet again is depressing enough. How can meaningful and constructive forward planning take place when there is no certainty beyond the twelve-month horizon? Another worrying issue is the potential impact of Britain's departure from the European Union, upon the level of funding available to St Helena. A recent letter to St Helena Government from the Deputy Director, EU

Exit, stated that the British Government fully recognises the importance of the issue to the British Overseas Territories. They've also made it clear that it will not be until after the British Government's spending review towards the end of this year and the outcome of further discussion with the EU that a way forward will be able to be established.

During the recent holiday visit of the Acting Head of Unit of the Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development within the European Commission, I met with him and explained the immense value of EU support to St Helena and my concerns for the future if this ceases. He obviously took my points on-board and he almost immediately tweeted and I quote "Thank you to Dr Corinda Essex for the insights of St Helena and the role EU support has played under the EDF. Much concern in relation to future funding for capital investments following Brexit." EU budget support has been so critical to date. Obviously, we will have to watch that space and see what happens, but St Helena Government needs to do all that is possible to ensure that St Helena does not lose out. Whether the future additional funding comes from the EU or direct from Britain does not matter, but what is essential is the level of funding does not decrease, particularly in the critical transitional period that St Helena is currently experiencing. This topic will form part of the discussions at the forthcoming Joint Ministerial Conference which the Honourable Derek Thomas will be attending and I know that he will be pushing for a favourable outcome for St Helena. Here I would just like to make an observation which is that there is often public criticism about Councillors attending functions such as the Joint Ministerial Conference, but if St Helena is going to be able to put forward its case and not feel the disadvantage in comparison with the other British Overseas Territories, which are always represented in far greater numbers at these Conferences and Committees than St Helena is, we have to be present. It is not a "nice to have". If St Helena is to move forward and have the international voice that it deserves, we must be represented.

Mr Speaker, I will end by touching on an even more potentially serious issue, that is of the Covid 19 virus. We are aware that actions are being taken, both to prevent the virus entering St Helena and to be prepared if it still manages to do so. Indeed, we amended legislation today to facilitate that, but my concern is how any additional equipment and resources needed will be funded, particularly if an epidemic should occur. Would this be treated as an exogenous shock for which emergency funding would be made available immediately by the British Government? Has dialogue with the British Government already started in this regard? Do we have assurance that we would have the necessary financial resources to avoid loss of life due to not having sufficient ventilators and other specialist equipment on island? Mr Speaker, I hope and pray that this situation never arises, but we must be fully prepared if it does. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Any other Honourable Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Russell Yon?

The Hon. Russell Yon –

Mr Speaker, I rise in support of the adjournment debate. Mr Speaker, what a few weeks we have had to endure as politicians since the turn of the year. No one said 2020 would be bright and rosy, but for sure I wasn't expecting some of the most recent ups and downs, highs and lows. Our community is still in some sort of disarray and although some measures have been put in place to quell the concerns, the state of our economy is not making it easy to comprehend. Again, freight is at the forefront and although this Government is looking at all avenues to address the rising issues, to include subsidising some commodities, in particular, provisions, building goods, reefers and animal feed. The current impact on freight is being felt worldwide, hence it has increased almost triple fold for our importers, not only by the cost of operating the

MV Helena, but because of our location. There is no way around this when almost everything we consume is imported. The introduction of the IMO 2020 low sulphur fuel regulation has had its impact worldwide on the shipping industry and although there are some ports that can provide the low sulphur quality fuel required, it comes at a cost and vice versa those who cannot access the correct fuel are then penalised for having to use the high sulphur content fuel or to have scrubbers installed on the vessels. Shipping companies have categorically announced that they are not going to pay for these costs alone as environmental protection is everyone's baby, so naturally either the seller or the buyer will have to foot the bill to these additional surcharges. The MV Helena hasn't escaped these increases, thus it is transferred to the customers on the island.

Mr Speaker, the recent?.....surrounding our fishing industry has not gone unnoticed as we all are aware that fish has long been the staple diet for St Helenians. Not having fish available will always present a problem here on the island, not only to the consumer, but also to the team of dedicated fishermen who give up long hours to fish our waters to provide for open table. We all knew what the current status at the time and that the St Helena Fisheries Corporation would not be able to continue in the current financial climate and the operations and financial spend on this entire entity had been heavily scrutinised. Only time will tell, when, as they say, a bug would be bold. Personally, how it was done I do believe could have been managed with improved involvement of all stakeholders, however, I do believe now is the time to not be playing the blame game, but to come together to provide a desirable way forward. The direction of our fishing industry is paramount to our economy, let us hope that the decision taken for the future of this industry is in the island's best interest.

On another note, Mr Speaker, it is pleasing to say that the Infrastructure and Transport Directorate is progressing well with the CDA at Bottom Woods and it is envisaged that this month there will be some ground-breaking when excavation will start on site for the access road and utilities. This will then enable the technical team to complete the layout of the plots and they will become available to the public, along with plots that SHG will develop to Government Landlord housing. I should also mention here that other developments with regard to lands and properties are progressing well and additional projects will commence soon with more members of the private sector becoming involved.

Mr Speaker, it is also good to see the progress that has been made under the projects within the EGO, especially with the few micro projects which included the refurbishment of some of the public toilets. I can also inform Members that the Directorate will be receiving the street lights soon which will see part of the street light infrastructure of Jamestown upgraded. It is also noticeable that one of the larger projects is also progressing well. The Rockfall Protection project under the watchful eye of Fairhurst and contracted to Can France is also moving along to schedule. It is rather unfortunate that works on the upper side of Ladder Hill road has impacted on us all, in particular, to having access in and out of town. In the real world, there would be alternative avenues, but this is St Helena and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the public for being so patient with this implementation for the road closure. It won't be long when this part of the project will be completed, however, and in the meantime, we just can't fit it both ways.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to mention that although not under my watchful eye, but operating within A&NRD section of the Environmental, Natural Resources and Planning Directorate, mention must be given to our Agronomist, who has, since his arrival, been working on ways to ensure our farmers get the best out of their lands. Although I know some of his work might be a repetition of work done by previous Agronomists, it is good to know that our lands still can produce with the correct methods and the will and power to achieve. The Agronomist is a position that I know Members around this table battled for on several occasions and to have one now who is also engaging the knowledge of our local farmers is very

encouraging. I do hope that along the way we will all see the need for this posting and its continuation as a positive step forward, not only to work with our farmers, but to instil in our youth the value that an Agronomist has to our farming and our economy and that hopefully one or two of our youth will use his knowledge to gain?....for their future.

Mr Speaker, I would like to say that the recent rains received has been most welcome and although we have seen some increased flows into our reservoirs it still hasn't shown evidence in others. Our aquifers, whether they sit in the high or low lands, are almost depleted and will take a long time to replenish. Only a few boreholes are able to provide the supply we need and we should be thankful for this intervention. Climate change is happening and impacting the world all over, St Helena is no exception. We cannot provide the guarantee that we can depend on rainfall to produce our water stock and if we want to develop the island and grow our population we need to look at alternatives, not just increasing storage, but also the use of reclaimed water, reverse osmosis and maintaining our supplies which means managing our Peaks and their vegetation.

Mr Speaker, together with other Elected Members, we were privileged to pay a visit to the Peaks this past Friday and I would like to say all Members would agree that this was an exceptional visit to learn from Miss Sasha Bargo and her two teams that work endlessly in unforgiving circumstances and conditions on securing not just the endemic vegetation, flora and fauna, but also taking it upon themselves St Helena's future is being developed on its paths. This is an achievement that is getting St Helena recognition worldwide and I do hope that all those involved will get the recognition they deserve. Mr Speaker, I beg to move and I support the adjournment debate.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Any Honourable..... The Honourable Anthony Green?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Mr Speaker, I support the adjournment, I agree with my colleague, it has been a really busy time, but I would like to spend a minute just to look ahead and mainly about things that my Committee, the Social and Community Development Committee, SCDC, will be doing and one of the things we are about to do is to begin a process of looking and reviewing the Elections Ordinance and some ideas that have emerged include things that the public have mentioned, it looks at reviewing the processes relating to persons who are eligible to vote, but who may be unable to do so in person at the time of a by-election or a general election, with a view to such processes being as secret as possible, also to consider the introduction of postal voting and see how that might be facilitated and consider, sort of, a definitive time limit set for the regulations for persons wishing to register as an elector before the run up to a by-election or at general election, also to look into the possibility of amending the Ordinance so's that people can actually register as electors and be able to do that in any electoral area, also to look at these....when it can be made easier for people's names to be removed from the register, also to consider whether there's any appetite in the island for lowering the age to sixteen. Also, to consider whether there should be more than one constituency for the purpose of elections and the implications of a Councillor standing for individual constituencies, rather than as now for a single constituency and also to consider the pros and cons of compulsory registration. I emphasise that these are ideas at the moment and it will be necessary for the, for a review takes place, is to take account from what emerges from Professor Sarkin's report, bit to carry out this work, I as Chairman, propose to appoint Councillor Jeffrey Ellick, who is a member of my Committee, to chair that subcommittee and we will be announcing more information hopefully in the coming weeks. I'd also like to say about the fixed penalty notices which consultation has recently been completed and say that the attendances at those public consultation meetings

have been relatively low, but also that we've had significant feedback and it's now proposed that the Criminal Justice (Fixed Penalties) Bill will actually be brought to this Legislative Council at the next meeting at the end of March.

As Honourable Members will also be aware that I'm also on their behalf been liaising with Darrin Henry from Inside St Helena, and that's another St Helena success story, about possibilities of how we could actually have more regular press conferences; this is an idea that he came up with and we are working through that, but in recent weeks it's been a lot of other matters that have been taking our attention.

I'd also like to mention about the Governance Reform which hopefully will result in Professor Sarkin's final report which we, as far as I know, hasn't yet been received, but it will be a major factor in how St Helena manages its business in the future and we await that with interest as it's certainly obvious to some of us that fundamental change is really now necessary, but the point I would like to mention is that nothing is going to be a success unless we have total buy-in, not only by all Members, but prospective members and all members of the community.

Mr Speaker, I support the adjournment.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much indeed. Any other Honourable Member wishes to speak? Honourable Jeffrey Ellick?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Mr Speaker, I rise in support of the adjournment. I'm deeply concerned for the people of St Helena in respect of the cost of living on our island. No doubt St Helena Government will be introducing their annual increases from 1st April, freight charges has increased on various voyages of the MV Helena and there is a proposed increase for the utilities bill for Connect St Helena. Why are we continuously squeezing the purse of our people to achieve a balanced budget? Is St Helena Government squeezing itself? Those individuals who will be affected by the never-ending increases will have no other choice but to call on St Helena Government for financial assistance. Where will St Helena Government find the finances to assist these individuals? Possibly from the revenue collected from the annual increases. Mr Speaker, our economy is not in a good position then I'm wondering when our community will thrive. Air access has not delivered what was anticipated, we have encouraged our people to invest in business because of this airport, do we know why the business has not delivered?

Since being elected last year, I've been involved in discussions where I learnt that since 2016 a Social and Economic Impact Assessment of the reforms for the airport was requested, four years later this is not completed.

Mr Speaker, Elected Members have been asked to reconsider the proposed increase in tariff rates for utilities. Although Elected Members does not have the power to agree to disagree Connect St Helena's subsidy to mitigate any further increase for our people of St Helena, sorry, Connect St Helena's tariff rates, we do have the power to increase Connect St Helena's subsidy to mitigate any further increases to our people of St Helena. If St Helena Government can find money to offset the operations of Mantis St Helena, then surely they can find money to?.....impact of increases on our people.?....., Mr Speaker. As representatives of the community, we must take the lead and provide direction for our people. We should have a basic plan. What will this Government deliver? Is the Public Service too big? There will always be financial pressures in our Health, Adult and Children Directorates, Education has to remain our top priority, we should cut off accordingly to our situation so that we living what we can do at one time according to the circumstances, according to the resources available and the circumstances. St Helena needs to focus on core services and divest services that generally is not the business of any Government. I urge my Honourable Colleagues to get off the fence

and collectively take action. We are here to lead and push for change for the betterment of our people. Climate change is real, some of us hasn't realised, we need to welcome change and we need to do it now. What sort of message are we sending from this House when our Government is still operating in an antiquated way? Mr Speaker, the amount of paper that is required for this sitting of this meeting, in my opinion, is criminal. We have all the technology ready at our disposal, but when asked if sessional papers could be viewed electronically this was refused. We aspire to be greener, to be greener we have to reduce our ...?.... footprint, so let's start walking the walk and not just talk the talk.

Mr Speaker, I support the adjournment.

The Speaker –

Thank you. The Honourable Clint Beard?

The Hon. Clint Beard –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. As we go through challenging economic climate, we all have to be mindful of the level of involvement in Government and the private sector has and the roles that will determine a vibrant economy. Relationships is important and the value that private sector will play in our environment is critical. Employment opportunities, financial wellbeing and just the innovation some of the private sector displays with limited resources are encouraging and should be commended. A stronger private sector is the future that will allow proper growth in our economy and portray a more realistic backdrop of what St Helena Island needs and the possibilities for other services that could possibly open up. Working together is critical to beneficial outcomes and that has improved over time and we still need to work on keeping that channel open and looking at priority lists of what we need to tackle and stick with that as at the moment we are dealing with and putting up too many issues and overcoming maybe too few. Accountability is another word used so often, yet I'm sure that we all do our best to be accountable as possible and not try to make decisions that will not be of benefit. It is also credible that information is disseminated in full and as much information is delivered as possible so that decisions can be made with all the information that is received. Our employees in SHG is critical throughout the Government and we need to make sure that we appreciate and remunerate appropriately as the value they all create is essential in our day to day operations. It is also mentioned that the youth needs to be protected, but I would like to mention that there still needs to be more work done on making sure our youth has activities and places that they can go to on weekends and in school holidays and we need to endeavour to get ...?... and places and premises in order so that otherwise we will always have a youth that will just create and be bored. We will also need to increase probably more writing in some areas, but the main concern is getting more parents involved and getting their views on how we better improve youth protection and more youth activities. Education for me will be one of the economic drivers for the future, still we see steady growth and creating opportunities is high on my agenda, but it is hard work and it needs involvement from everyone. With a common goal of getting more locals in jobs on island and growing our local scheme.....?..... Education Directorate has the majority being of local employment and training is ongoing for teaching staff and that just means that our talent pool is going within our schools. Investment is another key factor, but we need to make sure that investments are curtailed on the island's future strategies and plans and as we as a island look at opening investment we all need to measure up and put in place protection and make sure that we manage the risks. Access is a key element for growth via sea and air. We are at a point where we need to make sure we have the best, affordable and reliable service and we make sure we use all our assets for the benefit of this island, be it r...s, hubs. We need to make sure that all?.....engage so that we also have people who raise concerns about the hubs and making sure that we can answer those questions

and making sure that they understand that we are using the best affordable way.?.....ever increasing, it is important that we bear in mind, as?.....is so dependent on this, what would have to be done to make sure we bear all factors in mind when making decisions for the best interests of the island. We have already intervened on some aspects of subsidy, but I think one of the key aspects will be the Ruperts Wharf being fully operational and the work has begun.

Social living on St Helena is hard and challenging and it seems lots of work needs to be done to show our community we are working on this. There are so many people that work from Monday to Friday, even Saturdays, and still find it hard to make ends meet and those are the ones that are just out of the reach of any funding or assistance, but yet behind closed doors those are the ones that are really suffering. This leads to the movement of locals that need to leave and look at opportunities offshore to have more financial stability for their families. I ask the question around this table, are we doing enough to keep our locals on island? Are we creating an atmosphere for employment opportunities that will be covered by a reasonable and fair remuneration?

Not all is bleak, we have beautiful sea and land and that was reiterated by my Colleague on my right, when we went to visit the Peaks. The work that they are doing there and replanting of certain plants you will never find in the world is amazing, but yet I think we need to expose that all to the world.

Housing is also another positive and it's moving along quite swiftly and I commend the Committee and the Directorate for moving this along.

Fishing is now somewhat changed and I hope that the fishermen will reap the rewards for their hard work and see benefits for their long days. The amount of effort they put in and hopefully the rewards and also create a service and more fish for the local market.

Water is one of those issues that come up all the time and I believe it's high on the agenda of everybody so I do believe that that will be an issue that needs to be taken further.

Today I just want to leave you with this words, I read it somewhere, I'm not sure I've got it all in order, "Today is an important day of all our lives, it is the recognition that every opportunity you have tomorrow is determined by the dedication, purpose and skills we use with it." Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much indeed. Honourable Cruyff Buckley?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I rise in support of the adjournment debate. Mr Speaker, as a parliamentarian in this House, it is becoming increasingly difficult to separate operational irregularities with strategic level thinking. Mr Speaker, I shall use this opportunity to offer a verbal invitation for UK Ministers at the highest level to come and visit St Helena, to have face to face meetings. Mr Speaker, we hope that we can engage with them in meaningful dialogue to ensure that St Helena has a place in 2020. The relationship between FCO and DfID is changing, Mr Speaker, Junior Ministers now have portfolios which encompass both departments, as it should be. It is strengthening and both the FCO and DfID can now capitalise on the work they are already performing in the Overseas Territories. Recently we had a visit from Mr Andrew Mitchell, it was the first high level visit of its kind in recent years, in many years, Mr Speaker and I do hope the other high ranking Ministers can take heed to this and reach out to the Overseas Territories and give assurance to this House that they are committed to our relationship. They have their part to play, they have their own portfolios and their short term in office can make a real difference to St Helena and the other Overseas Territories. St Helena, it goes to say, is a real green and blue and exemplar with a lot of environmental

protection, it is to become a digital powerhouse, a safe haven, a space port for ground stations as well as offering renewable energy on an unprecedented scale. I believe it is truly the jewel in the Crown of Great Britain. Do UK Ministers feel the same? Can they reinforce the tremendous work that has already been achieved with regards to our environmental protection? We need a long-term commitment from Her Majesty's Government and SHG's document, SHG 2050, it was kindly reproduced by Mr David Marlow, offers such a solution. A realistic compact that asks for exactly what has been laid out in law with regards to the Overseas Territories White Paper, a commitment to guide St Helena towards self-sustainability. Mr Speaker, it is a real chance for Ministers to come, now that we have flights regularly whereas the RMS previously didn't allow for any short-term visits because of the timeframes. This is no longer an excuse; Mr Andrew Mitchell has proven this. I think it is a real time now to reconcile our past history and post Brexit now to be able to focus on the Overseas Territories so we can have a brighter future. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you. The Honourable Derek Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas-

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I rise in support of the Adjournment Debate. As Chairman of the Public Health Committee, I think it would be remiss of me not to say something about the Corona virus and my Honourable Colleague, Dr Essex, quite rightly raised concerns, but I will provide the public with some information, most of it should have been out through Press Statements, but what I will say is the Health Directorate is liaising with the key agencies and stakeholders in St Helena with the Director, Ted Rayment, working closely with the Chief of Police, David Lynch, as the Head of the Resilient Forum to ensure that we can try and prevent the virus coming to St Helena and how we will respond if it does. The Health Directorate, they do meet every Monday to review actions and monitor the spread of the work of the virus worldwide. Also, weekly meetings with the Resilience Forum and every Friday at 4 pm with Public Health, England, and other Overseas Territories to exchange knowledge, identify risks and concerns and also the Directorate liaise with World Health Organisation. However, Mr Speaker, there are real challenges. The Director of Health has written to Public Health, England, advising that we, with only one Anaesthetist on the island and no backup staff, no negative pressure rooms in the Hospital, we have significantly challenged. The Director has advised that we would struggle to manage cases so planning need to be greater. Action taken to date, the Bradleys Camp is being prepared as an isolation facility if needed, the Airport screening of all arrivals using temperature checks and questioning where arrivals have travelled through high spread locations, training of staff in use of protective equipment, identification of additional staff and equipment needed, if and when, Covid-19 presents on the island. Medical releases and Director available for radio interviews. A test run has taken place at the airport to check process and managing of the response, emergency response. Flu testing kits arrived last Saturday as we are entering the flu season. We do not have the capacity to test for the Corona virus in St Helena, but **Sathead**, a leading modular diagnostics company, is developing an automated modular test for point of care, the results in thirty minutes, rather than two weeks to send samples offshore. This technology is likely to be available in two months. This testing can be used on a **then existence**, which we have in Public Health. Public Health, England, are fully aware of our need. The Director of Health has recommended that tourist information, advice, sorry, advised that those travelling the identified high risk countries who display a cough, fever or shortness of breath and have been to those countries in the last fourteen days after medical assessment may be isolated for fourteen days. The management of Covid-19 has significantly added to the workload of the Health Directorate which means that the Director is

working in the evening, early mornings and the weekends to try ensure that his responsibilities can be managed. This is not a healthy situation, Mr Speaker, as we are aware that the virus is spreading rapidly, we need to take greater measures here, measures which will come at a cost. The Health Directorate is working up further requirements which will undoubtedly present itself here to Elected Members. I do appreciate public ongoing concerns on this track and the Director has assured that he will continue to provide radio interviews and regular updates to the general public.

Mr Speaker, a few days ago, Elected Members were provided with a briefing from the Board Members of the St Helena Airport Limited, SHAL, on staffing matters and I was pleased to see that there is a succession plan in place for the training and development of local staff and opportunities for local people to take on and be trained for technical positions. I recommended to the Board Members that this positive story should be communicated to the general public. However, Mr Speaker, I do feel as a role that St Helena Government can play in conjunction with Airlink and that is to explore the possibility of our local people being trained in cabin crew, it would be really good for St Helena to see our own local people as cabin crew on our scheduled aircraft.

Staying with job opportunities for our local people, we have a mission to encourage local Saints to return to St Helena and provide where possible employment opportunities, yet, in many cases it has been brought to my attention that it would appear that our interview panels can be very off-putting to potential applicants. It was explained to me by certain individuals recently that they had a real drilling when being interviewed, they thought that they were on trial in a court of law. I will ask that this issue be addressed and maybe some training on interviewing techniques if required be delivered, after all, people do make the effort to apply for a job, prepare themselves for a job and attend interviews.

Mr Speaker, I will also report that on Wednesday of this week, the consultation on Tobacco ended, that is the public consultation, but it doesn't stop there, there is a further period of two weeks for members of the public to make written representations if they choose to and that can be made to our Secretary, Peter Henry, in Public Health.

Mr Speaker, it is very challenging for our Government when we are in receipt of aid, we don't have des..?... control of our own money, as such, so we have to make decisions, some of which are very challenging, but we often see the negatives and I don't want to harbour on today the positives, but if you look in the session today the actions that Members have had to take. Land is going to be available and it goes on, we're all aware of that, so, and we do rise to these challenges, it is not a situation of anybody sitting on the fence. I'll leave it as that. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much indeed. Councillor Cyril Leo?

The Hon. Cyril Leo –

Mr Speaker and Honourable Elected Members, let's go back in time and focus our minds on one day in the life of St Helena when all St Helenians at home and throughout the world looked to the future with unprecedented excitement and optimism. On that special April day in 2016, the St Helena Airport, a £285m project, funded by the British Government, was about to accommodate the very first Comair 737 commercial flight. It was intended to be the first of many Comair 737 commercial flights to St Helena. There were numerous St Helenians standing on the hills near the airport, the new airport, we were witnessing?.....start of something that we felt would bring unparalleled opportunities for social and economic development for the people of St Helena. Standing on the hill near to me were two small boys and I captured this special moment in time for them on camera. St Helena, I thought, would

now be able to offer all of her children a future full of opportunities and options. However, here we are, four years on, and air access is still to deliver on the expectation and promise. The economic benefits for the people of St Helena have yet to materialise. We have seen how major game changing development has failed to deliver on expectation and promise for the people of St Helena in the past, let us now focus our attention on the present. Once again, St Helenians have been gifted with another unprecedented opportunity to positively transform the social and economic?.... of our community. The European Commission has provided the people of St Helena with funding for a fibre optic cable that will link St Helena to the wider world. The fibre optic cable is expected to also bring unparalleled opportunities for social and economic development for the people of St Helena. The European Development funding of the cable for St Helena equates to some £14.3m. The St Helena Government has an obligation to ensure that the people of St Helena will be the recipients of maximum benefits from the South Sea Cable. Corporate monopoly in St Helena cannot have the freedom to extract unregulated profits from the fibre optic cable enterprise at the expense of the people of St Helena. St Helena is heavily dependent on financial aid from the United Kingdom. Some four years ago, DfID stopped providing capital programme funding for the island and this will gradually undermine progress largely contributing to the current serious social and economic decline and?.....confidence in the future. We have now secured the financial commitment of £30m from the United Kingdom for capital project funding.?.....will bring some consolation to the community during these current social and economic difficulties. However, more momentum is urgently required from St Helena Government in the delivery of the actual project work. Technical work is ongoing to activate construction work for the Comprehensive Development Areas at Half Tree Hollow, Bottom Woods and Buffers Hill, in particular. The Forestry Section has released some 200 plots of land for Government Landlord housing first time housebuilders and market value plots. All of these various options for construction work will have a positive impact on the private sector, but, here again, momentum is now urgently required to progress the project and?.....economic activity within the community. Capital funding has now been set aside for new sewage systems to serve Half Tree Hollow, Jamestown and Bottom Woods, housing?.....also means even more construction opportunities for the private sector and economic activity within the wider community. Collectively all the ...?.....developments will bring wide ranging employment opportunities. Other positives include the Renewable Energy development that will see the installation of three powerful wind turbines at Deadwood Plain. To inject additional financial energy into St Helena's economy we must also find ways of increasing the customer base and the tax base, constituents who invest in this?.....resources in local business ventures often complain about the limited customer base on the island. An independent economic review is being carried out and its SH 2050 progressive approach will inform St Helenians on the vision for the next thirty years. It is suggested that the population of St Helena should be gradually increased to double by 2050, more details on the 2050 vision will be forthcoming for public information and consultation. Mr Speaker, there are still many obstacles to address and overcome by this Council and there are many constraints that Elected Members have no control over. The cost of fuel within the world markets and the knock-on negative impact it has on local freight charges is one example. The high cost of living on St Helena, mainly due to the ever-increasing freight costs, remains a serious concern. SHG is currently seeking financial assistance from DfID to provide some measure of freight subsidy, the matter must be addressed by St Helena and DfID with greater purpose and urgency.?.....must persistently work to address the social and economic negative impact in St Helena, let us also as a community be inspired and spurred on by the positives. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much indeed. The Honourable Gavin Ellick?

The Hon. Gavin Ellick –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I guess all my colleagues done cover most things, but I'd like to thank our Technical Service team from the ANRC Department who've done great work and I hope they have received their increments that was promised to them, the next one is to the National Trust for completing another successful Wirebird count, even though the Wirebird count down lower and also to our fishing industry, while we got nice fresh fish on the street, it's a pity we don't have nowhere for our fishermen to store, but will become a glut of fish, so I hope that somewhere along the line we can try to help to alleviate those couple months' time when everybody will be saying no more Tuna, we at least will have some on display. Thank you very much.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Any other Member wish to speak? Honourable Mover, do you wish to respond to the debate?

The Hon. Susan O'Bey –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of the Members for their contribution to this afternoon's Adjournment Debate. The topics covered were varied, I can't commit to responding to each and every one of them, but I have tried to summarise what I see to be key issues arising out of this.

I'd first of all like to respond to two points made by Councillor Henry, one in relation to the Social Policy Planning post. Councillor Henry, I can assure you that the Social Impact Assessment is very much featured in the terms of reference for the Social Policy Planner, the post has been advertised on the Government Careers website and I'd just like to read an extract which says "you will have key responsibility for coordinating and developing a policy, you must focus on a social impact assessment of the way the economy is developing and identify key issues of concern", so hopefully going forward we will be able to address all of the concerns that have been raised since 2016. I can also reassure Councillor Henry that I have spoken with at least one of the entities in reference to the procurement processes in relation to the preferred list during this period of economic downturn and I will follow through with the other entities through the SHG representative who sits on those various Boards.

I thought it might be possible if I were to, I usually like to try and route some of the issues into what I see are challenges and opportunities, but before I do that, I would like to say that I found at least two elements today in the House very interesting to hear, so the first one was from the Financial Secretary who gave a very comprehensive update on the Economic Development Investment Programme and I know that that is something which is dear to the hearts of many of us around this table for a number of years where we've not had that injection of funding to allow us to move forward on essential ...?.....projects and I found that overview, Financial Secretary, really useful. I also found Councillor Yon's overview in his exposition, for those of you who work with his Committee has undertaken in recent months really helpful. I think we sometimes find ourselves addressing and reacting to the challenges and in doing so we forget to highlight the really good work which is actually taking place in all Committees and I hope going forward we will be able to bring forward a lot of that because I think people are not always aware of what is actually taking place. We will continue to be beset by challenges, no sooner one challenge is addressed another one is on the doorstep and I want to highlight three this afternoon. One of these is climate change, which the Honourable ...?.....made reference

to, another one is budget settlement and the other one, of course, is the present threat of Covid-19.

In relation to climate change, I think we all share concerns about that and in recent months we've all experienced first-hand the impact of climate change with the current drought ...?....that we've been seeing. The rains that have fallen in the last few days and weeks are more than welcome, but, of course, if those rains are not going to address the issues in going forward in the longer term and I hope that the work that the Water Strategy will uncover in terms of options for increasing resilience in our system, will go some way towards allowing businesses and individuals the comfort of knowing that as we move forward into the future we will have water that is adequate to meet the needs of whatever it is that we want to do, whether it be for normal day to day living or for business purposes, that water is a basic human commodity necessary for human existence, but also very much for development and we need to make sure that that is covered within the Strategy and I'll give my assurance here today that that work will be taken forward.

Budget settlement is very rightly pointed out, the challenge that that presents. Last year, when we were at the end of the Budget Speech, we were looking forward to possibility of developing the Strategy and plans to be able to trigger and unblock a three-year project settlement. Everybody knows that we've had comfort in knowing what resources are likely to be available for a longer period of time, it gives you the confidence that we need in order to be able to plan appropriately. Unfortunately, for various reasons, the UK Government is not able to work with us on that and so we find ourselves in the situation where we have put together, despite the fact that we put together three-year plans and budgets, it's likely that we will get just the one year settlement and, of course, given that St Helena is perhaps a very small cog in a huge machinery of Government in the UK we still at this point, and today is 28th February, we still have not received any indication from the UK Government what the settlement for this next financial year will be. Now that's disappointing, it is disappointing for the general public and it is also disappointing for yourselves and for Officers, particularly Directorates who have spent a huge amount of time during this current financial year to develop and get in place the necessary plans, budgets and evidence necessary in order to be able to support the budget submission. Unfortunately, as I said, we are in receipt of aid, we're also unfortunately part of a wider machinery and with all that is going on in UK at the moment, Brexit, reshuffling of the Cabinet and everything else, it's unfortunate for us that we find ourselves in this position. Going forward though, I see the engagement at the forthcoming Joint Ministerial Council as being absolutely critical and once again I reiterate the message that Dr Essex has said, it is absolutely critical that St Helena is able to take its place at that table during these opportunities and these engagements as an equal player along with other Overseas Territories. We need to set up our stall and the JMC is the ideal opportunity for us to be able to do that, it's the opportunity for you as Elected Members to be able to set out to the UK Government what our plans are for the future of this island. We shouldn't underestimate the importance of being at those events, we have this year two opportunities, we hope, we've got the March delayed or postponed event which should have taken place last November and then, of course, we use our annual Joint Ministerial Council event that we hope will take place as normal towards the end of this calendar year.

Covid-19 or Coronavirus as it is also known, a number of us have spoken about it today and we are all obviously anxious and concerned at the impact that this could have on our small community. I want to reassure people that emergency planning is well underway. We have prioritised this and a number of officers, together with other stakeholders, are working to make sure that we are as prepared as we can possibly be within the resources that we have, so on island we have already got well developed plans and we're continuing to hone those plans so that whatever happens we are as ready as we can possibly be and some of the legislation

changes and amendments that took place today are a part of that work. We continue to have, and we have started, as I repeat, have started and will continue to have dialogue with the UK Government, through Public Health England and through the FCO to highlight the fragility of the island and improving the need for additional resource should Covid-19 present on the island. I was listening to an interesting programme on the BBC this morning and one of the things that was highlighted, that within communities and islands and less well off nations, we ourselves could become a threat to the health of the rest of the world if we are unable to respond to these kinds of threats and shocks and challenges, because if we're not able to contain and react to them in a positive way then we become a liability, if you like, for the health of the rest of the world and this is what we have already seen in some cases, so we will continue to press ahead and to make sure that that is a priority for SHG and the people of St Helena.

I want to just reflect for a minute or two now on opportunities. In this period of economic stagnation it is inevitable that people feel, that people, the negativity, if you like, prevails and can in some cases have a less than desirable impact, if you like, on the way we feel, the way we operate and the way we go about our daily lives, so I want to reiterate that it was encouraging to hear and to note the level of work that is being achieved within the different Council Committees. There are opportunities that we need to be engaging with and to be aware of and I appreciate that when?..... and when you're wondering about where the next pound is going to come from and how you're going to feed bellies, it's sometimes difficult to lift your head and look towards the future and see what it is, but that is, I would say, the role of everybody sitting around this table to do, it is to make sure that we also whilst addressing the immediate needs of the island at the moment, that we continue to have a look to the future and the strategic, the general, that we have to be putting in place and following and having somebody like David ...?..... on island this week I think has been really helpful, it certainly has helped me, it's certainly made me step back a bit and say we need to also look towards the strategic agenda, because it is very easy to get bogged down with everyday issues and, you know, find things that we have to deal with, but I just want to highlight a few of these. The signing of the contract with?....., I don't think we can underestimate by any means the potential that that will bring for St Helena. Now we know that there are challenges, we know that we need to be looking at not just the getting the cable to the island, then what happens when the cable is on island and how to make sure that whatever we roll out is affordable and will enable and not disable development on the island and that is being worked up as we speak in terms of looking at the next engagement that we have with whoever is going to be our telecommunications provider going forward. The signing of the contract, or the agreement with PASH has gone on for a long time and I have recognised that for everybody around this table was beginning to despair of whether it was going to take place, but?.....we are close to getting that agreement and we have to be positive about this and what that will do in terms of reducing the cost eventually of electricity to consumers is actually going to be a game changer for us as well, so basic needs, telecoms, reasonably priced utilities, those are?.....that they are the basic building blocks of any development that we want to do and it is important that we continue to keep our eye on the end goal in terms of what can be achieved, so whilst I appreciate that it is frustrating, it is taking longer than we originally anticipated, I hope that the end is very close now and that in the coming weeks we will be able to announce that that has been sorted and can move forward.

Going on in the background I am aware there's a series of reviews to some key policies including immigration, land and building disposal, land development control, those policies are being continuously reviewed, they are being continuously updated to reflect changing situations and they will continue to be key enablers alongside of the basic building blocks that I just referred to and I think terms of helping us to be able to shape the kind of future for St

Helena that we so richly deserve and ensure that the legacy that we put in place for those children that are still to be born is one that will be enduring.

Political Governance Reform is yet another opportunity and whilst I appreciate that there might be ...?...vigilance about this, the vibes that we're getting is that people feel very strongly that there is a need for us to have the kind of Government arrangements in place that begets a 21st century island and it is important that as we take this work forward that everybody engages with it and that we use this opportunity to get in place a system of governance reform, a system of governance that will allow us to be able to develop in the way that we want to.

We talked earlier about what was SHG doing in terms of preparing for this and one of the things that I can say is that in order to be able to support any new system of political governance we need to also look at how SHG is structured. The current Committee system I think we recognise has its challenges its flaws and we need to look at whatever system or whatever institutional arrangement we put in place that the St Helena Public Service is also reclaimed in order to be able to support that and what will take place during the coming months will be a series of functional reviews which will look exactly at how we perform and how we deliver our services. We recognise, we hear it a lot, I hear it constantly, that SHG is weak at delivering services, SHG does not take into account the needs of the customer. That is true in some areas, it certainly isn't true in all areas, but it certainly is important that we look at how we deliver our services, that in this ever changing environment that we're able to respond in a way that is timely, that fits the needs of whatever it is that we're responding to and that the scarce resources that we have that we are able to utilise these in the best possible way, so, again, that work is starting, it will be led by the HR and OD team and we hope that between April and September that we will be able to analyse all of our functions, identify where there is waste and put in place a strategy to improve how we deliver the work that we need to. Following this and once we understand what the new governance arrangement will be we will then look at what SHG, the Public Service, needs to look at in order to be able to support that reform, so there is an ambitious agenda for us this year, there is a lot that we need to do and we don't have a huge amount of resources to do it, but with the support of everybody and with everybody working together I'm confident that we can achieve this.

And finally, I suppose I'm going to use this as an opportunity just to give a little information as well, about something that I think touched a lot of us in these last two weeks. We have a couple of consultants on island who delivered some exploitation training. Now, exploitation training was delivered, it was to raise awareness of, again, how our young people potentially could be exploited and how important it is for us to be aware of this. This training was delivered to 221 adults, to 250 children, to 40 parents, there were a number of radio broadcasts. So what it did was it highlighted to us the concerns that some parents had in terms of their children and their concerns for the safety of their children. Now, one of the things that the consultant was asked to do was to raise these concerns and to bring them to the attention of everyone who works with children and I think today it is perhaps a very useful vehicle, if you like, to do that. They raised concerns about taxis and the issue of whether their children were safe in using taxis and whether we, as a Government, need to look at introducing regulations to make sure that children, young people, adults, visitors to the island, feel absolutely safe when they are travelling in taxis alone. They raised the issue of the lack of lighting in key areas where children congregate. They pointed out hotspots, if you like, in using?....., the Public Gardens, the Wharf in Jamestown, the Longwood Bus Shelter and Longwood Green, they talked about their concerns about children and their ability to be able to have access to?.... and that they were concerned that we no longer operate the prove it scheme where children were able to, sorry, where licensed premises were able to ask children to demonstrate their age by proving that they really were able to do this. They bemoaned the lack of a Police presence in certain areas, so these are issues that parents are very concerned about. I'm raising them

here, they will be addressed in some shape and form through the Safeguarding Board, the Adult and Children Safeguarding Board, but some of these as well will need to be addressed through your specific Council Committees and it was very encouraging to hear through the EDIP programme that we have purchased or we now have additional lighting and also to hear the work that Councillor Yon referred to his Directorate and the work that is going on there. So, in all of this, I suppose, if I were to sum up, yes, we are going through a period of negativity, we recognise that, and we have to address it, but in doing so we also have to make sure that we keep our eye on the future, the strategic agenda, we only get so few options to do that and that strategic agenda needs to be brought to the attention of the UK Government, they need to understand as well what our plans are, how we intend to go forward and what we intend to do in order to be able to address some of these challenges as well and I know that from conversations that we've had this week that our two representatives, Councillor Thomas and Councillor Green will take this agenda forward when they attend the Joint Ministerial Council here later next month.

And finally, as I said, as we're doing all of this, we also need to make sure that the people that we are really concerned about, which is our youth, those who are young now, those who are still not born, that we don't lose sight of the fact that we need to create a St Helena that they can be proud of and I know that this is also your desire. So, Mr Speaker, as I said earlier, I'd like to thank Members for their contributions and I beg to move.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much indeed, Honourable Chief Secretary. Honourable Members, this concludes our business for today. I now put the question that this Council do adjourn until 27th March 2020.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker –

Honourable Members, I hope you have a great weekend.

Council adjourned until 27th March 2020.