

ST. HELENA
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

THE PRESIDENT

His Excellency the Governor, Dr Philip Rushbrook

EX-OFFICIO MEMBER

The Honourable Attorney General, Mr Allen Cansick

ELECTED MEMBERS

The Honourable Rosemary June Bargo
The Honourable Gillian Ann Brooks
The Honourable Mark Alan Brooks
The Honourable Ronald Arthur Coleman
The Honourable Jeffrey Robert Ellick
The Honourable Corinda Sebastiana Stuart Essex
The Honourable Martin Dave Henry
The Honourable Robert Charles Midwinter
The Honourable Christine Lilian Scipio
The Honourable Julie Dorne Thomas
The Honourable Karl Gavin Thrower
The Honourable Andrew James Turner

CLERK OF COUNCILS

Mrs Connie Johnson

PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

INAUGURAL MEETING UNDER NEW MINISTERIAL SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT.

Monday, 25th October, 2021

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

ORDER OF THE DAY

- 1. PRAYERS**
(Fr. Alan Williams)

- 2. ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS AND AFFIRMATIONS**

The President –

I invite each Councillor in turn to come to make the Oaths of Allegiance and Affirmation, for affirmation, I will call you out individually.

Oaths taken by -

- Mr Allen Cansick – Attorney General
- The Honourable Rosemary June Bargo
- The Honourable Ronald Arthur Coleman
- The Honourable Jeffrey Robert Ellick
- The Honourable Gillian Ann Brooks
- The Honourable Mark Alan Brooks
- The Honourable Corinda Sebastiana Stuart Essex
- The Honourable Martin Dave Henry
- The Honourable Robert Charles Midwinter
- The Honourable Christine Lilian Scipio
- The Honourable Julie Dorne Thomas
- The Honourable Karl Gavin Thrower
- The Honourable Andrew James Turner

The President –

That concludes the Oaths and Affirmations. The next item of business.

**3. ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT
(His Excellency the Governor)**

Thank you. Acknowledging my commission from Her Majesty the Queen, I welcome Honourable Members, officials and others in attendance at this first Legislative Council of the new term of office. I extend my congratulations on your election and look forward to working with all Councillors. But first, let me take a moment to thank Gillian Francis, Carol George and the many other officials involved in conducting an efficient and well-run General Election. I was delighted at the strong turnout of voters, which was monitored for the first time, albeit remotely, by international observers from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. I look forward to receiving their report shortly.

Today is the dawn of a Ministerial government and I hope the selection of the first Chief Minister will be achieved later in this session. Without exaggeration that moment will be a truly historic one for St Helena. I also take this opportunity to thank warmly the public-spirited members of our community who worked voluntarily in the Governance Commission and later, on the information programme ahead of the Consultative Poll and the more recent, Implementation Committee within the administration. Each worked diligently to define options and prepare workable arrangements for a Ministerial system. Their efforts and fair-minded deliberations were an essential and valuable part of the process that led to Legislative Council requesting the UK to amend the Constitution. Let us see today as the culmination of decades of debate and grasp the opportunity for a more clearly responsible, accountable and timely form of government. Each Elected Member's role, albeit a ministerial one or a representational and scrutiny one, is a fundamental part of a cooperative government. One where differences can be debated, minds are open to alternative views and if a majority decision is made all Councillors can find it in themselves to support the mainstream will of Legislative Council. Pragmatism to overcome differences and acceptance of a majority view are at the heart of a democratic process. Under the ministerial system, the public servants are also an integral part of the government. They provide the advice to Ministers on policies and implement the decisions Ministers take, within the framework of the Constitution, existing legislation and any other binding obligations. It is important each Minister establishes a positive and collaborative working relationship with their respective Portfolio Director and the Chief Secretary. Your success or otherwise is built upon reflecting on their advice and their steadfast execution of your decisions within the resources available. The Ministerial system changes the nature of the role of the Speaker. The way Legislative Council should operate; the creation and conduct of Scrutiny Committees and Question Time; the transformed roles of Ministers and other Councillors, mean the Speaker's function has changed to a different and distinct leadership one. This is necessary to ensure Council business works efficiently, Standing Orders are upheld and the highest ethical standards expected of Elected Members are maintained. I would encourage the new Chief Minister to set out as soon as possible their vision for prosperity and the achievements they seek to deliver in their term of office. This vision is one element of the clarity and the taking of responsibility the general public have asked for. I caution against going backwards by setting up cumbersome ad-hoc committees and working groups or other ways that blur ministerial responsibility and accountability for decision-making. Various serious financial, economic, legal and community issues confront the Island. It is essential they are addressed early in the life of this new Council for the good of St Helena. These issues will become apparent as Ministers and Councillors receive their briefings from Portfolio Directors. The decisions to be made will be difficult and not necessarily popular with everyone but if these are not addressed then the services and prospects for our Island will be affected. As Councillors, it is your role from hereon and throughout the next four years to ensure on behalf

of the people the future prosperity of St Helena can be secured. You carry a weighty burden. In other places I have commented, like previous Governors, that the long-term future for our Island lies in making more use of our own resources and expanding the business sector. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted this over the past 18 months. However, with 97% of our adult population already double vaccinated and booster and youth jabs expected on the 8th November flight, COVID should not be seen as a blanket reason to delay defining how our Island can move its prosperity forward. It is also clear the Island cannot rely on arguing for increased external budget support. The difficult fiscal situation post-COVID in the major economies of the world is putting pressure on public spending and borrowing. St Helena is not immune from these constraints and it will be the responsibility of the Chief Minister, and the wider Legislative Council, to ensure public finance decisions are affordable and create a thriving outlook for the territory. My Office and Her Majesty's Government in the UK stands by to continue to assist the Government of St Helena. That said, I am encouraged to see Councillors here are energised and ready to build a government whose policies genuinely balance the desires of the general public and the essential need to become less reliant on budgetary aid money. You are all now the political government of St Helena, not only for those in our community that voted for you but also for those in our community who didn't vote for you and for those in our community who cannot vote. I wish the Council success as it embarks upon its important business. Thank you.

I invite now the next item of business.

4. ELECTIONS

Election of Speaker

The President –

I invite nominations for the Speaker. Are there any nominations, please? Councillor Scipio?

The Hon. Christine Scipio –

Thank you, Mr President. Mr President, I would like to nominate Mr Cyril Gunnell of Jamestown as Speaker of Legislative Council.

The President –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Is there a seconder?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The President –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Mr Gunnell, do you accept nomination?

Mr Cyril Gunnell –

I accept it.

The President –

Thank you. Are there any other nominations? Councillor Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Mr President, I wish to nominate Mr Cyril Kenneth Leo of Gumwoods for the position of Speaker.

The President –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Is there a seconder?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo –

Thank you, Mr President, I beg to second.

The President –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Mr Leo, do you accept the nomination?

Mr Cyril Leo –

Thank you, Mr President, I accept.

The President –

Thank you. May I invite any other nominations. Please, Councillor Thrower?

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

Mr President, I wish to nominate Anthony Green of St Paul's as Speaker of Legislative Council.

The President –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Is there a seconder?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Thank you, Mr President, I beg to second.

The President –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Mr Green, do you accept the nomination?

Mr Anthony Green –

Mr President, I accept.

The President –

Thank you. That is three nominations so far, are there any other nominations? Please, Councillor Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Mr President, I wish to nominate Mr John Cranfield of Jamestown as Speaker of Legislative Council.

The President –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Is there a seconder? Please, Councillor Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Thank you, Mr President, I beg to second.

The President –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Mr Cranfield, do you accept the nomination?

Mr John Cranfield –

Thank you, Mr President, I accept the nomination.

The President –

Thank you very much. Thank you. May I ask, are there any further nominations? No, I do not see any further nominations being advanced. Right, I see we have more than one person up for election, therefore, I now have to give an opportunity for each to address Council. Each person nominated will have no more than five minutes to speak and will be called in alphabetical order. So, if I have got this correct, Mr Cranfield. Mr Cranfield, would you care to approach the table and you have five minutes or no more than five minutes to explain your interest in becoming Speaker.

Mr John Cranfield –

Thank you, Mr President. Mr President, Honourable Members, and dare I say future colleagues? Many thanks indeed for giving me this opportunity to address you on the matter of my nomination for the election to the post of Speaker of the House. Firstly, I would like to congratulate you on your successful election to the Honourable House of Legislative Council and as this is an historical occasion and because we have moved to a ministerial form of Government I wish you all every success during the tenure of your office for the ensuing four years and I think that you should all be proud to be the first to embark on such a venture.

Honourable Members, the Principle Speaker's office is a high-profile position and undoubtedly requires substantial leadership skills and having particular qualities, all of which I have achieved throughout my professional career in the Public Service. Allow me to expand, Honourable Members. I started my career in 1973 as a Customs Clerk and by 1979 was promoted to Senior Customs Officer and Harbour Master within the then Treasury Department after successfully completing an overseas course in all aspects of Customs procedures in Essex in the United Kingdom. For successfully completing the course I was awarded a Certificate. Being promoted to the post of Information Officer in 1989 in the Office of the Chief Secretary, my responsibilities were for the editing and distribution of the island's weekly newspaper and the efficient and effective operations of the St Helena Radio Station at Pounceys. I then moved to the then Economic and Development Department in 1992 as the Building Inspector and having responsibilities for ensuring the safe erection of all forms of construction in accordance with the Building Regulations and in 1992/93 attended an overseas course on the aspects of building and planning procedures. This was with the John Lang Technology Group in Mill Hill in London. I was awarded a Certificate for my successful participation in the course work. In 2000, I moved to the then Public Works and Services Department as Senior Transport Manager until my retirement from Public Office in 2009. My main responsibilities were for maintaining an efficient and effective transport service to all Government Departments throughout the Public Service. Having served in senior management positions until my retirement, this gave me a wealth of leadership skills and qualities. I wanted to continue to serve the island and so in November 2009 was successfully elected to the prestigious House of Elected Members of Legislative Council. I was appointed Chairman of the Access and Transport Committee, also a member of the Finance Committee, Public Works and Services Committee and the Home and International Committee. It was, indeed, an honour and a pleasure to serve on these all-important committees. For approximately ten years, I served as a Justice of the Peace, however, in accordance with the Island's Constitution, it was necessary for me to resign as a Justice of the Peace thus allowing me to run for the office of Deputy Speaker. Due to the sad passing of Mrs Cathy Hopkins, the then Deputy Speaker in 2015 and after due process, I was duly elected as Deputy Speaker serving in this capacity until Council was dissolved in 2017. The General Election of 2017 found me once again elected to the office

of Deputy Speaker. In 2018, the substantive Speaker vacated his office and following due process I was successful and duly elected to the prestigious office of Speaker, the position I held until the dissolution of Council on 2nd August 2021. Considering these accomplishments and achievements it speaks volumes for my leadership and integrity abilities. I'd like to say when I first became Deputy Speaker, I found it to be a steep learning curve, but by giving my total commitment and dedication soon became conversant with the inner workings of our Constitution, Standing Orders and the Code of Conduct for members of Legislative Council. An exciting new concept is being proposed by the Speaker of the House of Commons and that is the Speakers of the House of Commons and Overseas Territories Conference. As Speaker, I attended the first virtual Speakers teleconference on 14th July 2021, and, Honourable Members, this will present an excellent opportunity for the island to gain some alternative source of funding. As an example, I can confidently inform you all that the Speaker of the House of Commons is genuinely passionate about the financial welfare of the Overseas Territories and this includes all Speakers of the Overseas Territories. The relationship between the Speaker in the House of Commons and the Overseas Territories Speakers is still in its infancy. The shared aims of all parties are that these meetings of Speakers through this conference will help to consolidate, strengthen and enrich all parties no matter how big or small.

I do wish to continue my political career and I will give the same fervency and zeal to becoming an integral part of this Council and its operations. With its longstanding protocols of this Honourable House and its members and having a greater understanding of the importance of having the Legislative House conduct itself in a professional manner and giving support to all to have an equal say. Honourable Members, I care passionately for this island of ours as undoubtedly you do otherwise you would not be seated here today, Honourable Members. I have a happy disposition with an approachable manner and I enjoy interacting with fellow islanders and being a good listener. Responding to the challenges and giving guiding support to Honourable Members will be my mainstay as Honourable Speaker when called upon. To conclude, Honourable Members, again I thank you very much indeed for allowing me the opportunity to address you all, it now begs the question, Honourable Members, are you seeking experience and continuity to assist you in keeping the best interests of the island and its people? If so, Honourable Members, then I'm your man. Thank you very much indeed.

The President –

Thank you, Mr Cranfield. I invite Mr Green to the table, please? You have up to five minutes to present to Members why you should be considered for the position of Speaker.

Mr Anthony Green –

Thank you, Mr President and good morning and congratulations once again, Honourable Members.

I take the rule that how Council conducts its affairs is important for gaining public support and respect. The Speaker has a pivotal role to play in achieving this. I offer a summary of my working career for you to consider what I could bring to the job.

The first twenty-five years of my working career was with SHG. I then progressed through the Civil Service, then I embarked on studying GCE 'O' levels not available during my schooling. Eventually I achieved GCE 'O' levels in English Language, Mathematics, History, Geography and Art. In 1983, I was appointed as Assistant Government Secretary, a job I then did for six years. For approximately three of those six years was spent as Acting Government Secretary, now called the Chief Secretary, to cover leave and other absences of the Government Secretary or when the Governor was away. During acting appointments in Government, I was leader of Government business, both in ExCo and in LegCo. Other key tasks during those years were

Clerk of Councils and Registration and Returning Officer for Elections. In 1986, while working here in the Secretariat, I was appointed as Acting Administrator of Ascension Island for four months. I then spent three years as a Justice of the Peace and a Magistrate both on Ascension Island and here in St Helena. In 1989, I was seconded to Ascension Island as the Administration Officer for Ascension Island Services. On completion of my four years secondment, I resigned from SHG to work as an employee of AIS. AIS was a company funded by the London User Organisations on Ascension responsible for the entire island's infrastructure other than that belonging to the military. This included the island's roads, bungalows, single accommodation, hospital, dental clinic, school, shop and shipping and pierhead operations. During those early years, AIS staff numbered about two hundred. In the 1990s, I obtained a professional Certificate in Management from the Open University. In 1998, I was promoted to the Senior Manager de facto CEO of the Ascension Island Services replacing a BBC World Service employee. I immediately initiated and then embarked with my Managers on seeking ISO 9000 for the company. ISO 9000 is an internationally recognised management system. We received this accreditation within eighteen months. In 2001, AIS was divided into three separate companies and I became the CEO of part which became the Ascension Island Works and Services Agency. In 2004, when AIG took over the role as managing the infrastructure and services, I took redundancy and returned home. In 2005, I was recruited by SHG to be the Constitutional Change Coordinator for six months. After that, I went to the St Helena Development Agency as their Managing Director. In 2006 to 2008, I was the CEO of Solomons. After those two years I retired and was elected to Legislative Council in 2008. During my years on Council, have served on the Executive Council and perhaps all the various Committees. In 2013, had to leave Legislative Council for the UK as family there needed urgent support. Since returning from UK, have spent about three years as a Lay Advocate, in 2015 was a member of the Financial Services Regulatory Authority, re-elected to Legislative Council in 2017 and served on ExCo these past four years and also Chairman of SCDC. I'd like to think I'm reasonably familiar with the LegCo procedures, Standing Orders and Code of Conduct being closely involved in the build-up to the ministerial government. As to the role of the Speaker, I feel that it least has two key features, one of impartiality and secondly one of authority, applying the rules consistently and fairly. It would be an honour and privilege to serve as your Speaker.

The President –

Thank you, Mr Green. I invite Mr Gunnell to come to the table and present yourself for consideration for Speaker and you may speak for no more than five minutes. Thank you.

Mr Cyril Gunnell –

Thank you, Mr President and Honourable Members, thank you for allowing me to present myself as a candidate for the vacant position of Speaker and Deputy Speaker.

Firstly, Honourable Members, I congratulate you on becoming members of this new Legislative Council under the ministerial form of government and historic moment.

The Speaker is responsible for enforcing the rules of Legislative Council, presiding over the conduct of House business and maintaining order and decorum, ensures that the rules of the House for conducting its business are followed and that all members of the House have an equal opportunity to take part in debates. Because it is essential for the Speaker to be seen to be above party politics, the Speaker does not take part in debates or vote unless there is a tie. The Speaker needs to be sympathetic, firm, but fair and honest at all times with the ability to remain above the fray in the House, upholding the values enshrined in the Constitution which have been approved by Parliament. A broad range of skills and personal qualities are required. For years I have been interested in St Helena's governance and proceedings at Council

meetings. You may have read my report entitled “St Helena – Evolving Governments – Procedures at Formal Meetings”. Preparing for this meeting, I refamiliarised myself with Standing Orders, Code of Conduct, the Constitution and read the amendment to the Constitution.

I was first elected to Council in 1991 and came off in 2013. I believe politics is everybody’s business, I try and keep abreast of happenings in the world and especially St Helena where mostly this is by reading local newspapers, Press Releases, listening intently to formal LegCo proceedings and attending as many open agenda meetings that I can. My Council experience spanned many years, including Executive Council for two terms, chairing Employment and Social Services and Health and Social Welfare Committees. I also served on various other Council and ad hoc Committees. Working together brings rewards. I can recall successful interventions in the House where this has benefitted island development. For example, instigating a review of the Constitution, ensuring the SHG workforce became fully established so that all staff is entitled to a pension and reviewing the benefits system where hard working people for the first time in their lives could receive a pension for years worked, instead of having to rely on means tested benefits. Council experience also included representing St Helena at various CPA Conferences; the Millennium Development Goals Conference and leading a delegation to the Bon Aire Conference for discussions on EU funding. Along with the late Cathy Hopkins, we both were part of the Working Group amending the Constitution. I visited the British Virgin Islands to observe ministerial governance in that territory and was able to also compare the capacity of our Speaker’s Office with that of the BVI.

In civil society, among other things, I was part of the Citizenship Commission campaigning for restoration of British Citizenship. The preamble to the Constitution also came from us on behalf of the rights and aspirations of the people and I am a member of the Chamber of Commerce.

My previous work record includes Fire Inspector and Medical Assistant for Pan American on Ascension, in the UK I was an Accounts Clerk for B H Blackwell and following a period of Flight Operations Clerk at CSE Aviation at Oxford Airport was promoted to Progress Control Manager. This was a senior management position. In St Helena, I held various positions, including Income Tax Officer, Social Worker, Home Help Supervisor, Environmental Assistant, Radio News Editor and was the first Investigations Officer following a complete review of the Benefits System. Some were leadership positions. Currently I am a freelance journalist and for the last five years chaired the Public Accounts Committee scrutinising financial statements, following the public pound, making recommendations for the Legislative Council to consider for holding Government to account.

Honourable Members, I am a passionate person, very passionate about our island, I want the very best for our people and I know you want the same. Of course, there are challenges to address and I believe you will collectively do all possible to overcome them. I would like in some way to be a part of that, even if only by making myself available with a sympathetic ear to discuss some point you thought I could help with, I am a good listener and very approachable. For me, it has been a long journey, but, Honourable Members, I am so very grateful for all the wide-ranging experiences gathered working alongside the Government and Council and learning something from everyone I meet, valuable experiences that would assist me greatly in the role of Speaker. Under this ministerial system of government where the role of Speaker has changed, having a competent Speaker is imperative. I believe I can be that individual and would uphold the Speaker’s office with integrity and greatest respect. Thank you for listening.

The President –

Thank you, Mr Gunnell. May I invite the fourth candidate, Mr Leo, to come to the table and present to the Councillors your reasons for wishing to become Speaker. Please speak for no more than five minutes.

Mr Cyril Leo –

Thank you, Mr President. Honourable Members, I will take this opportunity to congratulate you all on being elected to serve the people of St Helena on Legislative Council. My political thinking and journey really started on Ascension Island. At the time there was no democracy on Ascension and the conditions of service for St Helenians employed on Ascension needed improving. I represented staff of the BBC Atlantic Relay Station on what was then the Administrator's Advisory Forum. In the absence of democracy on Ascension, the Forum basically allowed members of the public to have a voice in island affairs. Democracy or elected representation was introduced on Ascension Island in 2002. My experience of serving the people of Ascension as an elected representative on the Ascension Island Council helped to further enhance my political knowledge and my understanding of the working mechanisms of local government and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

On returning home in July 2017, it was a special honour to have had the electorate of St Helena give me the opportunity to apply my political experience and knowledge in the service of the people of St Helena. Serving the island community on Legislative Council and contributing to the ongoing development of St Helena had been an objective of mine for many years. In November 2017, I attended the five-day Westminster seminar on Parliamentary Practice and Procedure. I am satisfied that I served the island with committed dedication and loyalty throughout the last four years. I started taking a closer interest in the role of the Speaker when the Police was instructed to investigate the people's elected representatives for apparently sharing confidential details with constituents. Such action, through my eyes, was seen as yet another clear example of how democracy, openness and transparency were being suppressed by unelected powers within local government. The extensive Police investigation found all twelve elected members/representatives not guilty. I strongly believe that we just cannot have a continuation of such negative traits being applied directly or indirectly against the legitimate efforts of the people's elected representatives by unelected public servants who hold positions of authority. Whilst maintaining order and impartiality, as Speaker, I will ensure that the legitimate needs, rights and obligations of elected representatives are defended as you work in the very best interests of the people of St Helena. I believe that a new approach is required within the new system of governance to determine the fine lines between openness, confidentiality, sensitive information and transparency. St Helena has a fledgling democracy. Honourable Members, you have an unprecedented opportunity to encourage local democracy to grow and to inspire public confidence in local government. Through the office of Speaker, I will do my utmost to support your efforts to further develop and enhance democratic procedures and processes in local government. My wife and I have three children and six grandchildren. Few things give me more pleasure and satisfaction than to see a child, any child, develop and strive to reach his or her full potential. The children of St Helena can be likened to uncut diamonds. In addition to the core responsibilities of the Speaker, I will do whatever I can to help encourage and inspire interested children strive to become St Helena's future potential leaders. Thank you, Honourable Members.

The President –

Thank you, Mr Gunnell, Mr Leo, sorry, Mr Leo.

Mr Cyril Leo –

That's okay.

The President –

Too many Cyril's here. You're to return to your seat. Thank you. Members, we have four candidates for election, we need to have a majority decision of the elected members to declare a nominee elected as Speaker. Voting will be carried out in secret and you may vote for only one person. Once you've made your mark in the box on the paper that the Clerk will give you, the paper should be folded and the Clerk will collect it from you.

If you've completed your ballots then the Clerk will collect them.

Whilst the Clerk is counting the votes, I will just remind you that if one of the candidates gets seven votes they are elected as Speaker. If candidates get less than seven votes, then the candidate with the lowest number of votes will drop out and there will be a second ballot.

The Clerk has just corrected the information I gave you previously. The requirements are that the candidate who got the most votes, if there is a clear majority of the votes handed out would be appointed, is that correct? It's the majority of all elected, then that's not a majority we need seven for a majority. Check with the Attorney General.

Yes, just checked that with the Attorney General, we have the following votes and we do need a majority of all Councillors, which is seven, is the minimum majority.

Mr Cranfield	-	2 votes
Mr Green	-	3 votes
Mr Gunnell	-	5 votes
Mr Leo	-	2 votes

This means there is no overall majority of all the Councillors so Mr Cranfield and Mr Leo will drop out and there will be a second ballot between Mr Green and Mr Gunnell. Another set of papers, voting papers will be issued to you.

There will be a short break while I find my Clerk.

Mr Green and Mr Gunnell, the Clerk will issue the ballot papers for you now. If you can put one mark against the candidate you choose, fold the paper and hand it back to the Clerk when she comes around again. As I said before, there needs to be a majority of all Councillors, the minimum number is seven votes for one candidate. If there's a tie vote, 6/6, then proceedings will be adjourned for twenty-four hours.

The result. If I can read out, Honourable Members, the number of ballots cast for each candidate =

Mr Green	-	5 votes
Mr Gunnell	-	7 votes

Therefore, I declare Mr Gunnell has been duly elected as the Honourable Speaker of this Council and I congratulate Mr Gunnell.

(Applause)

I now wish to briefly adjourn Council whilst the Speaker takes the prescribed Oath of Affirmations and puts on the robe to assume the chair, so please don't leave the Chamber because I think that's quite a short activity. Thank you.

Meeting Adjourned.

Meeting Resumed.

FORMAL ENTRY OF THE PRESIDENT

The Speaker (The Honourable Cyril Gunnell) –

Before I call the Elections, I would like first of all to address you for a minute or so. First of all, I want to say that I am deeply touched by the trust that you, Honourable Members, have placed in me by electing me as your Speaker, showing the depth of confidence that you have in me to manage the affairs of this Honourable House. I want you, Honourable Members, to know that I sincerely value the respect that you have given to me and I will strive to perform to the best of my ability the task that you have entrusted to me. Honourable Members, I will carry out my duties to the very best of my ability, assisting you as best I can when requested and sharing with you any knowledge from my long-term political experiences, subject, of course, to being able to at the same time to maintain my impartiality as is expected of this honourable office.

Honourable Members will know the main work of this Council is to pass legislation that will benefit the island. I know that Honourable Members will consider and find ways in which they can improve the consultation process before bringing legislation to this House. I applaud and encourage this process as it is important to know what impact, if any, proposed legislation might have on the various members of the community. As a new Council, we should not forget the work of past Councillors in laying the foundations on which we can now build and on your behalf, I openly thank them. In moving forward, I know we will all value and adhere to the guidance of our Code of Conduct, our Standing Orders and our Constitution for it is these tools that will unite us in helping to build a peaceful, safe and prosperous St Helena. I now wish all Honourable Members well in their work together and call on our Clerk of Councils, who I warmly welcome to this Council, to call the next item of business. Clerk of Councils?

His Excellency the Governor (Dr Philip Rushbrook) –

I will leave the House in the capable hands of Mr Speaker. I want to confirm for the record that the Oath of Allegiance and the Oath of Office was taken before Her Majesty the Queen with witnesses in my room. I wish the Speaker every success in the coming period and as I discussed with the Speaker before he came through, there will be an adjournment for fifteen minutes whilst he has a briefing from the Attorney General and I leave you. Mr Speaker, congratulations and good fortune.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Your Excellency, and Honourable Members, please remain standing whilst His Excellency leaves the room.

So now a briefing I understand with the Attorney General. Thank you.

Council adjourned.

Council resumed.

FORMAL ENTRY OF THE PRESIDENT

Elections Resumed.

Election of Deputy Speaker

The Speaker –

Election of Deputy Speaker. I now call for nominations. The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I wish to propose Mrs Maureen Thompson of Half Tree Hollow for the position of Deputy Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Is there a seconder? Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Mrs Thompson, do you accept?

Mrs Maureen Thompson –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I accept.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Are there any other nominations, please? Honourable Jeffrey Ellick?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I wish to nominate Catherine Elizabeth Cranfield of St Paul's as Deputy Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Is there a seconder? Honourable Christine Scipio?

The Hon. Christine Scipio –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Mrs Cranfield, do you accept the nomination?

Mrs Catherine Cranfield –

Mr President, I accept.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. So, we have two members, oh sorry, yes, I need to ask if there are any more. Are there any other nominations for Deputy Speaker? Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I wish to nominate Mr James Kellett of Alarm Forest for the post of Deputy Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much and is there a seconder to the proposal?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Mr Kellett, do you accept nomination?

Mr James Kellett –

Mr Speaker, I accept. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. So, are there any other nominations for Deputy Speaker? No? So, Honourable Members, we have three members up for election and I have to give them an opportunity to speak to you. They will have no more than five minutes to speak to you and they will be called in alphabetical order, so first of all, Mrs Maureen Thompson. No, hang on a sec, can't read my own writing or rather my Clerk's writing at the moment. Mrs Cathy Cranfield, please come to the table.

Mrs Cathy Cranfield –

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, thank you for this opportunity to address you on my nomination for Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker is a non-voting member of Legislative Council. They assist the Speaker in undertaking their functions and performs the role of Speaker whenever the Speaker is absent, has a conflict of interest or if a specific function is delegated to the Deputy Speaker. The Deputy Speaker's responsibility is also to investigate complaints addressed to the Speaker from Honourable members or members of the public.

The Deputy Speaker's role requires someone who is organised with good managerial, communication and leadership skills. During my long and diverse career with the public service, I have progressively been able to develop these skills and was fortunate to be given the opportunity to do so in a number of areas throughout the public service, both on St Helena and Ascension Island.

My career began as a trainee clerk in the Police Department back in 1977. I gained clerical experience and worked my way up the career ladder and in 1984 was promoted to Executive Officer in the Public Health department and spent seven years managing the administration team providing support to the Senior Medical Officer and the heads of sections, Sundale (mental health), Barn view (people with disabilities), Environmental Health and Community Nursing Officers. In addition, providing assistance to the medical referrals who were sent to Frenchay Hospital in Bristol, UK and performing the duties of Secretary to the Public Health Committee. In those days, building plans were considered and approved by the Public Health Committee. I was responsible for conveying the decisions made by the Committee back to the applicants. I also acted as Senior Executive Officer when the post became vacant for a short period and had to prepare the budget for the whole of the Health Department.

In 1991, I was successful in securing promotion to the position of Internal Audit Manager in the Audit Department, leading a team of four internal audit officers reviewing governments systems and procedures. I remained there until 1996 when I was promoted to Senior Customs

Officer/Harbour Master. During that time, I was responsible for running the section with a team of three full time customs officers who were responsible for completing assessments on the merchant's customs entries that were all done manually, no electronic system, ensuring that the correct import duty was collected. It was a tedious task but one that had to be done. There was a deputy Harbour master who was responsible for taking care of the wharf, inspecting and licensing boats and ensuring the wharf was kept clean and steps free of algae. There were also a number of part time customs officers who assisted with baggage clearance during the RMS St Helena calls. During my time as Senior Customs officer, an overseas consultant was engaged to train and modernise the section during which time I was trained in how to carry out investigations. I also received 12 weeks work experience in Liverpool under the guidance of the Consultant.

In 2001, I was seconded to the office of Ascension Island's Administrator providing administrative support to the Administrator in his role as head of Ascension Island and managing the small team for day to day operations. The position also meant I was appointed Clerk of the Court during which time I was able to receive legal training from a UK District Judge along with the JP's and Lay Advocates.

In 2002, Ascension Island was to undergo drastic change with the introduction of taxation for the first time in its history. Using my knowledge and experience gained in St Helena, I provided advice and support for some of the new systems and procedures, for example, customs and tax that had to be implemented for the establishment of the new Ascension Island Government in April 2002.

I also assisted with the drafting of the Customs legislation and the restructuring of Ascension Island Services, which then became an Agency of the Ascension Island Government. I was appointed acting Administrator of Ascension Island on three occasions. regularly liaising with the Desk Officer in the FCO and other local Heads of Organisations. The position called for a diplomatic relationship with the Heads of Organisations.

With a small tax base, the government faced financial difficulties in 2009/10 and had to downsize which saw the Agency closed and some staff and services brought over into government, difficult and unsettling times for staff. My own job as Administration and Personal Manager was made redundant and I was offered the position of Projects Team Leader during which time I studied Project Management and in 2011 qualified with a Diploma in Project Management.

I fully believe in democracy, so much so that in 2011 when it appeared Ascension would not have an Island Council I agreed to be nominated. Needless to say, it took me a lot of courage since defeat can be mortifying in such a small community. However, on being elected I found it to be challenging and rewarding. Being an employee of the government and a Councillor meant I had to exercise discipline to separate my job from my council role. One of the highlights of my tenure was when I attended the Joint Ministerial Council in London. which was a real eye opener, meeting officials with whom I could compare and discuss similar situations.

I continued to work for the Ascension Island government and in 2013 I was given the opportunity to do an interesting online course called Green Diplomacy, which covered the implications of climate change, people displacement and deterioration of agricultural land, to name but a few modules. In 2014, I decided to take up employment with the St Helena Government as Procurement Manager, however, due to ill health and developing a disability I wasn't able to continue. My determination not to let my inability get in the way of me continuing to have a purpose in life, I applied and was successful for a position of Human Rights Commissioner in 2017, where I remain today as Deputy Chair.

Working for Human Rights is very rewarding, ensuring our people's rights enshrined in Part 2 of our Constitution and the Conventions extended to St Helena are upheld. The role allows me to be flexible, being able to work from home as and when I needed to. My work involves dealing with clients issues and carrying out investigations. for example, the investigation into the prison conditions in 2019.

There is much work to be done to develop St Helena to become an inclusive society with equal opportunities for all, leaving no one behind. Disabled access to government buildings.....

The Speaker –

Mrs Cranfield, sorry to interrupt your flow, but you have now spoken for five minutes, so if you can, sort of, quickly come to a conclusion. Thank you.

Mrs Cathy Cranfield –

Mr Speaker, to get to the Council Chamber this morning, I had to be carried up in my wheelchair, not something that I take pleasure in. I daresay having a person with a disability as Deputy Speaker would portray a strong image that this new council is serious about making a start on creating a more inclusive society to become a norm, removing all forms of discrimination and enabling people with disabilities, or should we call it '*people with different abilities*' to participate fully in society.

I have been volunteering as the Chair of the St Helena Disabled Persons Aid Society for the past three years, where I remain today.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, having given you an insight into my working life, my full commitment to any position that I was appointed to or undertook, gave me an opportunity for a very diverse career. I have held many senior positions that required strong leadership, managerial, organizational and communication skills. I hope this is enough to assure Honourable members I am very suitable to undertake the role of Deputy Speaker.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much, Mrs Cranfield. Right, we now call on Mr James Kellett to come to the table. Mr Kellett, in five minutes, could you tell us why you ought to be the Deputy Speaker?

Mr James Kellett –

Thank you, Mr Speaker and congratulations on your appointment.

The Speaker –

Thank you.

Mr James Kellett –

Mr Speaker, elected members, those present and those listening to this broadcast, I am pleased to come before you today to present myself as a candidate for the role of Deputy Speaker. The roles of both the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker are crucial to the processes and procedures needed to put into effect the values, ideals and requirements described within our Constitution. Accordingly, I have put myself forward for the role of Deputy Speaker to do my duty as a citizen of this island by bring involved in and supportive of the democratic purposes and outcomes to which we all aspire. I am passionate about the future of St Helena because my family and I have a stake in it and it is this passion that leads me to present myself as a candidate. To summarise, the Deputy Speaker is required to ensure meetings of the Council are conducted in compliance with the Constitution and the Standing Orders, ensure petitions, questions, motions, debates and voting are conducted fairly and transparently with probity and

with respect, ensure that the processes and administration of the meetings are conducted in a democratic, fair and equitable manner through maintaining good working relationships with all stakeholders and thus give assurance to citizens that their views have been fairly represented and to ensure all members abide by the Code of Conduct and to investigate any instances or allegations where members may have fallen short of the requirements laid out in that Code, and, indeed, as Deputy Speaker, to demonstrate their own adherence to that Code of Conduct. And finally, the role requires good two-way communication and negotiation skills to ensure that once issues have been debated and views have been given that the Legislative Council then speaks as one clear voice. So, Mr Speaker, I feel that I have the necessary skills and experience to fulfil the role and responsibility of the Deputy Speaker as follows: I currently work in the aviation industry which is governed by detailed and complex international rules and regulations. It is my role to monitor and maintain compliance with those rules and regulations to keep abreast of changes to them and to understand their effect on aviation operations. I believe that these skills are transferable to the role of Deputy Speaker in so far as ensuring compliance with those rules and regulations of the Council. I possess great attention to detail. This is a crucial element to the maintenance of safety at the airport and to the understanding of aviation law. Similarly, attention to detail and a sound knowledge of the Standing Orders is important for the Deputy Speaker role to enable them to support the processes of the Legislative Council. Likewise, I have followed with considerable interest and understanding the debates and decisions made by previous Councils and thus preparing me for debates and decisions to be conducted and made in this Council. I also work with integrity and honesty, supporting all those with whom I work, treating them in a fair and open manner regardless of their position within my organisation. My integrity has and is core to my working life because without it you lose the trust and confidence of those around you. I am patient, good humoured and yet assertive when required. Again, these attributes are crucial to the role of Deputy Speaker. I'm also charged with conducting investigations at the airport and am therefore well versed in the need to conduct them in a sensible but authoritative manner to ensure conclusions are drawn and lessons are learned and given that the Deputy Speaker is usually tasked with conducting investigations involved in the Code of Conduct, my experience stands me in good stead. I'm also a good listener and communicator, I am the lead person at the airport for communication and stakeholder engagement. This requires a good understanding of one's audience and to tailor what is being communicated in an understandable manner, and, again, communication is key to the Deputy Speaker role. I have held middle and senior management positions throughout my career, both on and off island and I'm only one of thirty-four people in the world to have achieved the 'ACI ICAO' Agency Airport Safety Accreditation.

Away from work, I am part of the community, supporting it where I can. I've been a Lay Minister in the Anglican Church for a number of years and have therefore experience of serving and communicating a diverse and enquiring community. I can also demonstrate trustworthiness and neutrality, I have no affiliations with Council Members, so you can be assured that I'm not at the mercy of undue influence, bias or favoritism and although I may not have direct experience of the Deputy Speaker role it is clear that the electorate has voted for change. This would indicate the desire for a forum to see a new invigorated system with new invigorating Councillors and we have just elected a new Speaker and as such I would suggest that perhaps a fresh face is also required for the position of Deputy Speaker.

So, in conclusion, Mr Speaker, I feel that I have the necessary skills and experience to conduct the role of Deputy Speaker in a fair, competent, intelligent and supportive manner. I am, as I say, passionate about my personal responsibility in bringing about a better future for the island. This election was the first time I was able to vote on island and I was excited to do so, to have my say and to have my voice heard in respect of the future of the island has been worth the wait, so the role of Deputy Speaker would significantly build upon that voting privilege and

permit me to give something back in return, namely to assist with the continued implementation and support of our Constitution and to steadfastly serve the Legislative Council. Finally, I would like to thank Honourable Members Robert Midwinter and Gillian Brooks for proposing and seconding my nomination for the role and I would sincerely wish to repay their trust and confidence in me of fulfilling the role with honesty, demonstrating strong leadership, accountability, selflessness, objectivity, openness and integrity. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Mr Kellett. So, we've now heard from Mrs Cranfield and Mr Kellett, could Mrs Thompson now come to the table, please?

Mrs Maureen Thompson –

Good afternoon, Mr President, Honourable Members. Firstly, may I take this opportunity to congratulate you all on being elected to Legislative Council as you have joined the Council when once again history is being made for our island with the new system of government.

For those of you who don't know me or anything about me, my name is Maureen Thompson, I'm married to Leon and I reside at Half Tree Hollow. Having left school at the age of 15 years, I worked in retail for four years until I joined the St Helena Police Force where I served for almost ten years reaching the rank of Police Inspector. During my time on the Police, I was appointed a Public Prosecutor and on one occasion Assistant Superintendent of Police. I also had the opportunity to attend three training courses in the United Kingdom. I then left St Helena for United Kingdom where I lived for thirty-two years. Whilst in the UK, I worked in security as a Loss Prevention Officer for about twenty-one and a half years and needless to say I met people from all walks of life and it also gave me an opportunity to work with the Police. However, the UK Government then changed the law with regards to security in retail stores which meant that my contract was to be outsourced. My decision was to remain with Marks and Spencer so I secured a position within the Store's Finance Office where I worked for ten years before I returned home to St Helena. After being home for five years, in March 2019, I was successful in being appointed Deputy Speaker, a post I held for the past two and a half years. I received no formal training for this position so it was a steep learning curve, but with determination and commitment I soon became familiar with the inner workings of the Constitution, Standing Orders and the Code of Conduct and was well aware that I would have to be independent and impartial. It is true to say that I have been committed and dedicated to this role during my time as Deputy Speaker and thoroughly enjoyed my short term in office. As Deputy Speaker, it is my role to assist the Speaker with discharging of his duties to be prepared, if necessary, to be able to take on the responsibility of the Speaker in his absence. This I have done when the opportunity arose from August to December last year. The Deputy Speaker may attend, but must not take part in any sittings of Legislative Council where the Speaker presides.

For the past year or so, I have represented the Speaker's Office on three different working groups, the Drafting Group, Progress Committee and the Governance Reform Implementation Group working tirelessly looking at new ways of modernizing structures for the new governance. This involved discussions on the processes leading up to the consultative poll and discussions around the Constitution amendments, ministerial code, post-election representation areas, question time, select committees, election monitoring and induction training and not forgetting the re-drafting of Standing Orders and the Code of Conduct. I also liaised with the CPA via e-mail and teleconferences and spent numerous hours doing research online. The Deputy Speaker also has the important role, delegated by the Speaker, to be Chairperson of the Investigation Commission to deal with complaints against members of the Legislative Council. I feel I have gained a lot of experience during my last term of Council to hold me in good stead

for the future. The Deputy Speaker also automatically becomes a member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. There is little doubt that the next four years are going to be tough for you all as leaders of our community and if I am fortunate enough to be re-elected, I will be fully committed and do all in my power to serve you well. I am honest, conscientious and trustworthy and throughout my working career I've always been a team player and together we can work to achieve what is best for the future of our island.

Mr President, Honourable Members, thank you for this opportunity to present myself today as a candidate for the post of Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Council. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Mrs Thompson. Well, Honourable Members, we have three members up for election and as you know we need to have a majority vote to be able to declare the nominee elected as the Deputy Speaker. I will ask the Clerk now to issue out the ballot papers, it's done in secret, you may vote for one person only. Once you have made your mark in the box, then you fold your paper, as we normally do, and the Clerk will then come around and collect it from you again. Clerk?

Okay, the result, Honourable Members.

Mrs Cranfield	-	5 votes
Mr Kellett	-	5 votes
Mrs Thompson	-	2 votes

So, there were more than two candidates and none of them received the votes of a majority of all the elected members. The candidate with the lowest number of votes shall be deemed eliminated and a fresh ballot paper shall be taken in which the remaining candidates shall be the only candidates, but the candidates shall not have a fresh opportunity to address the Council. If the votes are equally divided, the President shall adjourn the item of business until the next day and on that day conduct a fresh election from the beginning. If an election under paragraph 2 above the votes are again equally divided, the President shall declare that the Council has failed to elect a Deputy Speaker. We may not come to that, but Mrs Cranfield you were nominated so we now have to go through the process again and I need to, we need to get some more papers unfortunately.

Okay, so ballot papers are available, extra ballot papers are available and are now being passed around to all of the members.

Ballot papers have been collected and the Clerk will open them up and we will see what the result is.

Thank you, Clerk, thank you, Members. We do have a result.

Cathy Cranfield	-	7 votes
James Kellett	-	5 votes

(Applause)

So, Mrs Cranfield, I declare you Deputy Speaker. And normally we would have...take the prescribed oaths and affirmations at this point, but we will do that later. So, the next item please, Clerk?

Election of Chief Minister

The Speaker –

So, I now call for nominations for Chief Minister. Honourable Andrew Turner?

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I wish to nominate Julie Thomas of Gordon's Post to be the Chief Minister.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Is there a seconder? Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I wish to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Are there any other nominations for Chief Minister? There are no other nominations as I can see for Chief Minister. Thank you, Honourable Members. Honourable Julie Thomas, do you accept the nomination?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

Mr Speaker, I accept this nomination.

The Speaker –

Thank you. And as you know there are no other nominations, so, Honourable Members, we have.....Yeah, I put the question, sorry, I do beg your pardon, I put the question that Honourable Julie Thomas can be declared Chief Minister.

Question that the Honourable Julie Thomas be declared Chief Minister, put and agreed to.

(Applause)

The Speaker –

I'm not certain if you want to say anything at this time, otherwise we will adjourn for lunch and affirmations and things can take place at a later date.

The Hon. Julie Thomas (Chief Minister) –

Well, I'd just like to say a short thank you to all my team here and the new Council and I will address again in the Adjournment Debate. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much, Mrs Thomas.

Council Adjourned.

Council Resumed.

5.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

The Speaker –

After the Adjournment Debate, the Press Office has asked to have some photographs taken and so if you don't mind staying around for that to happen down on the steps. Thank you.

The Hon. Christine Scipio –

Excuse me, Mr Speaker, may I rise to speak?

The Speaker –

Please do so, Honourable Christine Scipio.

The Hon. Christine Scipio –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I do recognize that the Press Office would like to take a photograph and that all Members are aware of that, but what I've just observed, Mr Speaker, that the Deputy Speaker isn't here, will she be present for this photograph?

The Speaker –

The Deputy Speaker isn't here, as you so rightly point out, I've given her permission not to be here.

The Hon. Christine Scipio –

So, is there any possibility, Mr Speaker, to delay the photograph because I think it is important that all Members of Legislative Council is present when a photograph is taken? Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

That's a very valid point. What say all of you? Yes, so the consensus is that we should have everybody present, which is proper, and so we will delay the photographs, Press Office, until such time. Thanks very much.

So, Adjournment Debate then. The Honourable Attorney General?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

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

The Speaker –

Thank you. Is there a seconder?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo –

Mr Speaker, I second it.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much indeed. The Motion is that the House do now adjourn sine die. Honourable Members may be able to speak for up to ten minutes, so I call on the first person to want to do that. Honourable Julie Thomas?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Today is a momentous day as we have now been officially sworn in as the newly elected Council for St Helena; and this has all come about because of you, the people of St Helena. You, took it upon yourselves to use your democratic right and chose the twelve of us present here today, for which I am extremely grateful. It is also fitting that I

acknowledge those of you who were not eligible to vote, but gave me your undeniable support. I take this opportunity to thank you all, your words of encouragement have given me purpose and makes me incredibly proud to be on this new, yet challenging journey, representing you. Since being elected into our new roles, we have commenced an intense, yet meaningful induction programme. Last week we had the pleasure of receiving virtual training from the Civil Service College, we also met with all five Portfolio Directors and their Senior Management teams who gave us an overview of their duties along with having introductory discussions with other key members within St Helena Government. I thank you all for the time you granted us, providing advice and guidance to enable us to undertake our roles as effectively as possible and giving us an insight into your roles and responsibilities. I look forward to our working relationship flourishing as we progress.

I now turn my attention to my Honourable Colleagues, our team, who just a few moments ago elected me to undertake the role of Chief Minister. It is indeed an honour and a privilege to have been chosen and I thank you all for bestowing your trust in me to undertake such a pivotal and leading role; however, it is important that I declare, that I will only be as strong as my team. We have much work to do, and I believe we are a strong team with diverse skills and experiences that are necessary if we are to take our island forward. We need to remain focused and work diligently to improve and develop good governance. Hence, it is important that we be resourceful during these challenging times, and be forever mindful of our limitations to ensure that decisions taken are indeed realistic, affordable and achievable. Implementing good planning and communicative initiatives must be at the heart of our work ethic if we are to achieve our progress.

This journey is not going to be easy, it will take hard work, fortitude, relentless energy and resilience, but I am confident that we can achieve an improved St Helena for all if we are prepared to work together for the greater good. This will most certainly involve this Council but it will require the collaboration and endorsement from all of us that make up the community of St Helena. We all have an important role to play. Let's make a difference together - It's our time! Thank you. Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Mrs Thomas, and, of course, everyone has the right to speak for up to ten minutes, so I call on the next person who wants to speak. Councillor Jeffrey Ellick.

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I rise in support of the adjournment. Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to formally congratulate my colleagues on their election to Legislative Council, including you, Mr Speaker and the Deputy Speaker, to my Honourable Friend, the newly-elected Chief Minister, I wish you all the best as you take the helm and lead this team and St Helena to new horizons under a different political system. To all who partook in the General Election, I wish to say well done to all candidates for stepping up and giving the electorate a wide range of choices. For those who administered the processes and to the people of St Helena who supported and came out to vote, I am really proud of you for coming out, in what I believe was a record turnout, and making your voice heard. Well done, democracy is alive and kicking. Mr Speaker, as this Council moves forward, the road ahead will have many challenges, therefore, it will be important that we together as a cohesive unit, but more importantly, we need to build strong relationships with our people and take them with us, we cannot afford to leave people behind. Mr Speaker, most might be aware that I did not support the new ministerial system, however, we now have this system and it's now time to move forward and deliver for St Helena and its people. Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Any other Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Martin Henry?

The Hon. Martin Henry –

Mr Speaker, I would like to say thank you to my sponsors, supporters and all of the electorate that voted and to the community as a whole who has made this year's General Election both historical and one of the most exciting in our island's recent history. I find myself in the unique position of being part of the Governance Commission that brought this new system of government to life. This new ministerial system is a combination of the hard work which was first compiled in the early 2000s, revised, modernised and consulted on by the Governance Commission, the wider public and is now about to be implemented by the historic new Council. With this initial in-depth connection, I am honoured to be in a position that will allow me to physically apply this system which I have had a direct hand in creating and build upon it. It is equally important that our community allows this Council to develop and evolve the new relationship and structure with the whole of the public sector, to understand that we currently just have a blueprint and we are yet to lay any bricks in its physical foundation. Likewise, it is integral that all those of the public service recognise that changing the way we govern on its own cannot deliver this Council's vision without their full support, accepting that business as usual is not an option and together we are the government, elected and employed to serve our people and this community. Mr Speaker, this adventure has been a journey like no other for me and although I am at the very beginning of what is potentially a challenging term in office, I am here because of a deep and unwavering drive to protect and serve our community. Presenting oneself for public life comes with personal costs, however, I believe that my passion for our people to live vibrant and fulfilling lives through self-empowerment, responsibility, with the support and structure of a robust, innovative and caring government, far outweighs these costs. One of the most significant highlights of my campaign was an engagement at the end of the debate with our youth, whereby the students I was talking to said, if we were old enough, we would vote for you, you have our future at heart. The decisions made by this Council must always take into consideration that they are our future and that in order for them to reach their full potential as intelligent, well rounded, proactive members of our community, we must provide the environment for this to be nurtured. We must also remember our elderly and the sacrifices they made to provide us with our future, they deserve the dignity and the grace we would expect when we get there.

Mr Speaker, I would finally like to offer my extended congratulations to yourself, the Deputy Speaker, my colleagues and to Julie, our Chief Minister, as she leads this new, dynamic team through these tough and uncertain times. You all will have my full personal and professional support. I would like to end with one of my favourite quotes for our team, which reads, "Don't go where the path may lead, but go where there's no path and leave a trail".

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

And thank you, Mr Henry. Don't go where the path may lead, but go where there is no path, words for me to remember as well, I think. Any other Honourable Member wish to speak? Honourable Andrew Turner.

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Firstly, I, of course, have to say a massive thank you to everyone who participated in the election. The turnout was something that all of us as a community can be proud of. I'd like to, of course, thank my sponsors, supporters and the whole public, because your support before, during and after Election Day has been amazing. On Polling Day, the

people of St Helena made an important statement, they wanted change and I think this is evident from the sheer number of new faces here in the Chamber today. Now the people of St Helena have spoken and they've chosen us to bring about that change, we have the responsibility to ensure we don't let them down. We have some big hurdles to overcome in our term, whether it be reducing financial support from the UK, the impacts of Covid 19 still raging around the globe, or even our own economic downturns and many other issues besides, but as I look around this table and I see my new colleagues, I know that we can succeed in facing the challenges ahead and bringing about a better future for our island.

Finally, I want to congratulate our newly-elected Chief Minister who I firmly believe is the right person to lead our new government, to our new Speaker, I know this is something you've been aiming to for a long time, so congratulations to you and to our new Deputy Speaker, and at this point I must say how proud I am of the people in this Chamber for proving today that we are committed to diversity and equality in our own Chamber. Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Mr Turner. Any other Honourable Member wish to speak? Honourable Mark Brooks?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. First, I would like to start by thanking everyone; the voters, my sponsors and supporters, the non-voters that still played their part by giving me their support. I would also like to welcome the Speaker and Deputy and our new Chief Minister.

In my campaign, radio interviews and manifesto, my story has mainly been around a smart government. New and innovative ideas and thinking, modern and smart technology that could not only help St Helena save money, but also make money. Over the next 4 years, this would be my prime focus, because reducing leakage and creating new revenues is the best way to grow our economy and with a growing economy, we might just start to reach our goals, but the Covid 19 pandemic has infected almost every sector in every industry in every country on every continent, even a tiny dot in the middle of the ocean has felt the ripples of a changing world. The way in which humans travel has changed and the tourism sectors and health care have suffered the biggest blows.

So, what do we do? That is the question. Together, we must find the answers, as a government, as an island, as a community, we all have a part to play, working together, listening to one another and leaving no one behind. We must also grow our population.

This new government has a mighty job to do, in the new system, with limited resources. We must all stay focused and work together, but we need the public and their support.

I believe we can make things better, if I didn't, I wouldn't be here.

Mr Speaker, we have an administration team who are the vehicle, Council are the drivers, but the public are the fuel and the mechanics, we need them to help us move forward.

The things I can promise is that I will be –

“T” transparent and truthful.

“A” accountable. And

“R” resourceful. TAR.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

And thank you, Mr Brooks and anyone else wishes to speak, I see first of all the light on from Honourable Robert Midwinter.

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Mr Speaker, I rise in support of this Adjournment.

Firstly, Mr Speaker, may I take the opportunity to congratulate you and your Deputy on your elections to this House; I look forward to working with you both over my term of office.

I would similarly like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Honourable Julie Thomas, on her election as Chief Minister. I look forward to providing her with my own support and assistance, as she embarks on this historical new position within the St Helena Government.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the electorate, for putting their faith in me; I will strive to push forward those commitments that I made during my own campaign, in a manner that recognises the collective workings of this Council.

It is in this vein, Mr Speaker, that I wish to call attention to the recent commemoration ceremony that was attended by the Council as our first official public duty. This ceremony gave recognition to the Royal Navy, and the role that they played, along with this Island, in the abolition of slavery. During the ceremony, mention was also made of those who were liberated, and in particular those who did not survive the ordeal that they faced.

Mr Speaker, as a part of the airport project, the remains of a number of these “Liberated Africans” were exhumed, and these have been stored in the former Pipe Store in Jamestown where they sit to this very day awaiting re-interment.

Mr Speaker, noting that our airport has now been open for 5 years, I find this position untenable, and during my own campaign I made a commitment to do whatever I can to ensure that these ancestral remains are once again laid to rest.

In this respect, Mr Speaker, I would urge my new colleagues to join me in this mission, by adding this to our priorities list for our term of office.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

And thank you, Mr Midwinter. I now call on Honourable Dr Corinda Essex.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, first, I wish to congratulate all those who have just been elected to key roles during this Sitting. I wish you all well and look forward to working with you.

Mr Speaker, we are now a new Legislative Council sworn in and ready to start meeting the challenges of our term of office. Perhaps the greatest immediate issue will be setting the next budget for St Helena at a time at which Britain itself is facing increasing financial pressures and hardships. Although the Overseas Territories are the first call on aid for their reasonable needs, it is inevitable that British taxpayers and the Government that represents them will wish to ensure that their own needs are the key focus when allocating resources. Therefore, reaching a budget settlement that truly meets the needs of St Helena will be extremely difficult and, indeed, may prove unachievable and it will certainly be essential to put forward the very strongest case possible and also to explore other means of generating income.

Another key task for the new Government will be to set its policy priorities and strategic direction. A new government is not bound to follow the same course as the previous one, but if it is responsible and sensible, it will ensure that legislation, policies and projects that have been developed but are still in the pipe-line move forward to implementation. It is unfortunate that this Government has inherited a large backlog of matters that were delayed for reasons that I have raised previously both in this Honourable House and during my election campaign and it is our duty to get these over the line as soon as possible as they are for the benefit of St Helena and they are what the population of St Helena wants to see put in place. This is not going

backwards, but ensuring that valuable ground is not lost and that improvement is made in key areas where it has been identified as being necessary for St Helena to progress.

Mr Speaker, I will now provide some examples that relate to areas in which I was involved. Perhaps the most significant pieces of primary legislation that have already been through extensive public consultation relate to Road Traffic and Immigration. Almost every week, constituents ask me why they still have to undertake a costly medical examination every year just because they have turned seventy if they wish to drive a vehicle. They ask why drivers' licences have to be renewed on a yearly basis instead of at longer intervals; why fixed penalties for minor traffic offences have not been introduced instead of criminalising offenders and when a St Helena drivers' licence will not look like a joke to authorities overseas. These long-standing issues will all need to be addressed and will be dealt with when new primary legislation is passed. Further delay must be avoided.

Constituents have also been calling for changes to the Immigration Ordinance for years. In fact, I moved a successful Motion relating to this topic in this Honourable House in 2016. After intensive work on the part of both officials and Elected Members spanning four years, it is imperative to get the new legislation in which addresses the concerns of the public and is fit for purpose. Although not yet consulted upon, draft new Immigrant's Landholding legislation was nearing completion before dissolution of the previous Council and also requires moving forward promptly, because that has now been separated from the actual Immigration Ordinance where it previously sat.

Turning now to policies, three key policies nearing completion in the Education field are the Apprenticeship, Scholarship and Scholarship Trust and Prince Andrew School Behaviour Policies. Having up to date policies in these areas is absolutely crucial if our young people are to have the opportunity to achieve their potential. Of equal importance is the completion of the Code of Practice relating to pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

Another key document nearing completion is the St Helena Government Property Disposal Policy that further develops the concept of affordable plots, particularly for first time home builders, which was first introduced in the Land and Building Disposal Policy of 2016. Of even greater significance, because it is applicable to all development on the Island, is the revised Development Plan for St Helena which will supersede the current Land Development Control Plan and this needs to be taken for public consultation as speedily as possible.

In relation to projects, considerable groundwork was completed regarding relocation of bus shelters near Kunji Field and Hutts Gate and erection of bus shelters at Two Gun Saddle and Levelwood. Unfortunately, planning permission was not granted for the site preferred by residents at Levelwood so the location will have to be revisited and it has so far been impossible to identify a site near Seaview that is both safe and on land that is available as the majority of the land there is in private ownership and the landowners are not happy to allocate property for the purpose of a bus shelter.

The proposed new parking area alongside Maldivia Road remains a priority to reduce the growing problem of traffic congestion near the hospital and the making of at least one, but preferably two, cuttings to join the Deadwood and Haul roads has been fully explored. It is also essential that momentum is not lost on identifying a site for a shed for boat repair and maintenance and in that context, I declare my interest as a boat owner.

On a much bigger scale, continuation of the development of the Comprehensive Development Areas at Bottom Woods and Half Tree Hollow is crucial as is the finalisation of the incredibly long drawn out process of permitting a local investor to commence development of Bunker's Hill.

Mr Speaker, I wish to say two very important 'thank you's'. The first is to all the members of the last Legislative Council. Without their efforts and dedication, the current situation on St Helena would be much worse than it is in many respects. Indeed, any Council is not always

going to make appropriate decisions, they can only make decisions based on the information at their disposal and they're certainly not always going to be able to make popular decisions, but I served with those Members for four years and I have no doubt of the commitment and hard work that the majority of them gave to this Island during their term of office and it would be unfair and unjust to say anything else. Their hard work should not go unrecognised.

And last, but not least, I wish to thank all those who voted for me to be re-elected and all those who supported my nomination and who have given me indications of their level of confidence, including all those who approached me and begged me to consider being Chief Minister, until eventually I felt like an old tape recorder having to press replay and explain all the reasons yet again why I was not prepared to take that position at this point in time. I am deeply moved by the confidence and trust of all those that have supported me and I was overwhelmed by your level of support. To be quite truthful, I was expecting to be re-elected from the vibes that I was getting by the electorate but I certainly was not expecting to get the number of votes that I did, so thank you very, very much. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Dr Essex. And as I said earlier on, I, too, sort of, recognise the importance of legislation and which is why I said that I am sure Honourable Members will find ways of improving the consultation process so that legislation can be brought forward. The Immigration or the Road Traffic Ordinance, I would welcome that coming in because I note there that people over seventy will be able to not have their licences done every year and I, sort of, fall into that bracket. Perhaps I'll say a bit more about things as we go on, but I now recognise the Honourable Gilly Brooks to have your say.

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I support the Adjournment Debate. First, I would like to extend congratulations to the Chief Minister, the Speaker and Deputy Speaker. I now express my sincere thanks to my sponsors and supporters and all who attended the Polling Stations and cast their votes on Election Day. In my manifesto and on radio, I said communication is key and I would like to see improved communication, amongst other things I said I would like to pursue. I spoke of the necessity to retain our people on island, this starts with those preparing for and entering the workplace and adult life. We have a very good education system and work-related learning here on island and I would like to further explore what more can be done to enhance the current teaching of vocational skills and to address gaps in trades that enables a person to have a skill set and offer a specialised service to the community. I spoke of the Technical Trades School we had years back. I see this as enhancement to the very good work already offered at Prince Andrew School to our young people.

Following through, I believe there should be robust succession planning that encourages people to strive for more senior and specialised roles. As I've said previously, succession planning allows for continuity and stability in the workplace which helps us to retain people on island. I would hope that support is given to enable the Health Directorate to deliver the Health Transformation Programme in the timeframe that has been set for this.

I understand there will be a steep learning curve and challenging times ahead for us and restrictive finances will not make it possible to always have our preferred outcomes. I would hope we can continue to develop on what good work is already in place. I believe if we are open and honest, work together constructively, keep people uppermost in our minds when we make decisions, we will be doing the best that we can. I trust the Administration will support what I have mentioned. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

And thank you, Ms Brooks. And is there anyone else? I see Karl Thrower, Honourable Karl Thrower has his light on.

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I support the Adjournment Debate. I would like to start by congratulating the Chief Minister, the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker on their appointments. I would also like to extend my grateful thanks to the people who supported me throughout the Election, the one number that I will always keep in mind with the Election was the fact that 60% of the people who could vote, did vote, and they voted for the people around this table, we have nine new elected members, that has brought a completely different set of skills to both Councils, both Legislative Council and the Executive Council. For the first time we have six private business people who all have a spread of businesses. In my manifesto, I raised total key issues, which were shared by the majority of the newly-elected Councillors. One of these key issues was the need for better communication between the private sector, the public sector and the public and I'm looking forward to working with my newly-elected colleagues on moving this forward.

As highlighted by the Governor during his address, there are many challenges ahead for the new Councillors, the Island's economy is currently under a huge amount of pressure and I think that it's anybody who knows these things will see that it's actually almost collapsing. I believe that the main priority, or the first priority of the newly-elected members must be to address the economy, because if the economy fails, everything else that we are trying to achieve will fail. During my campaign, I brought to the table the idea of looking at the cost of utilities on the island, because I believe that when you look at the utility costs of the Island, they are the key problem with moving the Island forward. The reason for that is very simple. Our hospital has to buy electricity at that price just exactly the same as the smallest, private businessman has to buy it, just like a pensioner in their house has to buy it, just like an individual school has to buy it. We are quite literally destroying our own economy because we have always been afraid, I feel, to look at the cost of utilities on this Island and I believe that we really have to address that as a major priority. Thank you, Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

The Speaker –

And thank you, Mr Thrower. Honourable Member, Rosie Bargo?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo -

Mr Speaker, I rise in support of the Adjournment Debate. Firstly, I would like to congratulate you and your Deputy on your elections to the House and I look forward to working with you both. I would like to congratulate the Honourable Mrs Julie Thomas as our Chief Minister and I look forward to supporting and assisting our Chief Minister in these exciting and challenging times ahead of us. I would also like to thank the people of St Helena who have put their faith in me and voted for me. As a first time Councillor for the people of St Helena, I'm extremely eager to serve as one of the Councillors under the new ministerial system. It's also a time which sees our economy struggling and I know we are in for some challenging times ahead of us. Mr Speaker, I declare my interest, but tourism is deemed our leading sector in economic growth. However, with Covid-19, the last two years has seen tourism practically driven to non-existence, resulting in a struggling hospitality sector with a knock-on effect on all private sectors and the public sector with our people continuing to struggling to stay afloat whilst facing the ever-rising cost of living with low income to support it; this is desperate times for all. As a newly-elected member of Council, one of my immediate priorities is to look at how we can grow our economy, exploring new opportunities for economic growth whilst reviewing existing means which will also mean the constant review of our Covid-19 quarantine periods.

Economic growth will be key to ensuring that all other issues, including our health and education system and general wellbeing of our people can be adequately supported. I believe we as Council have a strong team and together with the people, the private and the public sector working together, will make a positive difference for all.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Miss Bargo. Councillor Christine Scipio O’Dean, I beg your pardon, that’s all changed now, so I say again, I call on Honourable Christine Scipio.

The Hon. Christine Scipio –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Firstly, Mr Speaker, I would like to congratulate yourself, the Deputy Speaker and the Chief Minister on your new positions, I look forward to working with you. I would also like to thank the voters for turning out in record numbers in the recent General Election.

Mr Speaker, since being elected, the new Council have been extremely busy with receiving information on the role of Ministers, collective responsibility, question time for Ministers, an overview of St Helena Government Portfolio Directorates, which may be seen as information overload, but it has been beneficial and informative. Heartfelt thanks are extended to those individuals who have made themselves available to share information with this new Council and also for their patience with the one hundred and one questions, no doubt, there will be another one hundred and one questions to come. This new Council has not yet had the opportunity to discuss their collective vision for the people of the Island, but as we now have a Chief Minister, I am certain these discussions will be held fairly soon and it is hoped that shortly constituency meetings will be arranged to engage with the community.

Mr Speaker, talking about the community, the community is still awaiting the publication of the review of the mail system at the Post Office and also the filling of the rather enormous potholes at Longwood Enterprise Park, formerly known as Longwood Dairy. Mr Speaker, these potholes are the holes in the main road that a few months ago I had intended to photograph, but fell instead. Hopefully, an update on these matters will be shared with the public fairly soon.

The community has high expectations of this new Council and there’s hope that collectively we will be able to deliver. It is hoped that the community will appreciate that we do have limited resources that will require this Council to prioritise focusing on particular areas at a time. Mr Speaker, this period will be challenging, but working in partnership with our community I trust that it will be an onward and upward journey. I beg to move.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Ms Scipio. And one last person I think who hasn’t spoken yet, I see the light up for him to speak, Honourable Ronald Coleman.

The Honourable Ronald Coleman –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I raise to the Adjournment Debate. First I would like to congratulate you and the Deputy on your election this morning and also the Chief Minister who I know we all will support and be well led in our deliberations. I would also like to thank the people of St Helena for coming out and voting for all of us, their support was greatly appreciated and I know that we are all excited about being elected and ready to run. I also would like to say that I don’t want to cover a lot of the ground that’s been covered by my fellow colleagues, but it was great to hear their concerns and that we’re all singing from the same hymn sheet.

Economic development is one of my greatest things that I want to, and I know it's gonna be a big challenge, looking at how we can bring additional money into St Helena and keep it in St Helena, we need to grow the private sector and we need to look at ways of how we can do this, I am concerned about local businesses, especially the hospitality, our fishing industry and our farmers, so that we can give them some level of support.

Mr Speaker, we were elected to provide and give our people a better quality of life and we hope that moving forward we can collectively do this with the decisions and choices we make for benefitting the Island and its people and we hope we can do this with better communications, unity, openness and transparency. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Mr Coleman. So, all twelve Members have had the opportunity to speak and they have done so and very eloquently too and Mr Brooks, you know, the biggest thing for me, the hardest thing for me to do as Speaker, is not to speak out politically, so I have to be aware of that, but you need the public, you say, to help and I think that that is correct, everything stems from the public, the system is there now for that to happen. Perhaps it wasn't there before, but it is there now, so I'm pretty certain that you all will take advantage of that, making that happen, but it is for me now to ask the Attorney General to respond if he wants to respond.

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. In future meetings of this Council, it will be the Chief Minister who both moves and responds to the Adjournment Debate. However, I won't respond myself today in any more detail than to wish all Members success in their terms as Members of the Legislative Council.

The Speaker –

Thank you. So, what's left for me to do, I need to congratulate the Chief Minister as well, thank you, Julie Thomas for taking that onboard, it is a big decision, I know you will handle it well and I will look forward with great interest to see who the other Ministers will be. You will let us know all of that in good time. But some fine words have been spoken around the table today, I know you are all earnest and sincere about all of that, it is going to be difficult, isn't it. What a moment it is now though that we do have in place a ministerial government and, you know, people were asking for this over thirty years ago, it is now there. We need to now go forward, make the best of it.

All I need to do now is to put the question that this House adjourn sine die.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker –

Thank you all very much.

Council is adjourned sine die.

Honourable Speaker

Date