



• Chief Medical Officer/  
Interim Director of Health,  
Community Psychiatric  
Nurse, Locum Laboratory  
Manager/Senior Biomedical  
Scientist, Locum Senior Food  
Microbiologist, and Pharmacist  
introduced to the Committee

• Primary Care Facility at Sundale, Tobacco  
Control Legislation, and Health Promotion  
award among the items discussed

## **PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, 7 OCTOBER 2020**

The monthly meeting of the Public Health Committee (PHC) took place on Wednesday, 7 October 2020.

Chief Medical Officer/Interim Director of Health, Dr Roland Fasol, was introduced to the Committee. In an extensive overview of his background, it was noted that Dr Roland was a qualified Cardiac Surgeon with 20+ years' experience as a Medical Director. He had also been involved in a number of set-up projects throughout his career, which included a Cardiac Centre in Papua New Guinea. Following much discussion, Dr Roland was thanked for an informative overview of his background. The Chairman advised that with a wealth of experience it was anticipated Dr Roland would add much value to and be able to further develop the health service on St Helena. The Committee looked forward to working with Dr Roland for the duration of his six-month contract.

Community Psychiatric Nurse, Kevin Ryder, informed the Committee that he had been a qualified Mental Health Worker for 40+ years, had worked as a Coast Guard, on the Falkland Islands and with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) in the UK. Kevin confirmed having managed both GP Practising Surgeries and Dispensing/Pharmacy services. An overview of his role on St Helena generated much discussion and he was thereafter wished well in his role and thanked for his attendance.

Locum Laboratory Manager/Senior Biomedical Scientist, Geoffrey Day, was welcomed to the meeting. The Committee noted that he had been employed as a Locum by St Helena Government (SHG) on previous occasions and, in light of this, had already met members of the PHC. Geoffrey gave an overview of his work experiences since his last employment on St Helena and advised that the duration of his current contract would coincide with the return of the substantive Senior Biomedical Scientist from overseas. He was wished well in his role.

Following an introduction to the Committee, Locum Senior Food Microbiologist, Abraha Amanuel, gave an overview of his background. He confirmed having studied for his Masters in Microbiology & Infection at the University of Birmingham and has been employed on St Helena for a six-month fixed term contract. On behalf of Committee, Abraha was wished well and thanked for his attendance.

Pharmacist, John Woollacott, was welcomed to the meeting. It was noted that he had been employed by SHG on a previous occasion and, in light of this, had met members of the Committee, albeit in different roles at the time. John informed the Committee that he was extremely pleased to have had an opportunity to return to St Helena, following a period of employment on the Falkland Islands. In an update on the Pharmacy, he advised that there had been a number of challenges associated with stock control. Workload within the Pharmacy had also increased with around 10,000 items being dispensed

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on a monthly basis. John further explained that these issues were compounded by the fact that staff levels within the Pharmacy were well below that as recommended by UK standards. The need for an additional Dispenser was therefore considered important. Following much discussion, John was thanked for his attendance.

Various updates were given under 'matters arising'. In discussing work relating to the proposed Primary Care Facility at Sundale, the Chairman advised that a discussion with His Excellency had highlighted problems within the Island's social care facilities, relating specifically to demand for space. A meeting with both the Health and Children & Adults Social Care Directorates had therefore been considered necessary to determine what could be put in place as a short-term measure.

For the benefit of the Chief Medical Officer/Interim Director of Health, the Chairman gave an overview of the background of discussion(s) with the Government of Mauritius, both prior to, and following the visiting delegation in early 2020. He advised that an agreed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) had not been able to be progressed due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and in light of this, it was anticipated discussion(s) would resume following return to a state of normality.

In an update on Tobacco Control Legislation (Registered Dealers), the Health Promotion & Social Marketing Lead gave an overview of progress to date and advised that all efforts were being made for implementation on 1 January 2020. In discussing this, the Health Promotion & Social Marketing Lead informed Committee that a meeting for holders of Liquor Licences would be hosted by the Police Directorate shortly and used as an opportunity to give an update on Tobacco Control and essentially what this would mean for dealers, moving forward.

The Interim Director of Health, Janet Lawrence, commented on the recent Health Promotion award and advised that the Health Promotion & Social Marketing Lead and her team were to be commended on this achievement. Janet informed the Committee that there had been a number of challenges at the Hospital in recent weeks due specifically to an increase in patient/case numbers. It was therefore considered advantageous to have additional staff in post, recruited as part of the Island's COVID-19 preparedness. In discussing this, Janet commented on her remit to undertake a gap analysis on COVID-19 resources, which had highlighted the need for a COVID-19 Coordinator. She explained that this position would be funded from finances allocated specifically to COVID-19, for a six-month period in the first instance, as this resource might not be required in the long-term.

Janet informed Committee that it had been extremely good to have the Chief Medical Officer/Interim Director of Health in place with a medical background such as his and commented on the Health Directorate as a whole, the teamwork that existed and good work that had been done and the fact that there remained still much to be done, moving forward.

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**SHG  
October 2020**