



**St Helena  
Government**

**ST HELENA GOVERNMENT**

**GOVERNMENT OF ST HELENA  
PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
FRIDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2022  
FIRST SITTING OF THE FIFTH MEETING**

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

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**THE PRESIDENT**

The Honourable Mrs Catherine Harris Cranfield  
(The Honourable Speaker Cyril Gunnell – Overseas)

**EX-OFFICIO MEMBER**

The Honourable Attorney General, Mr Allen Cansick

**ELECTED MEMBERS**

The Honourable Gillian Ann Brooks  
The Honourable Mark Alan Brooks  
The Honourable Ronald Arthur Coleman  
The Honourable Jeffrey Robert Ellick  
The Honourable Dr 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 Andrew James Turner

The Honourable Rosemary June Bargo - Overseas  
The Honourable Karl Gavin Thrower - Overseas

**CLERK OF COUNCILS**

Mrs Connie Johnson

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2022

The Council met at 10.00 am  
in the Court House, Jamestown

(The Honourable Deputy Speaker Mrs Catherine Harris Cranfield in the Chair)

### ORDER OF THE DAY

**1. FORMAL ENTRY OF THE PRESIDENT**

**2. PRAYERS**  
(Lord Bishop, Dale Bowers)

**3. ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT**

Honourable Members, ladies and gentlemen and radio listeners, good morning and welcome to this first sitting of the fifth meeting of Legislative Council.

Firstly, there are a few honourable members who are not able to attend this sitting and they are, the Honourable Speaker Cyril Gunnell who is currently off island attending the British Overseas Territories Speakers Conference and meetings with UK CPA staff after which he'll be on private business. The Honourable Karl Thrower who left the island last week to attend the Pacific Regional Seminar's Special Committee on Decolonization that is being held in St Lucia and finally, the Honourable Rosemary Bargo who is away on private business.

We welcome back the Honourable Gillian Brooks and Honourable Andrew Turner who recently returned from attending the Westminster Seminar and the British Islands and Mediterranean Region Conference in the Isle of Man. We also welcome back the Clerk to the Council, Mrs Connie Johnson who recently returned from attending a 2 week work attachment at the Public Accounts Committee in Jersey and Miss Shanice Phillips, the Legislative Council Office Assistant who also attended the Westminster Seminar.

Thanks are extended to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop Dale Bowers MBE for delivering prayers, Mr Merlin George for performing the ceremonial duties of Mace Bearer and also SAMS radio for airing these proceedings for the benefit of the listening public.

Now turning to the business for today. This meeting is important one in that this is what we refer to as the Budget Session, when you, Honourable Members, appropriate funding for the 2022 financial year and in this case you are setting a budget on which this new Ministerial government will have to operate.

I would like to thank the Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development and his team for their dedication and commitment to ensure that a budget is presented to this Council today and much earlier than in recent years.

In addition to the Appropriation Bill, which is the main purpose of this meeting, there are 2 Sessional Papers 12 Questions for oral answers, 3 Questions for written answers and 2 Motions for debate which will run into a second day when there will be further questions in addition to the Appropriation Bill. The meeting will then conclude with the traditional Adjournment Debate.

Finally, when it's appropriate from around 12.15pm we will break for an hour for lunch and then resume to continue the remainder of the business for today. Honourable Members, before we continue, if you wish to remove your jackets then you may do so. So without further delay I will now invite the Clerk to announce the next item of business please.

#### 4. PAPERS

*SP 14/2022 – The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development.*

Madam President -

Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development?

The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development -

Madam Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the Appropriation Bill 2022 be approved in principle and referred to the committee of the Whole Council, I also formally confirm that that this Bill is presented on the recommendation.

Madam President -

Minister, Excuse me.

The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development -

Sorry.

Madam President -

The Sessional Paper.

The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development -

Okay, Sorry

Madam President -

Could you just read the Sessional Paper?

The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development -

Sorry, I beg to present Sessional Paper 14/2022.

**Ordered to lie on the table.**

***SP 15/2022– The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development.***

Madam President -

Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development?

The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development –

Madam Deputy Speaker I beg to present Sessional Paper 15/2022 Saint Helena Government Currency Fund, Annual Financial Statements 2020/21.

Madam President -

Thank you.

**Ordered to lie on the table.**

***SP 16/2022 – Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development***

Madam President -

Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development?

The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. I beg to Present Sessional Paper 16/2022 Estimates of Recurrent and Capital Expenditure and Revenue 2022/23 to 2024/25.

Madam President -

Thank you.

**Ordered to lie on the table.**

Madam President -

Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development, did you have an Authority to Proceed for Sessional Paper 14/2022?

The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development -

Thank you Madam Speaker, I formerly confirm. Sorry Deputy Madam Speaker I forgot to turn my mic on, I formerly confirm on that this Bill is presented on the recommendation of the Governor in accordance of Section 73 (2) of the Constitution.

Madam President -

Thank you.

**6.**

**QUESTIONS**

***Question No. 1 – The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex to ask the Honourable Chief Minister.***

Madam President -

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Will the Honourable Chief Minister tell this Council what action is being taken in response to the petition submitted to Executive Council on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2022?

Madam President -

The Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, and thank the Honourable Dr Corinda Essex for her question. Madam Deputy Speaker the Honourable Member will be aware that I have responded to the presenter of the Petition setting out how this Government will be addressing the concerns raised. This response was copied to all Elected Members and published in the Media. The Petition concerns two specific areas, (1) the airport hub used by Airlink, our contracted air service provider, and (2) Medical referral arrangements in South Africa. These areas, whilst not mutually exclusive, are both separate and fall under the remit of two different Ministerial Portfolios; Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development for Air Services, and Health and Social Care for Medical Referrals. As previously advised during the presentation of the Petition and publicly stated by me via both Medias, Minister Brooks and Minister Henry have been asked to consider the requests of the Petition and for their Officers to undertake research into both matters. Both Ministers will report back to the Cabinet when a full analysis of the relevant information has been completed. On receipt of this analysis, a further update will be provided to the Petition presenter and the wider community giving details of our proposed next steps. Thank you Madam Speaker.

Madam President -

Thank you, the Honourable Minister, Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

May I rise in the point of information?

Madam President -

Yes you may.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Before I ask my supplementary question?

Madam President -

Yes you may.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

I thank the Chief Minister for her response, however it is disappointing that there is no further update to what was aired on the radio and communicated to us a couple of weeks ago and I would like that to be put on record please.

Madam President -

Thank you.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Because the purpose of my question today is to ascertain the state of play as of now. May I now ask my supplementary question?

Madam President -

Thank you, you may.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, will the Honourable Chief Minister tell this House when it is envisaged that the invitations to tender for the provision for medical and associated support services in South Africa will be issued?

Madam President -

The Hon. Chief Minister?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

Honourable Dr Essex I can tell you that that tender will be published or issued in the next week.

Madam President -

Thank you Chief Minister, Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you for that good news Is the Honourable Chief Minister aware that the anger and seriousness in place relating to medical treatment in Pretoria far exceed those relating to treatment in Cape Town?

Madam President -

The Hon. Chief Minister?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

Thank you for the supplementary question as I have said in my response I am waiting on information to come back from the Minister from Health and Social Care and that is part of this whole process whereby we will be able to look at all the information that is on the table. I appreciate Dr Essex mentioning the time it's taken but as we told the presenter of the petition it will not be a speedy response because the fact the tender process would need to be undertaken. So all of that is being collaborated on and compiled to provide an in depth response to the petition presenter and indeed the wider public.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister, Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Will the Chief Minister state when it is expected that a full analysis of all the issues raised in the petition will have been completed and reported back to Cabinet?

Madam President -

Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon Chief Minister –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, it's unfortunate but I can't give a deadline to this because obviously the part of the tender process is also part of this whole procedure, because until we understand what and who's interested in providing the services it would be irresponsible of us to provide a response to the petition presenter to say what services are being provided.

Madam President -

Thank you Chief Minister, Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Will the Chief Minister state what follow up actions will be taken by Cabinet and what within time scale when the necessary information is finally available?

Madam President -

Thank you, Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

Thank you again Honourable Essex, I think again I'll have to say until we see information coming in from both portfolios I wouldn't want to provide a timeline because I don't know what the analysis will show at this time but as I said, the tender process will be a part of that so until that is also been complete I think then we'll be in a better position to provide a timeline.

Madam President -

Thank you Chief Minister, Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Honourable Chief Minister, my question didn't just relate to the timeline, it also asked what further action will be taken by Cabinet, can I please be informed of that?

Madam President -

Thank you, Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

Thank you Honourable Essex, I think as this will have to be taken under consideration more information on the table it's difficult for me to say at this time what the Cabinet will do we as have told the petition presenter and the wider public those portfolios will provide the analysis with regards to air services and the medical services and until we get that information back to be able to look at what options are available to us obviously that will be something the Cabinet will undertake then we will be in a better position to talk about the timeline as to how we go about doing that.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Chief Minister, Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

I thank the Chief Minister for her response but will she please indicate whether these issues are of sufficient serious nature for Cabinet to take the findings to Executive Council?

Madam President -

Thank you, Honourable Dr Essex, Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon Chief Minister –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, I think we already given that commitment to the petition presenter and the wider public when this information is provided to us Cabinet will consider it and as soon as we feel there is sufficient on the Table then obviously we will take a decision in Executive Council as to what how we go forward. What and how we go forward will very much depend on that information and that is a commitment on the day the petition came in we would obviously publish and respond back to the petition presenter what our final outcome would be.



Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Chief Minister, the Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, will the Chief Minister state why it took almost 4 weeks to issue an acknowledgement receipt to Mr Cranfield?

Madam President -

Thank you, the Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

I thank the Honourable Robert Midwinter for his question, if I'm to be perfectly honest we did give a response to the petition presenter on the day the petition was actually presented to us the public will have known as well the delegation was given the opportunity to meet with the Ministers in the Council Chamber it was during that discussion that we told them what would need to take place. I then went almost immediately to both radio stations to inform the public of that also so providing a written response was just confirming what had already been told directly to the petition presenter.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Chief Minister.

***Question No. 2 – The Honourable Ronald Coleman to ask the Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs.***

Madam President -

The Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, Will the Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs tell this Council will the St Helena Government consider to improve the St Helena Drivers Licence to include information so the Licence can be used for identification purposes?

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Ronald Coleman, Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs?

The Hon. Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs –

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for his question and yes we are considering improving the Driver's License as part of the scrutinizing the draft Road Traffic Bill 2022 as my Honourable Colleague will appreciate photo card licences cost then the current paper card based ones so while there are some suitable equipment whilst while there is suitable equipment available the decision was made until the implementation of a new ordinance before changing from the current system as this will have an impact on St Helena Governments Budget. It is expected the new licences would be able to provide some additional forms of identification was notably to proof of age on St Helena. However I am currently working with my portfolio to ensure the draft Roads Road Traffic Bill is fit for purpose as well as new driving licences and will deliver exactly what St Helena requires.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister, the Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Can I just ask when you think the draft bill will be to this House?

Madam President -

Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs?

The Hon. Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs –

I thank the Honourable Member for his supplementary question, we are currently considering the Road Traffic Ordinance in the next six months to ensure it meets the community's needs.

Madam President -

Thank the Honourable Minister, the Honourable Andrew Turner?

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

Will the Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs tell this Council which countries if any accept the current St Helena Drivers Licences as a valid overseas Licence?

Madam President -

Thank you, the Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs?

The Hon. Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs –

I thank the Honourable Member for his supplementary question, to be quite frank I am not sure which countries as far as I know you can go to UK and can go for up to six months with that Licence but as for the other countries, we don't have any information on that at this present time we probably have to check with other countries if there are accepting it or not. Thank you.

Madam President -

Thank the Honourable Minister, the Honourable Rob Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, will the Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs tell this Council will the classes of licence will be brought in line with the international Drivers Licences at the same time?

Madam President -

Thank you. The Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs?

The Hon Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs –

I thank the Honourable Member for his supplementary question, like I said we are scrutinising the draft Bill at the moment and we are looking at the Licencing categories so we will take that in to account when scrutinising and this will be done over the next six months. Thank you.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister, next question. Oh the Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, will the Honourable Minister explain why they are sticking with the time threshold of six months when the draft barely only needs some tweaking?

Madam President -

Thank you, Honourable Dr Corinda Essex that's straying away from the question of driving licences.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

It relates to what the Honourable Minister said in his response, supplementary questions can be based on the response received by the Minister or the individual.

Madam President -

I've been advised that the new subject area Dr Corinda Essex.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Very well.

Madam President -

Thank you, Honourable Dr Corinda Essex, any further questions? Next question please.

***Question No. 3 – The Honourable Gillian Brooks to ask the Honourable Chief Minister.***

Madam President -

The Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Will the Honourable Chief Minister tell this House when the Ministerial Code of Conduct will be made public?

Madam President -

The Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon Chief Minister –

I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for her question. Madam Deputy Speaker, we all recognise that these past six months have been a steep learning curve for all Elected Members, particularly as we have come into a new Ministerial System of Government which requires us to implement the tools of good governance in the form of political guidance, political scrutiny frameworks, standing orders, and codes of conduct which have all had to be developed to suit the new system.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Ministerial Code of Conduct is, as the title implies, a Code for Ministers setting out the standards of conduct expected of ministers and how they discharge their duties. This Code is still being discussed by Ministers. We hope to have agreed a draft code by end of June. Pursuant to section 71 of the Constitution the Code needs to be approved by Legislative Council before coming into effect. I therefore plan to make a motion for its approval in this Council shortly after the draft is agreed by Ministers. It is my intention to make the draft available to the public as soon as it is agreed between Ministers. I can confirm that during the interim, Ministers have agreed to follow the general principles that will be in the Code. The general principles include that "Ministers are expected to maintain high standards of behaviour and to behave in a way that upholds the highest standards of prop-

propriety” and also compliant with the Nolan Principles of public life, of which all Elected Members will be aware. Thank you.

Madam President -

Thank you, Honourable Chief Minister. The Honourable Andrew Turner?

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

Thank you, will the Honourable Chief Minister tell this House in the event of any complaint against Ministers and in the absence of a substantive code of conduct for Ministers what methods are Ministers going to use to investigate such a complaint?

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Andrew Turner, the Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

I thank the Honourable Turner for his question as I’ve just said we are using the draft Ministerial Code the Nolan Principles are a part of that so these a section of the Nolan Principles that’s a. to i. and in there we would be able to obviously address any complaints put in about Ministers.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Chief Minister, Honourable Andrew Turner?

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

I’d like to thank the Honourable Chief Minister for her response and just as a form of clarity for the listening public what is the method for investigating a formal complaint under the draft Ministerial Code?

The Deputy Speaker –

Thank you Honourable Andrew Turner, the Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

Madam Deputy Speaker as I mentioned my response to the Honourable Brooks, as we already go by the draft Ministerial Code I have said that the Ministers are expected to maintain high standards of behaviour and to behave in the highest standards of propriety that will continue obviously though as all Elected Members have to do we are also obligated to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the Legislative Council as well.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Chief Minister, any further questions? Thank you next question please clerk.

***Question No. 4 – The Honourable Robert Midwinter to ask the Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs.***

Madam President -

The Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs tell this Council how many individuals have attained Saint Helenian Status over the past twenty years and, of those who have attained such status, how many of these remain resident in Saint Helena?

Madam President -

The Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs?

The Hon. Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker and I thank the Honourable Member for his question, I can confirm for the people from 2001 to 2021 an average of 10 people per year were granted Saint Helenian Status that's 201 people in total. 118 persons who were granted Saint Helenian Status are still on Island, the Honourable Member has not stated what he means by resident however, to assist I can state 71 have now have not been in Saint Helena of last year until are deceased.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister, the Hon Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, are there any plans to improve the system of attaining Saint Helena Status?

Madam President -

The Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs?

The Hon. Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs –

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for his supplementary question Yes, we are reviewing the Immigration Ordinance which should come out soon, we will be doing some work on that. But there are plans to improve this as you know from our vision our aim is to improve our economy our population so yes it will be included in there.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister, Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, can I ask the Minister is there any intention to either increase or decrease the fast track Residence required in order to obtain Saint Helena Status?

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Midwinter, the Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs?

The Hon. Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for his supplementary question we have various things that is going to be in the Immigration Ordinance and that will be part of it but I would say to the Member we will come to you with the Immigration Ordinance to discuss it with you so you will have insight and you can ask any question you want or put suggestions forward if you so wish, but once we've got that ready we'll bring it to you.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you Deputy Speaker, I thank the Honourable Minister for that and I look forward to seeing that however, the question is really to inform the public at this point in time is there any intention to introduce a fast track to residence by investment scheme and what amount of investment would be required to secure this?

Madam President -

Honourable Robert Midwinter that is not related to your original question.

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Okay Madam Deputy Speaker, I'll withdraw that particular question because it is relating to investment however, is there any intention to reduce the qualifying period for persons married to Saint Helenians in terms of St Helena Status?

Madam President -

I don't think that relate to your original question.

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Ok well Madam Deputy Speaker it was about attaining St Helena Status however, the final question then is he able to say when the new Immigration Ordinance will be available to this House?

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs?

The Hon. Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs -

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for his supplementary question but what I can say soon what we are waiting on at the moment with the immigration officer and custom officers coming out so we will have a chat with that individual before we actually come round to Ministers and Members before we even go out to consultation we will like to have you on board first and get your views on this first.

Madam President -

Thank the Honourable Minister, Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Will the Honourable Minister give an assurance on the first substantive changes being recommended there will be public consultation?

Madam President -

The Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs?

The Hon. Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for her supplementary question I did thought I covered that before but there will be public consultation. Thank you.

Madam President -

Thank you Minister, next question?

***Question No 5 – The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex to ask the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development.***

Madam President -

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure Sustainable Development tell this Council when it is envisaged that review of the current eligibility criteria for receipt of the Basic Island Pension will be concluded and any recommendations implemented?

Madam President -

Thank you, the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, and I would like to thank the Honourable Member for her question. As outlined in at the last formal Legislative Council meeting, the cost of pensions in St Helena has long been a matter of concern in terms of accessibility and long term affordability. The Basic Island Pension or BIP in particular, which is estimated to cost the Government £2.7 million in this current financial year, is an unfunded scheme. This Government recognises the financial challenges this places on public finances for the future and has set in motion, work is going on to explore and to address this issue. One of the key options being explored as a means to address is sorry is a means to address a long term issue unaffordability of pensions and in particular the BIP is a National Insurance Contribution scheme on NIC. St Helena Government will be seeking the services of a Pension Expert to provide the technical advice and support to conduct this exploratory work. I've also touched on this I think in one of our previous Legislative Council Meetings but just to give an Indication of what this work will entail we're looking for this expert to try an: Outline how a NIC scheme could be feasible – the conditions needed for its sustainability also we need to assess whether there is public appetite for a National Insurance scheme and affordability for workers and employees sorry workers and employers. We need to assess if a National Insurance scheme is viable and if so prepare documents and policies as options for consideration. He would also support or they whether it be a he or a she sir Madam Deputy Speaker but also support the development of legislation and regulations. As part of this work also the Pensions Expert will be reviewing the eligibility criteria for access to the pension under such scheme. But there is no proposed proposal for a review of the BMI of this work. A Terms of Reference has also been prepared for this work to be done. Approval of the budget is required though before engagement can take place, however it's anticipated that the procurement of this specialist support will be undertaken soon after the approval of the budget. I also would confirm to my Honourable friend the Terms of Reference has already been drawn out n could be shared with this House if it needs to be anything else added to capture what this island is trying to accomplish. Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister, Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

I thank the Honourable Minister for his response, would he confirm that the current eligibility criteria are not going to be revisited until this substantial piece of upcoming work is completed?

Madam President -

Thank you Madam, Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs?

The Hon. Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development –

Thank you Madam.

Madam President -

I do beg your pardon Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development.

The Hon. Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development –

That's quite ok Madam Deputy Speaker and I thank you, and I thank the Madam sorry my Honourable friend for her question no it is not anticipated that any review will be done before the substantial work as we are bringing in a specialist in pension work and we feel that that is the best way forward to have somebody who understands the complications of the pensions systems. Thank you.

Madam President -

Thank you Minister, Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Will the Honourable Minister undertake to ensure that at least the Treasury Directorate leaflet entitled “ Basic Island, Pension - your rights and obligations” is corrected as a matter of urgency as the section relating to eligibility criteria has a serious flaw.

Madam President -

Thank you. Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker and I'd like to thank my Honourable friend for her question and yes I will also like to thank you for bringing that to our attention and that will work that piece of work will be undertaken as a matter of urgency thank you.

Madam President -

Thank you Minister. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

I'd like to thank the Honourable Minister for his response because this issue is one that is causing considerable concern and confusion to potential applicants.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Dr Corinda Essex. Next question please?



***Question No. 6 – The Honourable Ronald Coleman to ask the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care.***

Madam President -

The Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care tell this Council has the St Helenian Government any plans to assist the retired people of the island with essential pairs-repairs such as leaking roofs in their homes, to allow them to live in their homes longer especially those who are living on social benefits and small pensions?

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Ronald Coleman, the Minister for Health and Social Care.

The Hon. Minister for Health and Social Care –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker and I thank the Honourable Member for his question. The repairs and maintenance of private properties falls outside of the Social Care budget however, there has been some remedial work works completed on properties for people with additional needs and disabilities to enable them to remain at home and decrease the demand of Government Landlord housing and residential care or sheltered accommodation. The Disabled disability grant held within the Social Care budget enables people with disabilities to have adaptations to the properties to fulfil their needs and enable them to safely remain at home for longer. The Grant however, is quite small but has enabled the building of wet rooms accessible outside spaces ramps, equipment and where possible stands to meet arising needs. The Grant is managed closely by a multiagency panel, to prioritize these and meet the scrutiny of the internal and external audits, the Grant is undertaken subject to financial assessments of the recipient to enable the most vulnerable to access the support, both portfolios port portfolios which include the Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development and Health and Social Care, recognises that there is a grown number of older people living in homes that will or do require maintenance to ensure that they are safe and continue to meet the needs of the resident of whom have very little incomes. With this in mind we have formed a Working Group to consider these issues but also factor in a grown trend of people gifting family's properties prior to their death and any adaptations or updates to these properties will have to consider these elements as well.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister, the Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

I just want to thank the Minister for his reply, thank you.

Madam President -

Thank you, next question please?

***Question No. 7 – The Honourable Gillian Brooks to ask the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development.***

Madam President -

The Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development provide an update regarding the proposed design changes to the R2 Project?

Madam President -

The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development –

Thank you Deputy Speaker, I would like to thank the Honourable Member for her question. I think well before I give my answer to the question I should give some background context to the situation. The R2 business case did make a compelling case for the rehabilitation of Side Path and Field Road, and it was intended for both roads to be completed with a bitumen surface. One of the critical success factors discussed was the design life of the road to be 20 years. This was predicated on the assumption that materials can be produced locally which would be readily available on island and to the appropriate specification – to construct a flexible road pavement (a bituminous carriageway) in accordance with Overseas Road Note (ORN) 3 and 31, as this would provide the best Value of Money. It was agreed that Side Path rehabilitation works would be constructed using local contractors with local design and supervision, split into seven (7) construction contracts, with the original budget estimate (including 25% contingency) being £1.36million. As we progressed into Contract 3, which involved the laying of the road base, it became apparent that the road base specification was not being achieved. The quality of the road base is a key component in achieving the required performance (and design life) for the road. Progress of site trials has proven what is working and what isn't working. With the completion of additional laboratory analysis and quality checks, the supply of appropriate and specified materials is unlikely to be achieved. In March this year, the EDIP team re-evaluated the bituminous (flexible) road construction and proposed to construct a concrete (rigid) road pavement for Side Path. Approvals from all relevant Stakeholders has now been received and following negotiations with the contractor, we are now able to progress with a variation to the existing contract. Based on the original budget for Side Path, we are able to implement the concrete road surfacing option at 2% (£30,222) below the original budget, and therefore the change at this current time will be met from within the existing approved budget. The concrete road option also provides a longer design life (40 years) and a lower whole life costing, and so will provide better Value of Money. The supervision of contract 3 – storm water management and road base - has now sorry the suspension not supervision been lifted, and works will now recommenced on site. So completion of construction and opening of Side Path road is now expected in October 2022. Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister, Honourable Gilly, I do beg your pardon, the Honourable Gillian Brooks.

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, so are there sorts of round of measures still suitable or do these need to be changed as a result of the design changes?

Madam President -  
Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development –  
Thank you Deputy Speaker, I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for her supplementary question and just to confirm the run off drains that is currently in place as Members of the public will see that the huge pipes sticking out through the wall. Yes that is suitable for concrete surface as well. Thank You.

Madam President -  
Thank you Honourable Minister, Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –  
Has PMU consulted with Planning Office on any variations from the Original Plans, to ensure that any works are fully compliant with planning regulations?

Madam President -  
Thank you Honourable Gillian Brooks, Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development –  
Thank you Deputy Speaker, and yes my Honourable friend I can confirm that all the relevant authorities have been consulted on. Thank you.

Madam President -  
Thank you Honourable Minister, Honourable Andrew Turner?

The Hon. Andrew Turner –  
Thank you, will the Honourable Minister tell this house what sort of projected changes in maintenance costs following the design changes?

Madam President -  
Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development –  
Thank you Deputy Speaker, and I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for his questions. However, I don't have that level of detail at the moment but I can undertake to provide this information to my Honourable friend as soon as I talk to the relevant expertise. Thank you.

Madam President -  
Thank you Honourable Minister.

The Hon. Andrew Turner –  
I'd like to thank, oh sorry jumping the gun a bit there. I'd like to thank the Honourable Minister for that undertaking and to ask what steps are being taken to ensure no further damages caused to the heritage walls in the area?

Madam President -  
Thank you, Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development –

I'd like to thank you Deputy Speaker and I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for his supplementary question. The steps are taken is part of the variation, part of the variation was for the safety and the protection of the heritage wall. Thank you.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister, Thank you. Any further questions? next question please.

***Question No. 8 – The Honourable Robert Midwinter to ask the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care.***

Madam President -

The Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy, will the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care tell this Council how many individuals have tested positive for Covid-19 in Saint Helena since the outbreak of the pandemic, and of those who have tested positive, how many have required hospital attention as a direct result of having Covid-19?

Madam President -

Thank you, the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care?

The Hon. Minister for Health and Social Care –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, and I thank the Honourable Member for his question just to add bit I think this is probably the shortest answer that I would give it is a very specific question, so just to update yourselves and the public there has been 45 positive cases and none of them have required hospital admissions.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, and I thank I really thank the Honourable Minister for his response it was very positive to hear. Can he say to the best of his knowledge has the Health Service been presented with any complicated cases at all, by people who have tested positive in quarantine?

Madam President -

Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care?

The Hon. Minister for Health and Social Care –

Thank you Madam Speaker and thank you and thanks to the Member and his follow up question, at the moment none has required any requirements from the hospital at all.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter–

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker and again I thank the Honourable Minister for his very positive response there, will the Health service be undertaking an updated information and education program to Covid-19 as a part of the roadmap to reducing quarantine?

Madam President -

Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Minister for Health and Social Care –

Thank you Madam Speaker, and I think once again thank you for your supplementary question Honourable Member, part of the road map for Covid-19, a large part of the roadmap for Covid-19 is to ensure we update and continue to keep our community with us. The first reduction in in quarantine was seen as a very minimal risk to the public, however going forward from now we are in the process of providing for a long communications plan that we will roll out and work with yourselves and the community as we go through these testing times. Thank you.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister, Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, and again I just wish to thank the Honourable Minister for that very positive response. Thank you.

Madam President -

Thank you, Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, will the Honourable Minister confirm that figures that he gave included the crew of the shipping vessel that tested positive in our waters?

Madam President -

Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care?

The Hon. Minister for Health and Social Care –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker and I thank you Honourable Dr Corinda Essex, yes it has included those figures.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister, Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Can the Honourable Minister confirm that none of those crew members required medical intervention?

Madam President -

Thank you, Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care?

The Hon. Minister for Health and Social Care –

Thank you Madam Speaker, once again thank you Honourable Member, yes there was a negative intervention with one of the crew members however, it was not Covid related.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister, any further questions? No? Thank you next question please?

***Question No. 9 – The Honourable Ronald Coleman to ask the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development.***

Madam President -

The Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development tell this House if the St Helena Government have considered any plans to enable the Bank of St Helena to introduce International Banking for use in St Helena for its people using other international banks overseas and to assist and encourage Inward Investors?

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Ronald Coleman. The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, and I'd like to thank my Honourable friend for a very good question. SHG has for some years been working with the Bank of St Helena and other financial institutions to enable St Helenians to have access to international banking – which for the purposes of this answer I am assuming the question is referring to internationally recognised bank accounts. Firstly, there are a number of challenges the Bank of St Helena faces, given the island's unique characteristics. SHG has over the years been in discussions with the Bank of St Helena to ascertain the reasons why they have been unable to offer internationally recognised Bank accounts to customers on island. The Bank of St Helena has a correspondence banking arrangement with Lloyds in the UK, in order to enable it to trade. This relationship puts a number of restrictions on the services it can offer, and any expansion to these services - for example allowing businesses to process international card payments at the point of sale - would come at a cost that would not be commercially viable to either the bank or the businesses providing the service. One option SHG and the Bank of St Helena explored was for Lloyds to provide international bank accounts and cards to Bank of St Helena customers. However we were told that UK banking regulations mean that Lloyds can only issue bank accounts and debit cards to UK resident customers. To that end, SHG announced in March 2020 that Gibraltar International Bank had agreed to formally support SHG and Bank of St Helena's initiative to provide easier access to international banking services for St Helena residents and businesses. This means that St Helena residents and businesses can now apply to open an account directly with GIB where they will be able to access online banking services and a debit card that can be used for online payments and use abroad. The GIB bank account is similar to having a UK bank account for the purposes of processing foreign transactions. I would encourage as many people as possible to contact GIB to take up this offer – it is a quick and easy process. Both SHG and BOSL are, however, aware that there is more to be done if St Helena is really going to be an island that facilitates business and is friendly to investors, both local and international. We are actively working with the bank to help the institution continue to grow as a key enabler of economic development on the island. This includes also working with the FSRA and global

regulators on understanding the changes we need to make to our laws and processes to allow any expansion of banking services on the island. As a start, we are currently in discussions with the FCDO and Her Majesty's Treasury in London, in order to understand the steps needed to ensure that the island, and its processes and laws, are fully compliant with the 40 Financial Action Task Force recommendations, to ensure that in the long term we are recognised as a world leader in our approach to anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism. Once that is achieved, Saint Helena should have much greater access to the world of international banking and finance. Thank you Deputy Speaker, and I'd like to thank the Honourable Member again for his question.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister, The Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Thank you Deputy Madam Speaker, I would just like to thank him for his comprehensive reply but would like to ask is there a timeframe?

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Ronald Coleman, Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development –

Thank you Deputy Speaker, and I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for his Supplementary question. However, I cannot give a time frame but what I can do Deputy Speaker is undertake that this will be a priority for this Government going forward. Thank you.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister, Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Just to thank the Honourable Minister for his reply thank you.

Madam President -

Thank you. Next question?

***Question No. 10 – The Honourable Robert Midwinter to ask the Honourable Minister for Environment, Natural Resources, and Planning.***

Madam President -

Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker will the Honourable Minister for Environment, Natural Resources, and Planning tell this Council how much funding has been received by the St Helena Government through the UK Government's Blue belt Programme for each of the past three financial years, and how much of this funding has been paid to local vessel owners for services rendered in support of this programme?

Madam President -

Thank you, the Honourable Minister for Environment, Natural Resources, and Planning?

The Hon. Minister for Environment, Natural Resources, and Planning –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, Madam Deputy Speaker I believe this is a two part question so I hope the listeners will bear with me with my response. So Deputy Madam Speaker, St Helena Government received two hundred and eighty four thousand five hundred and twenty five pounds during the financial year 2019/20 out of this amount for 2019/20 five thousand and eight hundred and one pounds was paid to local vessel owners I'll give a further break down Madam Speaker if I may of how that was made up. So out of the five thousand eight hundred and sixty one thousand five thousand eight hundred and sixty one pounds I beg your pardon five thousand eighty six seven pounds was paid for fish tagging work and seven hundred and seventy four pounds was paid for marine science dive surveys. For the financial year 2020/21 eleven thousand four hundred and fifty two pounds was paid to local vessel owners. Out of this amount five thousand six hundred and thirty two was paid for fish tagging work and five thousand eight hundred and twenty was paid for marine science and dive surveys during the year 2021/22 thirty four thousand three hundred and nine pounds was paid to local vessel owners. Out of this amount ten thousand eight hundred and seventy two was paid to fish tagging work and twenty three thousand four hundred and thirty seven was paid for marine science and dive surveys. Deputy Madam Speaker, over this three year period eleven local vessels were paid for services to St Helena Government through the Blue Belt funding.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister, the Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, and I just wish to thank the Honourable Minister for a very concise response it was much appreciated.

Madam President -

Thank you, next question please?

***Question No. 11 – The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex to ask the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development.***

Madam President -

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development state precisely what actions are planned to build new units or convert existing properties to address the need for Government Landlord Housing?

Madam President -

Thank you, Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, and I'd like to thank my Honourable friend for her question. To date we have built two new Government landlord properties at the Bottom Woods (CDA) or Comprehensive Development Area. One has been allocated with the other requiring



installation of services before it can be released. The Bunkers Hill development will see the construction of a further two houses as part of the development agreement which will process over a number of phases. In addition we are currently considering a development proposal for the Half Tree Hollow CDA, SHG have already invested in the core infrastructure and in return we will be looking to finalise the negotiations for a social housing provision within that CDA as well. We are also exploring other options to engage private sector led initiatives that will help address the demand on GL Housing. From an administrative point of view we are reviewing our existing policies including the right to buy, ensuring they are fit for purpose and aligned with the Island's housing need.

With a House Manager Housing now in place a tenancy audit will be undertaken that will help to inform Housing requirements and affordability, identify improvements and speed up the turn around on housing voids to allow better use of Government Landlord Housing. We are also looking to improve tenancy management, in particular the pay of rent arrears the payment of rent arrears. Actions will help to contribute to a number of these collective actions will help to contribute to the number of affordable homes available on the island while initiatives to build additional homes are developed. Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister, Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, and I thank my friend for his response. Will the Honourable Minister state what is the unspent balance in the revolving fund relating to the provision of Government Landlord Housing.

Madam President -

The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development –

Thank you Deputy Speaker, and I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for her question. However, I do not have that that that level of detail here of the actual figures of what is left. So I do apologise thank you.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister, Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

I accept the Honourable Minister's apology but, I would hope that he would supply us with that figure as a matter of urgency please?

Madam President -

Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development –

I do beg your pardon Deputy Speaker, yes I should have said that in my first reply we will we will undergo to supply you with that information. Thank you.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister, Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Will the Honourable Minister state the potential sites of Government Landlord Housing that have been explored on Government ground outside of CDA's?

Madam President -

The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development –

Thank you Deputy Speaker and I would like to thank the Honourable Member for her question. Yes some potential sites outside the EDA is has been explored sorry outside the CDA's. But it's at very early stages so I won't undertake to give any more information of areas on that because that still needs to be finalised. Thank you.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister, Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Is the Honourable Minister aware that the current shortage of Government Landlord Housing units is in fact causing some individuals considerable stress and tension which is in fact impacting negatively on their wellbeing?

Madam President -

The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, I can confirm that it is well known that there is a shortage of Government Landlord Housing. I can't confirm how that is effecting the tenants I'm not a specialist really I think that will come under, more under Social Health. But as the Landlord to Government properties we recognise that there is a need for more as the answer to my Honourable friends first question it does clearly state that this Government is actively working to achieve more Government Landlord Housing through Private Sector initiations. Thank you Deputy Speaker.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister, Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

I thank the Honourable Minister for his response. What sort of period of time do you think we are looking at before you will be able to have more clarity, on the likelihood of these Private Sector initiatives coming through?

Madam President -

Thank you, Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development –

Thank you Deputy Speaker and I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for her question, her supplementary question. I am pleased to say Deputy Speaker that we do have a Head of Property now in post. But he has only been in post for about 3 or 4 weeks so a very short time but I'm hoping now that we have somebody in that post that they will be able to do some work to help and address to help address the situation. Thank you Dr Essex and sorry I would say

that with there has been a period of time that we did not have this post filled and so there might have been some delays in the work that we were trying to do it's all down to resources and man power and I'd just like to say that in the last four weeks we've got those key people in post now which will help hopefully with the administration of the Housing Section. Thank you.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister, Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, can I ask the Minister, can the Minister say whether there will be consideration given to incentivising local interest investing local accommodation on the Island?

Madam President -

Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development –

Thank you Deputy Speaker, and I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for his question and my simple answer is yes there will be considerable consideration and later on in my Budget speech I do touch on how this Government is using initiatives to try and attract investment from the Private Sector on the Island. Thank you.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister, Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. I'd like to thank the Minister for that response I'm very pleased to hear that, noting that you made reference to the new Tenancy Management in his response would consideration be giving to creating an arm's length housing authority?

Madam President -

Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development –

Thank you Deputy Speaker, and I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for his supplementary question. Yes I would hope that with the recommendations of our new Head of Property that those considerations will be taken into account. Thank you

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister, Honourable Andrew Turner?

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, will the Honourable Minister tell this Council how many people are awaiting a Government Landlord House?

Madam President -

I don't think that is relating to the current question it was about planning to build new or convert existing.

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

Sorry Madam Deputy Speaker, the question to my mind is relevant because it's the problem we are trying to alleviate the houses are the number of people currently on the waiting list for a house.

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

It's a matter for you Madam Deputy Speaker. In Standing Order 8 rule 7 when a new answer has been given to a question any Member may ask a supplementary question for the purpose of elucidating any matters of fact with regarding which of an answer has been given a supplementary question shall not be used to introduce matters not relating to the original question. So it's a matter of you Madam Speaker.

Madam President -

My decision stands. No further questions. Thank you next question please?

***Question No. 12 – The Honourable Gillian Brooks to ask the Honourable Minister for Environment, Natural Resources, and Planning.***

Madam President -

Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Environment, Natural Resources, and Planning tell this Council why Saint Helena Government believe that it is necessary to procure a consultancy to develop a Water Resources Management Plan?

Madam President -

The Honourable Minister for Environment, Natural Resources, and Planning?

The Hon. Minister for Environment, Natural Resources, and Planning –

Thank you Deputy Madam Speaker, Deputy Madam Deputy Speaker, I do apologise for not addressing you properly. Saint Helena Government developed a Water Resources Strategy in 2020 and one of the key outputs of this strategy is the establishment and implementation of a Water Resource Management Plan. For scope involving developing a long term Water Resource Management Plan complete with scenario modelling and analysis requires dedicated specialists, resources that St Helena Government currently does not have.

Madam President -

The Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Can the Minister say what previous work has been done locally and also by paid visiting consultants?

The Hon. Minister for Environment, Natural Resources, and Planning –

Thank you Deputy Madam Speaker, so locally Deputy Madam Speaker a Saint Helena Water Strategy Working Group was established as a result of in December 2019 the Legislative Council resolved that the water security in Saint Helena should be treated as a key priority. I'm also aware Deputy Madam Speaker that a few Water Resource Management plans had been

developed for Saint Helena in the past. So a plan was developed in 1990 by Matheson which covered 1990 to 2010 and then also in 2011 consultants from Fairhurst developed a 20 year Water Resources plan which unfortunately Deputy Madam Speaker is still in draft as it was never completed.

Madam President -

Thank you Minister, thank you any further questions? No? Honourable Members we've now completed the questions.

## **Council Adjourned**

## **Council Resumed**

Madam President -

Honourable Members welcome back, we will now pick up on the next item on the Order Paper, before we do I understand Minister Scipio would like to rise on a point of information?

The Hon. Minister for Environment, Natural Resources, and Planning –

That is correct Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank you for giving me the permission to do so. So Madam Deputy Speaker earlier on in my question I answered to the Honourable Rob Midwinter I did mention that question was a two part question but, so I was doing my best in responding but what I didn't do Honourable Rob Midwinter is give you the actual total of funding received from St Helena Government for 2 financial years and I do apologise to our listeners for omitting that and I just feel that Deputy Madam Speaker that I need to do that so thank you for my permission to do that. So just to recap then in 2019/20 £284,525 was received, in the Financial Year 2021 £279,956 was received and in 2021 £573,120 was received, which makes a total of one million, one hundred and thirty seven and six hundred and one pounds. So again thank you Deputy Madam Speaker for allowing me to provide that information to our listeners.

Madam President -

Thank you Minister Scipio. Would you like to respond Honourable Member?

The Hon. Rob Midwinter –

Yes thank you Deputy Speaker, I really thank my Honourable Colleague for that addition however, I was actually thinking to myself that this seems a little bit light compared to what I had thought it had cost the UK Government so I really appreciate that additional response, thank you.

Madam President -

Thank you, next item of business please?

## **6.**

## **MOTIONS**

***Motion No. 1 – The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development.***

## **THE APPROPRIATION BILL, 2022**

Madam President -

The Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development –

Madam Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the Supplementary Appropriation Bill, 2022 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council.

Madam President -

Is there a seconder? Honourable Minister, Chief Minister I beg your pardon.

The Hon. Chief Minister –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, I beg to second.

Madam President -

Thank you. Mover, would you like to speak to the Motion. Thank you Chief Minister, oh Minister for Infrastructure, Treasury and Development, I do apologise.

The Hon. Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker it gives me great pleasure to be able to present the Appropriation Bill 2022, the first budget for St Helena under the new Ministerial Government. This budget sets us on a path to use the limited resources afforded to build a foundation in order to achieve our Vision that was published in March of this year. At the heart of our vision, there are three main dimensions: our environment, our economy and our social obligations. To enable us to achieve our vision, our priority policies will focus on targeted areas, we are instrumental if we are to address our current challenges. We are grateful to Her Majesty's Government for their contribution of Financial Aid, this year, like the last two we will receive a flat line settlement of £26.79 million and up to £2.88 million is available for the St Helena Airport operations. FCDO continues to provide contingency fund on a call down basis at an increasing level of £2.12 million. This means Deputy Speaker Madam Deputy Speaker total available funding from HMG of £31.79 million. Local revenues are projected to be £11.67 million and with a withdrawal from the General Reserve of the Consolidated Fund of a further £1.22 Million, this means total spending expected for 2022/23 to be £44.68 million. I want my first budget speech Madam Deputy Speaker, to provide hope for our people that St Helena will not, during this government's tenure, be constantly on the back foot, but that we will have a plan for the economy that will build a sustainable environment that creates opportunities and inspires social and economic progress. This budget aligns our spending with our policy priorities in order to achieve our goals as set out in the ten year plan - whether that be the development of new infrastructure, changes to laws and regulation, or the targeting of incentives to the most productive sectors of our economy. This budget also outlines plans to generate new revenue streams, which will be key to empower our island to achieve its goals. Our Key Priorities Madam Deputy Speaker I don't think anyone would guess it is health. Madam Deputy Speaker, this year this Government's key priority is to ensure a more robust health care service which acknowledges and focuses on holistic health, taking into account our aging population and the complexity of our health and social needs, whilst encouraging a more responsible approach to improving our individual lifestyles. We move onto environment now Deputy Speaker, because environment a healthy environment equals a healthier life. Priorities include the protection of our environment, developing our renewable energy and water security plans which will ensure that we primarily protect our environment,

whilst delivering both resources at affordable prices. We will thrive to maintain and improve our blue and green agenda aspiring to become a blue print for others to follow. Maximising Revenues we want to achieve economic growth by enabling local private sector development and making St Helena more accessible for visitors, investors and residents by modernising legislation and policies that will make St Helena more attractive place all round. We will encourage opportunities to attract and facilitate new streams of revenue, in an attempt to reduce our reliance on UK aid and reinforce our current shrinking tax base, and we aim to be the Government that takes St Helena forward into a new digital era maximising opportunities that comes with the arrival of the fibre optic cable. We want to create the platform for existing businesses to grow and for new businesses to commence. Food Security, Food Security is key and we will put in place policies and legislation to enable the expansion of our agriculture and fishing sectors through modern techniques. Education, we will strengthen and improve our educational offering by continuing to recognise the importance of inclusivity, whilst also acknowledging the importance of education in our lives. We will encourage lifelong learning by investing in our by investing and valuing our people in order to develop their skills, training and rewarding will create a sustainable workforce. Housing we will implement schemes and policies that will provide options for affordable housing and enable our residents where possible to own their homes. Whilst there will be a number of other priorities that have not been listed here which are important for St Helena and its people, we have used these key priority areas as the basis for the allocation of this budget. Our Key outcomes for 2021/22 Madam Deputy Speaker, we must however not forget about those good news stories that have been achieved over the past year which will positively impact on the lives on most in society. I would like to take a moment to highlight some of those key success stories. During the pandemic we have been able to keep our Island safe from any outbreaks of COVID in our community, meaning that at a time when the rest of the world was in lock down, our citizens have been able to go about their daily lives in a ‘business as usual’ manner. Everyone involved in keeping the community safe should be congratulated for their hard work and dedication to achieving this outcome. Social Society, sorry Social Security Building on the work of the previous Legislative Council – we have now been able to implement substantial changes to Social Security ordinance and regulations which saw a move from a ‘household’ based system of determining entitlement to Income Related Benefit, to a system based on ‘families’. Increasing availability of Housing There was good progress made on increasing the availability of land for house building facilitating the availability of affordable land. The comprehensive development area (CDA) in Bottom Woods has seen the construction of the road network and installation of a number of services, two new Government Landlord houses have been completed with an additional block of flats containing 4 apartments to commence later this year. Soon these serviced plots will be offered to the market, with a mix of affordable and market value properties or plots. The much awaited signing of the development agreement for Bunkers Hill will see 154 plots being made available through nine development phases. Each phase will need to be agreed. This CDA will also have a number of plots available for first time home owners, residential plots and investment plots. As part of the development agreement the developer will provide SHG with two new GL homes and 4 serviced plots for development of additional Government Landlord Housing properties. It is also pleasing to report that we are in discussions with another developer in relation to the development of the CDA in Half Tree Hollow, if successful this will see an additional 50 serviced plots being made available, with additional Government Landlord Housing properties. Projects let’s have a drink of water 2021 was a significant year in the journey towards the digital transformation of St Helena, with the physical landing of our cable and the construction and commissioning of the Cable Landing Station in Rupert’s. This was a significant achievement for all those involved particularly given the CLS civil works and the installation were undertaken and overseen by local contractors and

SHG staff respectively. We also saw good progress in a number of other projects including: Rupert's Port development, The Sewerage treatment plant in Rupert's, and a number of micro projects were completed which included the upgrading of two public toilets, a pedestrian walkway in Longwood, and additional much needed car parking at the hospital. On our environment agenda. Excellent progress was made in year 1 of the Cloud Forest project, with a number of visits from specialists despite the challenges around access to the island. The EU funded 'move on' project which recently came to an end was also a great success story for St Helena, through this project, decision makers have access to spatial data and analysis to support evidence-based policy and decision making. Education There was strong progress made in education attainment over the last year: Financial year 2021-22 attainment and progress targets were met. Madam Deputy Speaker I could go on but the point this makes is that whilst it is important to look forward see what still needs to be achieved, it is equally important to step back and recognise when there has been progress and good news. We often don't do enough to portray all of the good things that are happening. Right let's turn to challenges and opportunities now Madam Deputy Speaker, Health Service The health service has come under a lot of pressure over the past 12 months. As one of our key priorities for this financial year, spending on health and social care has largely been protected from any budget cuts. There is £8.9 million earmarked for recurrent spending, £0.5 million earmarked for essential improvements to areas within and around the hospital. There is also some £4.5 million allocated in the TC budget for Health professionals bringing a total of £13.9 million allocated to Health and Social Care in the coming year, this represents 31 % of the overall budget. This Madam Deputy Speaker is good news and should provide reassurance to our community that we are treating Health as our number one priority. Cost of Living, When I speak to many in the public, an area that is of great concern to all is that of the current rising prices of goods and services and the overall impact this is having on the cost of living especially when there is little or no wage growth. This is not just impacting on St Helena but also globally, in the UK for example families are seeing significant upward pressure on spending on core commodities such as utilities, as well as food. I will be undertaking a review to see how we can ease the tax burden on households by reviewing the personal allowance within the coming year. Madam Deputy Speaker we have recently approved an increase in the minimum wage which will come into effect from the 1st August 2022. This will see the hourly rate for those aged 18 and over increase from £3.25 to £3.37 and for those under the ages of 18 the hourly rate increased from £2.30 - £2.42. In addition, it is the intention of this Government to achieve a targeted minimum wage over the next 2 years of £4.00 per hour for adults over the age of 18 years and a rate of £3.05 for those under the age of 18. Madam Deputy Speaker, these targeted increases in the minimum wage will help to combat the rising cost of living. Care will be taken to understand the impacts of these proposed changes on employers. Covid-19 We received approximately £5.0 – 6.0 million per annum by tourists in 2019/20, reducing to £2.0 million in 2020/21. The 75% reduction in arrivals to St Helena as a result of COVID, has definitively had, and will continue to have, a negative impact on the Island's economy by reducing spending on-Island. This continues to be a challenge with just one flight every other week. A number of tourism related businesses have struggled to sustain themselves during the pandemic, whilst others have been resilient and have diversified where possible. It is estimated by those in the industry that Tourism will not reach the pre pandemic levels until at least the 2024/25 season. Tour operators have told us that it will be nearly impossible to sell any packages to St Helena whilst there are quarantine restrictions being imposed and whilst there is only a flight every other week. Whilst there was a recent reduction in the quarantine period to 7 days further work is being carried out to assess whether there should be further reductions. This work is anticipated to be completed towards the end of May 2022. It is clear Madam Deputy Speaker that we must take informed decisions on quarantine if we are to provide the level of certainty to the industry in order to



reinvigorate this sector. The Global Economic Climate, There are a number of external factors that are outside of the control of St Helena that will have a significant impact on life on a small isolated island like ours. Inflation is linked very closely to challenges around the increased cost of living with St Helena still heavily reliant on imports mainly from the UK and South Africa which is roughly split evenly between the two. The rate of inflation in the UK is currently around 7.0% and climbing, whilst inflation in South Africa is currently around 5.9%. Whilst inflation on St Helena is currently 3.3% it will not take long before the trickle effect from the UK and SA will result in higher inflation on St Helena. The conflict in the Ukraine is having a significant impact on the global price of oil and therefore fuel prices. We will see quite substantial increases in the cost of fuel in the coming weeks, and this has already had a significant impact on the cost of freight to the Island through the bunker adjustment factor. We have seen the cost of a container jump by around £600 between 2 voyages. However Madam Deputy Speaker you will have heard earlier today that this Government has taken the decision to continue to provide a subsidy of around £900 per container from the UK and around £500 for containers originating from South Africa and we will continue to help to lessen the burden of the cost of freight, through the allocation of £0.5 million in this year's budget for shipping. Like for many countries the pandemic has disrupted our supply chains, making it difficult to source essential goods and services, this is particularly difficult to control on an isolated Island in the middle of the South Atlantic with limited physical access. This has meant a number of delays on many key infrastructure 8 projects and is a challenge that will continue to need careful planning and consideration in the year ahead. Connectivity and Accessibility, Our isolation can often be seen as a blessing and a curse, during the height of the pandemic we were able to keep the community safe from any community spread, but we are certainly constrained by our physical isolation. But this is set to change with the commissioning of the fibre optic cable scheduled for early 2023 which will bring with it enormous opportunity to transform St Helena. It is no secret that this government and indeed most of the Island has aspirations for more affordable, faster and unlimited internet. To that end we continue to seek a Telecoms partner who will be able to deliver the level of services that a 21st century island requires if we are to truly take advantage of what this cable will bring. I have heard concerns being aired that we have not yet announced who will be the Islands next telecommunications operator, I want to reassure you all that we are taking the time to ensure we get the best outcomes for the long term interest of the Island. Economies of scale, one of the biggest challenges businesses face on St Helena is the size of the local market. This is true for both those whose businesses rely on imports and those who produce goods locally. It is clear to me that there needs to be better working together within sectors across the island, to identify where we can pool resources and knowledge to be able to take advantage of areas such as volume discounts and mechanisation to drive down costs and improve productivity. I have tasked my team to look at how we can facilitate this within the private sector as well as within SHG. Shrinking working age population and tax base the problems of market size are aggravated by one of the biggest challenges we face as an Island community which is the current outward migration. We have families leaving, and not only taking valuable skills with them but also in the case of families, taking a generation with them. We must reverse this trend if we are to have any prospects of sustainable, economic growth. With the essential skills leaving the island it leaves a gap which must be filled and it is essential that we have policies that supports the transfer of skills and increase the working age population. I'm pleased to report that a final draft of the new immigration policy will soon come to EXCO for endorsement to go back out to public consultation. However we cannot stop at simply making it easier for people to get here. In tandem, we need to have an awareness of why people are leaving. I am hoping that this budget starts to address many of the things people tell me makes them leave – low wages, a lack of opportunity, growing inequality, a lack of recognition and people feeling undervalued, the cost

of living, and the quality of our services. While St Helena will never be home for everybody, this government's ambition is to make it a home (again) for those throughout the diaspora who yearn to return. Demographics. The 2021 census was a stark reminder that we have an aged and ageing population with more than 25% of the population over the age of 65.1 This will continue to put pressure on Government resources particularly in health & social care and on the basic Island pension. Social Care have effectively utilized their budget to develop a growing home care service, which provides care for over 70 people within the community who would have otherwise required residential, sheltered or supported accommodation. This approach to care delivery enables people to remain at home for much longer and continues to promote some level of independence outside of institutional care settings. The budget will also enabled individual bespoke care packages for people with life changing illness or injury, to return home from hospital with the support to meet their needs to a safe standard, which would have historically resulted in an admission to residential care. Respite care has been developed to enable the carers and those being cared for, to have a break and offer some social opportunities. Respite care enables carers to continue to care for much longer and therefore reduces the demand for residential care settings. With our ageing demographic the affordability of the unfunded Basic Island Pension liability is an area of significant concern for this Government and resources have been allocated in the coming financial year for a technical expert to assist with reviewing pensions and to make recommendations to Ministers for pension reform to ensure that going forward this state pension is sustainable, affordable and will include amongst other things the option of some form of National Insurance contribution scheme. We have allocated £2.7 million in this budget for the Basic Island pension which is a statutory obligation year on year for SHG. Labour Market, accessing the right skills and experience in the current labour market continues to be a challenge for the both the private and public sector. The 2019 Labour Market Strategy focussed on these challenges which resulted in a number of policy initiatives to level the playing field for access to skilled labour and also saw the introduction of Careers Access St Helena which looks to match the right people to the right skills so they become more employable. This has been a success thus far and we will continue to invest in this area in the year ahead. There continues to be a heavy reliance on Technical Cooperation posts within the public service and with a shrinking local labour market, it is likely this will continue for a number of years, especially given that many of the roles are specialist posts. This year there is a total allocation of £8.5 million for TC posts. SHG recognises that salaries are generally low in comparison to the high cost of living. Salaries are a contentious issue and St Helena Public Service needs to ensure it has a fair and transparent way to set salaries across all roles in the Public Service. It also needs to have the ability to react quickly to market conditions within a transparent framework, either to retain shortage skills or react to market competitiveness for key skills, when required. A new Pay Policy is being developed to achieve this. This is positive work Madam Deputy Speaker. A new graduate scheme has been developed to create a pathway for our students to become the labour market of the future. The scheme focuses on targeting scholarship students that are at University (or those that have recently graduated) to ensure there are much stronger links and pathways back to the island and employment. With the arrival of the cable this will allow us the opportunity to access a new labour market where services can be supplied remotely. With the current bandwidth constraints this is not practical, but in the future we could buy in our labour requirements without them necessarily being physically present here in St Helena. There is also an opportunity for St Helena to provide services to those outside of the Island by leveraging our competitive advantage. English speaking, GMT time zone and laws based on the English legal system are just a few of the factors that make us well positioned to export professional services to the rest of the world. My aim is to construct an industrial hub in which businesses can be based, this will be a key enabler for this. Education, Human capital development is essential

not only to future economic growth but also to the long-term economic resilience of the island. It is vital that our education service begins to prepare our young people for the future workplace. The success of recent cohorts of our scholars in technical STEM degrees (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) shows me that St Helenians have the ability to compete in the global labour market with these high value skills. Our logical, analytical, and problem-solving minds, which I believe saints are blessed with, owing to the need we have to adapt to our environment from an early age, this sets us up perfectly to become world leaders in digital labour. St Helenians' skills are already one of our biggest exports, and I hope that once the cable is up and running these skills can be developed and exported without the need for anyone to move away. Education continues to be a high priority for this Government and this year we have allocated £3.6 million to Education Skills and Employment. Environment Actions to tackle climate change will continue to be a key priority for SHG. Through our energy and water strategies we will continue to promote the use of renewable energy sources and will continue to work with our utility provider to find a solution which will allow us to attain our goal of 100% energy from renewable sources. At the same time, we will continue to explore and implement sustainable options, including building on the cloud forest project, to build resilience in our water supply and reduce our reliance on rainfall to replenish water storage St Helena has a rich built and natural environment and we want to ensure that both are protected. This year we have allocated £1.7million for Environment, Natural Resources and Planning and this will be complemented by external environmental project funding this year of £0.9million. Funding has also been secured for year two of the project to restore the cloud forest in the Peak's National Park. We will also continue to support and enable research on our environment through the St Helena Research Institute. Revenues, The need to increase revenues to support further sustainable economic and social development is a key priority for this Government. With the current economic climate in the UK we are unlikely to get any further increases in financial aid from HMG or any certainty that the current level of funding will be maintained and therefore we must do all we can to become more self-sustaining. In addition to kick starting the post pandemic tourism recovery, this Government will be investing resources into developing new revenue streams unlocked through the arrival of the cable. My team has begun a programme of work to enable other new industries to base themselves on the island and make us an attractive destination for both traditional and new, niche financial services. We are currently in the process of updating St Helena's company registry laws so that all companies registered on the island will be legally required to declare their beneficial owners. We are currently working with international partners to understand the feasibility of digital finance on St Helena. While we recognise that St Helena does not have a competitive advantage in the more mainstream digital finance sectors, there are opportunities in the niche, underserved, and growing markets. Two such areas we are exploring are developing a legal framework that recognises Decentralised Autonomous Organisations (DAOs) and providing legal certainty for otherwise unclassified crypto-assets, such as Non Fungible Tokens or NFTs that are issued through smart contracts running on the block chain or as some now refer to as WEB 3 Infrastructure. We are continuing to explore the possibility of cultivating and exporting high grade medical marijuana for CBD extraction. Like digital finance this is also a fast growing international commodity. This year we expect to raise £6.0 million in Income Tax, up from £5.7 million in 2021/22. This is largely down to projected increases in service tax and some upward trajectory in Corporation tax. Customs duties are also expected to increase to £5.6 million this year up from £5.4 million in 2021/22. The increase is a result of projected increases in general Customs duty offset by projected decreases in revenue from alcohol and tobacco. Other revenues make up £1.8 million Other economic enablers On top of everything already said, this budget period will also see SHG working with the key institutions that enable economic activity and growth on the island. Working with the Bank of St Helena and other

financial institutions to ensure the range of financial products continue to serve the needs of businesses and individuals as we move forward into the modern age, this Government is ensuring we have the tools and resources in place to enable growth. Taxation historically, tax in St Helena has focused on income tax and customs duties as the chief mode to achieve revenues. This disadvantages people who rely solely on local employment and business for their livelihood and favours people who are able to sustain a lifestyle from gains or profits that are not presently taxable on St Helena such as through inheritance, overseas pensions, or property wealth. This is inconsistent with the goal of our Labour Market Strategy to attract people to live and work on St Helena. Tax reform provides St Helena with an opportunity to ease the tax burden on individuals, particularly of working age, by improving the efficiency of tax collection and spreading the tax system over a wider base. It also provides an opportunity to ensure that the tax system enables the Island's community as a whole to be in a position to benefit from tourism and successful inward and local investment. Also, very importantly, tax reform will provide the funding needed for a welfare safety net. All of our future policies on tax reform are underpinned by the principles of being fair, progressive, and equitable, while broadening the tax base, modernising fees and charges, and providing strategic incentives to key economic sectors. To that end, we are exploring initiatives to be greener - through encouraging greener transport initiatives; improving the support to families with children; continuing to encourage healthy behaviours, more effective and efficient use of land and buildings; and levelling the playing field between higher and lower earners. I can also confirm that there are no proposed changes to the income tax rates for next financial year. As is customary the import duty on Alcohol increased by inflation in line with the current policy from the end of March 2022, this means an increase of 1.7%. As a result, the duty on a bottle of 750ml of spirit or liqueur will increase by 24p, a 750ml bottle of wine will increase by 9p and the duty on a 330ml bottle of castle light will increase by 1p. Tobacco and Tobacco products increased at the end of March 2022 by 3.7% which is inflation plus 2.0%. This means that on a packet of 20 cigarettes the duty increased by 18p. There will be no other customs duty changes made at this time. Our Outcomes Madam Deputy Speaker we are all striving to achieve the goals as outlined in the Island's 10 year plan. This year we have allocated the budget to achieve the desired outcomes as follows: Altogether Healthier - We want to live longer, healthier, happier lives and are able to remain independent and active in our homes for as long as possible. We have allocated £13.5 million to deliver on this outcome. Altogether Wealthier - Our communities feel the benefits of economic growth by being in-work and enjoying a good quality of life. St Helena works toward becoming more financially sustainable and less reliant on aid. We have allocated £6.5 million to deliver on this outcome, Effective Infrastructure - We live in well-designed sustainable places where we can access the amenities and services we need. We have allocated £1.7 million to deliver on this outcome. Altogether Greener - We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect and enhance it for future generations. We have allocated £1.2 million to deliver on this outcome. Altogether Better for Children and Young People - Our children and young people in St Helena get the best start in life and we are better educated, more skilled and more successful. We have allocated £5.6 million to deliver on this outcome. Altogether Safer - We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger, and our older and vulnerable residents feel included, safe, and supported with choices to live independently. We have allocated £2.8 million to deliver on this outcome. Effective Efficient and Accountable Public Sector - Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to customer's needs. We generate sustainable revenues to reduce our budget deficit. Our decisions are evidence based. We have allocated £7.9 million to deliver on this outcome. Closing Remarks Every Government wants to provide certainty to its people and it had been hoped that St Helena would receive a three-year financial aid settlement with HMG to allow this Government to implement longer term plans with

certainty over funding. Unfortunately, due to the current climate with the UK and their own challenges around uncertainties not helped by the current conflict in Ukraine, this year's settlement is for a one-year only. We will continue to work with our partners in HMG to press for a future settlement which provides the certainty we need for implementing long term plans. My budget speech comes at a time of both hope and uncertainty, maybe more leaning towards uncertainty, but in this last section of my first budget speech, hope is where I'll start and finish. Hope, because a new dawn is approaching as the world turns a corner in the fight to combat COVID 19. Borders are opening, vaccination and booster rates are proving effective, resulting in less serious COVID cases and related deaths. The world is quickly adapting to living with COVID. Uncertainty, Madam Deputy Speaker, we can put as much resources and time into formulating a plan to reopen our Island but there is always the uncertainty of when and how. Has the time come to move with the rest of the world? Can we cope with a community outbreak? All big questions Madam Deputy Speaker, but as leaders we must unite and find the answers. Uncertainty of delivering on our long term plans in every sector, a 1-year settlement only adds to the difficulty in planning for our post COVID recovery. St Helena depends heavily on imports, and we will remain alert to potential economic aftershocks on the horizon that will no doubt send ripples to our shores in a variety of ways.

With the events in Eastern Europe, the uncertainty of what this means to the way of life on St Helena remains at the fore-front of our minds. We will continue to take every possible action within our capacity to cushion the effects of rising costs but unless we start to generate new streams of revenue we will always be playing catch up. Now, back to hope Madam Deputy Speaker, with a little light at the end of the tunnel thanks to HMG in the form of our capital programme (EDIP), EU Funding for our fibre optic cable and a new form of Ministerial Government to deliver phase 2 of EDIP, and the rollout of high speed internet to our homes and businesses. I hope with the support of this entire house that we can finalise our transformational business cases to present to HMG in this financial year so we may start the process of attaining further capital programme funding. Work has commenced with the design and plans for the new prison. This Government cannot continue to ignore the facts, and although it may not fit with economic development in principle, the construction and running of the new prison will bring new work and jobs. I would also like to say Madam Deputy Speaker that we are already exploring options to generate new revenue from the current prison building once the new prison is operational. The last of the capital funding for the EDIP still needs to be approved, business cases will be developed to ensure greater long-term returns from economic development, as a snippet: We will create a light industrial and technology business zone that meets the demands of the 21st century. It will provide one location for existing and new businesses to be established and grow in a controlled environment that enhances its surroundings, designed to be as eco-friendly and sustainable as possible, promoting what St Helena is already leading in, with the arrival of the cable the need to prepare for opportunities is essential if we want to make the most of our cable in an environmentally friendly way we will develop opportunities for Public Private Partnerships (PPP) in areas such as the Jamestown wharf regeneration plan, providing and enabling the private sector to invest in prime real-estate and create economic development, that will add a tourist attraction and offer improved experience for cruise ships disembarkation and our yachting visitors alike. Regardless of whether you are a tourist or a local, we will all be able to enjoy a safe and designated waterfront that meets all our leisurely needs including those with disabilities. I hope, Madam Deputy Speaker that soon the people of St Helena will have access to fast, affordable, and unlimited internet through a 21st Century cable, these foundations will also benefit opening St Helena up to so many more prospects which our Island has never had before. For instance, St Helena has been greatly fixed on attracting investment that grows and fits with industry and assets of our past and present, but with this cable, we can also look to growing the industries

of our future, and with the amalgamation of both, new gate-ways will be opened that have never been an option before. We will see possibilities to use this tool, not only to become pioneers but to promote our health, social, educational and economic development with the capabilities to become a self-sustaining Island. We will endeavour to accelerate economic stimulus and growth, focus on targeted projects offering opportunities for investment which meets the needs of tomorrow. Madam Deputy Speaker for the hope of our people and the generations of tomorrow, we must move towards self-determined priorities whenever we have an opportunity to do so. Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, I beg to move.

*(Applause)*

Madam President -

Thank you very much Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development for that very interesting but lengthy speech, budget speech. Honourable Members, at this point I will adjourn the debate on the Appropriation Bill 2022, until 10 am on Monday the 16<sup>th</sup> May to allow Honourable Members time to prepare your responses to the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development's budget speech.

Honourable Members I put the question that this Council adjourns the debate on the Appropriation Bill, pardon me 2022 until 10 am on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> May.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam President -

Thank you, next item of business please?

***Motion No. 2 – The Honourable Robert Midwinter.***

Madam President -

The Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker I beg to move that this House resolves to recommend that the Minister for Environment, Natural Resources and Planning considers using Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) as a valid means of determining Total Allowable Catch (TAC) limits, and that these should be reviewed and adjusted accordingly where already set without using this method.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Member, sorry do we have a seconder? Honourable Andrew Turner?

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

Madam Deputy Speaker, I beg to second.

Madam President -

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

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, Madam Deputy Speaker, the wording of this motion is quite long, and may sound somewhat complicated to the listening public, so in explaining what this motion is about, I will try to be brief and keep it simple.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is a well-known fact that we hold very little data that can assist the island in determining the biomass of tuna species within our territorial waters.

It is also a well-known fact that because tuna is highly migratory, meaning that it passes through our waters periodically on a journey to other parts of the Atlantic Ocean, it is particularly difficult and also very expensive to gain such data through methods such as tuna tagging programmes. Madam Deputy Speaker, earlier today we were told by the my Honourable Colleague, the Minister for the Environment, Natural Resources and Planning, how much implementing this type of programme has cost the UK Government over the past three years, well in excess of £1Million. In her response, we also heard how little of this funding (approximately £51,000) has directly supported local vessel owners, who could instead be productively fishing our waters, if we could all start working together again, to develop the island's fisheries in a pro-active manner. Additionally Madam Deputy Speaker, in response to a Written Question brought to this House by myself on 29th March, we were informed that the Total Allowable Catch or TAC limit for yellow-fin tuna, self-imposed by the St Helena Government, currently stands at 300 Metric Tonnes; whereas no quota limit for this particular species is imposed on the UK Overseas Territories by our Regional Management Organisation, namely the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, or ICCAT for short. Madam Deputy Speaker, I am not at all advocating here in this House that we should indiscriminately increase our TAC limits without some basis behind what these are set at, however, I am advocating on behalf of members of the fishing industry who would like to see Catch Per Unit Effort or CPUE being used by SHG as a valid means of determining the TAC limits. Madam Deputy Speaker, CPUE is recognised by the International Pole and Line Foundation as a valid means of measurement, and is even referenced in the Blue Belt Programme Report on the St Helena Tuna Fishery produced in June 2020, albeit that in this report it is referred to as Landings Per Unit Effort or LPUE, and I quote: "Monitoring LPUE trends allows the impact of the fishery on the local resource to be evaluated, while more detailed assessment processes are developed." Madam Deputy Speaker, I said that I would try and keep my Exposition both short and simple, so I think that I should now summarise what it is that I am asking; Namely, that I would like this House to support the view that is being taken by a number of our local fishermen that, whilst we continue to collect data by any other means possible, the St Helena Government considers Catch per Unit Effort as a valid means of data collection, that this method is taken into account when setting TAC limits for the fishing industry, and where existing limits have been set without taking this method into consideration, these should be reviewed and adjusted accordingly. Madam Deputy Speaker, I beg to move.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable mover, Honourable Members the motion is and I'll now read it that this House resolves to recommend that the Minister for Environment, Natural Resources and Planning considers using Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) as a valid means of determining Total Allowable Catch (TAC) limits, and that these should be reviewed and adjusted accordingly where already set without using this method. The motion is now open for debate, Honourable Andrew Turner?

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, it's been bit of a day for long speech's so I'll keep this as short as I can. Data is at the core of all good decision making and this is especially true when

it relates to potentially damageable resources such as the Tuna in our waters. Simply put, moving to a Catch Per Unit Effort model is, here and now, the best way we can get the data we urgently need about our Tuna stocks. Although tagging programmes are generally regarded as the best data gathering method, they are resource intensive and it can take years or even decades to get the kind of data we need. CPUE is a solution that not only has the support of international experts like the IPNLF, but most importantly it is a solution that works locally and would give us the data we need to really understand what we have in our waters. It will give us the science that we can use to make sensible decisions and enable us to protect our precious fish stocks while still allowing our fishermen to earn a sensible living. Thank you.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Member thank you, any other Honourable Member would like to speak? The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker I have no issue with the use of (CUP) Catch Per Unit Effort being used as one means of assessing total allowable catch quotas. However, there are serious issues associated with relying solely on any one type of data. Where ever possible scientific evidence indicates that data triangulation should always be applied and indeed if one relies too heavily on one single form of data collection that is not always reliable especially if it is not gathered over a substantial longitudinal period which enables trends to be established and so on, so consequently although I do not oppose the idea that CUP should be used as a means of assessing total allowable catch, I do have a problem with suggesting the quotas need to be adjusted to allow for that unless those adjustments are also going to be taking into account the other data that has already been obtained through the catch and release tagging programs and so on. They both need to be considered hand in hand so, consequently, although I do not object to the first part of the motion I cannot support the further recommendation . Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Dr Corinda Essex, Minister for Environment, Natural Resources and Planning?

The Hon. Minister for Environment, Natural Resources, and Planning –

Thank you, Deputy Madam, Madam Deputy Speaker, so Deputy Madam Speaker, I thought I would just stand up and make a few comments. So as Elected Members considers this motion and respond to the recommendation being proposed today I would just like to provide some information to assist such consideration and response. An important part of determining total allowable catch limits is achieving improvements and understanding of a fisheries and this cannot be gained by Catch Per Unit Effort alone. So Madam Deputy Speaker I can advise that to date where total allowable catch limit is limits have been determined by the Environmental, Natural Resources, and Planning Portfolio, it has been done through the use of both tagging data, landing data, and Catch per Unit Effort data. Which has helped to determine the impact of fishing on local biomass of fish species and determine its abundance and dynamics. Just to further aid our Elected Members tagging provides a range of information that is used for the provision of management advised for fish stock management. For example growth rates, seasonal movement, rates of fish exchanged between areas, fish behaviours and also estimate biomass for the assessment of stock dynamics and exportation rates. The resulting data will therefore inform preliminary biomass assessments and the connectivity of the population in particular fishing grounds. This method also provides important data in respect of tuna species



both within and beyond our EEZ zone. Appropriate methods are used to collect tag data factoring in behaviour and tag returns over a period of time this approach was used in our yellow fin tuna tagging program between 2015 and 2019 which strengthen confidence and around biomass assessments within our inclusive exclusive economic zone. So the mover talks about that we need to include a total allowable catch limits, when include a catch per unit sorry when determining the total allowable catch limits like I said we are already doing that so I do not agree with this motion. Thank you Madam Speaker.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister, Chief Minister?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker I too am unable to support this motion. Our vision clearly states that we will strive for a sustainable development that creates opportunity and inspires social and economic progress. Ensuring a better quality of life for all in my humble opinion we are to focus on all our scientific data capture under one method as proposed utilizing catch per unit method CPUE only I am gravely concerned that we may well be disregarding key elements.

Madam President -

Sorry Chief Minister, can I just jump in here?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

Yes.

Madam President -

Would you like to declare your interest first?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

I have no interests to declare we are talking about our environmental issues it's not about fish. I don't know how there is an interest in this. We are I'm talking about my vision and its factual it's not my personal opinion on how I get to this.

Madam President -

Okay thank you.

The Hon. Chief Minister –

And if it was if I was only thinking about my interests actually I probably think it's better to increase the TAC's. But it's not my purpose of talking here today.

Madam President -

Thank you.

The Hon. Chief Minister –

So sorry, I'm gravely concerned that we may well be disregarding key elements of our recently published Vision. Sustainability refers to providing a foundation for our community and businesses to develop and aspire to a prosperous to a sustainable approach using our unique unlimited resources. Our Vision then goes on to specify that we should seek opportunities that set a path for our Island that focuses on niche opportunities which will generate new streams of revenue that will have minimal impact on our natural resources. And that we finally progress

taking decisions that move us forward as an Island to ultimately get us closer to achieving our desired outcomes one of these desired outcomes will mean to strive to maintain and improve our blue and green agenda. Aspiring to become a blue print for others to follow taking this suggested approach using a sole method of much needed scientific data in my opinion this will not aid us in this achievement. Madam Deputy Speaker, the motion would suggest the use of CPUE is not incorporated but from the response of the Minister for Environment, Natural Resources, and Planning Minister Scipio, she has confirmed that this method is indeed incorporated in the current approach approved and agreed by Saint Helena Government and I may want to add here that it was the previous Saint Helena Government if I'm being questioned on conflicts here as one of the methods to obtain the most accurate and complete data. In addition Madam Deputy Speaker, Saint Helena is a category 6 MPA a status we have held since 2016. An MPA is an area clearly defined geographically which is recognised legally requiring data requiring dedicated management through law or other means to achieve the long-term conservation of the nature of the area and the industries it supports (fishing, tourism etc). It must also incorporate cultural values and activities. There is broad recognition that MPA's are a very important tool in managing the marine environment and at the time of being designated it was the global objective to have 10% of the world's oceans protected by 2020. A new blueprint has now been set whereby it is said that to give the ocean space to recover will promise to help declining fish population recover, restore habitat, and help save the climate, according to a new plan to save the seas. The campaign is now to protect 30% of the world oceans by 2030, supported by more than 70 nations, of which St Helena is one. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) gives management categories for protected areas in line with their objectives. These categories range from strict marine nature reserves in which fishing, mineral collection and other commercial activities are prohibited; to protected areas with sustainable use of natural resources. Under the IUCN categories, the St Helena MPA is a Category VI (Sustainable Use) MPA – which means marine activities and resource collection are allowed but managed in a manner that incorporates cultural values and sustainability. It means that we will aim to conserve our marine ecosystem, together with our culture and traditions, to ensure it can be utilized and enjoyed by future generations. It also means that all marine activities – for example fishing and tourism – must be carefully managed to ensure minimal impact on the marine environment. By legally declaring our MPA we have the responsibility to demonstrate that we are going to live up to those guidelines. The local community, policy makers, decision makers, senior managers, agencies and other institutions must align themselves with these MPA guidelines. It is for these reasons Madam Deputy Speaker that I cannot support the request of this motion. From my understanding of the responsibilities laid upon us by being a Category VI MPA and the information shared by Minister Scipio in respect of utilizing the CPUE method only to extract data. It is my opinion that the motion contradicts the values of our MPA status and the platform this government has pledged to achieve, noting specifically that our MPA status is not designed to accommodate large-scale industrial harvest. Madam Deputy Speaker, I cannot support the motion.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Chief Minister, Honourable Mover would you like to, oh I beg your pardon the Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs?

The Hon. Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs –

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, I just I rise just to say the Honourable Minister for Environment, has clearly explained the current method for determining TAC's and clearly there needs to be a combination of methods in order to get the best outcome for our Economic exclusion zone. Therefore I see no reason for the Minister to consider such a motion if this

particular element is already included. I will not reiterate what the Chief Minister had to say but only if we really care about our Environment we cannot only have one method. I do not support the motion.

Madam President -

Thank you Honourable Minister, Honourable Mover would you like to respond to the.

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Yes, thank you Madam Speaker, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, I made it very clear in my exposition I was not looking at limiting this to one form of data collection, it was about using this as a method to gather the data more quickly which I have been asked by the local fishermen to bring to the House. I also did not and I would certainly not advocate and I did state that it was not advocating large scale commercial extraction so I just want to make those 2 points. Madam Speaker I'm more than happy to withdraw the motion there having assurance from the Minister responsible that the CPUE is used so I'm more than happy to withdraw the motion today. However, I would like because I made reference to the local fishermen I would like to draw attention to the Code of Conduct item 6.1F which states "these provisions also provide that the interest held by the Members spouse or defecto partner." Thank you Madam Speaker.

Madam President -  
Attorney General?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Madam Deputy Speaker, if a complaint has been made under the Code it needs to be made to the correct procedure outline aside of this. The Chief Minister and I am totally neutral whether she is conflicted or not I don't give a view on that would be inappropriate to do so. To say that she has chosen not to give a declaration therefore any future consideration would be a complaint under the Code of Conduct.

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –  
Thank you for that clarification.

Madam President -

Thank you, Honourable Member are you intending to withdraw the motion then?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Yes I thought I made that clear Madam Deputy Speaker. The fact I had the assurance from the Minister concerned I am happy to withdraw the motion.

Madam President -

Thank you. Ok thank you Honourable Members that.

The Hon. Minister for Environment, Natural Resources and Planning –  
Point of Information?

Madam President -

Yes.

The Hon. Minister for Environment, Natural Resources and Planning –  
It is my understanding that you will need a seconder to withdraw the motion?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –  
I'm honestly unsure Deputy Speaker.

Madam President -  
Would you, would someone like to second that withdrawal?

The Hon. Andrew Turner –  
More than happy to second for procedural purposes.

Madam President -  
Thank you Honourable Turner, Honourable Andrew Turner.

Honourable Members that concludes the business for today, we've now come to the end of the business for today, I beg your pardon therefore this Meeting will be adjourned until Monday morning at 10'o clock when we will resume the business for that day.

Council is now adjourned thank you.

**Council Adjourned.**

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**Honourable Speaker**

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**Date**