



**St Helena
Government**

ST HELENA GOVERNMENT

GOVERNMENT OF ST HELENA
PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY 15TH JUNE 2022
FIRST SITTING OF THE SIXTH MEETING

ST. HELENA
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

THE PRESIDENT

The Honourable Speaker Cyril Gunnell - Overseas

The Honourable Deputy Speaker Mrs Catherine Harris Cranfield - Apologies

EX-OFFICIO MEMBER

The Honourable Attorney General, Mr Allen Cansick

ELECTED MEMBERS

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

Clerk of Councils

Mrs Connie Johnson

PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Wednesday, 15th June, 2022

The Council met at 10.00 am
in the Council Chamber

(The Honourable Christine Lillian Scipio in the Chair)

ORDER OF THE DAY

1. FORMAL ENTRY OF THE PRESIDENT

2. PRAYERS (The Rt. Rev. Bishop Dale Bowers)

The Hon. Christine Scipio –

Good morning All, I hope that there isn't any confusion because there is a different formality this morning. In accordance with Section 62 (1) (d) of the Constitution of St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha, elected members have exercised the authority to elect a member to preside over this meeting today in the absence of the Speaker who is currently overseas and the Deputy Speaker who unfortunately is unable to attend today's session. In order that this is recorded, I put the question now to Members that I preside over today's sitting of Legislative Council.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam President –

Thank you, Members, I now can do the formal proceedings. Please be seated.

3. ELECTIONS

Chair, Select Committee 1
Chair, Select Committee 2

Madam President –

So, Members, according to the Order Paper, we have Elections to the Chairs for Select Committee 1 and Select Committee 2. So, Honourable Members, I now call for nominations for the Chair of Select Committee 1. Are there any nominations? The Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Madam President, I would like to nominate the Honourable Robert Midwinter.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Gillian Brooks. Is there a seconder for this nomination?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo –

Yes. Madam President, I would like to second it.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Rosemary Bargo. May I ask Honourable Robert Midwinter if he accepts this nomination?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Madam President, I'd be pleased to accept the nomination.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Robert Midwinter. Can I ask if there are any other nominations for the Chair of the Select Committee 1? There are no further nominations so I will now congratulate Honourable Robert Midwinter for being the Chair of Select Committee 1.

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President –

So, Members, I will now call for nominations for Select Committee 2, are there any nominations for the Chair of Select Committee 2? Honourable Karl Thrower?

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

Madam President, I would like to nominate Dr Corinda Essex to be the Chair of Select Committee No. 2.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Karl Thrower. Is there a seconder for this nomination? Honourable Andrew Turner?

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

Madam President, I beg to second.

Madam President –

Thank you. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex, do you accept the nomination?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Madam President, I accept the nomination.

Madam President –

Are there any other nominations for the Chair of Select Committee No. 2? There are no further nominations, so Dr Corinda Essex I congratulate you as the Chair of Select Committee No. 2. Clerk, can I ask you to call the next item of business, please.

4.

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT

It does seem odd to greet and welcome you to the sixth sitting of Legislative Council after we have already completed some of the business, which was Elections for Chairs for the Select Committees. However, good morning, Honourable Members, members of the Civil Service and members of the public, either here or listening to this session via the local radio. It is, indeed, a privilege for me to chair this meeting today. It is recognised that we do have a rather lengthy agenda so I will endeavour to be slick with your support.

I welcome Mr Patrick Young as our Mace Bearer in the temporary absence of Mr Merlin George who is currently overseas and I therefore thank Mr Young for stepping up to perform this significant role, I'm getting rather tongue twisted here. The presence of the Mace is important as it symbolizes authority and many a Parliament business cannot be proceeded upon until the Mace is present.

I would like to thank the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop Dale Bowers MBE for his attendance and for opening this meeting in prayer.

Honourable Members, I will allow you to remove your jackets, but this will be following the presentation of Papers, Item 5 of the Order Paper.

Honourable Members, I have given the media permission to take photographs and it's hoped that all Members are supportive of this decision.

Honourable Members, I wish you well in your deliberations today. I now ask the Clerk of Council to call the next item of business.

5.

PAPERS

SP 17/22 – The Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs.

Madam President –

Honourable Minister of Safety, Security and Home Affairs?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Madam President, I beg to present Sessional Paper 17/22 – Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2022.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 18/22 – The Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs.

Madam President –

The Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Madam President, I beg to present Sessional Paper 18/2022 – Sexual Offences (Communication with a Child) Bill, 2022.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 19/22 –The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development.

Madam President –

The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Thank you, Madam President. I beg to present Sessional Paper 19/2022 – Communications Bill.

Ordered to lie on the table.

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Madam President, I also have authority from the Governor to proceed.

Madam President –

Honourable Minister of Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development, we will deal with that when we do the Motions.

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Thank you Madam President.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 20/2022 – The Honourable Gillian Brooks.

Madam President –

The Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Madam President, I beg to present Sessional Paper 20/2022 – Reports to Legislative Council on the formal sessions of the Public Accounts Committee held on 2 March 2022 and 27 April 2022.

Ordered to lie on the table.

Madam President –

Clerk, may I ask you to call the next item of business?

6.

QUESTIONS

Question No. 1 – The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex to ask the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care.

Madam President –

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Madam President. Will the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care provide an update regarding the tender process to procure medical treatment and ancillary support services for patients referred to South Africa?

Madam President –

The Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care?

The Hon. Martin Henry –

Thank you, Dr Corinda Essex for your question. The tender process has started and an outline contract completed to include all areas of tertiary and secondary clinical care required by the St Helena Government. The Procurement Board has unanimously agreed the extension of the existing provisions by the means of MSO in order to maintain the continued care whilst the procurement is ongoing until March 31st 2023.

The procurement process will include physical visits to all potential providers and ensure that all elements of this service provision meets the needs for St Helena and the patients referred for clinical interventions.

The contract is NOT specific to one area of South Africa, which will enable ALL providers across South Africa to tender for the contract and also take into consideration the recent concerns raised by the means of feedback and the petition.

Due to the HIGH RISK nature of the contract, taking into consideration and accounting for the overall costs, complexities in commissioning tertiary and specialist health care, the procurement board will be responsible for the evaluation of the tender process. Thank you.

Madam President –

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Madam Chair. Will the Honourable Minister explain the reason why the tender process was not started earlier?

Madam President –

The Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care?

The Hon. Martin Henry –

Thank you, Madam Chair. Can I just ask the Honourable Dr Corinda Essex what do you mean by stated earlier?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Started earlier.

The Hon. Martin Henry –

Oh, started earlier, sorry, I thought you said stated. The tender process has been prepared, however, there were two elements, primary elements which shift the process back slightly and the first one was the change in the Head of Procurement, which happened at the end of March/April and the second was the new arrival of our CEO and our Health Director, bearing in mind the Health Director did visit Pretoria on his way here so that we could be more informed of the needs.

Madam President –

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Will the Honourable Minister state how widely the invitation to tender has been published?

Madam President –

The Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care?

The Hon. Martin Henry –

Sorry, Madam Chair. The tender process is on the In-tend, which is the tender platform currently being used.

Madam President –

Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Will the Honourable Minister explain how potential bidders will be aware that it is on the In-tend system?

Madam President –

The Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care?

Madam President –

Just for the benefit of our listeners, Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care is discussing this with the Portfolio Director. The Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care?

The Hon. Martin Henry –

I apologise, Ma'am, however, the tender processes are quite, they need to be followed with a set procedure. It will be advertised by the South African Press.

Madam President –

Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Will the Honourable Minister confirm or otherwise that direct contact is also being made with

known providers?

Madam President –
Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care?

The Hon. Martin Henry –
Yes, all known providers will be contacted. Thank you, Madam.

Madam President –
Thank you. Can we move on to the next question?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
No, sorry.

Madam President –
Oh, sorry, I didn't see your light.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
I have more supplementary questions.

Madam President –
Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Thank you. Will the Honourable Minister state whether it is intended for a visit to the proposed facilities to form part of the evaluation process?

Madam President –
The Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care?

The Hon. Martin Henry –
Thank you, Madam Chair and thank you for your question. As stated in my original statement, yes, there will be physical visits to all parties that tender in for this contract.

Madam President –
The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Will the Honourable Minister state when it is anticipated that the tender will be awarded?

Madam President –
The Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care?

The Hon. Martin Henry –
Madam Chair, I am not able to state the exact timing at this present time.

Madam President –

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Can the Honourable Minister give an indicative time?

Madam President –

The Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care?

The Hon. Martin Henry –

Thank you, Madam Chair, currently we are unable to give an indicative timing, however, we will try to or we will endeavour to stick to the tender process ending on 31st March 2023 and should have a provider in place either before or by this time.

Madam President –

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Will the Honourable Minister please confirm or otherwise that the specifications of the tender also relate to pastoral support and care as well as the clinical aspects?

Madam President –

The Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care?

The Hon. Martin Henry –

Thank you, Madam Chair, yes, it does relate to both processes.

Madam President –

Are there any further questions? The Honourable Karl Thrower?

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

Would the Honourable Minister state how the medical tender that's gone out is linked to our current flight paths?

Madam President –

The Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care?

The Hon. Martin Henry –

As stated in my original question, the tender process has gone out to South Africa as a whole and currently there is no link being forged at this present time. The process, the tender process for medical services is based on trying to find the best possible medical services for St Helena. Thank you.

Madam President –

Are there any further questions? I'll ask the Clerk to call the next question.

Question No. 2 – The Honourable Ronald Coleman to ask the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development.

Madam President –

The Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Thank you, Madam President. Will the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development tell this Council, because of the problems the people of St Helena is experiencing with not receiving international mail in a timely manner, are we looking at any plans to enable a better and improved incoming international mail service?

Madam President –

The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Madam Deputy Speaker I would like to thank the Honourable Member for his question.

The Post & Customer Services Centre management has undertaken extensive investigations into establishing a reliable, secure and cost effective international mail service through South Africa for incoming mail both before and during the disruption to the regular air service because of Covid, but such a service has been difficult to establish and there are a number of issues that contribute to this. Firstly, it has been difficult to identify a suitable, safe and reliable Courier for incoming mail within Johannesburg to receive, process and load our mail onto the aircraft for St Helena. Management has approached a number of service providers in Johannesburg, including the Courier used by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office previously; however, there has been no interest from any of these Couriers to provide a service to St Helena.

Secondly, unlike letter mail, packages are subject to scrutiny by South African authorities and are subject to customs checks and seizures. Due to the high volume of mail and automated sorting systems, the UK Royal Mail Service is not able to sort letter mail from packages. Therefore, inbound mail coming via South Africa containing both letter mail and packages. So, because they contain both letter mail and packages they are at risk of being seized and held by South African authorities. Equally, all relevant customs duties payable will need to be paid before packages are released in South Africa.

And, thirdly, even if we were able to identify a suitable Courier, finding a Courier that is cost effective will be a challenge. There are substantial costs involved in delivery and despatching of incoming international mail and based on the current additional cost of outgoing mail it could be in the region of about £300.00 per bag. The budget held by the Post & Customer Services Centre cannot accommodate this and this is an additional cost which will need to be covered in some way. So, in summary, I'd just like to say to date we have not established a service for incoming mail through South Africa that is reliable, safe and cost effective. Investigations continue and it is the aim of the Post and Customer Services Centre to establish such a service and every effort is and will be made to make this happen.

In the interim, Ascension Island is being utilised as a means to route UK mail to St Helena but this is dependent on the availability of cargo space on the monthly flight.

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President –
The Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –
Just to thank the Honourable Minister for his answer.

Madam President –
Are there any other questions? I'll ask the Clerk to call the next question.

Question No. 3 – 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 President. Will the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care tell this Council, whether his Portfolio is monitoring the Monkey Pox situation in the United Kingdom and if he will make a statement on the matter?

Madam President –
The Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care?

The Hon. Martin Henry –
Thank you, Madam President and I thank the Honourable Member for his question. Monkeypox advice has been provided by UKHSA and the Chief Medical Officer has recently completed a press statement outlining the low level of risk to St Helena at this stage. The Chief Medical Officer has completed a basic guide to "What is Monkeypox" which is already now in the public domain. Since the start of May, cases of Monkeypox have been appearing in areas outside of Africa in people who have never travelled abroad. As rodents in these countries are not known to carry Monkeypox it is likely that the infection is spreading from person to person. So far there have been about 1,600 cases of Monkeypox outside of West/Central Africa and 452 in the UK, that's of the 12th June. There have been no cases, strangely enough, reported in South Africa, in Africa, South Africa, sorry.
Although this worldwide outbreak of Monkeypox is unusual, and we still don't fully understand why it has happened, the actual number of people affected remains very small. The chances of someone bringing Monkeypox to St Helena is minimal. However, as a precautionary measure, anyone arriving on the island with a rash should report this immediately to Health Care. Although it is extremely unlikely that anyone already has developed Monkeypox, unless they have been in direct contact with a person with the disease, anyone who develops a blistering rash should once again contact Health Care immediately. Thank you.

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –
I'd just like to thank the Minister for his response. Thank you.

Madam President –

So, I think that you should wait until I call you, Honourable Robert Midwinter, but thank you for responding anyway.

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Sorry, Madam President.

Madam President –

That's fine. Are there any other questions? I'll ask the Clerk to call the next question.

Question No. 4 - The Honourable Andrew Turner to ask the Chief Minister.

Madam President –

The Honourable Andrew Turner?

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

Thank you, Madam President. Will the Honourable Chief Minister tell this Council if the St Helena Government has put in place, or has plans to put in place, education programmes (relating to both the security of people and increasing skill sets) to ensure that the people of St Helena are ready for increased internet connectivity following the fibre optic cable going live?

Madam President –

The Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

Thank you, Madam President and thank you to the Honourable Andrew Turner for your question, I think this is the time to showcase actually Education, Skills and Employment and the work they have been doing. So, the Education, Skills and Employment Portfolio have had representation on the St Helena Connected Working Group and are aware of the milestones associated with the securing of the funding to enable the Cable project to progress. As a result of this we have been developing and improving our offering to enable all on St. Helena to have the opportunity to become cable ready.

Our Primary schools follow an Information and Communications Technology (ICT) curriculum where all pupils from the Reception class (age 5yrs) through to Year 6 (age 11yrs) are exposed to the knowledge and skills required to enable them to access computer-based learning and assessments. They are taught the basics of Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Publisher, how to use the internet and e-safety. In addition to the allocated time for ICT on the school timetable, pupils are also exposed to the internet for research purposes in other subject areas such as History, Science and Geography etc.

In our secondary school from Year 7 through to Year 13 all students learn about cyber security and how to stay safe on line. This is repeated and built on so that a student will be exposed to this every year of their secondary schooling. This is taught in both IT lessons and Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education.

In Year 9 all students have to complete and pass two compulsory Level 1 IT Examinations; Microsoft Word & Excel and this is to ensure that all students leave PAS with at least a Level 1 Certificate in IT and are IT literate.

At GCSE level, secondary students are able to study Computer Science and/or ICT. If they then meet the required standard, they can then progress to A Level Computer Science and ICT. Computer Science focuses on computer engineering which is beneficial for students aspiring for a career in Engineering as it requires a good foundation in programming languages. Whilst ICT encompasses learning computer programmes such as Word, Excel, Access, Networking etc. it gives a balance of both theory and practical. The A Level option of ICT includes Media based learning with exposure to Digital Art using the Adobe Suite and Web Development tools for an example JavaScript. This course is beneficial for students with career aspirations in the fields of Media, Graphic Design and Marketing etc.

The school also offers ICDL, which is the International Computer Driving License. This is available in school but students can also study this at home if they wish to. Again, this course gives an overview of IT and includes level 2 certificate in Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint. In addition, we have held parents' evenings across the island at various times during this year to increase awareness of the different apps, websites and programmes that children are accessing, how to manage these and stay safe on line. These evenings were conducted in partnership with Social Care, the Police, IT and also by Wes Lewis a consultant who was on island supporting our work in developing our cyber security awareness. Wes also undertook some awareness sessions in PAS in October of last year to educate the students on cyber security in relation to being online and using their mobile phones. Government is currently actively seeking to engage the services of a Cyber Security and Awareness Officer who will be responsible for designing and delivering cyber security awareness training programmes to all involved with the island's Critical National Infrastructure, CNI and Critical Information Infrastructure, CII. The delivery of security awareness training will allow end users to better understand proper cyber hygiene, the security risks associated with their actions and ways to identify cyber-attacks which they may encounter via e-mail or the internet, and, as I said, I am showcasing Education here, because now I'm gonna move on to the St Helena Community College.

Our College provides opportunity for the adult community to learn and develop skills needed to be ready when the cable lands. We currently offer a range of courses to cater for the varying needs of the adult community. To be specific, courses cater for those who have never switched on a computer to those wanting to learn and develop at a higher and more advanced level.

In the Community College, we currently offer the following:

Basic IT – This is delivered by a tutor and is designed to meet the needs of individuals who are just learning the very basics of IT. As in PAS we also offer the International computer Driving License (ICDL). This course can be accessed any time during the day and is also tutor supported after hours on a Thursday evening.

We offer a range of Commercial & Security Corporation Courses predominately referred to as CISCO. Some of these courses are self-study courses and as such can be studied as and when the student is able. These include Networking Essentials, Cisco Certified Network Associate CCNA: Introduction to Networks, CCNA: Switching, Routing Wireless Essentials, and Enterprise, Networking, Security and Automation.

On offer is also self-study, online courses get Connected and level 1 BCS e-SAFETY. Introduction to Cyber-Security, Cyber-Security Essentials, Cloud Security.

All courses are included in our prospectus, advertised via the local media and have also been promoted in our Learning Opportunities fairs.

We are also in the process of linking with other service providers to see if we can improve our offer of IT courses, and, as I said, I'll take this opportunity to remind the listening public that within the Education, Skills & Employment Portfolio we aim to meet the needs of our community with their learning and development, therefore, if it is believed we could expand our offering we would encourage you to pop in and talk to us. We can then explore these additional opportunities and will do our utmost to accommodate them within the remit of our available resources. Thank you.

Madam President-

The Honourable Andrew Turner?

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

Firstly, I just wish to thank the Chief Minister for that incredibly comprehensive response. Is the Honourable Chief Minister able to give any kind of indication as to the level of uptake, particularly the adult courses have had?

Madam President –

The Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

Thank you, Madam President and I thank the Honourable Andrew Turner for your supplementary question. So we've seen full house for the basic IT courses, but as I did at the end, we are encouraging more people to uptake on the more advanced courses because although we have students and persons interested we do have vacancies for more.

Madam President –

Are there any further questions?

(Please Note – Due to a technical fault, the recording stops from 10.40 hrs to 11.25 hrs with the result that nine Questions, numbers 5 to 13, were not recorded. Included here for record purposes are the nine Questions as per the Order Paper with the official responses from Ministers)

Question No. 5 – The Honourable Gillian Brooks to ask the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care –

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Will the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care tell this Council what is the timetable for medical specialists to come to St Helena throughout this financial year?

The Hon. Martin Henry, Minister for Health and Social Care –

ENT November

Cardiologist November-January
 Ophthalmologist January-February
 Optician- TBC, but will fall in conjunction with Ophthalmologist
 Orthopedic-Locum, November onwards and Substantive post holder in January for 3 years
 Audiology-TBC
 Pediatrician-TBC

Question No. 6 – The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex to ask the Honourable Chief Minister –

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Will the Honourable Chief Minister tell this Council what action is being taken in relation to developing a work scheme as recommended in the Motion carried unanimously in this Honourable House in March 2022?

The Hon. Julie Thomas (Chief Minister) –

Following the motion as carried in this Honourable House in March 2022, the Education, Skills and Employment Portfolio have undertaken the following actions towards this work.

We felt it was prudent to first review existing documentation that related to the previous Casual Work Scheme to identify what worked well, what were the pitfalls and what lessons, if any, could be learnt from this. In addition, an initial meeting was convened with relevant officers which included our Social Policy Planner, Career Access Manager, a previous line manager involved in the Casual Work Scheme and key management personnel from ES&E, including myself, to discuss the development of a Work Scheme and to consider how this could be managed.

These discussions and the findings from the paper-based exercise proved to be invaluable as they highlighted areas that we have to be cognisant of when undertaking the development of a similar scheme. Key areas that will need to be addressed are as follows:

- Striking the balance between casual work and what constitutes a person as being employed so that the scheme does not contravene the Employment Rights Ordinance 2010.
- Ensuring that there is offer of work/work experience that is attractive to all unemployed noting that currently we have 40 males and 18 Females registered as unemployed.
- Providing an incentive for the unemployed to participate in the scheme e.g. financial gain. Currently IRB stands at £73.00 per week, if a person participates in the scheme, they can earn at least £70.77 based on the minimum wage. The amount earned will not be in addition to the IRB. The current situation stands that if a person is engaged in any form of employment, they have to declare this to the Benefits Office and their IRB will be reduced.
- Under the current Employment Rights Ordinance 2010 this scheme can only be utilised with a group of individuals for a time not exceeding 3 months (12 weeks),
- Funding - if the scheme was to be designed so that the unemployed were supported financially by SHG, this would cost in the region of £24,000 for the 12 week period if we were to support 20 people. This is based on the minimum wage and includes costs

associated with transport, PPE, supervision and administration. Given that we currently have 58 persons registered as unemployed, the figures provided would have to be tripled to cater for all persons which would amount to approximately £72,000 per year. If supported, there would have to be agreement on how the scheme would be funded noting that a previous scheme was funded from the Consolidated Fund.

- If the scheme is to be voluntary, it is important to note that SHG would be under no obligation to provide work, therefore there is no guarantee that work would be available within SHG, hence we would be looking to the private and NGO sectors to offer these employment opportunities.

These are a few of our findings. The development of a work scheme or similar scheme is a complex undertaking. As a result of this meeting 16 actions arose, one of them being to form a Working Group to enable a wider input into this from all different stakeholders. The suggested membership of this group is as follows:

- a) All members present in the initial meeting which include Portfolio Director for Education, Minister for Education, Head of Lifelong Learning, Social Policy Planner, Career Access Manager and a rep from Environment and Natural Resources and Planning.
- b) Representatives from;
 - the Social Security Benefits Office
 - the AG's Chambers
 - the Public Solicitors office
 - Health and Social Care
 - the Magistrates Office

It is anticipated that this meeting will be convened in early July. Elected members will be kept updated.

Question No. 7 – The Honourable Ronald Coleman to ask the Honourable Minister for Environment, Natural Resources and Planning -

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Will the Honourable Minister for Environment, Natural Resources and Planning tell this Council, in accordance with the SHG Vision and Strategy April 2022 – March 2025, what plans are in place in St Helena to conserve and sustainably use the ocean, the sea and marine resources for sustainable development?

The Chief Minister spoke on behalf of the Hon. Christine Scipio (Minister for Environment, Natural Resources and Planning) –

The priorities within our Vision and Strategy that are important in relation to the Honourable Member's question are as follows:

Food Security - the priority includes the intention to 'put in place policies and legislation to enable the expansion of our agricultural and fishing sectors through modern techniques'.

Our Blue and Green Agenda - the priority includes the intention that ‘we will strive to maintain and improve our blue and green agenda, aspiring to become a blueprint for others to follow’.

A Fisheries Management Policy Statement is in place which provides for important commitments such as using best available science and local fisheries experience for good fisheries management; low- impact, environmentally responsible methods of harvesting fish species; ensuring fishing rights provide certainty and security through making provision for use of our fisheries resources for all fishing types, for example: research, sports, recreational and commercial fishing; best practice for fishing and fisheries management; improving our regulation through legislation and compliance and enforcement actions; and managing our fisheries to improve economic returns where possible through exploratory and research licencing.

Under our Fishing Licencing Policy, a fishing vessel licencing system is in place for all forms of fishing. Any vessel that is used to fish must have a licence, the licence contains conditions that fishers must follow to ensure they are fishing sustainably. One of these conditions stipulates that a log book must be completed for every fishing trip. The log book returns ensure we know what fish is being removed from our ocean.

We have a Marine Enforcement Section that monitors vessel movements and conducts boardings and landing inspections. Data gathered during inspections is compared to log book returns from fishers to ensure the accuracy of the returns. Fishers have adapted well to the licence system and compliance with fishing licence requirements is high. Through the log book system, the Saint Helena fishing industry is now providing some of the most accurate fisheries data of any fishing industry worldwide.

The offshore sea area is monitored through remote sensing and surveillance. Automatic Identification System (or AIS) surveillance checks are conducted daily and further measures are available to react to any perceived threats. The Marine Enforcement Section has access to satellite surveillance data through the Blue Belt Surveillance and Intelligence Hub. Our Enforcement Section liaises with foreign governments through the UK Marine Management Organisation. We have received, upon request, tracking and logbook data from foreign governments relating to foreign flagged vessels that had appeared to pose a threat to Saint Helena’s marine environment. Gladly all of the data received has proven that vessels are in fact fishing outside of the Saint Helena MPA.

In support of a new Fisheries Ordinance for St Helena that commenced in 2021, fisheries regulations have been developed for adoption over the next few months to give effect to this Ordinance and support implementation of its provisions towards sustainable use of our fisheries.

We have adopted an exploratory fishing proposal for our offshore fishery to assist stock assessment work for our main tuna species in order to inform the potential for future expansion of our commercial fishing activities. This proposal is underpinned by and supported through a research licence and exploratory fishing licencing provisions for fishing vessels undertaking this work later this year.

Marine tourism regulations are currently being drafted under the Environmental Protection Ordinance. Once these regulations are in place we will implement a licencing system to regulate commercial marine tourism. Marine Tour providers will have to complete a marine accreditation

programme to qualify for a licence. This accreditation programme will educate them on how to provide their service in a sustainable manner. Marine tours will be observed by Marine and Fisheries Conservation and Marine Enforcement staff to ensure that tour providers are acting in line with licence conditions.

Marine development regulations are currently being drafted under the Environmental Protection Ordinance. Once these regulations are in place we will implement a licencing system to regulate marine developments. Anyone who wishes to undertake development in the marine environment will need to have a marine development licence. The licence will contain conditions to ensure the development is not damaging to the marine environment. The Marine Enforcement Section will inspect marine developments to ensure compliance with regulations.

A Marine Management Plan is in place to support management of St Helena's Marine Protected Area (encompassing our ocean, seas and marine resources), since its designation in September 2016. Our Marine Management Plan is the main management tool used to guide SHG and users of the marine environment and other interested parties on how the MPA will be managed. An updated Plan for a new 5 year period has been produced which has been informed by additional marine use, new information secured since 2016 in respect of marine management, marine monitoring and science activities, and which reflects new priorities to improve management of the MPA over the new planning period.

In short, its updated vision and management goals are as follows:

Vision: The rich biodiversity and unique natural ecosystems of St Helena's MPA are conserved, protected, and restored, with use of its natural resources managed in line with its IUCN Category VI Sustainable use principles now and for future generations.

Goal 1: The islands marine environment and natural ecosystems are protected, conserved, and (where necessary) restored, with appropriate monitoring to track short and long-term changes.

Goal 2: Use of our marine resources is managed sustainably, using evidence-based decisions for appropriate management of human activities, aimed at securing economic, food and cultural security for St Helena

Goal 2: St Helena's marine environment, its importance, and management methods are better understood by both the local and international community, with all provided the opportunity to input into securing its future.

This revised Plan will be publicly consulted on shortly towards its adoption during this year.

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

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Will the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care tell this Council, whether his Portfolio is monitoring the Covid situation in the Falkland Islands and if he will make a statement on the matter?

The Hon. Martin Henry (Minister for Health and Social Care) –

The portfolio joins a weekly UKOT call in relation to Covid 19 and any other viruses/health threats impacting the rest of the World. UKHSA chairs this forum and we have through this learnt from the valuable experience from The Falklands in relation to testing, vaccination, PPE usage, hospitalizations, management of the vulnerable group etc.

In addition to this weekly call, which includes Pitcairn, Montserrat, Ascension, Falkland's and ourselves, we have learnt from those who have experienced community spread to inform our strategy going forward. We have also arranged for separate support with the Falklands outside of this forum to focus on our longer term strategy and readiness.

Question No. 9 - The Honourable Gillian Brooks to ask the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development:

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Will the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development tell this House what plans, if any, are there to protect and support St Helena to address the potential and current increases in basic commodities impacting on the cost of living?

The Hon. Mark Brooks (Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development) –

Madam President, I would like to thank the honourable member for her question.

Madam President, this question is timely given the rising cost of living driven largely by increasing inflation, increasing fuel prices and currency fluctuations. Last week the Chief Minister and the Financial Secretary went on both radio stations to give an update on the work being undertaken by SHG to understand the implications of the rising cost of living and to outline what policy options are under consideration.

Madam President, the options under consideration include:

- Increasing the subsidy to Connect St Helena Ltd in order to soften the impact of potential higher electricity prices (based on the current price of fuel, this could be as much as £810,000 for the remainder of this financial year alone)
- Reviewing how the current shipping subsidy is distributed, and whether this could be more focused on essential items such as food and animal feed
- Lowering Customs Duty on certain essential items
- Reviewing the Minimum Wage.

Enabling these measures would mean reprioritising the budget and making tough decisions about what activities would need to stop in order to fund this unplanned expenditure.

Question No. 10 - The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex to ask the Honourable Minister Health and Social Care:

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Will the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care tell this Council what measures are in place to address illicit market sales of fish and what are the associated penalties?

The Hon. Martin Henry (Minister, Health and Social Care) –

The Health Protection Board applies the regulations in relation to the licensing of individuals and or businesses processing fish products. The board is established under The Public Health Ordinance 1939.

The license, which is provided under the Regulations is in respect to fishery products and covers the following:

4.(1) No person may process, package or store fishery products intended for commercial marketing locally or for export, otherwise than in a regulated unit in respect of which the license has been granted under section 5 and is valid at the time of such processing, packaging or storage.

(2) No person may, for commercial purposes, offer for sale or export fishery products, or process fishery products for the purpose of sale or export, unless such fishery products were:

(a) Landed at a fish landing site designated by the authority under section 7; and

(b) prepared, processed, packed and stored in a regulated unit referred to in subsection(1)

(3) This section does not prohibit-

(a) The bleeding, heading, gutting and removal of fins of fish on board a fishing vessel: or

(b) the preparation or storage of food containing fishery products by any café, restaurant, catering business, canteen, school, hospital or institution, which services or supplies such food products solely to persons who are end consumers.

The Regulations make way for the Governor to approve the appointment of an authorized officer to ensure compliance with legislative requirements. Authorized officers have powers and duties to ensure that the regulations are being complied with and are able to ensure this by:

- Examine the fishery product and the regulated unit where processing is undertaken
- Stop and search any vehicle or vessel to examine the fishery products
- Sample any fishery products
- Examine records regarding the processing of fishery products
- Seize any fishery products where it is apparent that the Regulations have contravened

Under the same legislation it is a criminal offence to process, package or store fishery products intended for commercial marketing locally or export, without the required license. Any person who commits such an offence could be liable on a summary conviction to a fine of £500.00 or to imprisonment for 18 months or both.

There has to date been a number of allegations in relation to people who are unlicensed to process, package and store fishery products, which remain unsubstantiated. It is apparent that most of the intelligence of allegations are from one source, but is at this stage hearsay. The Health Protection Board, authorized officers, Port Control, Police and ANRD will however, continue to investigate any allegations of alleged criminal activity under this Ordinance to ensure that the Regulations are not contravened.

Question No. 11 - The Honourable Ronald Coleman to ask the Honourable Chief Minister:

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Will the Honourable Chief Minister tell this Council, now that the Careers Access St Helena Centre is up and running, are there any plans in place for introducing and identifying appropriate training and development to address the Island's skills gap and finding work for the unemployed?

The Hon. Julie Thomas (Chief Minister) –

Honourable members should be aware that the St. Helena Community College has been involved in identifying and introducing appropriate training and development courses to address the Island's skills gaps since the launch of the SHCC in 2016. This has been achieved through the annual Training Needs Analysis.

The Training Needs Analysis has been conducted with both the Public and Private Sectors. Through this process the training and development needs of employees are identified and then facilitated by SHCC. Over the past three years statistics are as follows:

In Academic Year 2019 – 20 we were able to provide for 65% of training needs identified. In Academic Year 2020-21 we were able to provide for 75% of SHG training needs and 94% of the Private Sector. In Academic Year 2021-22 our most recent year we were able to provide for 76% of the SHG training needs and 98% of Private Sector training needs.

For this year we have also extended the offer to the general public to determine what the needs are across St. Helena. This offer was advertised in May through the local papers.

Honourable members should also be aware that all courses offered by SHCC are advertised locally. In addition to existing services and training provided, Career Access will be convening all 'active' clients towards the end of June to initiate a Training Needs Analysis and Basic Skills Kit (BSK) Test. The outcome will establish the number of individuals to be enrolled for the Functional Skills Courses especially in the areas of English and Maths. This is being done with support from Corporate Human Resources and team members from Career Access and the SHCC, with acknowledgement of the IRB Office and any additional support applicable, such as, additional transport costs. This activity is geared towards developing individuals to a greater level of employability whilst acknowledging and mitigating any areas of challenge where possible, whilst applying a duty of care.

To date, Career Access has registered 93 clients into its database who are seeking employment. These are IRB referrals and walk-in clients comprising of 64 males and 29 females. Currently Career Access has assisted with 126 job applications and witnessed 28 individuals achieving some form of employment; casual, temporary, part-time, full-time, fixed-term and permanent posts, of which 13 were achieved directly via Career Access services.

To date, 58 individuals in total continue to seek employment (40 males and 18 females). Approximately 25 of these individuals are analysed as having barriers to employment owing to criminal convictions, health challenges and other areas disclosed to Career Access. This situation is also exacerbated by local negativity towards some of these clients.

This situation is unlikely to change in the foreseeable near future. This is supported by the fact that the majority of the vacancies advertised over the past 7 recent months do not match with the majority of clients that remain unemployed, and their transferrable skill sets are also not aligned to the roles advertised. On the other hand, clients have also been assisted with applying for roles that attracted stiff competition. This, coupled with the competition from those leaving school and/or ending their tenure with the Apprenticeship Scheme in a few months' time makes the possibility of further unemployment likely.

Question No. 12 - The Honourable Robert Midwinter to ask the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development:

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Will the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development tell this Council, what was the outcome of the invitation relating to Strategic Asset Disposal dated 1st April 2022, and if he will provide an update in relation to all Strategic Assets currently under offer?

The Hon. Mark Brooks (Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development) –

The applications for strategic asset disposal round seven, which opened on 01 April 2022 are currently under review by the estates strategy panel ahead of recommendations being taken to Exco in the near future. As there are ongoing commercial negotiations from that round I will not go into any more detail on the properties we received offers for nor the number of applicants at this stage.

There are currently two other properties under offer from previous rounds for which the sales are currently being finalised, as approved by Executive Council. These are for Clifftop and Luffkins.

Question No. 13 - The Honourable Gillian Brooks to ask the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care:

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Will the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care give this House an update on how the Health Transformation Plan, which was made public in August of last year, is being implemented?

The Hon. Martin Henry (Minister for Health and Social Care) –

Following the completion of the health transformation plan and the subsequent publication in August 2021, there have been a number of changes within the directorate and across the portfolio as members will be aware. The transformation plan in part has begun by means of additional expertise in the guise of:

- Chief Medical Officer (in post)
- Two qualified paramedics, in conjunction with the overall review of the ambulance service(in post)
- Director of Health (in post)
- Head of Governance (in post)
- Chief Nursing Officer(due to arrive in August)
- Chief Allied Health Professional (due to arrive in August)
- Portfolio Director(in post)
- Bio-medical scientist (due to arrive in August)
- Staff Nurses x 4 (Due in July)
- Dentist (due in August)

The above posts formed part of the overall transformation of health in relation to suitably qualified expertise to support the longer term strategy to improve health services in collaboration with social care. The transformation plan albeit published will be reviewed in line with need and amended to ensure it meets the health and social care requirements of St Helena by the senior leadership team that will be in place from August onwards. Continued consultation with UKHSA and FCDO will

help to inform the plan and enable the portfolio to achieve an achievable and sustainable plan for health and social care.

Council Adjourned.

Council Resumed.

Madam President –

Please be seated. Council, we will now resume. I will ask the Clerk to call the next item of business.

7.

MOTIONS

Motion No. 1 - The Hon Minister for Safety Security and Home Affairs

THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2022

Madam President –

The Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick =

I beg to move that the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2022 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the Whole Council. I formally confirm that the Bill is presented with a Certificate of Urgency signed by the Governor in accordance with Standing Order 12 (1) given that the ten-day normal period was not able to be achieved.

Madam President –

Thank you. May I sight the Certificate of Urgency?

Ordered to lie on the table.

Madam President –

May I ask if there is a seconder? The Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

Thank you, Madam President, I beg to second.

Madam President –

I now would like to invite the Honourable Mover to speak.

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you, Madam President. The Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2022 amends section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Ordinance 1975 and removes the limit on compensation which is

currently set at a maximum of £2,000. Unfortunately, there have been a number of recent criminal cases before the Courts where Courts have been unable to award appropriate compensation, example - damage caused to property or the value of stolen goods exceeding £2,000. This creates an unfair position for victims of crime who are unable to be properly compensated. We are now proposing that where damage or loss occurs and the value exceeds £2,000 Courts will have the appropriate powers to ensure victims are properly compensated. Madam President, I beg to move.

Madam President –

Thank you, the Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs. Honourable Members, I put the question that the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2022 be approved in principle and referred to the Committee of the whole Council. The question is open for debate and any Member wish to speak to the principles of the Bill you may do so now. There has been no lights shown to demonstrate that any Member would like to speak to the Bill, so I will ask the Honourable Mover if he'd like to say anything further at this stage?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you, Madam President, nothing further to add at this stage.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs. Honourable Members, I put the question that the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2022 be approved in principle and referred to the Committee of the whole Council. Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

(Inaudible)

Madam President –

I think at this stage, Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs you need to beg to move to go into Committee.

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

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

Madam President –

Is there a seconder? The Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

I beg to second.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Chief Minister. I put the question that the Council do resolve into a Committee to consider the detailed provisions of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Council in Committee.

Madam Chair –

Honourable Members, we are now at the less formal part of the session where you are free to question and debate as the Council is now in the Committee of the whole Council. So, as this is a very short Bill we will take the clause as two separate clauses and I will invite the Attorney General to help us through this Bill. So I'll start with Clause 1 which is Title, Short Title and Interpretation.

The Hon. Allen Cansick (Attorney General) –

Madam Chair, Clause 1 contains no more than the short title of the Bill.

Madam Chair –

Honourable Members, I put the question that the Title and the Interpretation Clause be part of the Bill. Are there any questions? So then I will ask if you stand part of the Bill, those in favour say Aye and those of a contrary opinion no. Okay, the Ayes have it.

Madam Chair –

Attorney General, we go to Clause 2.

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Madam Chair, Clause 2 repeals subsection 1(a) of Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Ordinance. At present this section replaces a £2,000 limit for compensation. Removing it allows the Court to proceed without any limits on its powers for awarding compensation.

Madam Chair –

Honourable Members, I now invite you to ask any questions or debate Clause 2 of the proposed amendment. Any questions? Honourable Members, I then put the question that Clause 2 do stand part of the Bill.

Clause 2.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Chair –

Okay, Honourable Members, we will now resume into formal capacity.

Council Resumed

Madam President –

So, Honourable Mover, would you like to report on the Bill?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I beg to report that the Sexual Offences (Communication with a Child) Bill, 2022.

Madam President –

Sorry, I think you're looking at the wrong one.

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Oh, sorry.

Madam President –

Would you like to start again, Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Yeah, I'll go again. Madam President, I beg to report that the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2022 passed the Committee without amendment and to move that this Council approves the said Bill.

Madam President –

And recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted. Okay. Honourable Mover, would you like to speak to the Bill?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

No, just to say thank you to Members for their support, thank you.

Madam President –

So, Honourable Members, I put the question that this Council approves the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2022 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted. This House is open for further debate. Any Member would like to speak? The Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

Thank you, Madam President. As I second this, I just thought I would show support to my Honourable Colleague and say that it is indeed great that we have now removed this limit, because it allows the Judicial Services to be able to compensate where necessary and not have such limitations placed upon them. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Chief Minister. Is there any other Honourable Member who wishes to speak? No. I would ask the Honourable Mover if he would like to respond to the debate.

The Honourable Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you, Madam President, I'd just like to thank the Chief Minister for her words, but again, to all Members for supporting the Bill today. Thank you.

Question that the Council approves the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2022 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted, put and agreed to.

Madam President –

Next item please, Clerk.

Motion No. 2 – The Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs.

THE SEXUAL OFFENCES (COMMUNICATION WITH A CHILD) BILL, 2022

Madam President –

The Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you, Madam President. I beg to move that the Sexual Offences (Communication with a Child) Bill, 2022 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council. I can formally confirm that this Bill is presented with a Certificate of Urgency signed by the Governor in accordance with Standing Order 12 (1) given that the ten-day normal period was not able to be achieved.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs. May I sight the Certificate of Urgency?

Ordered to lie on the table.

Madam President –

May I ask if there is a seconder? The Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

Thank you, Madam President, I beg to second.

Madam President –

The Honourable Mover, I would like to invite you to talk to the Bill.

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you, Madam President. The Sexual Offences (Communication with a Child) Bill, 2022 contains one offence of sexual communication with a child. The offence is there to fill a gap in St Helena law where sexual communication with a child would not be an offence in itself. This Ordinance would prohibit the person from intentionally communicating with a child in a manner so as to obtain sexual gratification. The offence has a maximum punishment of a term of imprisonment of two years and will help to build our resilience for when the Equiano cable goes live, especially as the community will have easier access to online material and communications. It is, in effect, the first step in putting through appropriate cyber security legislation to protect our community and is a straight lift from the UK Sexual Offences Act. Madam President, I beg to move.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs. Honourable Members, I put the question that the Sexual Offences (Communication with a Child) Bill, 2022 be approved in principle and referred to the Committee of the whole Council. The question is open for debate

and I would like to invite any Member who would like to speak to the principles of the Bill. The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Madam President. I fully support the principles of this Bill. Already there are indications that there are increasing incidents of improper sexual conduct with children occurring within our community and that is before the cable gets lit, so as I think the Honourable Member alluded earlier, the likelihood of that sort of offence increasing after the lighting of the cable is considerable and therefore it is very important that we get necessary measures in place now that will lead to significant punishment which should help to deter potential perpetrators. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Dr Corinda Essex. Is there any other Member who wishes to speak to the Bill? The Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you, Madam President, I likewise fully support this Bill, I think it's high time that we do toughen up on some of these related laws. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Robert Midwinter. The Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Thank you, Madam President. I just also would like to support this Bill because it's so crucial that we take care of our children, so I totally support the Bill.

Madam President –

Thank you, the Honourable Gillian Brooks. The Honourable Rosemary Bargo?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo –

Thank you, Madam Speaker, I too would like to show my support to this vital Bill for our children going forward.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Rosemary Bargo. I invite the Honourable Andrew Turner?

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

Thank you, Madam President. I stand in full support of this Bill, I am having, in my time in media seen a number of these cases go through the Courts and the difficulties there have been in prosecuting them. This is an essential piece of work that we're doing today. I would also just perhaps like to harp back to the question session earlier and I'm glad to note that there are education programmes being teamed with this to make sure that people know and understand the consequences of their online interactions.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Andrew Turner. The Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

Thank you, Madam President. I fully support the principles of this Bill and rise as a citizen, a parent and Minister for Education, Skills and Employment in supporting this Bill. It is important for us to protect our community and more importantly to that of our children. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Chief Minister. The Honourable Karl Thrower?

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

Thank you, Madam President. I rise in support of the Bill as a first step in moving towards a more secure place for our children. However, I must also remind people that in order for Bills like this to work we also have to ensure that the Police have the resources to get the data off the technical devices and I would like to ensure that the House moves forward with ensuring that the Police have the necessary equipment and skills to make these Bills readily achievable.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Karl Thrower. Is there any other Member who would like to speak? The Honourable Martin Henry?

The Hon. Martin Henry –

Just simply to rise in support of the Bill.

Madam President –

Thank you. I don't see any more lights, so I will ask the Honourable Mover if he would like to respond.

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you, Madam President. I would just like to thank Members for their overwhelming support in this matter. I take on board what Councillor Thrower has said and I will be in discussions with the Police concerning this matter and see how we can best support them in those areas, but thank you so far.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs. Honourable Members, I put the question that the Sexual Offences (Communication with a Child) Bill, 2022 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council. Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I beg to move that the Council do resolve itself into a Committee to consider the detailed provisions of the Bill.

Madam President –

Is there a seconder? The Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –
I beg to second.

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

Council in Committee

Madam Chair –

So, Honourable Members, I remind you again that we are at the less formal part of the session and you are free to question and debate as the Council is now in the Committee of the whole Council. There are four clauses within this amendment Bill so I will invite the Attorney General to help us to go through this Bill and as it's a short Bill we will do clauses 1 and 2 together and 3 and 4. So, Attorney General help us to go through?

The Hon. Allen Cansick (Attorney General) –

Madam Chair, Clause 1 contains no more than the short title of the Bill. Clause 2 contains the elements of the offence of sexual communication with a child and the penalty that can be imposed for such.

Madam Chair –

Are there any questions, Members, on Clause 1 and 2? The Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to question the penalty of two years, I think that is too low if we want to do a deterrent for this sexual offence, because when you calculate the time in and the time out for good character, then two years is too short.

Madam Chair –

So, Honourable Ronald Coleman, are you proposing an amendment to Clause 2 subsection 3?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Thank you, Madam Chair, I would say up to five years.

Madam Chair –

So you are suggesting an amendment to the penalty imprisonment for a term of two years to five years. So, is the Honourable Mover would like to comment on this and then I'll invite the Attorney General?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

I'd just like to get some advice from the Attorney General to see if that's consistent with the UK Act as well.

Madam Chair –

Attorney General? The Attorney General, I'm quite happy for you to speak.

The Hon. Allen Cansick –
(Inaudible)

Madam Chair –
Yes, okay.

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Madam President, I just had a conversation with the Attorney General. The two years is specifically for this offence, which is just merely communication with intention. If there are other offences coming out then the other offences will apply and the relevant sentences will be imposed on those offences. However, for this offence it is in line with the UK and bearing in mind that we do have Judges who follow the guidance of the UK as well, so I consider at this moment it's appropriate for that particular offence.

Madam Chair –

So, Honourable Ronald Coleman, now that you have been given an explanation by the Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs is your amendment still stand?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Thank you, Madam Chair. I still think it need to be higher than two years, but if other Members feel it's not appropriate then I'm quite happy to go with other Members.

Madam Chair –

Okay, so Honourable Ronald Coleman you're making an amendment, imprisonment for a term of two years, is there a seconder for this proposed amendment? Okay, there is no seconder for this proposed amendment, then the amendment falls away. Is there any other questions on Clauses 1 and 2 of the Bill? The Honourable Karl Thrower?

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

I'd just like to question 2(c). These under sixteen in (a) does not reasonably believe that these sixteen or over, that just seems like a very big loophole. I didn't know that she was under sixteen and I don't know how you could prove that the person didn't reasonably believe that these was over sixteen, it just seems like a really large hole in it where it's almost like a get out of jail clause if you use that loophole, I don't know how you would prove that somebody knew that somebody else was under sixteen if they say that they didn't realise.

Madam Chair –

So, Attorney General?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Yeah, it's a task that Courts throughout the world carry out on a regular basis, looking at all the circumstances to infer, it provides protection for somebody who genuinely believed that they were discussing or to having conversations with somebody who was over that age, so it's not a real loophole, it's an element of the offence that that person must have believed that and it's always for the prosecution to show that's the case.

Madam Chair –

Are you content with the response, Honourable Karl Thrower?

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

Yes, thank you.

Madam Chair –

So, the Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Madam Chair. I would not second my Honourable Friend's suggestion of increasing the penalty for five years because I think that would be out of kilter with other more serious offences, but I would like to propose an amendment to increase it to three years.

Madam Chair –

Okay, do we have a seconder for the amendment that is on the table at the moment whereas Clause 2, sub clause 3 the penalty imprisonment for a term of two years is amended to three years, is there seconder for that? The Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Madam Chair, I would like to second.

Madam Chair –

Okay. So, Honourable Members, I will now ask for you to vote on this amendment. So, the amendment is Clause 2, sub clause 3, a person who contravenes this section commits an offence, penalty imprisonment for a term of three years, so that is the amendment, so all those in favour to this amendment to three years say Aye and those in contrary opinion.

So, Members, I don't know how many voted for Aye or voted for No so as we are just in the Committee stage, which is very informal, I'm not sure if we should do a ballot, but I will call you, the names around the table, there is a particular name for this, but somehow, division, thank you, Attorney General, it just couldn't come to me, my brain went blank, this is a huge task today, which I'm certain that the listeners would appreciate.

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick

A point of clarity.

Madam Chair –

So, on the table at the moment is the amendment, so the Honourable Mover, you'd like to make a statement?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Just on a point of clarity.

Madam Chair –

A point of information?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Yes, I thought that if we had an amendment and people speak to the amendment?

Madam Chair –

Yes, you can speak to the amendment.

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Before the vote.

Madam Chair –

But we haven't agreed to the amendment yet. Okay, you want to talk to the amendment. Okay, Honourable Mover, I'll allow you to talk to the amendment.

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

I'm just concerned that if we change the sentences it will go out of kilter with the other offences so this, what is a messaging offence, like a message that's gonna and there are other offences within the Sexual Offences Ordinance which might have higher penalties and this penalty might go above those penalties, so as has been sorted by the UK, they sorted that this particular offence was in its relevant place, so I think before we can make amendments we need to look at this thing holistically as opposed to individually, so, therefore, that's why I don't support it.

Madam Chair –

So, I believe you gave the explanation earlier when we asked for the amendment to be proposed to five years so we did have that discussion, yes? So, the amendment now, and I'm certain that the Members will take your statement into consideration, so I'm going to ask now with the proposed amendment on the table amending the penalty from two years to three years. Honourable Andrew Turner?

Division

Ayes

Noes

Abstentions

The Hon. Andrew Turner

The Hon. Karl Thrower

The Hon. Robert Midwinter

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex

The Hon. Ronald Coleman

The Hon. Gillian Brooks

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo

The Hon. Mark Brooks

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick

The Hon. Martin Henry

The Hon. Julie Thomas

The Hon. Christine Scipio

Madam Chair –

Right, I've been informed by the Clerk that it is six Ayes and six Noes and I do have some notes somewhere to advise me how to deal if the votes are the same, so I will need to take another five minutes break because I'd like to have a discussion with the Attorney General as to how to proceed with this, so I would ask if you would remain seated while I adjourn for five minutes. Thank you, Honourable Members.

Committee adjourned

Committee Resumed

Madam Chair –

Please be seated, Members. Honourable Members, listeners, we will resume now that I have had the opportunity to look at my notes on the table. So, according to Standing Order 17 (1) (b), and I will take the opportunity to read this directly from the Standing Orders – If the votes of the Members are equally divided the President shall declare that the Motion is lost in accordance with section 67 (4) of the Constitution, so, Honourable Members, going back to Clause 2, subsection 3, the penalty will remain as two years, so thank you for your discussion, healthy discussion on that particular item. Are there any further questions to Clauses 1 and 2 before I move on? No. Thank you, Honourable Members.

Clauses 1 and 2 –

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Chair –

So the Ayes have it. Attorney General, I will now ask you to take us through Clause 3 and 4.

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Madam Chair, Clause 3 applies Schedule 3 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and this allows the Court to impose sexual offences prevention orders and obligations to register on a Sexual Offences Registers in regard to convictions for this offence and Clause 5 gives Governor in Council the ability to make regulations necessary or convenient for the purpose of the Ordinance.

Madam Chair –

Excuse me, Attorney General, I don't see a number five on my paper.

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Clause 4.

Madam Chair –

Thank you. Okay, so, Honourable Members, do we have any questions for Clause 3 and 4?

Clauses 3 and 4.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Chair –

Honourable Members, I will ask the Honourable Mover to respond later, but we will now resume into our formal capacity.

Council Resumed.

Madam President –

So, Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I beg to report that the Sexual Offences (Communication with a Child) Bill, 2022 has passed the Committee without amendment and move that this Council approves the said Bill.

Madam President –

And recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted.

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

That it should be enacted. Thank you.

Madam President –

Do we have a seconder? The Hon. Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

Thank you, Madam President, I beg to second.

Madam President –

Honourable Mover, would you like to speak to the Bill?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you, Madam President. I'd just like to thank all Members for their support with the principle of the Bill, thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs. Honourable Members, I now put the question that this Council approves the Sexual Offences (Communication with a Child) Bill 2022 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted. The House is now open for further debate. Any Member wish to speak to the Bill? Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Madam President. I am disappointed that the proposed amendment was not accepted by this House and that it fell away by the status quo requirement in Standing Orders. I know the counter argument is that perhaps it would have elevated the punishment for this offence above others in the Sexual Offenders Act/Bill, but my argument is that I think all penalties for sexual offences need to be reviewed and revisited in view of the increase of this type of crime on St

Helena and the extreme youth of some of the victims of this type of crime, which is something that we have not seen on this island in past years on the current scale, so I would like this House to bear in mind the importance of stamping out this type of activity in our community as soon as possible and if it involves further review of the Sexual Offences Ordinance then so be it. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Dr Corinda Essex. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you, Madam President. I fully agree with what my colleague, the Honourable Dr Corinda Essex, is saying, I do believe that we should be undertaking a further review and actually that is what I would like to see is that all of these offences are reviewed and adjusted accordingly. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Robert Midwinter. Honourable Andrew Turner?

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

Thank you, Madam President. First I wish to echo the concerns raised by the Honourable Dr Corinda Essex, I'm not convinced I should say by the argument that this is how the UK does it and we don't want to put one out, one offence elevated over another, we had the opportunity to fix this offence here and now, I'm disappointed we didn't take it, however, much like the Honourable Robert Midwinter I'd like to ask now that we review all of these types of offences, after all, we have a new set of circumstances here on St Helena, we have certain offences that are causing more problems than others and I think we need to look at how we prioritise which ones get the strictest punishments. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Andrew Turner. Is there any other Member who wishes to speak? The Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Thank you, Madam President. I'd just like to say how disappointed I am also that the imprisonment terms of sentence wasn't raised because people do get a one third discount for pleading guilty so it brings it down to sixteen months and so people of this nature might not even serve twelve months in prison. Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Ronald Coleman. Is there any other Members would like to speak? Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

Thank you, Madam President. I think, speaking now obviously in the role of Chief Minister, but also in support of my Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs, I think we all recognise that St Helena is going through quite a lot of change at the moment and sexual offences is something

that is very, obviously it's growing, as the Honourable Dr Corinda Essex talks about, but I think that at this present time to make a change on one particular area I am thankful that the Honourable Essex has said that we do a review and I think as the Government of St Helena that can be done within the year. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Chief Minister. I will invite any other Member who would like to speak. No? So, the Honourable Mover, would you like to respond to the debate?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you, Madam President. Yes, I thank Members for their support with the Bill and I also take on board their concerns and will consider their concerns with my Portfolio. Thank you.

Madam President –

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

Question that the Council approves the Sexual Offences (Communication with a Child) Bill, 2022 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted, put and agreed to.

Madam President –

So, Honourable Members, I think it is timely to stop for a lunch break and we will stop for thirty minutes, so according to the clock on the wall it is almost twenty-five past twelve and we will start just shortly before 1 pm, so I look forward to the next session. Thank you, Honourable Members.

Council Adjourned.

Council Resumed.

Madam President –

Please be seated.

Motions Resumed.

Motion No. 3 – The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development.

THE COMMUNICATIONS BILL, 2022

Madam President –

The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Thank you, Madam President. I beg to move that the Communications Bill, 2022 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council. I also have with me, Madam

President, confirmation for the Certificate of Urgency signed by His Excellency the Governor in accordance with Standing Order 12 section 1.

Madam President –

Thank you, the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development. May I sight the Certificate of Urgency, please?

Ordered to lie on the table.

Madam President –

Is there a seconder? The Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

Thank you, Madam President, I beg to second.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Chief Minister. The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development I now would like to invite you to speak to the Bill.

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Thank you, Madam President. I beg to present the Communication Bill, 2022. This Bill seeks to create a robust but simple regulatory structure recognising that expert detailed regulations will be required in order to provide the regulatory detail required by the Communications Network and Service Policy. As is usual, the proposal is for the regulations to follow passage of the Bill. It is intended that the regulations will be completed prior to the Island's switch to high speed fibre optic internet and ideally prior to 31st December 2022. This Bill is an enabling piece of legislation.

Part 1 of the Bill addresses preliminary matters.

Part 2 of the Bill establishes a Communications Regulator and specifies the statutory responsibilities of the Communications Regulator.

Part 3 details a licensing regime which includes the authority to impose conditions in respect of licences.

Part 4 of the Bill deals with compliance in respect of the legislation. It provides for appeals against decisions of the Communications Regulator and creates the offences and penalties for breach of the legislation.

Part 5 of the Bill deals with miscellaneous matters and details the powers of the Governor in the event of an emergency.

Madam President I look forward to discussing the Bill in Committee stage where the Honourable Attorney General will be able to go through the detailed provisions of the Bill.

Madam President I beg to move.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development. Honourable Members, I put the question that the Communications Bill, 2022 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council. The question is open for debate, so I now invite any Members who would like to speak to the principles of the Bill. The Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

Madam President, I rise in support of this Bill. I see this Bill as being crucial in assisting us to get the most out of St Helena's digital transformation, particularly as we move forward with the next stages of implementing our digital strategy. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Chief Minister. The Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you, Madam President. I similarly support this Bill because it is a crucial piece of enabling legislation that will help the island to move forward, particularly in the advent of our cable. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Robert Midwinter. The Honourable Andrew Turner?

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

Thank you, Madam President. I stand in support of the Bill, I think it is a great feeling today to be debating our first piece of substantial legislation in our term and this Communications Bill may well prove to be one of the most important we do. The Fibre Optic Cable is one of the single most important developments that this island has made and it is critical that we get it right. This piece of work has been done to create some vital tools needed to properly regulate our new connectivity including an independent regulator who will have the teeth needed to ensure the public get the benefit of the Cable Project. I'm also encouraged by the provisions included in this Bill for better protecting our data, ensuring it's not misused. Although there's still some work to do in terms of the associated regulations, one of the key purposes of this legislation is to allow for Government to create a flexible regulatory framework that means we can quickly evolve in the face of new technologies. I look forward to seeing those regulations soon. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Andrew Turner. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Madam President, I stand in support of this Bill which I think is crucial to the future of St Helena and our ability to maximise the benefits from the Fibre Optic Cable. However, although I know that it flows from the policy which has been in place for a prolonged period of time, I think it is regrettable that it wasn't out for public consultation for the full ten-day period and, indeed, that there wasn't more effort to engage with key stakeholders during the consultation period because if we want to get backing and support for legislation it is very important that we get buy in from these required sectors within our community. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Dr Corinda Essex. The Honourable Karl Thrower?

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

Thank you, Madam President. I would just like to stand in support of this, the Communications Bill, and just say that this is actually a really important stage for the island, because if this isn't correct, and I'll probably support it as it is written, that we cannot move forward with issuing licenses for the providers and it is actually, just for the listening public, you know, the Communications Bill is basically how we monitor and we enforce licenses, so this will fix and help us fix a lot of the problems that we currently have been experiencing with providers on the island, so I'm fully in support of this Bill.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Karl Thrower. Is there any other Member who would like to speak to the Bill? The Honourable Mover, would you like to respond?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Thank you, Madam President. Just to respond and thank my fellow Members for their support in the Bill and just to reassure them that the proposed regulations that will follow the Bill will be done in a timely matter which will probably take care of some of the concerns which the Bill presents today. So, no, there's nothing else I'd like to add, just that I'd just like to apologise to the public for not being able to say Communications Regulator, which seems so easy now. Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development. So, Honourable Members, I put the question that the Communications Bill, 2022, be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council. Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Madam President, just to ease the confusion, should there be a vote first of all?

Madam President –

Yes, it's coming up, Honourable Mover, I just need to get this on the Committee stage and then we will approve for it to go into Committee. I did that with the previous two Bills today, Honourable Mover.

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Sorry, Madam Speaker, for the confusion.

Madam President –

Okay.

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

So, Madam President, I beg to move that the Communications Bill, 2022 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council.

Madam President –

It's not the wording that I have, Honourable Minister of Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable

Development. It's on Point 10 of the Checklist.

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Thank you for pointing that out, Madam President, I beg to move that this Council do resolve itself into a Committee to consider the detailed provisions of the Bill.

Madam President –

Is there a seconder? Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

Madam President, I beg to second.

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

Council in Committee.

Madam Chair –

I think that's where the confusion is. So, Honourable Members, I'd just like to remind you again that we are at the less formal part of the session where you are free to question and debate as the Council as you're now in the Committee stage of the whole Council. As there are a number of clauses, 27 in total of this proposed Bill, I will take the Bill in parts and there are five Parts. I will also invite the Attorney General to go through the clauses within the Parts of this Bill and I hope that you all are in agreement for this. Honourable Attorney General?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Madam Chair, could I request that Crown Counsel, Richard Holland, is invited to join me at the table for this section?

Madam Chair –

So I have given it consideration. Attorney General, and he may attend.

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

I'm grateful, thank you. Madam Chair, dealing with Part I in the Preliminary section, Clause 1 contains the short title and commencement provisions making provision for Citation and Commencement of the Bill. Clause 2 – Interpretation provides the meanings for specific words and terms that are used in the Bill.

Madam Chair –

So, do we have any questions from Members? Okay, let's move on to Clause 2.

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Madam Chair, I've dealt with Clause 1 and Clause 2 at the same time.

Madam Chair –

Sorry, I fell asleep again. So if there are no questions for Clauses 1 and 2 we will move, I'll ask Honourable Members if they agree and ask if Clause 1 and 2 stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Chair –

So, Attorney General, Part II.

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Madam Chair, Part II deals with the Communications Regulator.

Clause 3 establishes the Regulator and provides the appointment of the same by the Governor, subject to Labour Regulations in regard to suitably qualified individuals with appropriate skills and knowledge which will be provided by regulations. The clause also specifies the circumstances under which a person may be designated to perform the functions of a Communications Regulator should the Communications Regulator be unable to perform their functions and that's found at sub clause 3 of Clause 3 and that entrusts that to Governor in Council. The clause further makes provision for the employment of staff to facilitate the performance of the functions of the Regulator and it further makes provision for Governor in Council to give policy directions to the Communications Regulator.

Clause 4 addresses revocation of appointment of the Communications Regulator and it does so with very specific circumstances in regard to convictions for criminal offences of over six months and matters related to bankruptcy which provide automatic revocation of appointment. Sub clause 2 addresses circumstances where the Governor in Council if certain situations are met can consider revoking the appointment of the Communications Regulator and you'll see that's essentially in regard to the Regulator being unable to perform the functions or for behaviour which is seen as being irresponsible for that office.

Clause 5 details the functions of the Regulator and Clause 6 details the various duties of the Regulator and Clause 7 places an obligation on the Regulator to provide Governor in Council and Legislative Council with an annual report which would provide an account of the exercise of their duties.

Madam Chair –

Okay, so, Honourable Members, do you have any questions on Part II? So, just for the benefit of listeners, a lot of work has been undertaken behind the scenes where there has been a lot of discussions and debate in this particular Bill, so if the Members appear to be very quiet, listeners, it's because we have been through this exercise rather thoroughly. So, if no questions.... Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Madam Chair. Section 4, clause 4, part 2, it says that the Regulator's appointment can be revoked if he is unable to perform the functions, what happens if he is able to perform the functions but just failed to do so consistently?

Madam Chair –

I'll ask the Attorney General.

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

That would fall under (b), so Clause 4, sub clause (2) (b) which would be responsible for behaviour which is considered by the Governor in Council to be misbehaviour in office. If somebody is deliberately not performing their functions I would imagine that would be seen by Governor in Council as misbehaviour.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Misbehaviour. Thank you.

Madam Chair –

You have your light on, Dr Corinda Essex, any further questions? No? Any further questions from any other Members? No, okay. Honourable Members, I put the question that Part II, which includes Clauses 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 do stand part of the Bill.

Part II, Clauses 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Chair –

Attorney General, I'd like you to talk us through Part III.

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Madam Chair, Part III addresses Licenses and Clause 8 creates an obligation for a person to apply for a licence in order to operate a communications service or for approval in respect of the operation of a communications service and it establishes an offence for contravention of this provision.

Clause 9 addresses applications and it makes provisions for a person to make an application for a licence for approval and places an obligation on the person making the application to provide all information that is required by the Regulator. The clause further permits the Regulator to deny an application which is not accompanied by the required supporting information and it establishes an offence of false information being provided in support of such application.

Clause 10 addresses the form of application and places an obligation on the Regulator to publish a notice containing the information relevant to the requirements in respect of an application.

Clause 10 makes provision for the Communications Regulator to attach conditions to a licence or for approval granted under the Ordinance and specifies the manner in which such conditions are to be determined by the Regulator. Clause 12 makes provisions for the persons exempted from obligations to be performed by the person pursuant to the Ordinance in respect of the obligations of a Communications Service and the manner in which a person may apply for such an exemption. Clause 13 provides that a licence granted under the Ordinance is not transferable to another person to whom the licence was not granted and Clause 14 addresses variations of the licence and allows the Communication Regulator to issue terms and conditions in respect of such variations.

Madam Chair –

Thank you, Attorney General. Members, are there any questions relating to Part III, which is Clauses 8 to 14? The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Clause 12 (2), what is the purpose of giving an exemption to someone because their an amateur communications operator operating only for their personal aim? I agree that such individuals should not be subject to the same licence as other operators, but I cannot understand why they should be totally exempt and I would think from the point of view of effective monitoring and effective regulation it could be advisable for them to actually have a class of licence that is dedicated for their purposes?

Madam Chair –

So, I'll ask the Attorney General to respond.

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Councillor Essex, I was just taking some advice from the Crown Counsel. It seemed that it was the case that it was considered that such licences shouldn't be part of the same regime, so in making the allowance for an exemption here doesn't stop conditions or regulations being provided and almost, if you wanted to later on, expanding a regime for amateur licences, but it takes it out of this regime for now, but you're correct in itself there it certainly wouldn't put forward the conditions that are needed for such an amateur licence.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

So, on that same point, would amateurs who are pertaining to carry out this sort of service need to make an application?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Yes, they would, they'd have.....

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

In order to be exempted?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Yes, they have to make an application to Governor in Council.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

And if they didn't make an application, would there be penalties that they would face?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

I would presume that they would then fall under the requirement for a licence and the penalties that are contained there.

The Hon. Corinda Essex –

So, the same penalties apply to them.

The Hon. Allen Cansick –
Yes.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Thank you for that.

Madam Chair –
Any other Member who would like to ask any questions, wishes to speak? Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –
Thank you, Madam Chairman. I'd just like to ask, is there a fee for the provider to pay? I don't see it here.

Madam Chair –
Attorney General?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –
Honourable Ronald Coleman, that would be addressed in regulations later on; it's not put into the body of the Bill itself, but will be addressed in regulations.

Madam Chair –
So, Honourable Karl Thrower?

The Hon. Karl Thrower –
Thank you. I would just like to say that as somebody who's experienced with telecommunications, certainly wireless telecommunications, which obviously this Bill covers, it's very important that as an Island we do have in place a principle where as a Government we know what people are doing with telecommunications and one of the reasons for that is imagine if an amateur comes in and brings in equipment that starts interfering with the Police radio system or the emergency services system, now whether you do that through this particular Bill or whether you do it through frequency management, it's extremely important that you have it and St Helena has a problem that most of Europe and most of South Africa don't have. Because we import goods from both the European zone and the South African zone, both zones have completely different licensing regulations when it comes to frequency regulation, so if you buy a modem from South Africa and take it to the UK it's illegal, because it interferes with frequencies from other telecommunications devices and it's something that we have to be extremely aware of on this Island that whether you call it a licence but you definitely need to make sure that the Government and the Regulatory body know what people are bringing on to the island and what they want to use for telecommunications otherwise we could end up with a real mess because trying to find something that is interfering with frequencies is extremely difficult to locate and your Police radios, and it does happen that the Police radios or something very important for the island won't be working for months while you try to find the one person who accidentally imported it, if you've got a register and you know where to start looking then that will help a lot to maintain that, our systems.

Madam Chair –

Thank you for sharing that information, Honourable Karl Thrower. Any other Member has any wish to speak? Part III, Licences? No, so, Honourable Members, I put the question that Part III, Licences, which includes Clauses 8 to 14, do stand part of the Bill.

Part III, Licences – Clauses 8 to 14.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Chair –

Attorney General, I'll ask you to go through Part IV, which is Clauses 15 to 23.

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Madam Chair, Part IV is the section that addresses Compliance and Clause 15 makes provision for the suspension or variation of a licence in addition to revocation and it specifies circumstances under which a licence may be suspended or revoked and the manner in which it may be suspended or revoked.

Clause 16 makes provision for appeals against decisions of the Communication Regulator, so the provisions are here if somebody appeals against suspension, revocation or variation.

Clause 17 addresses compliance and inspection and makes provisions for the way in which compliance can be ensured by the Regulator.

Clause 18 creates an offence in respect of a person obstructing the Regulator or a person authorised by the Communication Regulator in performing the duties and functions under the Ordinance.

Clause 19 establishes an offence in respect of a person using a communications service to transmit misleading or indecent messages or in respect of a person interfering with the operation of a Communications Regulator.

Clause 20 establishes an offence in respect of a person unlawfully using information obtained pursuant to this Ordinance for their benefit.

Clause 21 establishes an offence in respect of a person who unlawfully discloses information obtained pursuant to the Ordinance.

Clause 22 establishes an offence in respect of the non-compliance of a person with the terms and condition of a licence for approval granted in respect of the operation of a communications service; and

Clause 23 establishes an offence in respect of a person who is a body corporate committing an offence is covered under the Ordinance in the same way for a person who is not a body corporate.

Madam Chair –

Thank you, Attorney General. So, I'll ask Honourable Members if they have any questions relating to this particular part. The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Madam Chair. In relation to the proposed penalties, that's in 14, 17, 19, 20 (*inaudible*).

Madam Chair –

Honourable Dr Corinda Essex, sorry to stop you, but could you put your light on so that the listeners can hear you. Thank you.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Okay, thank you. 21 and 22, most of them seem to be fairly in line with one another, but in 17 (3) it says a fine of £25,000 or imprisonment for six months or both. All the other sub clauses contain maximum fines of a much higher amount, but the same level of imprisonment, so what is the rationale for that?

Madam Chair –

Attorney General, you would like to respond?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

In regard to all of the offences having the same maximum imprisonment of six months, it was considered during discussions that that was appropriate for all offences and that whole discretion of up to six months would be left with the Court. In regard to fines, I'm not addressing any of them in specific, there is some, as you pointed out in 17 (3) and 18 for £25,000 and again in 19 (2) for £10,000 and the lower rates here that they were, seem to be addressing individuals who wouldn't be on a commercial basis, so not against the Regulator or a commercial company and more individuals in a different type of offending and that was thought to have a correct lower limit rather than a sort of higher limit for commercial operation.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

That would not totally fall in with, for example, 19 (1) (*inaudible*) or commercial entities as well.

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Councillor Essex, the explanation I give is the general principle that was applied by the various individuals involved in the draft Ordinance in bringing this forward when deciding these penalties, it might not fit exactly into every single one, but that was the general principle being applied.

Madam Chair –

Any questions from other Members? The Honourable Karl Thrower?

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

I'd just like to say I agree with Corinda on it. What I'm worried about is that six months and so my worry, the one I actually highlighted, was 19 (2) when a person commits an offence to if a person persistently uses a communications service for the purpose of causing annoyance or inconvenience or needless anxiety to another person is a fine of £10,000 or imprisonment, so I was just wondering, in this list I don't think the six months accounts for if somebody's doing it on a commercial basis. Should I like if I was sending spam e-mails that matches that. Now, that is a criminal activity, but it only comes under this Ordinance and I don't think six, if I'm mass sending out spam e-mails from St Helena, I don't think six months and £10,000 is anywhere near enough of an upper limit, I think the six months seems too, far too low, I think this was thought of more as individual people doing it, you know, you know, on a one off basis, almost like the sex thing that we've just covered, but I wonder that this doesn't take into account people doing commercial crime on the island against the Telecommunications Bill and the fact is as well we have to remember that we still don't have a Data Protection Act or any copyright laws on this island and we are gonna be, I really think we are gonna be a place where people do criminal activities on a much bigger

scale than what this takes into account and I think that you really need to start looking at putting those fines up because this is a real soft touch if somebody comes over here and starts setting up any illegal e-mailing operation what law does it break on St Helena, we don't have data protection, we don't have copyright theft and this has to account for that, but six months doesn't account for somebody ripping off a little old ladies, and we know it happens, it already happens on St Helena, the Bank's already reported cases.

Madam Chair –

So, Honourable Karl Thrower, I know you was overseas, but we as the remaining elected members did had a lengthy discussion about this particular clause prior to this Bill being published and I do recall the fine was probably lower at that time and during our discussions we agreed that it should be higher and that's why it is as it is now that is being proposed. Attorney General, is there anything you'd like to add, because I'm just mindful that the title is misleading or indecent messages and interfering?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Not really very much for going into policy now rather than an explanation of a law here, an explanation of what was taken into account as very much not something for me to answer in regard to how policy looks at this.

Madam Chair –

So, the Honourable Mover, would you like to comment?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Thank you, Madam President. Just as a point of information, like you said, we have discussed this and my Honourable Friend probably was away at the time so may have missed some of the details of that discussion. What was discussed is that we came to the conclusion that some of the offences committed under this section, 19 (2) could be dealt with in other legislation, for instance, the Criminal Damage or something like that, so we looked at this fine as a maximum but also taking into account that the consequences of the offence could end up with the person or the perpetrator being prosecuted under different legislation so that would take care of that, so just as a point of information, Madam President.

Madam Chair –

Thank you, Honourable Mover. Any further questions? So, no further questions from Honourable Members? Okay, so I will ask then, Honourable Members, I'll put the question that Part IV, will stand part of the Bill.

Part IV – Clauses 15 to 23.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Chair –

So, Attorney General, would you like to talk us through Part V?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Thank you, Madam Chair. Part V is a number of Miscellaneous Provisions, the first one addressing emergencies where provisions for the Governor to take specified steps in respect of the operation of the communications service in emergency situations, essentially being for the public safety, public order or defence of St Helena.

Clause 25 addresses compensation and it makes provision for a person to be compensated if such person suffered loss when the Governor exercised authority prescribed in Clause 24.

Clause 26 deals with Regulations and it makes provisions for regulations to be made under the Ordinance; and

Clause 27 makes provision for the repeal of the Telecommunications Ordinance 1989 but saves licence of approval granted in respect of the same unless such licence is itself revoked, lapsed or expires.

Madam Chair –

Thank you, Attorney General, I notice that there is some typos which I'm certain that you will address.....

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Absolutely.

Madam Chair –

.....prior to, if agreed, prior to publication. So, Honourable Members, do you have any questions on Part V of the Bill? I do not see any lights on, so I'll put the question that Part V – Miscellaneous which includes Clauses 24 to 27 do stand part of the Bill.

Part V – Miscellaneous – Clauses 24 to 27.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Chair –

So, Honourable Members, we will now resume back into the formal capacity.

Council Resumed.

Madam President –

So, I will now ask the Honourable Mover if he'd like to report on the Bill.

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I'd like to report that the Communications Bill, 2022 passed the Committee with zero amendments and to move that this Council approves the said Bill and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Mover. Do we have a seconder? Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

Thank you, Madam President, I beg to second.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Chief Minister. Honourable Mover, do you wish to speak to the Bill?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Thank you, Madam President, just to thank everyone for their support of the Bill and also to reassure everyone that had concerns and suggestions that we will look at this in the next stage of the Bill, which is the Regulations that will follow. Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Mover. Honourable Members, I put the question that this Council approves the Communications Bill, 2022 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted. The House is now open for further debate. Any Members wish to speak to the Bill? No? Thank you very much.

Honourable Members, I now put the question that this Council approves the Communications Bill, 2022 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Members. I will now ask the Clerk to call the next item.

Motion No. 4 – The Honourable Gillian Brooks

Madam President –

The Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I beg to move that this House resolves, in accordance with section 69(9) of the Constitution of St Helena, that Sessional Paper No 20/22 namely the Public Accounts Committee Report to Legislative Council on the Formal Sessions held on 2 March and 27 April 2022 is adopted by this Council and requests the responsible member of Executive Council, not later than the first sitting day following the expiration of six weeks after 15 June 2022, to advise the Legislative Council of the action proposed to be taken by the Government of St Helena in respect of this report.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Is there a seconder?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Madam President, I beg to second.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Dr Corinda Essex. Honourable Mover, you may speak to the Motion.

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Thank you, Madam President. The precedent for this Motion is well established from the previous Council and its purpose is to ensure the House is aware of the findings of the Public Accounts Committee in the formal reports laid at this Session. Sessional Paper 20/22 summarises the matters arising from the PAC scrutiny of SHG's accounts for the year 2019/2020 and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Treasury team for achieving an unqualified audit opinion. This is the first time this has happened since the transition to the accrual basis of accounting from the previous cash basis of accounting. Sessional Paper 20/22 also reports to Legislative Council on the PAC's scrutiny of SHG Expenditure in Excess for the year 2020/2021 under section 106 (2) of the Constitution. Legislative Council may by resolution allow these sums to stand charged to public funds and I believe the Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development will present a Motion later today in respect of this. The issues raised by PAC and the explanations and assurances received from SHG Officers are documented in the report, together with recommendations for improvement.

Madam President, we are now at that reporting stage. Accordingly, this is the opportunity for elected members to raise and debate of this Motion any matter they wish to air in respect of these Public Accounts and the issues and recommendations raised by PAC for attention of the House. Madam President, Section 69 (9) of the Constitution provides for Legislative Council to resolve to adopt the reports of PAC such that Government may then respond to the recommendations not later than the 1st sitting day after six weeks of this Session. Madam President, I beg to move.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Members, the Motion is that this House resolves, in accordance with section 69(9) of the Constitution of St Helena, that Sessional Paper No 20/22 namely the Public Accounts Committee Report to Legislative Council on the Formal Sessions held on 2 March and 27 April 2022 is adopted by this Council and requests the responsible member of Executive Council, not later than the first sitting day following the expiration of six weeks after 15 June 2022, to advise the Legislative Council of the action proposed to be taken by the Government of St Helena in respect of this report. Honourable Members, the Motion is now open for debate. Anyone would like to speak? So, there are no lights on, so there is no Members who would like to speak. Honourable Mover, so is there anything that you would like to say, Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Madam President, PAC is tasked with scrutiny of Public Accounts and Audit Reports. I thank Members for their support for this Motion. The Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development is designated as the Responsible Member of Executive Council to bring the Government response to these PAC recommendations to the next Session of this House so that Council can see how these matters will be progressed. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Mover. Honourable Members, the Motion is that this House resolves, in accordance with section 69(9) of the Constitution of St Helena, that Sessional Paper No 20/22

namely the Public Accounts Committee Report to Legislative Council on the Formal Sessions held on 2 March and 27 April 2022 is adopted by this Council and requests the responsible member of Executive Council, not later than the first sitting day following the expiration of six weeks after 15 June 2022, to advise the Legislative Council of the action proposed to be taken by the Government of St Helena in respect of this report.

Question put and agreed to.

The Motion is carried.

Madam President –

Clerk, may I ask you to call the next item?

Motion No. 5 – The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development.

Madam President –

The Hon. Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Thank you, Madam President. The Motion is that this House resolves that the excess expenditure for the financial year 2020/21 in the Statement of Expenditure in Excess 2020/21 laid as SP 4/2022 now stand charged to public funds in accordance with section 106(3) of the Constitution.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Mover. Is there a seconder? The Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

Madam President, I beg to second.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Chief Minister. Honourable Mover, you may speak to the Motion.

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, at the 29th March 2022 formal meeting of Legislative Council, a Statement of Expenditure in Excess for the financial year 2020/21 was presented as Sessional Paper 4/2022 in accordance with section 106(1) of the Constitution.

The statement reported that:

- Head 26: Environment, Natural Resources & Planning, had excess expenditure over their appropriated budget of £23,949 which related to expenditure incurred under the Association of Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTA) Innovation Project that did not qualify for funding under the Overseas Countries and Territories Memorandum of Understanding.

The Statement of Expenditure in Excess for 2020/21 was subsequently scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee under section 106(2) of the Constitution and they have reported back to this House via Sessional Paper 20/2022 today recommending to this House that the excess expenditure for Head 26 totalling £23,949 stand charged to public funds.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, I beg to move.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Mover. Honourable Members, the Motion is that this House resolves that the excess expenditure for the financial year 2020/21 in the Statement of Expenditure in Excess 2020/21 laid as SP 4/2022 now stand charged to public funds in accordance with section 106(3) of the Constitution. Honourable Members, the Motion is now open for debate. Is there any Member who would like to speak? The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Madam President. The Statement of Expenditure in Excess was considered by the Public Accounts Committee and the Public Accounts Committee was satisfied that the circumstances underpinning it were justifiable, so I have no difficulty in supporting this Motion.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Dr Corinda Essex. Any other Member wish to speak? The Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

Thank you, Madam President. I rise in support of this Motion, it is a necessary process in accordance with good financial management practice.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Chief Minister. The Honourable Karl Thrower?

The Hon. Karl Thrower

Thank you, Madam President. I also rise in support. I will say, as a Member of the PAC, as my Honourable Friend, Dr Corinda Essex stated, we did have a look through this and we believe it was a justified expense.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Karl Thrower. Is there any other Member who would like to speak? No? So I invite the Honourable Mover to respond to the debate.

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Thank you, Madam President. I'd just like to respond by showing my appreciation for the support from all Members of the House. Thank you, Madam.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Mover. Honourable Members, the Motion is that this House resolves that the excess expenditure for the financial year 2020/21 in the Statement of Expenditure in Excess

2020/21 laid as SP 4/2022 now stand charged to public funds in accordance with section 106(3) of the Constitution.

Question on Motion, put and agreed to.

The Motion is carried.

Madam President –
Next item please, Clerk.

Motion No. 6 – The Honourable Andrew Turner

Madam President –
The Honourable Andrew Turner?

The Hon. Andrew Turner –
Thank you, Madam President. I beg to move that this House resolves to recommend that the St Helena Government reduce or remove restrictions on non-psychoactive, Cannabinoids or (CBD) products on St Helena.

Madam President –
Thank you, Honourable Mover. Is there a seconder? The Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –
Madam President, I will second.

Madam President –
Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Mover, you may speak to the Motion.

The Hon. Andrew Turner –
Thank you, Madam President. I am bringing this Motion today in the hope that it will spur action from the Government to improve access to CBD products for people on St Helena. Now, I must stress at this point that I am only asking about non-psychoactive CBD products which, to put it in very simple terms, will not get you a high, much to the disappointment of some people I'm sure. Globally, CBD is experiencing something of a boom as a health product and is being used to treat chronic pain, epilepsy and anxiety among a myriad of other things. It's also found a market in both beauty and wellness products. Indeed, I understand local Importers are already having issues where hemp seeds are being included in bags of mixed seeds and nuts which are held and confiscated by customs. Now, on St Helena, there may be many schools of thought on how we can improve access to CBD and, indeed, to how far we should go on the matter. Some want CBD to be a prescribed medication, given to you by your doctor. Some want us to follow the global trend and treat CBD products as something we buy over the counter like Paracetamol.

Well, today I'm not really asking about the long term changes, today I am bringing this Motion for the people who are already using CBD products, but are unable to maintain their supply.

Currently certain people are allowed to bring in CBD products under a very strict regime – requiring written consent from the Governor to be able to bring the products through Customs.

These people have, in some cases, been recommended CBD by their doctor while on overseas treatment and it begs the question why we have to ask a non-medical professional to decide if they get their treatment.

Many of these people are dealing with lifelong illnesses that put them in constant pain, and yet in the current system, I have spoken to people who have been going for months without having the medication they need as they're waiting for approval. So instead they have to take powerful, addictive painkillers that are disrupting their daily lives and their work. I'm sure we can create a better system than that.

I know that this Government is looking at CBD products as a potential money maker for the island, and I'm very glad we're doing so. I understand the argument for making one big change to our legislation to enable it instead of making a small change here and a small change there, but this issue is here today, there are people suffering now, and we owe it to them to do something about it. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Mover. Honourable Members, the Motion is that this House resolves to recommend that St Helena Government reduce or remove restrictions on non-psychoactive, I'm struggling with these words, just like Minister Brooks earlier on, Cannabinoids, (CBD) products on St Helena. And I will have to repeat that later on as well. The Motion, Honourable Members, is now open for debate, so I would like to invite Honourable Members to speak to the Motion. So, the Honourable Jeffrey Ellick?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I do not support the Motion as is, but would be more in support of a review of the policy that underpins the Drugs Ordinance and how we deal with the drug Cannabis and the various Cannabinoid components within the drug plant, such as the psychoactive agent tetrahydrocannabinol, THC, and Cannabidiol, CBD. In other countries, if the THC level in products in Cannabis plants is below 0.3% and has a high level of Cannabidiol, CBD products and plants are legal to purchase and use. If you go online to sites such as Amazon.co.uk you can purchase a lot of CBD products. I would suggest that consideration should be then given on whether there should be a policy change within the Drugs Ordinance to fit with the SHG's current vision and policies which should then trigger if there is a need for changing the legislation. Whilst I support where he is going with his Motion, might I suggest to the Mover that the Mover considers an amendment to his Motion so we follow a process.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Jeffrey Ellick. The Honourable Rosemary Bargo?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo –

Well, I do thank you, Madam President, I do support the Motion by Councillor Turner, you know, I've noticed too overseas they are selling such products over the shelf, over the counter, sorry, and

also, I mean, if there is concern, of course, but could we at least regulate it or consider regulate it through our Dispensary in the meantime, in the immediate term.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Rosemary Bargo. The Honourable Mark Brooks?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Thank you, Madam President. I do stand in support of the principle of this Motion, but I fail to see how we deal with CBD products alone without dealing with the Cannabis plants itself, so I do have a bit of concern that, and I know the Mover suggested that we shouldn't be dealing with or we should try to deal with legislation in the whole rather than little bits, but I do have concern that we are dealing with a small fraction of the legislation which will affect the overall legislation as a whole, so I do think we need to look at this in a bit broader content, so that is all I will say. Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Mark Brooks. Honourable Rob Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I rise in support of the Motion, because in this day and age where this type of medication is readily available on the pharmaceutical shelves in supermarkets elsewhere in the world I believe that it is high time that we play catch up and at least as an initial step perhaps make such medication available upon prescription from a medical practitioner without the need for a reference to His Excellency the Governor for an exemption order. Thank you, Madam President, I support the Motion.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Robert Midwinter. Is there any other Member who would like to speak? The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Madam President. Current provisions exist for the issuing of licences to individuals to enable them to access supply for their own needs, so, quite frankly, I do not understand why some are experiencing serious delays in being able to obtain their medication that they have been prescribed and I would suggest as a first step what's going wrong with the current system is examined and rectified. That said, I would support ultimately the issue of CBD products via the Dispensary, I would have concerns about them being offered over the counter, because the reliability of a number of the products is questionable and it would be extremely important to ensure that the individuals who are receiving that treatment are receiving bona fide CBD products and not other sorts of concoctions that could, in fact, end up proving to be addictive and/or, indeed, harmful to those individuals in other ways, so although I do support the principles behind the Motion, I do not support it as worded now and I feel that the initial step should be to improve what is already in place. Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Dr Corinda Essex. Honourable Karl Thrower?

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

Thank you, Madam President. I think it's clear from the comments made by my Honourable Colleagues that as a House we seem to agree that we need to look at this system that we currently have in place, I certainly don't think it's right that a Governor should have to okay for many people to have, you know, CBD oil for medical purposes, I think that we have a Health Service for that and we have a Dispensary, but I would also agree with Dr Corinda Essex that, you know, because it is such a growing market there is a huge amount of very good product from the market, but there is also a huge amount of very bad products on the market and no matter what we do to move forward with this we have to ensure that the product being allowed on to St Helena is truly medical grade and fit for the purpose that the people want to use it for, so I would suggest that we do two things, we look at this current system as it currently is and see how we can improve it so that the people who need the pain relief can get it as fast as possible, but also that we have to have a look at the bigger picture. My Honourable Colleague, Andrew, said, we have considered this as a business to move forward into and in order to do that we have to look at the big picture anyway, so I would say that we take a two-step approach, first of all we look at the current system, second, we look at the system that we want for the future, not just for the levy of CBD oil to patients, but also how we want to move forward with it as a business case for St Helena.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Karl Thrower. Is there anyone else would like to speak? The Honourable Martin Henry?

The Hon. Martin Henry –

I rise in support of the principle. CBD oil within the regulations is now legal in all states in the US, in the UK, South Africa and most of Europe. It is now recognised that CBD oil has the potential to help support many health issues and although some research, some current research is still ongoing, the likes of the FCDA of FDA in America has now recognised its full potential, but just to add that CBD oil has been used for self-care and medication, it dates back to ancient China, to India and most of Asia, this is not new, where it was used for physical and mental healing purposes. This update will bring St Helena up with the rest of the world and allow members of our community to access alternative sources of support where current pharmaceutical methods have failed. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Martin Henry. Is there any other Member would like to speak to the Motion? Okay, so I just want to ensure that I have understood correctly and before I proceed any further there is no proposal, is there a proposal to amend the Motion? No?

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

Sorry, Madam President, could I ask the AG for a brief moment? Obviously, originally my wording had initially asked to expedite a review, I was informed by the Deputy Speaker at the time that had to be changed, is there a reason why I should not be asking to expedite a review as I originally intended?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

You were originally intending to expedite a review of legislation, the legislation is quite clear, that's been set out, so if you're asking for a review of policy or recommend a review of policy, that's absolutely fine, if you amended to that, but it would be a review of the policy rather than the legislation. However, you pretty much already got that here, so ultimately you want not just the removal but also a percentage of reduction and if that's the principle that's agreed you might not need to in any way amend the Motion, so perhaps.

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

For the removal of doubt it would be advisable to expedite the review with a view to reducing restrictions?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Yeah. I mean, or it could just be now that this House resolves to recommend that the St Helena Government reviews its policy on non-psychoactive etc etc.

Madam President –

Okay, so Honourable Members, I will just call a short, five-minute break so that the Honourable Mover could just have a few moments just to.....

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

I think I'm happy with that wording and we're happy to proceed.

Madam President –

.....you're happy?

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

Yes, if I can just have it in writing, I'd be.

Madam President –

So, that's why I suggest that we have a five-minute break, because I want to make sure we get it absolutely correct before proceeding any further and this five-minute, and I'll ask that you do not remove yourselves from the room, just to allow the Attorney General and the Mover just to have a very quick brief discussion. Thank you. Please remain seated.

Council Suspended.

Council Resumed.

Motions Resumed.

Madam President –

Thank you, Clerk. So, Honourable Mover, it's my understanding that you have a proposed amendment to your Motion, so would you like to share that with us?

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

Thank you, Madam President. The amendment would stand that the Motion would now read that this House resolves to recommend that the St Helena Government reviews its policy on non-psychoactive Cannabinoids (CBD) products on St Helena.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Is there a seconder? Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Madam President, I second.

Madam President –

So, Honourable Members, the Motion as it stands now, that this House resolves to recommend that the St Helena Government reviews its policy on non-psychoactive Cannabinoid (CBD) products on St Helena. I now invite you to speak to the revised Motion. Sorry, I missed a step, I have to ask if you agree to the Motion first before I invite you to speak to something that's not been agreed, so, my apologies, it's been a long day. So I will need to say those words again, so bear with me, listeners as well.

So, Honourable Members, the Motion is that this House resolves to recommend that the St Helena Government reviews its policy on non-psychoactive Cannabinoid (CBD) products on St Helena. I will now ask the Honourable Members if they agree to the revised wording of the Motion.

Question on revised Motion, put and agreed to.

Madam President –

So, Honourable Members, on the table now, I will invite you to speak to the revised Motion, that this House resolves to recommend that the St Helena Government reviews its policy on non-psychoactive Cannabinoid (CBD) products on St Helena. They always say that practice makes perfect, so I think I'm slowly getting there with pronouncing those words, so Members, the new Motion is now open for debate. Does anyone wish to speak? The Honourable Jeffrey Ellick?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you, Madam President. Now that my Honourable Friend has changed the Motion in full support of his Motion as this will then help us now to look at the policy and look at the issues surrounding policy, because I know that there are merchants who are bringing in like shampoos and soaps and everything else that has CBD products in it and which is perfectly legal in most other countries around the world and those are the things that need to be addressed and obviously if you look at our policies, our policies can address that, but also the other matters of the legislation, so we can tailor the legislation to suit the needs of the community. And obviously again we need to sit down with the appropriate people in relation to this here, the Government needs to be on board, does it fall in line with our Vision and so forth and if it does then this is what we should be bringing, taking forward, so thank you for the change in the Motion.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs. Is there any other

Member who wishes to speak to the revised Motion, because the old Motion has now fallen away?
The Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

Thank you, Madam President. I'm not gonna say that I know the detail of this and I'm certainly not gonna join you in trying to pronounce all the words, all I'll say is that from the information we've been provided thus far on CBD and the desire and need by some of community to help them with their medical and health problems, I am in full support of this Motion, especially now that it has been revised to talk about reviewing our policies and ensuring that it fits within the regulations and vision of this Government. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Chief Minister. Does anyone else wish to speak? The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Madam President, my comments remain unchanged, I think the initial steps should be to make the existing system work better and ensure that individuals are not kept waiting for sustained periods because with proper coordination and organisation that should be able to be avoided. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Any other Honourable Member wish to speak? No, so I will now invite the Honourable Mover to respond to the debate on the revised wording.

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

Thank you, Madam President. First, I feel like I need to apologise to you at the start for making you say the word non psychoactive Cannabinoids so many times, but I'm very glad to say here that we're making some progress on this issue and more than happy with the revised wording and very glad it's getting the support from everyone here. Again, I must stress that I'm not trying to tell you as a Government how far you should go here or there, I am trying to bring the issue there is an urgent issue right here, right now, so I do just want to stress that one more time that there are people who are waiting on this sooner rather than later, but thank you to everyone for their support and I look forward to seeing progress.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Mover. Honourable Members, the Motion is that this House resolves to recommend that the St Helena Government reviews its policy on non-psychoactive Cannabinoid (CBD) products on St Helena.

Question on Motion, put and agreed to.

The Motion is carried.

Madam President –

Clerk, I'd like you to call the next item.

8. ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

Madam President –
The Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –
Madam President, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn sine die.

Madam President –
Is there a seconder?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –
Thank you, Madam President, I beg to second.

Madam President –
Thank you. Honourable Chief Minister, do you wish to say anything at the outset of the debate?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –
Madam President, probably not, I think I'll try and do a roundup after every Member who wishes to speak has and then I'll do it in my response. Thank you.

Madam President –
Thank you, Honourable Chief Minister. So, Honourable Members, I put the question that this House, this Council is adjourned sine die and the question now is open for debate. Members, you may wish to speak. So, Honourable Andrew Turner?

The Hon. Andrew Turner –
Thank you, Madam President. There's so much to talk about right now. The recent statistics showing St Helena's declining population are frankly terrifying and the cost of living crisis is likely to hit us even harder than the global pandemic and to be honest I feel like we're only starting to feel the burn on that one.

But I actually want to carry on with this meeting's theme of communications. As I alluded to earlier, the cable project could be the single biggest change in our lifestyle, more so than even the airport. Personally I'm very excited to get my Netflix account and Steam accounts and to be able to do my research without having to worry about megabytes. This cable has so much potential to benefit our island both economically and socially and it can be a powerful tool to allow us to develop into the modern age.

While I was extremely pleased to hear about the range of educational programmes put in place, the fact is that there is a lot of areas where we're not ready as an Island.

So, I firstly want to look at the technical side: When the cable goes live, people are expecting to be able to use commonplace modern services such as Netflix for TV, Spotify for their music and Amazon for their shopping. But, without international debit card services from our Bank, how do you pay for them? And how do we sign up for them when many of the sign up pages don't even

recognise that St Helena exists and when our postcode is flagged up as invalid or, the particularly frustrating one, is where they ask for a mobile number which they then say is invalid because our phone numbers don't have enough digits. That's if you can ever receive a text at all.

We have told people there will be opportunities to put their businesses online and we're now giving them the skills to become content creators, digital artists and so much more besides. It is great that we are teaching them how to do that, but how can they do it without access to proper international payment services, how can they be paid for their work?

On a legislation side, a great step forward today with updating our telecoms regulations, but one of the main benefits of the cable is the ability for international companies to register themselves on St Helena and to store data on St Helena and it worries me that we've yet to implement any comprehensive data protection legislation which surely is essential before we can open our doors in such a way.

Madam president, earlier I said the cable was a powerful tool for our development, but like all power tools, they come with a degree of danger and, while I am incredibly heartened by the work that has been done already I am concerned that as a community we are still not ready to safely use the new connectivity we're going to get.

We are about to take a massive step forward in the level of technology we use, we are stepping up from a blunt sword to a chainsaw – and if we don't know what we're doing we're going to hurt ourselves.

Again, I am glad to see more education programmes in place, but, as the Honourable Karl Thrower alluded to earlier, the Bank are still regularly dealing with issues where people are coming to make payments for online scams and this promises to only get worse once St Helena has become more active online.

We've had the warnings already and we're starting to respond to them. Since we took the step forward with mobile phones there have been increasing issues, which we discussed today, where people have been sending inappropriate messages to underage people via their mobiles.

Earlier in this session we passed changes to legislation to deal with sexual communications with children, but I so wonder if better education had been done beforehand, and we'd begun teaching people about the consequences of their online actions, we could have at least avoided some of the harm that has come as a result.

I'm glad we are making changes to better deal with the issue and I'm encouraged by the Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs describing those changes as a first step. I am so looking forward to seeing the next steps.

But, let's not also forget that this issue occurred at a time where internet and mobile connectivity is still incredibly expensive and I, again, this is another issue that I think we can expect to grow once the cable comes.

The rest of the world has had the luxury of developing as the technology evolved – they learned and made small mistakes as the small steps forward came with technology, but our big shift is coming and it's gonna bring these issues with it, so as a community, not just as a Government, let's be aware of this and let's make the most of the resources we have to prepare for it and learn how to deal with them. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Andrew Turner. The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex =

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I will first declare my interest as President of the St Helena Chamber of Commerce.

The current global situation is already causing St Helena to face unprecedented price increases, stock shortages and other challenges that will inevitably impact negatively on the cost of living and, therefore, erode both disposable income and economic growth. St Helena needs to do all it can to mitigate the resulting issues and to ensure that real poverty does not occur and that the private sector does not collapse and please note that I say St Helena, not just St Helena Government. And that is because these efforts must be made not only by St Helena Government, but by the private sector and, indeed, our community as a whole. Even with the best team work, collaboration and commitment the immediate future is going to be tough, demanding and, at times, depressing and down heartening. If we are not united it will certainly be even worse and take longer to turn around.

With the problems facing the British Government in the United Kingdom itself, which include poverty on a scale at which some families and individuals cannot afford to pay for the essentials of life, it would be unrealistic to expect Britain to increase grant in aid funding to St Helena. St Helena Government is already facing the impact of successive one-year, flat line budgets and any fat that used to be on the bones of Directorates' budgets has long since been carved away. Therefore, St Helena Government is no longer in the position of being the go to "cash cow" that could continually be milked, and if more money was needed, could be made to deliver more by squeezing a little harder. Madam President, those days are over.

However, the Government still has its responsibility to do what is affordable to mitigate the current situation and to act as an enabler in facilitating and supporting other key stakeholders to address it.

That said, I do urge St Helena Government to focus more on achieving greater efficiency, effectiveness and productivity across all Directorates. Although the Fit for the Future programme is still a long way from its conclusion, it would be reassuring and pleasing to start to see evidence of improvement in these areas taking place and of a more proactive and timely approach to taking matters forward, including some matters that have been previously raised and/or resolved in this Honourable House. Wastage of funding must also be avoided as it appears that this is still occurring in some instances.

Madam President, we cannot allow ourselves to fall into the trap of thinking St Helena Government can solve all our problems – it cannot, and we all need to work together to get St Helena through this period ahead with minimum damage and hardship, even if this means having to adjust to doing things differently and perhaps making some sacrifices for the greater good of St Helena.

The wholly Government owned Bank of St Helena will have an increasingly important role and there are a number of actions that it could take that would help the situation. I wish to emphasise that I am not suggesting that it does anything that would put depositors' money at risk by getting near to the safety margins, but that the Bank explores affordable options to assist both private and commercial customers. As a new Chair of the Financial Services Regulatory Authority will soon be in post, this presents an ideal opportunity to investigate what changes to current interest rates, loan regimes; etc can be introduced without presenting unacceptable levels of risk.

During this difficult period, it is also of the greatest importance that communication and consultation between St Helena Government and the private sector is maximised and sustained and that less "silo" working exists. The Chamber of Commerce will have a key role in helping to bring this about and so it is increasingly important to have a strong Chamber that can continue to

be the collective voice and advocate for all parts of the private sector. However, I also see an increasing need for closer collaboration and information sharing between those in the various sectors such as farming, retailing, tourism, etc.

Finally, Madam President, I turn to something which is not aspirational but is fully within the control of the 12 elected Members of this Honourable House who were all elected by the public to serve St Helena as their representatives. If we are going to achieve the best outcomes possible for St Helena in the very difficult times ahead, we must all be willing to work collectively, to value and listen to the input of our peers even if we do not always agree with it; to share and discuss topics and information of national importance as a team before final decisions are made by Ministers, (except in emergency situations), and to build mutual trust. If we fail to do these things, we will not only be letting our constituents down, but not fulfilling our duty to St Helena.

I support the adjournment.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Dr Corinda Essex. The Honourable Rosemary Bargo?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo –

Thank you, Madam President; I rise in support of the Adjournment. Madam President, I would like to declare my interest as a business owner.

Madam President, I have always believed in our team, believed that we can make a difference, being newly elected I felt extremely energetic, enthused and optimistic that we could make a difference for our people. One of the first initiatives I was a part of was looking at how we can ensure food security for the island. Along with other elected members, input from our local farmers, the Chamber of Commerce, ENRD Agriculture Sector and Connect, proposals were put forth. However, it seems that we have hit roadblocks of red tape as such initiatives are moving at a snail pace, which is becoming extremely frustrating. We are also facing a time that sees our working population migrating to the outside world at a high pace. Why? What are the pull factors of this migration we have to ask ourselves? Is it simply better employment opportunities, better wages or generally a better life and whilst most will argue that people will leave no matter what you offer and whilst that is an element of truth, people are also generally fed up, fed up because they have possibly stated their cases and have simply gotten nowhere, resulting in them making life changing and possibly very hard decisions to leave the island they so love to seek better opportunities for themselves and their families abroad. Our people are literally begging us to help them and then after, if any were made to help prevent migration, for example, like increase of wages to provide better employment opportunities, better working conditions, affordable homes or affordable land, comes a little too late. I spoke earlier on how enthusiastic I was to be able to be a part of enabling good change for our people. This enthusiasm was shared by the majority, if not all, of the newly-elected members, but change we seek are constantly met with stumbling blocks of limited funding and outdated with inadequate legislation and policies. This is unacceptable in my opinion. Our current legislation/policies and financial situation needs to be addressed and I don't mean in the future, it needs to be addressed now, which brings me on to Select Committees.

What seems like a lifetime, I'm extremely pleased that a consensus has been agreed between the Ministers and ourselves as backbenchers on the Select Committees Order and we shall have the ability to address decisions on policies, old and new, to enable good change for the people of St Helena. Whilst I acknowledge the difficult job our Ministers are being tasked with having to

address inherited legislation and policies, we look to you to help shape that needed change for a better life for our people and remember we as backbenchers are here to work with you.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge that today is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, a day we promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of our elderly. I would also like to thank the staff at Adult Social Care, all the staff in the Community Complexes and those in personal homes for taking care of our elderly. Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Rosemary Bargo. The Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Madam President, I rise in support of the Adjournment. Since our last meeting in the House, just over a month ago, the island has had to again face the daunting challenge of increases in cost of living, including the substantive rise in fuel prices. We know that this is an unfortunate case globally and beyond our control, but it is a bitter pill to swallow. We already have low and medium earners who are under pressure to meet living standards without this added worry. At the rate we are moving right now, basic commodities will be hard to source. It worries me how some families manage. I think of those with children. How do you explain to a young child they cannot have what they see as their normal foods? It is not good to hear how some of our elderly and our pensioners struggle to meet their basic needs. Some of these people have come from backgrounds where they did not have what we have offered to us today, but they had good staple diets and in their autumn years should not be pressured with living hand to mouth.

The welfare of those in the private sector is so concerning – this is an already struggling section of the workforce, therefore cuts made as a community to balance the home budget, will feed back to those who rely on our spending.

Government has made known they are actively seeking a way of cushioning the impact price increases which affect the island. We need action regarding this as quickly as possible, to help our community to cope, particularly those, as I said, in the low income bracket, those on social security and our pensioners.

We recently saw the statistics of the reduction of near 5% in our population spanning a twelve-month period to April of this year. We have just over 6% reduction in the working-age group. Linking this with what I spoke of earlier, it is vital we put robust plans in place to alleviate fears that it is fast becoming too expensive to live on St Helena – words quoted to me by constituents over the past weeks.

There is much speculation and mixed feelings around the opening up of the Island and the public is waiting to have more definitive information on the removal of quarantine. We know this is necessary in order for St Helena to economically progress and we understand Government is now collating relevant information to be better informed when putting together the road map that will lead us out of quarantine. I would hope that this will be with the public in good time to allow people to be well aware of plans and given ample time to digest and be fully on-board.

On a positive note, Madam President, St Helena Day is now nearly a month past, but as there has been no sittings in the House since then, I would like to express my thanks to Nick and Tina Stevens of New Horizons and their team of supporters, who worked hard behind the scenes to ensure the celebrations were laid on for all of us to enjoy.

Likewise, thank you to the team who planned and oversaw the celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee weekend. In a time when we are facing the concerns of how the future is looking,

it was good to see people shelving these worries to enjoy a momentous moment in history. Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Gillian Brooks. The Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Honourable Robert Midwinter –

Thank you, Madam President, I rise in support of the Adjournment.

Firstly, Madam President, I would like to congratulate the Royal St Helena Police Force, on their being granted their Royal status, and also those front line emergency responders who were awarded their Platinum Jubilee medals over the Jubilee weekend; thanks and also congratulations are extended to Her Majesty the Queen on reaching this significant milestone in her service to our people.

I would also like to acknowledge the hard work put in by so many behind the scenes to make the Jubilee celebrations and also St Helena's Day the successes that they were, so, again, a very big Thank You to all involved.

Madam President, It is particularly pleasing to see that the iconic mast at Signal House has been restored to its former glory, and I am also pleased to note that the three missing names of African crew members will soon be added to the Waterwitch memorial in the Castle Gardens.

Madam President, I am very pleased to note the invitation to tender has now been released by the Saint Helena Government relating to our Health Service. I look forward to receiving an update regarding this once the closing date has passed and tenders have been assessed.

I am also pleased that we have managed, between the Ministers and Backbenchers, to reach a consensus of sorts regarding the Select Committees (Establishment) Order, and have today elected the Chairs of the two Committees. Now that this election is out of the way, I look forward to moving forward and working with colleagues in implementing the scrutiny of areas of government activity.

Madam President, having thus far been pleased to note several positive things that have been happening here in St Helena, I feel that I must now change tune.

In particular, I would note that of grave concern to the public at the moment is the escalating cost of imported goods, and in particular items of foodstuffs that one could hardly call luxury items, such as cooking oil.

In this respect I believe an urgent review of cost increases needs to be undertaken, and consideration given to either reducing or removing import duty on those items that have increased significantly that may be considered as an essential item for basic living standards.

Madam President, whilst recognising the need for austerity measures, when we are asking the public to tighten their belts, this belt tightening should be public sector led, in that officials need to be very mindful of the public perception of SHG, particularly when the public sees SHG vehicles running around the island and sat in shopping areas during evenings, at weekends and during public holidays.

It would also appear to the public that there is sufficient funding available within certain Portfolios for branded work clothes, and other promotional related materials, that are only directed at an on-shore audience and in some cases are even time limited.

Madam President, in this respect I must ask, when the general public is being told that they need to tighten their belts and weather the storm, is this really a good use of our scarce public funding?

Madam President, yesterday marked 40 years since the Liberation of the Falkland Islands, and many Saints have a connection with the Falklands as a result of what transpired in 1982.

I myself only learned of St Helena having worked on the construction of Mount Pleasant Airport in 1986, the same year that the first Saints went to work in the Falklands.

Madam President, the Falkland Islands have come a long way since then, and they now have both a thriving economy, and also a growing population.

The Falkland Islanders have achieved this by taking full advantage of every opportunity that has come their way, and I would hope that we could look back in a few years from now and say that we have done likewise, as I strongly believe that we have the opportunity to make a difference to the future of this island.

However, this will mean taking calculated risks, and also exploring new revenue streams, both of which I believe we should be doing without further delay; as such, I fully support the growing public view that it is time to open up our island again, by removing quarantine restrictions for those travelling to the island who have been fully vaccinated.

In thinking of the Falklands, I am again drawn to the conflict that continues in the Ukraine, which I hope and pray will soon be resolved in a peaceful manner.

Madam President, in closing, I would like to thank you for stepping into the presiding role at such short notice, to commend you on your oversight of today's proceedings, and adding your personal touch of colour. Thank you Madam President.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Robert Midwinter. The Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Thank you, Madam President. I stand for the office of being a Councillor because I was passionate about St Helena and its people. The people of St Helena were suffering to my opinion and that I could make a difference. The people voted for twelve of us with the notion that we twelve Councillors who were successful could make a difference, but eight months on and there seem to be no difference, things seem to be not moving forward. Eight months down the road of our Ministerial Government, people are asking are the Ministers in control and listening to the people they represent or are they still allowing the Administration and Officials to pull their strings. People questions are the Ministers in charge of the island and can they make the difference they would like to make.

Madam President, coming out of the Commons and Overseas Territories Speakers Conference in 2022, which our Speaker attended, mention was made of strong Legislatures and I quote that: "Strong legislatures are the bedrock of democracy and essential for the development of prosperity of our citizens. They represent the people, pass laws and hold government to account. Strong legislatures are built on the foundation of independence of the Executive, access to independent legal advice and a physical, separate and accessible building, to name but a few. This here also supports the Benchmark Report from the CPA. What actions are we taking on this? Then we have the Island Vision and Strategy – Effective infrastructure, altogether better for children and young people, altogether wealthier, altogether safer, altogether healthier, altogether greener, effective, efficient and accountable public sector. Then the Minister for Finance in his budget speech mentioned some of the reasons why our people are leaving and they were – low wages, lack of opportunity, growing inequality, a lack of recognition, people feel undervalued, cost of living and

the quality of our services, so the quicker we can turn this around there might be hope, he also mentioned.

The Vision goes on to say that taking an outcomes approach will mean focusing on the difference which Ministers wish to make rather than on the things we do in an organisation. Successfully achieving these outcomes will require careful planning, including prioritising and investing in resources in those activities which will make the greatest impact. It will also require close and effective partnerships working with individuals, businesses, other organisations and communities and with the UK Government who provide the bulk of our funding. So, are the Ministers taking any action? They have the powers to change things and redirect some of that £44.8m to make a difference before it is too late, especially with the high cost of living. The increase in the cost of petrol and diesel, what is our Government doing about it? What about the vulnerable households, those who are suffering from these high price increases? Are we as a Government bringing in any measures to help them before it is too late? The UK is helping their people with support measures, has St Helena asked them for support for Overseas Territories? Apart from the monies already mentioned in the approved budget can the UK give us more support or additional money under these circumstances?

It worries me that our people of St Helena that nothing more has been heard on renewable energy, is there any further action? What about the Equiano cable, will we have a provider by the time the cable goes live? The people of St Helena is looking forward to the benefits from this cable, an enhanced and affordable internet connectivity, faster and cheaper internet across the island. What about food security, who is taking the lead in enabling our private sector to ensure the availability of adequate food supplies? Again, we have been short of eggs, potatoes, onion and carrots, even cooking oil, to name but a few, but what about our Agriculture and Fishing. St Helena used to produce all these things, eggs, potatoes and onions in abundance, what has happened? Let's have some action plans. Does the Government have any plans to enable food security measures?

I want to mention social housing. I've been dealing with families looking for housing and the Government cannot help, nor can Social help. I have regular checks with the families to see how things are going and I'm now being told that they are leaving the island to see if offshore can give them a better future. How sad is this? People have been leaving the island ever since the Falklands Conflict. They was always open to single status, but of course the people or employers in the Falklands and Ascension Island see the skills of our Saints and they have opened it up to families and that's why people are leaving now.

And finally, I cannot leave without mentioning quarantine. I most probably is the only elected member who is against dropping quarantine at present. Although today we heard about the Health Transformation Programme, which is really good news, but we cannot follow Ascension who only have a working population. St Helena has resident population, almost a quarter of which is elderly folks with wide ranging types of sickness. Also, almost a quarter of the population have young children who cannot have the vaccine and I feel that the Health Service is not ready. People still have to wait two weeks to see a Doctor and if there is someone to answer the phone. If we caught Covid and who's going to answer the phone and then wait two weeks to see a Doctor? This is not acceptable. Then there are the shortages of medical supplies, so are we ready? In my opinion, I think the answer is no. So we, who are elected to keep St Helena and its people safe and we should not bend to pressures from the UK. The UK should be supplying our reasonable needs. Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Ronald Coleman. Is there any other Member who would like to speak? Honourable Karl Thrower?

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

Thank you, Madam President. Firstly, I raise in support of the Adjournment. As many or all of the elected members know and many of the public, I recently went to a Seminar in St Lucia. In order to get to St Lucia, I travelled through South Africa where I had five days. I travelled through the UK and then direct to St Lucia. I will simply say this, the problems that St Helena is currently experiencing are not unique to St Helena. These are worldwide issues. The second thing is they are not gonna go away, if anything, unfortunately, they are gonna get much worse because the simple fact is that even if the conflict in Ukraine is resolved next week there have been diplomatic agreements now put in place that will see diesel not being supplied at a reasonable price for decades. You know, the simple fact is that Russia used to supply around 40% of pure oils to the world and the Western world has simply decided that they will no longer purchase those fuel oils even if the Ukraine conflict is resolved from Russia and everybody assumes that the OPEC countries and the other oil producers like Venezuela and that around the world will be able to pick up that supply. There is a problem with that. Russia supplied about 40%, they are only able to up their production by about 10% which gives you another 6%, there is still a 34% or more shortage. In order to meet that shortage, there was enough oil resources in the ground but they have to build infrastructure to get it out. The pipelines are already full quite literally at capacity, the refineries are near capacity. This is a long-term problem and whereas I appreciate the Government's response in substituting the fuel to Connect which will hold up a rise in energy prices until April, or should be, that's only a current rate, obviously if fuel goes up before then we'd have to look at that, but then we've got to look at the long-term solutions and I don't mean just long-term solutions to fuel at Connect, I mean shipping. You know, whenever we look at things our shipping contract is due up next year and, you know, I think personally is, I've already said, I said it on the radio yesterday and I've already informed elected members, I really believe that we need to start looking at Namibia maybe for shipping. The simple fact is it is physically much closer, it has a new port, you know, and it's not an instant thing of clicking your fingers and do it, it's just something that we have to start looking outside of the island for solutions, but I do worry that in the measures that SHG have announced so far there's nothing directly addressing the most vulnerable people on the island. I think we have to look at putting pensions up, we have, you know, pensions are already means tested so any increase in pension should only go to the most needy people. You know, I don't believe that we should be looking at directing funds to the masses as much, I think we need to address the needy first, the vulnerable first and then we can look at and do things. I do think there are solutions to do it. One thing, I know that my Honourable Friend has mentioned cooking oil today, which seems to be one of the hot topics. Now, at the minute, cooking oil has a 20% duty on it. Now, the problem with 20% duties, or percentage due to this, as the raw material price goes up then obviously the Government makes more duty on it. Now, one of the things we can look at, with alcohol and wines and things we have fixed amounts for the quantity, so you would have maybe look at put in fixed prices on a litre of cooking oil, so even when the price goes up and down, St Helena Government would have a more steady income stream, we would know what we're gonna do as long as we're importing the same amount, but also it would stop the almost double whammy of not only does the price that merchants are buying the product for at source going up, but then you've got a percentage added on and the percentage added on which really

double increases it, so I do think there are things that we can look at to address, but I will just say that these problems aren't going away.

Now, on a more positive note, I will say that during my travels obviously I saw Covid, I saw how it was being dealt with by other countries and I know that there's an argument that St Helena is not the Falkland Islands, it's not Granada, it's not the EBI, it's not to escape us or the UK or South Africa, but for me I believe that all the evidence is there to say that we can look at opening up and I do support the Government's move towards looking at opening up. I think it's proportional to the effect that we're worried about to have it on the island, so I will say I do support the way that that is progressing at the minute. However, then, I would also say, and I've also informed the Ministers, that I think the quicker that we can give a firm date for when we're opening up, it doesn't matter when it is, I'm not saying you should open next week or in a month or three months, but I think that once you announce a date then that gives all the people in our entire tourism industry something to aim for, that's when they know that they should be able to tell, you know, their colleagues overseas who do all the bookings and that for them, that this is when we open, you know, and this is when we can start looking at getting tourism in and then also I think that we need to then look at flights as well for Christmas, I'm guessing that if we do open before Christmas there are a lot of St Helenians overseas, especially in the Falkland Islands, who have basically been trying to get home for three years, not been because we've had quarantine and I think hopefully we might get a, you know, quite a few people wanting to come back for Christmas, but once again it all has to be proportional, we have to make sure all the ducks are in a row before we do that so that we can address the concerns of the public.

So, thank you very much.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Karl Thrower. Is there any other Honourable Members who wish to speak? Honourable Martin Henry?

The Hon. Martin Henry –

Thank you, Madam Speaker, Madam President. I rise in support of the Adjournment and to say that I will speak slightly off the current topic today and give you a bit of a personal account and this one is based on change.

What is change? One of my life's experiences in both a personal and professional capacity is the observation how we all use, circle around, the all-important pie in the sky word 'change'. We are told that in today's world this is the new constant and to ignore it is to ignore progress, to be left behind, to squander, to waste great opportunities. Today, I would like to speak on this contentious word from a person perspective and hope to at least encourage each of us to question our relationship with this new constant.

Wherever you go, whoever you talk to, at some point the conversation, the idea of change will appear and on most occasions why hasn't it happened. However, over the last few years I have come to realise two important factors about change, that is, nearly everyone wants change, but no-one wants to change. Fundamentally, in order for change to occur in a given system, of value within that system must change so if we all shout to the top of our voices we want change and then all go back doing exact the same thing, what is the likely outcome? I've spent a great deal of time trying to understand why this is the case and the answer is actually hard wired into our biology in the form of habits. We have heard this statement over and over and over again, we are creatures of habit, but what we don't realise is how true this is. Science has concluded that over 95% of our

daily actions by the time that we are thirty-five, all of us besides Andrew, are hard wired and every time we conduct that action it becomes even more an ingrained habit. However, what is more interesting, is that our habits inform the majority of our personal beliefs, so when you are smoking a cigarette whilst reading the back of a packet, Minister Brooks, that smoking will cause lung cancer and you continue to smoke, this is the habit, not just the addiction to nicotine, this is why people relapse when quitting, even when using replacement nicotine therapy, something I personally battled with for many years. When the United Nations declares on its dangerous foods list that processed meats like sausages and most deli hams are a type 1 class carcinogenic in the same category as tobacco smoking and asbestos that causes cancer and we continue to eat them on a daily basis this is a habit fuelled by dated mislead knowledge, it just might not be the water. So, what is the point? The point is that whilst we all want to change and make conscious changes to improve ourselves, our island and our futures, we often subconsciously derail this by not wanting to change our actions because to do so we will need to change our hard wired habits. We often provide excuses for not changing habits, I have sat in countless meetings and heard the need for change followed by all the reasons why it can't be done, statements like, "you don't understand the whole picture", "before days we used to", "don't throw the baby out with the bath water", "what about people who will suffer the most", "we always do it this way". Well, I daresay that it might just be time to take a real calculated chance as we will never understand the whole picture when it comes to stepping forward, realise that history is important for informing us, but has no place in our futures and that it just might be time to throw the baby out with the bathwater which could result in short term suffering but has the potential for long-term benefits for us all. Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time, we are the ones we've been waiting for, we are the change we seek. Barrack Obama. In order to enable change, we must change. Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Martin Henry. Does any other Member would like to speak? The Honourable Jeffrey Ellick?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Madam President, I rise in support of the Adjournment. The cost of living is and will continue to be a challenge for this Government and the island as a whole. However, sometimes out of adversity comes opportunity, opportunity for people to make a difference by bringing forward different ideas and solutions to the problems we are facing and problems we are likely to face. This is not just a challenge or problem for the Government, as my Honourable Corinda Essex has stated. My Honourable Friend from Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development has given some ideas as to what SHG will be doing, however, I would agree with Councillor Essex, we all need to work together to lessen the impact for St Helena, we all need to do our bit.

I can say in response to my Honourable Friend, Andrew Turner's comments on telecommunications that sensible support is working on data protection laws for St Helena and are in the process of hiring someone to assist with the legislation. In respect of cyber security, we are working with the Home Office in FCDO and are working on plans to ensure we are cable ready, not just as a Government, but as a community before the cable goes live.

In response to Councillor Coleman, who is well aware that £380,000 was given towards food production under the EDIP programme, just to say if my colleague did not hear the Treasury and Infrastructure and Sustainable Development Minister, he did point out the various measures and

funding we would use for subsidy in respect of cost of living. These measures are only short-term though.

I would also like to congratulate all who worked on the Queen's Jubilee Celebrations which, in my view, was a success and I do have my purple and maroon tie on to support Awareness about Elderly Abuse. Madam President, I beg to move.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Jeffrey Ellick. Would anyone else like to speak? So, Honourable Chief Minister, you would like to respond?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

Thank you, Madam President. Well, thank you, just about everybody, for your contribution to the Adjournment Debate and I would thank Ministers Henry and Ellick because I think some of what you've done, especially Minister Ellick, has kind of lessened the load for me to try and address here today.

But I will say that pie in the sky change word has been floating around not just here on St Helena, but internationally for some time. The other pie in the sky word that I think is so loosely used here and when you look at the news channels and the work that's being done globally, the next one close to that I think is sustainability and when you put one word into the mix with that it's the climate and I think that's the other thing that we need to be more aware of, globally we're being affected by what was told to us some thirty, forty, fifty years ago in respect of what we would see if climate change hit us and I think that is exactly what's happening to us in St Helena and in my pre JMC meeting last week I think it's very pertinent to note and tell you all that it's being recognised and seen in all the other British Overseas Territories as well.

So, we talk about cost of living and I don't think anyone in this room and potentially here on St Helena won't say that we are feeling the effects of cost of living. The Ministerial team, my cabinet, we are very aware of this and I think it's also pertinent to note that the increase in fuel came about some two/three weeks ago, we have proactively gone on radio to talk about this and we have spoken to all elected members to talk about the areas in which we are looking to address, which included shipping, which included Customs duty and which included minimum wage and the bill for electricity that we talked about again today, which, to take us up until the end of this financial year, fingers crossed, no more fuel price increases, but with the way of the world I can't see that being the case, electricity. We've talked about having to look at how we juggle all of these increases and the, dare I say it, the fund that's been given to us by the UK Government to some tune of £2.12m. If we start using those figures, when I went on radio with the Financial Secretary, we soon see we can burn a hole in £2.12m and we don't know what else is going to hit is before the end of this financial year. So, I'm a little disappointed to think that some Members believe that we've done nothing, because at the same time now that I'm on this topic, I'd like to actually say a huge thank you to the Financial Secretary and his team under the Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development for the work that they are doing in trying to collate some information so that we can have information on all of the different topics to share with all elected members so that when we make a decision all of the, the twelve of us will understand why it's being taken and how we try and address all of the issues, but like Councillor Essex and Minister Ellick also mentioned, it's unfortunate but we won't be able to put money to everything, we simply just don't have the resources to do that.

The declining population was talked about or immigration and I think this is something that's been going on, like Coleman said, for many, many years now, it is a grave concern, it will continue to be, because I think it is a shift, it's now more of families and we are working as quickly as we can to try and address these things, but it is partnership and it is not only the St Helena Government that needs to work to try and attract or encourage our people to stay, or, indeed, return.

We've been in this for eight months and generally, as a new-born baby, most new-borns take about nine months to a year to walk, so I'm just putting that out there for context, because to see the sterling job that my colleague Minister Scipio has done today I think this Cabinet is, as a Cabinet and elected members alike, who are prepared to try and do things differently and I thank you for how you've presented this today, it's been slick as you said it would be and I think we've got through some wonderful business here today and I just say to you Thank You, because it was at short notice. So, we are flexible, we are adaptable and it's gonna take some time, we're now eight months into this new role and I think we have got our feet firmly on the ground now. The contentious Select Committee Order has now been put to bed, if I can put it that way and we've seen our Chairs elected today, so hopefully we can see our Question Time become a reality very shortly and I would hope then through those things we can learn more about what's being done within the Ministerial Government.

To address comments made by Councillor Coleman about ministerial government and who is in control, I would like to address that, because I don't think it is fair and I don't appreciate it, if I'm honest with you, to think that we are being influenced by Administration or the Public Service, they work very hard with us to provide us with information, I can't speak about what happened in the past, but thus far I cannot say that I stand here as Chief Minister and say that the Public Service has done something that I wasn't aware of or didn't come through the Cabinet for our approval. The same can be said for UK Government. Obviously, I don't think we need the pressure of the UK Government to tell us that this island is in trouble economically at this time and Covid, we talked about Covid and the quarantine restrictions, it has kept our people safe and I'm grateful to the previous Government for ensuring that that was the case. We have now learnt a whole lot about Covid, we've got some experts on island now with, I've said this publicly, but I'll say it again, when we moved into this position, Minister Henry probably had one of the hot potatoes which was our Health System and I'm not suggesting that it's gone cold, but it's definitely not piping hot as it was when we first got here. He's now got an Administrative team, he's got his CMO and his Director of Health and he's looking a whole lot stronger and they have been extremely helpful in letting us and making us understand what Covid looks like and I thank also the Members who've been away from the island recently, to talk about their, how they saw Covid and how that changed their outlook probably in many ways on how it is being handled elsewhere in the world. We are not going to take a decision on quarantine because the UK Government told us we have to, it is what we need if we want to start looking at the economy of this island, but it doesn't mean that we'll look at the economy and not think of the safety of our people, hence it's a roadmap that we're hoping to publish very shortly, we have given the undertaking that all Members will be given the relevant information so that they can understand that when the Ministers take a decision regarding this, why it is taken and what information was presented to us, so that will be coming very shortly.

I do appreciate Councillor Karl Thrower when he said, and in that becoming even more noticeable and being brought to our attention, that the business community and, if I'm honest, more individuals on the island and abroad are asking that a decision be taken soon so that they can plan, I think that is a fair ask if I'm honest with you.

There was a lot of emphasis being placed on banking and as the Honourable Corinda Essex said, with a new Chair for FSRA coming shortly, I think some of the things that's been discussed and put into the public arena can be spoken about. I would encourage you though to communicate with the Bank, I know from our conversations with the Bank they are very keen to communicate with us, so we'll have to keep speaking with them to ensure that they understand what we see as frustrating and somewhat restrictive at this time.

Data protection, I won't mention too much about that because Minister Ellick did, but we will be having a meeting with all elected members, I think, if I'm correct, the Deputy Chief Secretary told me on 1st July, so we'll learn more about that.

In these testing times, I think it's also necessary to talk about individual responsibility. We all as a Government and the Private Sector will rely on employers or employees at times to be able to better inform us but it's our individual responsibility to speak up as well and then come to the table and tell us the things that you think we may well be missing.

As I said, acknowledging the increase in the UK financial aid, I thank the Honourable Dr Corinda Essex for speaking about that openly. The UK is under a whole lot of strain as well and whilst the war in Ukraine continues, asking them for additional funding for St Helena when we haven't put out a plan, especially the cost of living, as I said, Dax and his team is working on that, I think would be foolish of us if we don't show what we're trying to do on our own steam, so that is exactly why we're putting together the business case.

You spoke about efficiency, effectiveness and productivity, all key words that is in our Vision and Strategy and as you rightly say we do need to work together and trust has to be a key component between all elected members. It is definitely something that I'd like to see with regards to government if it feels that there is room for improvement in those three areas then by all means we're willing to hear about them.

Then we spoke about food security and I have to be honest, there is a lot going on with food security. Minister Ellick again talked about the £380k that has been recently approved by this ExCo with regards to investment in agriculture and this is being rolled out. There's also been some assistance through the Estates Policy, through the EDIP Agricultural projects, so there is things happening with regards to this.

And then I think we need to be very stringent on our food security, I'm hearing this cry about the cooking oil, I can tell you that when you look internationally we should be grateful that we're getting cooking oil at all, if I'm perfectly honest, because there's shortages worldwide at the moment, so all I want to reassure the listening public and the members in the room is we're not oblivious to all of the things that's been raised, I just think a little more time, and when I say a little more time, I'm talking weeks now, whereby enough time is given to the Financial Secretary and his team, we should be able to roll out a programme to at least demonstrate to the community of this island that we are, indeed, listening and we are aware of the struggles that's going on.

As quite a lot of you did, I'm now going to end on some positives, so I thanked Minister Scipio for your flexibility and thanking you for taking us through today. I thank the team from the Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development for helping to come together with the business case for Cost of Living, but I also need to say thank you to the Health and Social Care for the timely and useful documentation that is being provided to us to help us to make an informed decision on how we proceed forward in respect of quarantine. Jubilee Working Group has been mentioned but I really would like to thank the Group and everybody who helped and made the Queen's Jubilee extremely special here on St Helena, it was well attended and I think the community of St Helena really appreciated the work that went in, so thank you. And then, I just

would like to mention our In Scope programme as well, because I think a lot could be learnt from listening to those programmes because a lot of information has gone out, we've got one more to go for next week and that will be all the six, five Portfolios and Central Support will have been aired and then we'll start the one again.

And finally, sitting beside me here in the House today is the Attorney General and he will be leaving, fingers crossed, this weekend and I'd just like to, on behalf of this Council, thank you for all your support to us, especially in these first eight months of our life as a new Ministerial Government, and wish you and your family well on your endeavours. Thank you.

(Applause)

Madam President –

So, thank you, Honourable Chief Minister. Honourable Members, in my opening speech this morning I did say it is recognised that we had a very lengthy agenda today, we had Election for two Chairpersons, four Sessional Papers, thirteen Questions, six Motions and our Adjournment Debate and I promised that I would endeavour to be slick, but we only could have a successful meeting today with support of you to make it successful, so thank you all for supporting me today because like a few of you mentioned it was at a very short notice, so thank you for that.

I would also like to say thank you to the Clerk who does a lot of work behind the scenes and it is Connie, Anita and Shanice. I was also going to thank the Attorney General for his support to this new Council, because he's leaving our shores at the weekend, but I think that the Chief Minister has stolen my thunder as the saying goes, but I also would like to wish you and your family whatever endeavours you come across beyond the waters off St Helena, wherever your plans take you.

So, Honourable Members, may I thank you all for your participation in this meeting of Legislative Council today and I put the question that this Council do stand adjourned sine die.

Question that the Council do stand adjourned sine die, put and agreed to.

Madam President –

Thank you all and have a pleasant evening.

Council adjourned sine die.

Honourable Speaker

Date