



**St Helena  
Government**

**ST HELENA GOVERNMENT**

**GOVERNMENT OF ST HELENA  
PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
MONDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2022  
SECOND SITTING OF THE FIFTH MEETING**

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

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**THE PRESIDENT**

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

**EX-OFFICIO MEMBER**

The Honourable Attorney General, Mr Allen Cansick

**ELECTED MEMBERS**

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

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

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2022

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

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

### ORDER OF THE DAY

**1. FORMAL ENTRY OF THE PRESIDENT**

**2. PRAYERS**  
(Father Earnest Frittz)

Honourable Members just before I give my address I did give permission for Vince Thompson to take a picture, but I'm not sure where he is at the moment.

**3. ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT**

Honourable Members ladies and gentlemen and radio listeners, welcome to the second sitting of the fifth meeting of Legislative Council. Thanks are again extended to Deacon Earnist for delivering prayers, Mr Merlin George for performing the ceremonial duties of Mace Bearer and SAMS radio for airing these proceedings for the benefit of the public. Honourable members the business before this House today includes 6 oral questions, the resumed debate on the Appropriation Bill 2022 followed by the Adjournment debate. I would like to congratulate the Minister or Treasury Infrastructure Development on his first budget speech that Honourable members will now be able to speak to. As Legislative Council Members I remind you all we are duty bound by the Standing Orders and the Code of Conduct. I know on Friday it was extremely cold in here and most people didn't take off their jackets but if you wish to do so you may do so now. We will also break for an hour for lunch around 12 noon or when it is appropriate. And without further ado I will now call on the Clerk to announce the next item of business. Thank you.

**4. QUESTIONS**

*Question No. 1 – The Honourable Robert Midwinter to ask the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development.*

Madam President–

The Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker will the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development tell this House how much the changes made under the Social Security (Amendment) Regulations, 2022, is costing per month to implement, and how is this being funded?

The Madam President –

The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

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

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker I would like to thank the Honourable Member for his questions. Before I get to the answer within his question, I'd just like to give a bit of background as in the changes of the review that was done in October. So the Social Security (Amendment) Regulations, 2022, made changes to the social security system following a review of the changes made in October 21, where the principle change was a move from a 'household' based system of determining entitlement to an Income Related Benefit based on 'families'. The changes made under the Social Security (Amendment) Regulations, 2022 were as follows: The removal of the Shared Household Deduction (SHD) and the application of a flat rate of £73.00 per week per adult on IRB; Raising the asset disregard threshold from £3,000 to £4,000 disregarding child maintenance payments to a parent; Disregarding property owned in part or in full, which was lived in by a client and their partner and which there is a dispute through the breakdown of the relationship until such time as the future situation of the property arrangement is clarified; and Disregarding property owned in part or in full, which was lived in by a client prior to their move to supported accommodation until such time that the future situation is clarified and that is up to a maximum of six months, for example whether they will return to the property or not. The Social Security (Amendment) Regulations, 2022 came into effect from April this year where there were 214 families on IRB, and another 20 who receive only a rent or interest on their loan rebate. The total cost per week was £1,500 or £78,000 per annum or £6,500 per month. This has been factored in as part of the 2022/2023 Government Budget for Social Security which will be discussed in the House today. Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker I'd like to thank the Honourable Member again for his question.

Madam President –

Thank you the Honourable Minister.

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, and I'd like to thank the Honourable Minister for his response. He mentioned the total number of recipients but can he say how many people are now receiving benefits as a result of this change.

Madam President –

The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

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

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker and I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for his supplementary question. At this time the new review of regulations came in only of April this year so the numbers has remain sort of stable to the current regulations that was enacted in

October 2021 however, it might take a bit of time for people to start coming onto the system. So I think we will have a more clear answer to your question probably after six months of the new regulations being in place. Thank you Deputy Speaker.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Minister.

The Hon. Robert Midwinter–

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker and I'd just like to thank the Honourable Minister for his response.

Madam President –

Thank you. Next question please.

***Question No. 2 – The Honourable Ronald Coleman to ask the Minister for Health and Social Care.***

Madam President –

The Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, Will the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care inform the House what progress has been made in the Health sector in particular with filling of all the important posts to be held by Health Officials?

Madam President –

The Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care?

The Hon. Minister for Health and Social Care–

Morning and thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for his question. We are still experiencing challenges within our Health Service and we remain temporally short staffed in some areas, however recruitment of staff will continue to be a challenge but the situation is much improved. Good progress has been made with regards to fill our Medical Officers Vacancies both in the short and long term, and currently all our Medical Officers positions are filled. We now have five GP's, a general surgeon, an anaesthetist, an orthopaedic surgeon and an obstetrician/gynaecologists we are seeking to bring in an additional anaesthetist to the Island and the preferred candidate is going through checks and references currently. The recent run of recruitment has provided long term candidates and short term locals that can be used on a rotational basis, if required to fulfil future debts. We have appointed to all our nursing vacancies and are trying to expedite checks and references to get them on the Island as soon as possible. We are struggling to fill our radiographers vacancy which has now been outstanding for a long period and we also are seeking a speech and language therapist. However, we will put in place interim wishes until we fulfil these important roles we are currently scheduling dates for specialists over the Financial Year which include an ENT, a radiographer, an optician and a cardiologist. However, some of these roles are still very hard to source with global backlogs for these services. We have an interim director of Health and our current CMO will join us on the next flight these are both hugely experienced and respected individuals with a wealth of experience and knowledge. We have appointed our Chief Nursing Officer who is going through clearances, our Chief Allied Health professional and Head of Governance will join us soon. We now have two senior paramedics on the Island,

a dietician, a second physiotherapist and a new pharmacist that recently joined. We are recruiting for a practitioner, development nurse, a biomedical scientist and a dentist. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Minister, the Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Just to thank the Minister for his reply thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Andrew Turner.

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, will the Honourable Minister tell this Council does this mean we have now adequate staff to man the Bradley's Hospital in the event of Covid outbreak?

Madam President –

Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care?

The Hon. Minister for Health and Social Care –

We currently do not have the staff to fully man the Hospital this is within the recruitment of our nurses it is within that recruitment there is specialist ICU nurses. However, if there is a short smaller outbreak we could manage that in a short term. But for the full Bradleys Camp to come online we will need these recruitments to be on Island. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Minister, Next question please?

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

Madam President –

The Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Will the Honourable Chief Minister tell this House why the draft policy of the Legislative Program, which was referred to the Last sitting of the third Meeting of Legislative Council was not presented to this Council by end of March?

Madam President –

The Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

Good Morning Madam Deputy Speaker, I'd firstly thank the Honourable Gillian Brooks for her question. Madam Deputy Speaker, I fully accept that the indicative timeframe for the draft policy and Legislative Programme to be presented to Elected Members was not met. However I can confirm that the SHG Strategy which has been developed by officers to implement this Government's Vision published earlier this year on the 1st March, is being discussed in next week's Executive Council Meeting. The strategy provides an overview of our current social,

economic and environmental position; and outlines the focus areas relevant to Government's priorities. A set of 33 Strategic Objectives which are aligned to these are included in the strategy and these have been prioritised to align with Ministers' key strategic priority areas which are; A Safe and Reliable Health Service; Growing Revenues and Reducing Costs; Economic Resilience. The policy issues arising from these prioritised objectives have been identified and these will inform the policy and Legislative Programme going forward and are included as an annex to the Strategy which will be shared with all Elected Members following our meeting this week and published. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Minister, the Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks–

Thank you Chief Minister can we now be given a definitive time frame for it to be brought back to us to Elected Members?

Madam President –

The Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

I thank the Honourable Member for her supplementary question, so it's being discussed this week within our Executive Council Meeting and if this is approved, which it should do because we have been working much with our Portfolio Director's then I'd like to think that would be shared with you by the end of this week.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Chief Minister, the Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Just want to say thank you Madam Deputy Speaker and thank you Chief Minister.

Madam President –

Thank you, the Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, may I ask why non Ministers have had no sight of what is being proposed before it is in fact taken to Executive Council and it will then be a fait accompli.

Madam President –

Thank you, the Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

Thank the Honourable Dr Corinda Essex for her supplementary question, obviously we've shared the Vision and the strategy is literally the Roadmap now to be able to deliver on this Vision and of course now as we have been waiting for the Legislative Program will be very much geared round the Vision. So at this time we will be obviously sharing it with you but going to ExCo wouldn't have made any change with the fact that it is the Vision that we already agreed to going out on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Minister, the Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

I thank the Honourable Chief Minister for her response, however I trust that she recognises the need for meaningful consultation and I would ask that in future she can please ensure that there is more involvement of non-elected Members, NOT in decision making that is for the relevant Ministers, but in the interest of better communication - more openness and transparency and inclusivity - which is part of the goals of this Council. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you Dr Corinda Essex, the Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, I take on board what the Honourable Dr Corinda Essex has said and as I said we will share the whole strategy with Elected Members and the wider public. So going forward if time allows of course we will send out all the information for everybody to see, thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Minister, the Honourable Rob Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, Madam Deputy Speaker Can I ask the Chief Minister if she can just confirm whether that is she will be sharing this at the end of this week? will it be the strategy or will that also include the Draft Legislative Program.

Madam President –

Thank you, the Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

I thank the Honourable Rob Midwinter for his question, what we be sharing is the policies the strategy that will inform the Legislative Program.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Chief Minister, the Honourable Rob Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, again can I therefore ask for confirmation when are we likely to see the Draft Legislative Program?

Madam President –

Thank you, the Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

So the answer to that question, the policy priorities will be within the strategy and that obviously means we will have to liaise with the Attorney General to set the priorities of the Legislative Program.



Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Chief Minister, the Honourable.

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker I just don't think I'm still not getting an answer to my question. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you, next question please.

***Question No. 4 – The Honourable Robert Midwinter to ask the Honourable Chief Minister.***

Madam President –

The Honourable Rob Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Will the Honourable Chief Minister tell this Council whether there is a change to terms and conditions of service for posts held by TC Officers that wish to remain in Saint Helena beyond the length of their TC Contract, and whether these posts are advertised locally first as a part of the process?

Madam President –

Thank you the Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker and I thank the Honourable Member for his question. Where TC personnel acquire St Helenian Status or have been in the same TC post for five years it is expected that they will be transferred on to a regular SHG staff contract and onto a local salary which is in line with other St Helenian personnel. In exceptional circumstances, for example a critical role whereby we have been unable to identify or recruit a replacement following a period of 5 years or a local employee being identified to succeed a TC Officer but need additional time to complete their development plan exemptions will be considered by FCDO on a case by case basis. The majority of posts that have been localised are part of SHG's succession planning process, and so there is already an identified successor or designate who the Public Service is investing in, through training and development, to allow them to take on the role when 'localised'. Madam Deputy Speaker, in this situation the post would not be advertised at the point of localisation as the successor would move into the role. Historically, this was an in-house process, however going forward St Helena Government will advertise more widely locally to initially identify potential successors. Funding from the TC Programme is used to recruit internationally where the skills or qualifications are not available on island. Where the skills and qualifications have been developed on island by someone else, perhaps through another employer, then we would be able to advertise the role locally and would only need to recruit internationally if we were unable to fill it locally. Previously St Helena Government had relied on local knowledge to determine whether the necessary skills and qualifications were available on island however in our stride to become an inclusive Government, we have adopted the practice to first advertise locally before advertising internationally. Historically if a role is localised because an individual obtained St Helenian Status the individual would stay in that role if the alternative to filling the role would be to recruit from overseas as the skill is still not found elsewhere on the island. If, during the period the post holder was on island, others had developed the skill or become qualified in other

organisations so are not part of a Public Service succession plan then the post would be advertised. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Chief Minister, the Honourable.

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, and I'd like to thank the Honourable Chief Minister for her very good response and in fact that has actually taken most of my supplementary questions away. Is she able to confirm what period of the contract contributes to the contractual requirements of obtaining local residential status?

Madam President –

Thank you, the Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

Thank the Honourable Robert Midwinter for his supplementary question, and the short answer is yes it does. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you Chief Minister, Honourable.

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, I'd just like to thank the Honourable Chief Minister for her response.

Madam President –

Thank you. Next question please?

***Question No 5 – The Honourable Ronald Coleman to ask the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development.***

Madam President –

The Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development tell this Council since the setting up of the Sustainable Development Unit has there been any new possible revenue streams found for St Helena?

Madam President –

The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

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

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, and I would like to thank the Honourable Member for his question. To give some context to what I'm about to say, I would start by giving a little bit of background of how the Sustainable Development team was set up and the functions that comes under the Sustainable Development team. The team was created in April 2021, when Enterprise St Helena project came to an end. Sustainable Development took on the Tourism, Marketing,

Enterprise, and Investment functions what used to be delivered by ESH, as well as incorporating Civil Aviation, Economist, and Digital development functions of SHG. The first year of the team's operation has been focussed on setting up the new functions, developing strategy objectives, recruiting key staff, managing the effects of Covid and any other sort of economic sectors. They also had to navigate the change of governance on the Island, we went to a Ministerial change just as the team was being set up within Government. The team's ultimate goal is really to achieve the government goal to make the island "altogether wealthier", and as the question suggests, one way for this to be established is new source of revenue for Saint Helena coming in from abroad. Our traditional source of revenue from overseas is aid, both financial aid, which is used to pay for Government service, and capital aid, which is used to fund improvements in infrastructure. It varies from year on year but together these account for around forty to forty five million pounds transferred into the island. Apart from aid, the biggest source of money that comes from abroad is payments made by visitors to the island, both Saints visiting family and friends, and tourists, for the revenue that they put into services like food, accommodation, transport and so on. Pre-pandemic, it was estimated to be around five to six million pounds from the tourism sector as well as the returning saints as I've just referred to, is growing steadily, but the necessary restrictions on the Covid-19 stands for the protection of the population has meant that this source of revenue has fallen dramatically, to less than half of the pre-pandemic level. Money transferred to the island from Saints living and working abroad is the other significant income stream from overseas, and that is estimated to be around £2 to £3 million each year. It is worth noting that less than one per cent of the total amount of money coming in to the Island is for exports of traditional tangible goods, like fish, coffee, and stamps, and we recognise that more need to be done in regards to increasing exports and tangible goods. Therefore as the question quite rightly suggests, we need to be establish a new strategy to understand what St Helena is able to export and I'm afraid the answer is not the export of primary commodities, the answer is going to lie with the provision of service. The main reason we have an inability to adequately export our natural resources is due to the costs associated with extracting, processing, and exporting them, hence the limited comparative advantage on a global scale apart from a few niche products such as coffee. We also have an inability to industrialise in other words make things on a large scale, which is really a typical growth strategy in most developing countries. This is also hard to achieve due to our location and our population. Not good news I'm afraid. The UK Government's investment in the airport was an ambitious attempt to solve this problem, although encouraging growth in the tourism sector. Unfortunately, this industry has been shown to be exposed significant to global competition, and the demands have put the stress on the delivering that service when the world goes into pandemics, as we have seen recently. The COVID pandemic is what economists calls a demand shock, and it is true that St Helena cannot rely on a single strategy like tourism to help us break out of the economy difficulties. The Sustainable Development team have an acute understanding of the reality they have to work with. In their first 12 months great steps has been taken to enable the diversification of our economy, opening up new potential streams of revenue. I have made it clear to the them that while opening up as many new revenue streams as possible, it is also important, given our limited resources, to prioritise these initiatives that a) have a competitive advantage on a global scale and b) fits with this government's priority in our vision. Over the past 12 months the team have been exploring how we can update our Sustainable Development Plan so that it the benefits the fibre optic cable, as well as delivering on some of the actions contained within that plan. Our digital division worked hard with Oneweb to secure planning permission for the Satellite Ground Station at Horses Point. While we are still negotiating with Oneweb and other stakeholders with regards to the revenue share, the ground station itself is expected to bring in new money each year to contribute to the cost of the island's connectivity. The team has also begun a programme of work to enable other

new industries to base themselves on the island and make us an attractive destination for both traditional and new, niche financial services. We are currently in the process of updating St Helena's company registry laws so that all companies registered on the island will be legally required to declare their beneficial owners. We are currently working with international partners to understand the feasibility of a digital finance strategy on St Helena. Two such areas we are exploring are Developing a legal framework that recognises Decentralised Autonomous Organisations and providing legal certainty for otherwise unclassified crypto-assets, such as NFT's or Non Fungible Tokens. All of this work will ultimately be a key enabler for this government's vision to set a path for our island that focuses on niche opportunities, which will generate new streams of revenue that we will have that will have minimal impact on natural resources, and which will overcome constraints of our geographic location, size and population. I have instructed the Head of Sustainable Development to make the enabling of niche international company registry service our number one priority, so Madam Deputy Speaker, my answer to the Honourable Members question the shortest answer is yes and I have no doubt they will work with all stakeholders to achieve this in the next few years. Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Minister, Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Just to thank the Honourable Member for his reply. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you, next question please?

***Question No. 6 – The Honourable Robert Midwinter to ask the Honourable Chief Minister.***

Madam President –

The Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, Will the Honourable Chief Minister tell this Council how many SHG staff are currently working remotely, outside of St Helena, and what is the total cost of such working arrangements each month?

Madam President –

Thank you, the Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. There are 4 members of staff working remotely, outside of St Helena. These are 2 members of staff employed under the TC Program or Technical Cooperation Programme and 2 members of staff employed under local terms and conditions. The cost of an additional VPN Server (taking into account monthly charges and annual costs e.g. license renewal) is £2,942 per month. This is offset/paid for by savings from posts employed under the Technical Cooperation Programme not receiving International Supplement. The additional VPN Server is also supporting 3 local staff to be able to work out of their government offices in remote locations on the Island whom previously could not access their emails/desktops. Staff are therefore now able to gain access whilst in their respective workplaces, which allows them to spend more time with their teams and communicate more

effectively. The additional VPN Server is also used on an ad-hoc basis to allow people who may leave the island for short periods (i.e. annual leave, conferences, visits) to be able to access their remote desk top and work emails if needed, or to allow the Public Service to retain a Technical Cooperation Officer working remotely for a short period at the end of their contract while waiting for the new post holder to start. Thank you

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Minister, the Honourable Rob Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, and again just to thank the Chief Minister for her response because that has actually answered my supplementaries as well thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you, no further questions? The next item of business please?

## 5.

### MOTIONS RESUMED

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

### THE APPROPRIATION BILL, 2022

Madam President –

The Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development? Honourable Members before the House today is resumed debate on Appropriation 20 Appropriation Bill 2022. A motion for debate and the considering Adjournment Debate. I would like to congratulate the Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development for the most informative Budget Speech which Honourable Members will have the opportunity to speak on. Honourable Members, we will now resume debate on the Appropriation Bill and I now put the question that the Appropriation Bill, 2022 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council. The motion is now open for debate. Would any Honourable Member like to speak? The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak to the principles of the Bill. Madam Deputy Speaker I first wish to declare my interest as president of St Helena Chamber of Commerce, and as an importer and retailer. Madam Deputy Speaker, it is disappointing and frustrating that we have yet another one year financial settlement as we all know the negative impacts that this will have, but this is not surprising that in the global economic climate and the associated difficulties that are facing Britain itself. Under these circumstances it is pleasing that we will be able to obtain what is essentially a flat line budget although in real terms there are signs of reduction. The timing of the dissolution of the previous Legislative Council and of the General Election did not assist the Budget Process and it is to be hoped that this year, Ministers and all Elected Members will be able to input at a much earlier stage. Ministers are the decision makers, and the advisory boards made up of officials are their mainstay, but the other Elected Members are the link between them and their constituents and have a key role in making them aware of the views, concerns and suggestions of those who elected us. Obviously the Ministers are not forced to take our advice but it should assist them to be able to take better informed and

balanced decisions. I am concerned that the budget constraints we are facing may undermine achievement of value for money, by skewing decisions towards least cost options or simply maintaining the status quo and that St Helena and its people will subsequently suffer the consequences of sub-optimal outcomes. It is sometimes better to focus on a few key issues and ensure, as far as possible, that value for money will be obtained, than to try to do too much and little, or none, of it to the required standard. This must be borne in mind, in particular, when evaluating tenders such as that for the provision of overseas medical treatment and associated services. In relation to Food Security, I trust that the policies and legislation to enable expansion of the agricultural and fishing sectors will not only relate to modern techniques. There is a vast amount that can be done to strengthen these sectors that does not rely on modernisation but on the introduction of work schemes such as that I proposed in this Honourable House some months ago; closer collaboration between suppliers and merchants; island wide control of invasives and basic upgrades to existing infrastructure. Turning now to Housing. The Land and Building Disposal Policy of 2016 made provision for the sale of discounted Crown land to first time home owners on low incomes. This was the first step towards providing affordable housing plots for the less well off. When this policy was due for review in 2020/21, a more ambitious tiered market approach was proposed which built on the concept already established but developed it further so that a greater proportion of the population would benefit. The revised Policy was nearing completion before dissolution of the last Council and it is disappointing that it has not yet been endorsed and implemented. It is great news that work has now been allowed to commence at Bunkers Hill, and that development continues at Bottom Woods and is likely to recommence at Half Tree Hollow CDA, However, as I stated last Friday there is also a need to explore other potential sites for Government Landlord Housing that could enable units to become available more quickly. Lack of housing is contributing to mental health and social issues – some of which are resulting in costly interventions to try to contain them - but will only intensify until the needs can be appropriately addressed. The escalation in world oil prices, increases in the purchase cost of many goods and decreased reliability of supply chains all present major challenges that are beyond our control and there are no ways by which St Helena Government can shield St Helena totally from their negative impact. Freight rate increases pose a huge threat and SHG has already make a substantial contribution to help offset these, but mechanisms to ensure that essential goods can remain affordable to the less well-off within our community must be explored. I am aware that a wide range of options that might reduce the operational costs of the MV Helena have been explored, but there are no easy answers and although I am in favour of testing the market to see if any other company can provide a reliable sea freight service at a lower cost, I am far from convinced of the outcome as a wide of range of factors has to be taken into account to ensure, apart from other things, that any reduction in the cost of the voyage to St Helena is not outweighed by increases in getting goods to a different port, as an example. Madam Deputy Speaker, I beg that detailed consideration is given immediately to identify possible ways to assure that essential goods can be obtained by all within our society. A responsible government cannot allow its poorest members to suffer poverty that prevents them from purchasing the basic foodstuffs and other items necessary for their wellbeing. Plans to address this issue need to be formulated now so that they will be ready for implementation when required. It is pleasing that the Honourable Minister recognised the need to retain the skills of Saints and to regain these by providing more incentives for those overseas to return. This is crucial to sustainable development and although the current skills drain makes it necessary to rely more heavily on ex-patriate input, it is vitally important that this reliance does not cause our own people to feel that there is not a suitable place for them in their own home island. If they feel this way, more and more will leave and St Helena could end up with the local population being outnumbered by ex-patriates which has been found to be undesirable in other parts of the world. The exodus of skilled Saints has had

an inevitable negative impact on the local labour market so there is a need for employers to recognise that applicants may require more training or that only less experienced individuals are available, but this does not necessarily mean that candidates are unsuitable if they have a good attitude and are willing to learn. Feedback that I receive from constituents is that the wording of job advertisements is daunting and that interviews feel more like interrogations – both these factors deter individuals from expressing interest. I support fully the intention to encourage establishment of both traditional and new, niche financial services and to actively pursue other potential sources of revenue that the lighting of the cable will make possible. It is essential that St Helena and its people can maximise the new opportunities that vastly improved connectivity will facilitate. Further capital funding beyond the current EDIP programme is absolutely essential to St Helena's economic and social development. The absence of a capital programme for some three years had a hugely negative impact on the private sector and the Island as a whole. While I understand fully the rationale for the programme being focussed on economic development, my concern regarding how capital projects that are essential for social development will be funded remains, particularly as these also fall outside the scope of other donor funding. In this context, I am pleased that construction of the new prison, which has been classed as a priority for years, is at last to be funded. Madam Deputy Speaker, the 2022/23 budget is far from ideal and will not meet St Helena's real needs fully, but at least it provides a starting point that allows essential services to continue. I therefore support the Appropriation Bill 2022.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Member, the Honourable Rob Midwinter.

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise in support of the Bill, however, I do so with a good measure of reticence, in that I really don't know what to say in respect of how we are going to develop our island when we know that the majority of the funding contained therein is coming from the UK Government; especially noting that this is not expected to increase any time soon; and I also get a strong sense that with our current direction of travel, unless something dramatically changes over the next few months, we will not be seeing any significant revenue generated by our key export related industries, namely Tourism and Fisheries, in the short-term. Madam Deputy Speaker, there are so many priority areas that are suffering as a result of our budgetary constraints, and it is extremely unfortunate that we are yet again having to spread funding so thinly. That said, whilst I must declare an interest here, as a member of the SHAPE Board of Directors, I am pleased to note that in the main the island's Non-Governmental Organisations have seen a marginal increase in their funding support for this year. I say that I am pleased to see this because I strongly believe that these organisations provide invaluable services to the community that would most likely cost the island even more, were these organisations not to exist. I am also very pleased to hear that this Government will be reviewing the basic rate of income tax that is paid by employees, in order to assist in addressing concerns regarding cost of living increases; in this respect, I look forward to hearing proposals. Madam Deputy Speaker, because we are again having to spread the budget so thinly, there are two things that I believe it is very important that we, collectively, draw from this; Firstly, we need to ensure that the money that we do have is spent wisely, and prudently, and is not wasted on frivolous things; such as snorkels on new SHG vehicles, which I am led to understand actually increase fuel consumption, and therefore make the vehicle less economical and also less environmentally friendly to operate. Secondly, I strongly believe that we need to be doing all that we can to develop and diversify our economy, in order that we are able to bring in additional streams of revenue. In this respect I recognise that we face some

very tough choices, however, I believe that is what we, collectively, were elected to do, to make tough choices on behalf of this island. Madam Deputy Speaker, I reluctantly support this Bill, and in closing, I just wish to congratulate my Honourable Colleague, the Minister for Treasury, Finance and Sustainable Development, on delivering his first budget speech. Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Member, Honourable Andrew Turner.

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, Madam Deputy Speaker, firstly I must congratulate Minister Brooks on presenting his budget speech. However, it's unfortunate that today I cannot stand in support of the budget proceeding. There is much in this budget that I agree with. For example, I'm glad to see health is once again being considered a priority area, as it has been for a number of years and to see money being spent on essential improvements in the facility itself. And I'm also glad to see continued efforts to improve stocks of Government Landlord Housing and to build the long awaited new prison. I was particularly glad to hear the Minister announce plans to address the massive rise in the cost of living currently being experienced on the island, I hope that the Tax reviews and Minimum wage increases that are proposed will go some way to alleviate the brutal impacts the cost of living is having on people's everyday lives. However, in my opinion, there are several important things missing from this budget, some of which are vital to our community. To start with a simple one, our roads are in a dismal state and I am inundated with requests from the public for basic road maintenance, an experience I'm sure many of my colleagues here on the back bench share. St Helena has 115km of adopted road network and yet only 2km, yes 2km, can be serviced each year. The budget is simply not sufficient to support our roads infrastructure which is the backbone of any economy. Farming is at the heart of food security for St Helena. Having personally spoken to many farmers one recurring theme is that the cost of labour makes it nearly impossible for farmers to expand their businesses and to make their products affordable. And yet despite a cost of living crisis, there is no labour subsidy for farmers. It was also disappointing to hear that, aside from customary Alcohol and Tobacco increases there will be no changes to customs fees despite this being one of the most powerful tools we have to assist businesses and consumers. In particular, I would have liked to see Sanitary and family planning products made exempt from customs duty as part of the goal to improve health within our community. There is also no provision for independent legal advice for backbenchers, despite this becoming essential in our new ministerial system. What really surprises me is that despite a new governance system, and a new team of ministers directing the funding, in reality there has been very little change how the budget is being spent. Our ministerial team has set a new vision for how it wants to see the island move forward, surely that should come with a substantial change in how we spend our money or is the vision really "more of the same." I accept that St Helena has a flat-line settlement from the UK from last year, however this does not mean we need to copy and paste the budget from last year. If anything, particularly in light of the global situation, we need to be much more imaginative in how we spend our money. After all, due to inflation this flat line settlement represents a cut in real terms. Still with 75% new council perhaps this could have been achieved had backbenches been brought on board sooner and we had been able to feed into the formulation of this budget. I echo the honourable Dr Essex's hope that this will change going forward. So unfortunately madam deputy speaker, although there are many good things in this budget I cannot with "hand on heart" say that I support it going forward. Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker.



Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Member, the Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise in support of the Bill. Firstly I would like to thank the Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development for the Budget Speech that he delivered on Friday and to his team that supported him. We are grateful for her Majesty's Government for her Financial Subsistence provided to us. However, disappointingly, once again we run on a one-year budget and we could not start the budget at the beginning of the financial year. We know the one-year budget makes financial planning and projection difficult for the Treasury and portfolios and therefore remain hopeful of having a three-year budget, an aspiration for us and one that has been strived for by previous councils. It is challenging to manage the limited monies available to us, therefore the opportunity to know our budget over three years, would be advantageous to us. It was encouraging to hear that no financial cuts has been made to Health, this should help to reassure the public that the holistic wellbeing of the island is taken very seriously, especially at a time when we are balancing concerns against consequences. Increases were made this year on alcohol and tobacco products; these are not essential items, so far better than should these increases had been put on essentials such as diabetic, baby foods and other necessary goods. The consideration for a National Contribution Scheme was also mentioned and whilst we may see this as another 'pay-out', it is again ensuring we forward plan for the provision of pension to our current and future senior citizens. In relation to this, I understand the need for overseas technical support, but would hope and expect that there will be consultation with the wider community. With such limited funding, we need to be creative in considering revenue streams, whilst protecting what is best for St Helena. Madam Deputy Speaker, I support the Bill, as without this in place, St Helena would come to a standstill, but I would like our disappointment on once again having a one-year budget, shared with Her Majesty's Government, so there is emphasis on how a three-year budget would be more effective to us. Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Member, Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, first I'd like to congratulate the Honourable Minister for putting together the first Budget Speech of the 2022 Budget. The Honourable Minister mentioned the Budget sets the path, to use limited resources afforded to build a foundation in order to achieve the Vision. We are looking at a spend of 44.68 million pounds. At the heart of the Vision for this budget he mentioned our environment, our economy and our social obligations. But there is so much that needs to be achieved if we want to give our people a better or improved quality of life leaving no one behind. We cannot leave out the small measures needed to help us to achieve this from the word go - starting with this budget we need to make the changes necessary if we are to achieve something in our 4 year term. We have now been in office for 7 months and all we hear about - is the state of our Health and Social framework, the states of our roads, the cost of living, lack of social housing for those who cannot afford to build their own houses and for those who can afford to build their own homes there is no land been released, the high cost of utilities and how unfair the benefits system are. Our people are also depending on us the elected members to keep our island and its people SAFE during this pandemic and beyond. Madam Deputy Speaker - let us remind ourselves - the expectations and aspirations of our Saint Helenians are high and they expect better and looking for better outcomes from their recently elected members as they voted for change. And

who can blame them. As we Campaign for a better quality of life for all and leaving no one behind. Some Key Priorities - Health and the challenges we welcome the funding of £13.9 million for this year but it would be interesting to know if this will continue for a sustainable Health service and that the structure put in place will be fit for purpose. There are still people who cannot get an appointment with the doctors or to get a scan carry out and have to wait long periods of time to get this done leaving people with great anxiety. So let's hope there are measures in place for continuous monitoring to ensure we the people of St Helena is getting great value for this money and a really good service fit for purpose in this 21st Century. Also ensuring that no one is left behind and everyone is treated fairly. Also keeping the island and its people safe at all time. Environment - We talk about the environment and we welcome the funding from our sponsors for our Blue and Green agendas. We are doing some great work in these fields and the workforce is to be commended for the work programs been undertaken. But with all this work been done on these little islands how does this measures up to any work been done anywhere else in the world like America both North and South, Africa, Europe, Asia and Australia and the Oceans. It is these Countries that will make the real difference. Back to our island - can we not see the island is now been covered with White Weed. Ten to Fifteen years ago this white weed was on our Borders with nothing or very little been done to control this and right now this white weed is covering our whole island which will strangle everything in its path and phase out farming both arable and animal farming if nothing is done soon to control this weed if we are serious about the island providing Food Security. This White Weed is also now closing in on the majority of our roads network. But I see no money in the Budget for this work as this something that affect the whole island and is a great cause for concern if nothing is done. One of our greatest assets also is our built heritage – It's one of our best assets for the Tourist product but how are we going to maintain these wonderful buildings and structures as over the years these will continue to deteriorate if nothing is done - they will be lost forever. But I see no consideration in the Budget for this also. Maximise Revenues and cost of living It would be lovely to maximize our local revenue but Madam Deputy Speaker we cannot squeeze our local people anymore with taxes especially as the rising cost of living is one of the challenges facing the Ministers which includes the challenge of leaving no one behind. We cannot put any more tax burden on households. But we would however welcome a rise in the Income Tax Threshold personal allowance NOW and maybe bring back the allowances for children with it, to help lessen the burden on families. Food Security - Food Security is one that is dear to my heart. Grow local, produce local and eat local. With so much happening around the world and so much uncertainty - we have the land and the people here to address this grow local – we also have the will power but there is need for some support and assistance and maybe also some guidance not only for farmers using crown estates but also for farmers with private farms and arable lands. Agriculture is been brought back in the school which is encouraging for getting the younger generation involved. But is there any funding in this budget to assist and support our farmers with their private lands to cultivate and produce, will there be assistance with land clearance such as White Weed I may add, or with tilling the land and assistance with the use of water cost. Madam Deputy Speaker maybe the Honourable Minister can show me where this kind of support is provided - going forward in addressing local food security? Also we need to know where are our local fishing industry heading - will the plans been proposed lead us to a better economy? I have great admiration and support for our local fishermen and their efforts to keep the industry going as part of our local Food Security. I hope they have not been forgotten. Housing - Housing has been a large area of concern for us as Backbenches in the last 7 months. CDA areas have been identify for years but very little has happen - even if the private sector is willing to finance this – it takes years to have agreements finalise – this we need to address and have faster ways and means to release this land for development. These holdups dampen the economy especially if the people are

waiting to build - what a boost this will be to the economy the building industry including additional work for contractors and their workforce and good business for the Importers and Merchants bringing in building supplies. Thus increasing our much needed revenue streams. Then there is the Social Housing what is happen to this - only 2 houses last year – This is a very serious problem for island and its people. There are well over 100 people including families on the waiting list waiting to be housed many with young children. Although we are talking about Commercial Development Areas to be developed, what about are people who cannot afford to build their own houses. How did we get into this situation and there is no money in the budget for Government Landlord Housing where is the money coming from. Have we forgotten - will this be another large group of people been left behind. We are also told 25% of the population is over the age of 65 and this growing by the day which is taking a large proportion of our funding for health, social care and social benefits and assist to grow the home care service but what about the state of the private homes in which the elderly still live. How do we expect our older folks to maintain their homes in a good state of repairs so that they can continue to live there without putting burden on the now already stretch assisted living, sheltered accommodations and the Community Care Centre? There is no money in this budget to finance this type of thing. So another large group of people left behind. Our People - Again one of our greatest assets and resources is our people and we need to change attitudes and mind sets if we are to maintain our people and some of them are highly experienced, highly skilled and also highly qualified I might add. The Honourable Minister mentioned some of the reasons for our people leaving – low wages, a 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 may be hope as he also mentioned. We have had many of our people returned over recent years but left again – Why - because we were not ready. So what actions are we taking? Remember some of the things mentioned can also be achieved without money. People speak about the cable, the aspirations of this government is more affordable, faster and unlimited internet. I hope this can be achieved as with this one we don't want to leave anyone behind and our people is looking towards the Government to deliver. In Conclusion Madam Deputy Speaker If we are as a Government would like to have a healthier, greener, wealthier, effective infrastructure, a safer place to live and better quality of life for all supported by an effective, efficient and accountable public sector - will also need to grow the private sector with investment in sustainable infrastructure, a Health and Social Care structure fit for purpose, Social Housing for those who cannot afford to build their own homes and faster release of Crown land for house building for those who can afford to build their own- even if in partnership with the private sector , cleaning up our environment which include the removal of white weed and saving our built heritage - the product of tourism, raising the Income Tax Personal Allowance now and not wait, support our vulnerable especially those living on benefits and low income by having extra money in their pockets with a stifling cost of living facing us. Better road would also help and developing renewable energy and water security for our people at affordable prices will also be an added bonus. And on top of all this we need to grow our Economy with the Private Sector so that no one will be left behind. I am sorry Madam Speaker with 44.68 million pounds let's spend it wisely with value for money monitoring in place - I beg to move.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Member, Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, Madam Deputy Speaker firstly I'd like to congratulate the Honourable Minister Brooks for delivering such an informative and comprehensive Budget

Speech, noting also that it was his written speech. In my role as Chief Minister I'd like to touch on a few areas that was mentioned that is key to our success as we are gathered here today to discuss in detail our 2022/2023 Budget. This Budget will set the path for this Government albeit limited we will need to remain focused throughout and ensure and adhere to our Financial Plan if we are to achieve the Vision set by this Government a near two months ago. The three main dimensions at the heart of our Vision are our Environment, our Economy, and our Social Obligations that is our People. The Financial aid package received from her Majesty's Government was a flat line settlement of 26.79 million with an additional 5 million made available to us for our Airport operations and a contingency called on fund making the total available funding from HMG of £37.9 million. In the current Financial Climate I'd like to convey my thanks to her Majesty's Government for their continued recognition and support to us, I will today promise that we will do all that we can to ensure that this funding is invested into our Island with the intension of ensuring a better quality of life for all. I would also like to take this opportunity on behalf of my cabinet to thank all portfolio directors and their staff along with the Financial Secretary and Chief Secretary for assisting us through this Budget process and I look forward to working with you all with delivering our aims and objectives. It is only fitting however, that I acknowledge my Cabinet we came into Government through extremely difficult and busy times and barely had our feet on the ground and we were expected to consider the Budget that we are all here to consider today. I thank you all for your commitment and determination and I look forward to working with you and our partners in HMG to negotiate a three year Financial Aid Settlement which would aid us with implementing plans for the remainder of our tenure. Madam Deputy Speaker, Minister Brooks highlighted our key priorities for 2022/23 which included our Health service, our Environment, our desire to recognise revenues, the need for us to focus on food security, Education and Housing. Achieving these priorities will be no easy task noting the challenges we face nationally and from external factors noting our heavy reliance on imports access to much needed goods and services and the rising cost of such due to the Covid pandemic and now the conflict in Ukraine. It is therefore imperative that we challenge ourselves to search inward to discover how we can work towards common goals in a diligent innovative and ambitious manner, which I am certain will result in a more self-sustaining St Helena. Immediate action must be taken to make St Helena more attractive to work, do business and live to reduce the current outward migration and time is of the essence. Hence it is pleasing to hear Minister Brooks address these important factors when we spoke about the need to increase opportunities for the good recognition of our people and the quality of services that we offer. The point that intents this that led him to me was and I quote "While St Helena will never be home for everybody, this Governments ambition is to make it home again for those who rolled the dice for the ones who yearn to return." And I would add those who wish to remain, Madam Deputy Speaker that we are able to keep this our primary focus I have every confidence that we'll take steps in the right direction to ensure we achieve our key priorities. Hence in closing I take this opportunity to recognise and express thanks to all Members of this House who will be instrumental in assisting us to achieve our priorities for this Financial Year and beyond. Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Minister, Minister for Treasury for Environment and Natural Resources and Planning. Beg pardon.

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

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, and I know that is a mouthful as I get twisted sometimes as well in trying to name my portfolio. So Madam Deputy Speaker, firstly I would like to

congratulate the Honourable Mark Brooks the Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development for his first speech, noting that this is the first budget speech under the ministerial system. Madam Deputy Speaker I stand here wondering how the Honourable Financial Secretary feels during this session, and I'd like to say thank you to him for the previous speeches that he has delivered. Since Covid 19, it has been a very challenging period for our people but it is an intention of this Government to have a vision and it is hoped that we will be more focus during our tenure. People and family will always be at the centre of our Government. It is the people who we are working for, people who we would want to retain. I am too concerned that families are leaving the island and whole heartily agrees with the Minister, that we need to reverse this trend, we need to take a hard look and face what is really happening. Our people should be praised for their resilience, and I would hasten to add that we are often left to pick up the pieces of the things we didn't break. Whilst I support our tourists that arrive by air and look to increase those numbers but I would also like to say that we always welcome tourist that arrive by sea especially the yachting fraternity. Madam Deputy Speaker the Sustainable Economic Development Plan says that the Island has significant natural resources including "premium grade tuna" and that "improvements in St Helena's export offerings will help to enhance St Helena's budgeting capabilities". We are all aware of the value of our resources but our investment, is slow in delivering results. I welcomed the remark made by Minister Brooks that the public service salary salaries needs to be set in a fair and transparent way across all roles within Government. It is my understanding that a salary increment will be paid in June 2022 (back dated to April 2022) to employees who are not in a cadre or on probation. It is also pleasing to know that a new pay policy is being developed to introduce pay progression frameworks. The Environment, Natural Resources and Planning Portfolio is grateful for the allocation of £1.7 million which represents 3.8% of the Government's planned expenditure for this current year. This is a reduced allocation of £126,000 when compared to the previous financial year, to achieve a balanced budget. This will limit our capability to rise to new challenges. As the Minister of this Portfolio we are also appreciative of external environmental funding that will assist our Portfolio with delivering certain projects such as Cloud Forest, National Conservation Management Plans, Climate Change and Drought Warning and establishing a St Helena biological records system. The Portfolio will continue to strive to protect and enhance our natural environment through effective management and sustainable use of our natural capital. Madam Deputy Speaker, the Minister did indicate that under current economic climate in the UK, we are unlikely to get further increases in financial aid from Her Majesty Government. It is therefore imperative that we increase our outputs and do more with less. This Financial Year is no exception, the challenges are real and we must rise to them. Madam Deputy Speaker I beg to move.

Madam President –

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

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

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise in support of the Appropriation Bill. Firstly I'd like to congratulate the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development for his first and well delivered speech. He made it clear this is the direction of travelling for this Government and how he intend to spend the budget we have been allowed. I'm pleased to say that I will not be repeating myself like I did the past two years I was on Council. This year with a new system of new Government the budget has been aligned to our Vision, which I might add we consulted the public on. It is clearly being prioritised to the areas of high concern and most importance to St Helena. In an aging population high cases of health problems and issues, there are challenges which drew high demands with the Health and Social

Care services. This budget clearly demonstrate that this Government natural sources to demand by putting 13.9 Million 31% of the overall budget of Finance into Health and Social Care. Through Education we are investing in and developing our people so they are equipped to confront deal and lead the ever growing challenges of today and future. This is an another area which is a top priority for us, my Honourable friend highlighted the global economic climate along with the impacts with the war in Ukraine. We will continue to subsidise weight on containers, he mentioned the increase in minimum wage and the fact that under the Social Security we need to move to household families so that we are not ruling people out. We had thoughts of increasing minimum wage, there is no proposed changes to income tax rates and we will be reviewing personal allowances on tax which is good to hear. All of this has been catered within this budget it shows our commitment to assure the vulnerable and those in need are not left behind. However, we are merely putting on a sticking plaster on a wound that is festering, if we do not stop the outward migration, shrinking working age population and tax base we could find ourselves in a position where we are not able to effectively provide other essential services. Therefore I would reinforce my Honourable friends point of hope, there is hope through opportunities we can have immense opportunities when the cable goes live hopefully next year. The proposal Immigration Bill should provide further opportunities to grow our population, our economy and reverse the shrinking working age population status. Reviewing of quarantine is also an opportunity will be it a contentious one nevertheless it's an opportunity that has to be considered on the back drop of the local global economic climate and the fact that tourism one of our main incomes have reduced by 75%. The releasing of current loan opening development areas should also provide economic stimulus it is important that we lean on our private sector and allow good investments so that we grow the economy. The opportunities are in front of us but it just not down to the Government it requires an aye from all there needs to be a more collaborative approach where we need to take responsibility by being more efficient, more effective and do more with less including taking responsibility for our health. If we don't grab the opportunities on Island I'm sure that the point I made earlier will come to pass we could find ourselves in a position where we are unable to effectively provide other essential services. My Honourable friend said for the hope of our people and the generations of tomorrow we must move to self-determined priorities whenever we have the opportunity to do so. So there is hope through opportunities but we have to take the opportunities and the opportunities are coming soon. Therefore Madam Deputy Speaker I would just like to close by saying thank you to my Honourable Member for his speech, Her Majesty's Government for enabling us to have a budget that was not reduced for which we are most grateful and to the public officers for supporting with the preparation with the Budget. Madam Deputy Speaker I support the Motion.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Minister, Minister for Health and Social Care.

The Hon. Minister for Health and Social Care –

Thank you Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the Appropriation Bill and would like to congratulate the Honourable Minister for his delivery. I will speak to the Health budget in the main I remain aware of the overall circumstances that we are under with both Health and Social Care now operating under the one portfolio we have the opportunity to implement better care co-ordination, to create more efficiency more efficient support driven and front facing services. We can start to develop a holistic bespoke approach to intergrade primary, secondary and tertiary care to our community using drone top thinking, allowing shared resources and experience. We must have a system which is patient driven within our existing limitations and that has the capacity to evolve to meet the Islands basic Health and Social Care needs but

equally one that turns a tide into its greatest threats. The now combined Health and Social Care Portfolio provides those key services include medical, nursing and community care statutory social work, residential care for adults and children, fostering sheltered accommodation and auxiliary services, pharmacy, medical lab and dental. Our aim is to ensure that the people of St Helena can enjoy longer, healthier, happier lives and remain independent and active in their homes for as long as possible. In order to achieve these aims the Portfolio has five key priority areas: Priority 1. Is to ensure all users, staff and visitors to our service and within our community are safe protected from abuse and avoidable harm in a nutshell we operate safely. Priority 2. We ensure the prevention of all Health is at the core of our work and that care treatment and support keep using our services to achieve good outcomes in all Health promotes the good quality of life and is able space as possible so we provide prevent and cure not just alleviate. Priority 3. Is to ensure that all services involve and treat people with compassion, kindness, humility and respect and care. Priority 4. Is that all service are organised so that it meet the needs of the people and are streamline to prevent repetition and duplication we become efficient. And Priority 5. Is to improve understanding of how effectively resources are used to provide high quality efficient and sustainable Health and Social Care services to our population we aim to become value for money. So in summary our five priorities are that we aim to operate safely use methods which equally try to prevent illness alleviate suffering and cure disease in a caring and efficient service that provides value for its money. In addition to these priorities we need to build a core Health and Social Care team which will only be achieved by stabilising our TC turn over and build in the capacity of our long term contracts as well as more consistent short term staff. Equally it is necessary to continuously encourage and up skill our local teams to develop their careers. In order to facilitate the above priorities and take informed strategic precisions we must understand our position through a robust data collection system that highlights trends and streamlines co-ordinate systems and be used to make informative decisions. This Government has made a commitment to prioritize Health and Social Care and making very limited adjustments to the budget however, we are all acutely aware of the flat line budget under inflationary circumstances is effectively and across the board reduction in the goods and services that can be cured for its seen value. The overall budget for the Portfolios stands at 8, 876 for recurred funding and for further half a million for capital essential improvements this is further supported by 4.5 million from the TC budget for Health professional staff. There are large apparent reductions to this new budget is the movement of resources and as a result of the fit for the future realignment of staff equating to 610 thousand Finance, Administration and HR post's which have been transferred from Health and Social Care to the Central team. The second audible sum is 200 reduction as cost of overseas medical services to result of starting the regular commercial however, if needed the core fund under financial aid is able to support any increases above this expenditure. Finally I would like to conclude to remind our Members that of a statement that we must acknowledge that is the state and effectiveness of any health service is directly related to the Health population provides for. The largest threat to this limited isolated remote health service is the current health of our population which cannot be dismissed together we as individuals must take some personal responsibility for our complex lifestyle related health conditions with the full support of our Health service, this Government and our Business and civil community through holistic approach. And finally holistic Health in composes both body and mind so I would like to leave you with a simple quote and guidance "to ensure good health eat lightly, breathe deeply, live moderately, cultivate cheerfulness and maintain an interest in life." I support the motion.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Minister, the Honourable Mover would you like to respond to the debate?

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

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, yes I would just give a short brief reply holistically to the debate just highlighting some of the concerns that was raised by my fellow Members. So the disappointment of the one year budget, yes I think we all share the same disappointing circumstances that this budget was compiled and put together for the Vision with only a one year supplement, and that the Vision takes us through our tenure of our Council or of our position as Ministers and we would have like to be able to deliver a long term strategy based on the certainty of the three year budget however, we weren't able to secure that but we will work with our partners in HMG next year in trying to achieve this goal. Some of the other things I think my Honourable friend Dr Essex touched on was the timing of the budget in relation to the timing of an Election we all felt that we did had to come into office hitting the ground running especially with the budget preparations for a lot of us this is the first time being we're all new and I'm sure that this valuable experience that we have learnt over this past few months will go some way in improving the budget negotiations next year. My Honourable friend also point out some of the areas on the export like our fishing and agriculture, also growing on our exports and our local products through fishing and agriculture. Though I would say I think the main work that needs to be done here is more collaboration between the organisations the fishing sector just needs to I think work more together trying develop better outcomes for everyone that also could be introduced to the agricultural sectors. We've often heard there's a sort of disjointed sector communication lines between the producers and the importers or the sellers, within the retail industry. We have in some way I know, this does not show within this budget but we have tried to put resources into increasing the agricultural production through the EDIP program we have allocated 380 thousand to try and build on our agricultural production. Some of the other important areas is housing yes we recognise there is a need and demand for affordable housing, for more Government Landlord Housing and for more available land, and we have tried I think in our short term to work on the housing expects. We have finalised the negotiations of bunkers hill which will hopefully relieve some of the housing, sorry available housing areas and demands through CDA's and we're trying to focus on building more Government Landlord Housing and making more Government Landlord plots available through these CDA's as part of those negotiations. But we do recognise that it is a need to build more Government Landlord Houses, especially one bedroom and two bedroom accommodations but that will give us the extra sort of few properties to do more of a change round having those properties that you can put someone into whilst you reassess the stock, so we believe that is essential if we are to make the most of our current stock. Labour we do recognise our labour market strategy and the shortness of labour that strategy has point out and we know that there is a need for better support especially with our locals doing job interviews and job placements. We have already started some work on this on the bridge between leaving school and finding placement in work also through the CASH or Career St Helena Access St Helena, Careers Access St Helena got it right finally Madam Deputy Speaker. Investment there was concerns for me for further investment and we are working on that, at the moment our main form of investment through infrastructure and economic development capital program and like Dr Essex rightly pointed out the need for a further capital program is essential. The timing is not just right yet for us to negotiate for our further capital program as I said earlier on a number of occasions we need to finalise this years or this capital program with the business cases presented to her Majesty's Government before we can start the negotiations for a second capital program. What else was there, my Honourable friend Robert Midwinter recognises the



work done by the non-Government organisations particularly SHAPE and so on and as you've rightly pointed out we've got some right to protect those non-Government organisations 'cas we recognise the importance of the work they do within the community. A lot of them fill a gap that if they weren't there it wouldn't be filled anywhere else so it is very important and we've all as Ministers visit SHAPE recently and we are all surprised about the importance of that support that is out at Sandy Bay. The other thing that was mentioned was roads by my Honourable friend Andrew Turner, Cllr Turner we and yes in our Constituency Meetings roads has come up a lot there is, the community feels there is need for improvement on the roads. We haven't taken any money from the roads budget this year it remains the same however, we are looking at how we can improve our road network. Again we are relying on our capital funding but we might be looking at exploring a business case of how we can address some of the backlog and also trying to improve our road network going forward. So it might be in the form of new equipment to speed up the actual process or just maybe new policies that way in the process is done but it has been pointed out by our constituents that there is a need so we will be prioritizing that this year going forward to. My Honourable Friend also pointed out some of the customs duty, the customs and import duties that can be improved on there is two levels of customs duties, there has been an exemption or a reduction in customs duties for essential needs and goods for our community. My Honourable Friend also sits on the Tax Working Group so we will look forward to discussing some of those views and some of those concerns within our Tax Working Group, to see if there is any improvements that can be done to incorporate more people that needs the essential imports of certain items. We are also as I've said before are looking to try and support the construction sector and the house building sectors but maybe looking at additional reduction in essential building products. As it is there is I think cement and timber is already classed but as we all know it takes more than cement and timber to build a house. Some of the other essential things is also becoming quite expensive globally so we also need to see how we can wider open that tax reduction to better support our construction of our homes. I think the last which I will end up on Deputy Speaker is what I think is effecting us most is the Cost of Living, the Cost of Living overall is the concern to this Government I guess it has been for some time now given our geographic location and our isolation everything that we import and export needs to travel a huge distance across an ocean, powered by diesel so the need to try and reduce the cost to export and import is some work that we are trying to address the shipping monitoring group, trying to look at other options of moving around the schedule of probably less voyages coming to the Island. So reduce the amount of voyages would help, would see if that would help reduce the cost of freight but there is a lot of areas that still need to be explored. But I think it all falls down to one thing and that is that we only have a certain amount of budget this year and what we did last year and the year before, and its most likely next year we will only get the same amount next year and if you take into account the rate of inflation, this year is expected to rise even higher because of the global demands with the main commodities the world is currently using oil and so on that is anticipated to rise, food is anticipated to rise, so I think on the horizon things are not going to be too much easier but I think we should as we have been trying to illustrate through our Vision and through our through my budget speech we need to put efforts into creating new revenue and right now the world is going through a very considerably very difficult time. But it's also a time for opportunities and hope as I have eluded to you in my speech. And we hope that the opportunities that the Cable and which will bring to us will will broaden equal opportunities and investment for the Island and try as a Government will try for any opportunities to benefit revenue generated through the Cable as I have said on some occasions. But Madam Deputy Speaker I would like to thank everyone that has supported this budget this year. It's a difficult time for St Helena there is hope and there is opportunities on the horizon and I feel that in order to try and make the best of those opportunities we need to work together collectively as a

Government as Elected Members for the benefit for our community and our Island now and in the future. So I'd like to thank my Honourable Members for replying to my Budget Speech, and I'd like to thank Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Mover, I now put the question that the Appropriation Bill 2022 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam President –

We will now take off where we left off, and I now hand over to the Mover of the debate.

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

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

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Member, do you have a seconder please? Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

Madam Deputy Speaker, I beg to second.

Madam President –

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

Question put and agreed to.

### **Council in Committee**

Madam President –

Honourable Members we are now in Committee, in accordance with Standing Orders 13 2(a) and need to work through the schedules first. Schedule 1 Honourable Mover?

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

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, may I request that the Financial Secretary and the Deputy Financial Secretary join us at the table?

Madam President –

Yes you may.

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

Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Members Schedule 1 recurrent expenditure. I put the question that Head 12 – Central Support Services – standing in the amount of ten million, four hundred and one thousand pounds do stand part of the Bill. Honourable Chief Minister would you like to provide an overview?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, Head 12 – Central Support Services which provides a wide range of support services to the five portfolios as well as the Executive and Legislative Councils. It also provides services to the public, the support services are pertinent to ongoing public service delivery, high level decision making, accountability, compliance and good public relations. The portfolio has six priorities which will support the delivery of the national goals for St Helena and achievement of our strategic objectives of our policy priorities and meet the needs of the community. Our portfolio priorities are as follows: Priority 1. Drive St Helena Government digital transformation agenda. 2. Ensure effective Corporate Governance arrangements are in place to achieve St Helena's overarching goals and objectives. 3. Encourage and facilitate openness and transparency across the open Government. 4. Enable and support makers for portfolios and the public to make better decisions. 5. Support the development of the Public Service for the delivery of an effective people's strategy and 6. Ensure the provision of an effective and efficient vehicle hire service. Under Central Support Services we have a number of different costs and from going through these quickly just to give an overview of each the majority of which have remained have been reduced sorry but the main one that has been decreased and was spoken about this through the Budget Speech as well and all Members will be aware of the change of where it was centralised administration service so under the management of administration we'll see an increase to take into account the centralised administration service staff and that has included an increase of 22 extra post's. And then also under that Heading we have seen an increase due to additional staff with IT equipment which makes up for the increase under Management of Administration the information services that has reduced as well as the head of policy and planning, the majority have reduced what comes out of a small amount if we look at the whole entire head coming at ten thousand four hundred and one thousand so if there's any specific questions that people will have I am happy to talk about it.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Chief Minister, are there any questions or comments from Members?  
The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Can I ask for an explanation on the reduction in the public relations budget then, please?

The Deputy Financial Secretary –

Maybe I can assist, so on the Public relations side so the majority of that is relation to adjustment to post's, so there's a post where some of the responsibilities which are now related to another post it resulted in a reduction but also it was a relation to the reduction to the internal recharges. And if I can also just add at this state as well there's this general kind of change throughout all of these budgets what discuss around all internal Management Admin recharges whereby previously we took those cost's and split it out against each of the other individual cost centres so what we've done this year with the budget is to eliminate that all together. So rather than having to account for it separately and then recharge it all out again we've eliminated that all together so you'll see there's a common theme across all the budgets whereby they have reduced because of Management and Admin recharges.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, I just realised that I said ten thousand and I should have said ten million and four hundred and one thousand thank you.

Madam President –

Ok thank you, any other Members have any questions or comments? Ok I put the question that Head 12 – Central Support Service – standing in the amount of ten million, four hundred and one thousand pounds do stand part of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam President –

I put the question that Head 14 – Attorney Generals Chambers – standing in the amount of one hundred and four thousand pounds do stand part of the Bill. Honourable Chief Minister would you like to provide an overview?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, I will ask the Deputy Financial Secretary if they can give an overview thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you.

The Deputy Financial Secretary –

Thank you, so this particular Head covers the administration cost of the Attorney Generals Chambers so it includes all administration staff as well as additional cost for running an office, as well as law subscriptions etc. so that's included within that particular Head of expenditure.

Madam President –

Thank you, any other Honourable Member like to offer any comments? No? Thank you, I put the question that Head 14 – Attorney Generals Chambers – standing in the amount of one hundred and four thousand pounds do stand part of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam President –

I put the question that Head 15 - Safety, Security and Home Affairs - standing in the amount of two million, two hundred and forty thousand pounds do stand part of the Bill. Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs would you like to provide an overview?

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

Thank you Madam Chair, to give just an overview the Safety, Security and Home Affairs portfolio is on the front line of keeping citizens safe, and the island secure and plays a fundamental role in this security and economic prosperity of St Helena close working across portfolio's, local businesses and community is required to tackle safety issues for the Island. St Helena will prosper a significantly from being open, engaged and connected to the rest of the world, and it creates tremendous opportunities for individuals and the Islands perspective prosperity. The portfolio provides wide ranges of services to the communities of St Helena, Ascension and Tristan Da Cunha, and composes of Immigration, Customs, Fire and Rescue, Prison, emergency planning, port control, maritime, and a range of licencing and inspection

services. The portfolio also provides 24 hour emergency services contact, control and command centre, the portfolio has five priorities which will support the delivery of the national goals for St Helena and achievement of our strategic objectives and policy priorities and meet the needs of the community. Priority 1. Keeping St Helena safe by reducing crime and working to better the lives of children, young people and those most vulnerable in our community. Priority 2. Working with partners internationally and in St Helena to secure our borders, in order to protect the community and support economic development. Priority 3. Improving community trust and confidence services provided by the portfolio. Priority 4. Working with partners, volunteers and stake holders to minimise and identify problems and to maintain public safety in our response to the community. Priority 5. Working with the community, partners and stakeholders to help solve the issues most effecting the community to make us all together safer. Madam Speaker this is a short overview of the priority and outcomes and strive to achieve which is available for all to see in the budget book and although the figures in the book show a massive reduction in the Safety, Security and Home Affairs budget it doesn't tell this as the case. So let me enlighten you as an island we have a flat line budget in assets St Helena has a similar budget to last year, however we have more demands of our services especially Health and Social Care therefore we need to prioritise, and in order to prioritise we have had to put money more money in the priority areas which mean in some areas would have to make cuts and have less money. So I decided that Safety, Security and Home Affairs will make a significant cut the staff in our portfolio wasn't too impress however, understood why we needed to cut and I'm grateful for their understanding. As you can see from the budget book there's a difference of two hundred and nine thousand compared to last year's budget. But we are still committed to delivering our priorities and outcomes and the way we are going to do this is by being more resilient efficient and innovative. In fact we've already started this tapping into other funding streams. Madam Chair I'm happy for you to continue, and I am happy to answer any questions concerning my portfolio.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Minister, Honourable Members anyone would like to make a comment? Or ask a question?

The Deputy Financial Secretary –

Perhaps Madam Chair I could give an overview of the numbers for the public as well?

Madam President –

Yes Deputy Financial Secretary.

The Deputy Financial Secretary –

So in terms of the allocations, you will notice that it will start on page 37, in our pink book in our estimates book and you will notice that there are some areas that doesn't have a budget allocated as was last year because what we've done is to calculate some of these together. The line that says police operations for example now includes police investigations and public protection and the contact centre as well as emergency planning those have been calculated into one cost centre for the police operations which is here at seven hundred thousand pounds, fire and rescue and three hundred and twenty two thousand pounds, and HM Prison at three hundred and seventy nine thousand pounds. Immigration is at a hundred and fifty three thousand pounds, and the sea rescue service is at sixty six thousand pounds, customs two hundred and sixty nine thousand pounds, and port management at two hundred and thirty one thousand pounds, maritime compliance twenty thousand pounds. There's also revenue under this particular Head as well and the majority of their revenue collected under these operations

is for licencing bug, firearms, road licencing etc. so that's collected here to help support the budget overall.

Madam President –

Thank you Deputy Financial Secretary, ok, I put the question that Head 15 – Safety, Security and Home Affairs – standing in the amount of two million, two hundred and forty thousand pounds do stand part of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam President –

I put the question that Head 16 - Judicial Services - standing in the amount of one hundred and forty eight thousand pounds do stand part of the Bill. Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, I'll ask the Deputy Financial Secretary if they can give an overview thank you.

Madam President –

Deputy Financial Secretary.

The Deputy Financial Secretary –

Thank you Madam Chair, so under this particular head this covers all the administration of justice, so it includes all the cost of minister in that service and it includes as well the kind of ongoing day to day which includes the remuneration package for Chief Justice as well all included under that one head.

Madam President –

Thank you Deputy Financial Secretary, ok I put the question that Head 16 - Judicial Services - standing in the amount of one hundred and forty eight thousand pounds do stand part of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam President –

I put the question that Head 17 - Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development - standing in the amount of eleven million, three hundred and fifty three thousand pounds do stand part of the Bill. Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development would you like to provide an overview?

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

Thank you Madam Chair, and yes I will just give a basic summary of the portfolio and what it does, the role of the Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development portfolio is to facilitate sustainable economic and social development to ensure everyone on St Helena is all together wealthier. By developing an industry promoting sustainable green growth and increasing the scale of work for our locals through effective use of infrastructure with our limited finance. The portfolios have five priorities which will support the delivery of the national goals for St Helena and achievement of our strategic objectives and policy priorities to meet the needs of the community. The five priorities we are looking at Madam Chairman Priority 1. Would be to secure and protect core revenue streams and maximise revenue

generation opportunities. Priority 2. Is to stimulate economic growth and social development. Priority 3. Is to develop and maintain the Island's physical infrastructure. Priority 4. Is to increase the working age population living and working on St Helena. Priority 5. Is to strengthen public financial management and accountability. Under this portfolio we are looking to help achieve the islands goals of all together wealthier and we have anticipating putting five point nine million into this in this financial year. Effective and efficient and countable public sector we've allocated four point three million, and effective infrastructure we have allocated one point five million. Our outcomes and deliver goals for this year will be as follows; the portfolio will be focusing on efficient and effective process for enabling investment on St Helena, identifying key sectors of the development and diversification that will bring the greatest returns for St Helena. Madam Deputy Chair I will invite the Deputy Financial Secretary to just talk through some of the numbers within our portfolio.

Madam President –

Thank you, Deputy Financial Secretary?

The Deputy Financial Secretary –

Thank you Madam Chair, under this particular head there's quite a number of different cost centres, and so I will just try to talk through a few just to give idea of what's included, for example the management of social security and that's at forty seven thousand pounds so not that actual social security payments it selves which are separate than our appropriate London law this is the actual management the days that management of that office. There's revenue services and that's the cost of the income tax office and operations and day to day basis. And the central finance team and you'll notice that the comparison to the previous year that has increased and that's due to the changes under the fit for the future program where we have centralised the finance function. So it's basically transferring those budgets from other areas into the central team. So in point of the customs service centre hundred and seventy six thousand and then there's the budget called payments under half the crown which is the budget where we whole essentially where we cover many of the costs that effect across the government not just the specific area. And just to give an idea of what's included in that budget in there will be things like public sector pensions for those employees of Government who are under there and need to find pension contribution scheme under here would be our investment management fees for the whole of the government throughout the investment portfolio. Under here would be funding for non-government organisations that receive grants and subsidies from St Helena Government in here is included the subsidy to Connect St Helena for the provision of utilities and other kind of grants in here would be key contracts, the transport system and the swimming pool contract an then there's budget for compensation legal fees etc. so there's also in here the budget where we set aside the funding through IT replacement in this particular budget as well and there's also other contracts like the cleaning contract for example and then also audit fees in here there's a wide range of different kind of cost included in this particular budget. And then going back to the pink book page 42 there's procurement services, there's management of administration for the infrastructure team, there's the provision for the maintenance of roads and I just wanted to make it here that you will note that there was a percent decrease year on year on the roads budget and that is a reduction in the main budget for the material for provision of labour etc. but that is as I mentioned earlier the reduction as the elimination of internal recharges so there is a that funding attached to maintain or provide roads and then there's provision of maintaining street lighting of all protection building maintenance this is the budget that is held to do all of the works that the works team does around the estate there's the technical services the line registration, property disposal, there's a GIS budget there's project management in budget here as well. And there's the economic

development budgets so the sustainable development budget team, that team budget and there's the visiting nation centre, the marketing budget then there's shipping in here as well and underline here is five hundred thousand pounds contains the amount of money you set aside. In the main for the cost of transporting containers from Rupert's into Jamestown that is covered but it's also covered the other kind of subsidy that is provided in freight at this time is included under that particular budget called shipping. Civil aviation you will note that reduced quite significantly since last year and that's mainly because of the elimination of the charter flights service that was previously paid by St Helena Government where we have now moved back to the commercial contract with Airlink and finally there's airport operations at two point nine which is under two point nine million pounds that's set aside for the operational cost of St Helena Airport so I'd thought I'd go through a little bit more detail for this one because it's a budget for eleven point three million pounds.

Madam President –

Thank you Deputy Financial Secretary, Honourable Rob Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Can I just ask the question in terms of infrastructure what the post box walks are those being included under this information service?

The Deputy Financial Secretary –

Yes the maintenance of those are included under the information service.

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Ok thank you very much.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you Madam Chair, this is more point of information than anything else of a request for any information. The budget for legal fees are included under the payment on behalf of the crown as is the budget for public solicitors office but even when you total it budgets together they do not amount to any significant sum of money. Not the sort of some money that might be required if say an individual had any business within the community required high level legal representation in a serious case which he or she could not afford themselves under those circumstances how would that person be able to have access to the source of funding which would enable them to get equal representation before the court.

The Financial Secretary –

Thank you Madam Chair for that question so, the St Helena Government has a legal aid policy that exists and where the correct amount of support from the public solicitor offices isn't forthcoming or it falls outside of the skillset of those in the public solicitor's office. Currently under the policy they can make an application to the St Helena Government through the Financial Secretary for approval to use funding to be able to get the right sort of representation that they need. So as the Financial Secretary I rely very heavily on the support from the legal assistance fund and the trustees of the fund to actually advise me whether or not it is appropriate for the representation to be supported of public funds.



The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

And if the recommendation is that is appropriate, what would be the source of the funding?

The Financial Secretary –

So our first port of call is to use the money that sits under the payments on behalf of the crown, and if it exceeds that then we obviously have the call down fund that we can make the application fund to FCDO to utilise some of those funds.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you for that explanation.

Madam President –

Thank you, Honourable Members I put the question that Head 17 - Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development - standing in the amount of eleven million, three hundred and fifty three thousand pounds do stand part of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam President –

I put the question that Head 22 - Education, Skills and Employment - standing in the amount of three million, six hundred and six thousand pounds do stand part of the Bill. Honourable Chief Minister would you like to provide an overview?

The Hon. Chief Minister –f

Thank you Madam Chair, the role of the Education Skills and Employment portfolio is to ensure that education services are provided to meet the needs of the people of St Helena and support the economic and union capital development of the island. As part of core education provision four schools provide full time compulsory schooling from 5 to 16 years of age under the education ordinance 2008. All schools are supported by the teacher training and inclusion sectors the portfolio also provides a range of non-core services which include early years education which is children from age 3, six form education from allocation of 16 to 18 year olds, management of tertiary education and operation of the lifelong learning centre which encompasses the St Helena Community College, career access St Helena, the St Helena research institute and the St Helena public library service. The portfolio has four priorities which will support the delivery of the national goals of St Helena and achievements of our strategic objectives and policy priorities and meets the needs of the community. Our portfolio priorities are 1. Improve educational outcomes for all, 2. Operate an inclusive system that meets the holistic needs of all children, 3. To meet the academic training and development needs of the people of St Helena and 4. To provide opportunities for all young people to fulfil their career aspirations. Madam Chair as you rightly said we as education skills and employment we have three point six million pounds to deliver these services and our deliver goals for this year, a review is being done of the current structure of primary and secondary education and this will be taken to derive their plan and how compulsory education is delivered to enable the best educational benefits for students and ensure that children with additional needs are given the appropriate support to enable them to achieve their development milestones. The portfolio will continue to build a fully qualified experienced competent stable work force and in addition procure and independent inspector to undertake the evaluation the standards of teaching and learning in schools to gain an understanding of the improvements required and how to achieve them. So if anybody has any questions regarding my portfolio by all means I'll take them.

Madam President –

Thank you Chief Minister, ok no further questions I put the question that Head 22 - Education, Skills and Employment - standing in the amount of three million, six hundred and six thousand pounds do stand part of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam President –

I put the question that Head 23 - Health and Social Care - standing in the amount of eight million, eight hundred and seventy six thousand pounds do stand part of the Bill. Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care would you like to provide an overview?

The Hon. Minister for Health and Social Care –

Thank you Deputy Chair, as an overview the Health and Social Care portfolio has overall responsibility for the Islands Health and Social Care through its key services I have given an overview earlier about how we plan to deliver Health and Social Care on St Helena and this budget is to support the strategic approach. As mentioned the portfolio has 5 priorities which will support the delivery of national goals of St Helena and our achievement of strategic objectives of policy priorities and meet the needs of the community. The portfolio priorities are priority 1. Ensure all users staff and visitors to our services and within our community are safe protected from abuse and avoidable harm priority 2. Is to ensure that the prevention of pure health is at the core of all of our work and that care treatment and support for people using our services achieves good outcomes prevent ill health promotes a good quality of life and are evidence based where possible. Priority 3. To ensure all services involved and treats people with compassion kindness and dignity and respect. Priority 4. Is to ensure all services are organised so that they meet the needs and are stream lined to prevent repetition and duplication. And priority 5. Is to improve understanding of how effective resources are used to provide efficient and health social care services for our population. To achieve this our deliverables are that the portfolio will be a key partner/leader in trying to help wealth and wellbeing. Health care and social care on St Helena by delivering outstanding care and effective safeguarding within a community. I will now leave the budgets cost centres open for questions.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Minister, ok no further questions I put the question that Head 23 - Health and Social Care - standing in the amount of eight million, eight hundred and seventy six thousand pounds do stand part of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam President –

I put the question that Head 26 - Environment, Natural Resources and Planning - standing in the amount of one million, six hundred and sixty seven thousand pounds do stand part of the Bill. Honourable Minister for Environment, Natural Resources and Planning would you like to give an overview?

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

Thank you Madam Chair, as I said earlier the portfolio will continue to strive to protect and enhance our natural environment and being able to do that our strategic priorities are concerning biodiversity, preventing minimising and mitigating the negative activity on our natural environment and resources, Managing our natural food services and to provide forestry

services and products, Implementing and planning a control system to enable development reducing the economic impact on invasive species. Safeguarding St Helena through implementation of biosecurity system, safeguarding natural habitats and our endangered species. Madam Chair expenditure proposed for this year as you rightly said is 1.7 million and is allocated across 12 cost centres in support of the few priorities I just mentioned. This expenditure will fund work programs in delivery of services in agriculture, fisheries, forestry, biosecurity, environmental protection, risk management, marine and national conservation and a land planning and building control service. The nature of this planned expenditure across this portfolio is broken down as employee cost of 843k which equates to 51% of our overall expenditure. Property cost which is 60k which is 4% of expenditure, supply and services of 192k which is 12% of our expenditure and administration costs of 34k which is 2% of expenditure. Payment of other agency bodies or persons 32k which is 2% of our expenditure and other expenditure for example a subscription to professional bodies and service Tec's 19k which is 1% of expenditure. Payment to contractors 162k which was 10% of expenditure. And of course our internal recharges for transport and IT of 322k accounting to 19% of expenditure. So Madam Chair I'm not sure if Members have any further questions.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Minister, ok no further questions I put the question that Head 26 - Environment, Natural Resources and Planning - standing in the amount of one million, six hundred and sixty seven thousand pounds do stand part of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam President –

I put the question that the total of thirty eight million, three hundred and ninety five thousand pounds do stand part of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam President –

Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development would you like to provide an overview on Head 20 Pensions and Benefits and explain why no vote is needed on this?

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

Thank you Deputy Madam Chair, so I think for the benefit for the listening public we should allow the expertise to take us through the allocation of the bill. So if I may Madam Chairperson I'd like to hand over to Deputy Financial Secretary.

Madam President –

Deputy Financial Secretary?

The Deputy Financial Secretary –

So Head 20 we only include on the Bill to show the complete picture so that you can tie it back to the pink book the numbers but it doesn't actually require to be appropriated because the expenditure under this particular Head has cover by their own legislation. So under here would be a defined benefit scheme which is the SHG Employees which we refer to as the old scheme because it closed to a new entrance and so that is covered by the pension's ordinance 2012.

Madam President –

Thank you Deputy Financial Secretary, ok thank you now we move on to schedule 2 capital expenditure I put the question that Head 15 - Safety, Security and Home Affairs - standing in the amount of fourteen thousand pounds do stand part of the Bill. Honourable Minister for Safety Security and Home Affairs?

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

Thank you Madam Chair, the 14 grand under this capital part is for more in change of shackles as there are some in need of urgent replacement of moraines, I will take any questions.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Minister, no further questions? I put the question that Head 15 - Safety, Security and Home Affairs - standing in the amount of fourteen thousand pounds do stand part of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam President –

I put the question that Head 17 - Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development - standing in the amount of five hundred and fifty nine thousand pounds do stand part of the Bill. Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development.

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

Thank you Madam Chair, under Head 17 there is a few different things which is covered under there so again I will let the expertise explain these to this House and the listening public. So I'd like to hand over again to the Deputy Financial Secretary.

Madam President –

Deputy Financial Secretary.

The Deputy Financial Secretary –

Thank you so under here there are three main areas, firstly the payments on behalf of the crown budget Members last year 500k pounds was set aside for refurbishment works at the fish processing plant, as part of last year actual expenditure was only 470k pounds. So what this does is take the remaining balance from last year's 500 and just rolls it over into this Financial Year to be spent on the Capital parts of that work, the second reason is under building maintenance so there's a part of that building maintenance work that is kind of ongoing operation maintenance that is covered on the recurrent budget but there's an element here that we will capitalise under the building maintenance work of 50k which has been set aside for rewiring of the dental clinic and rewiring Essex House. So those are 2 main areas under the capital works. And then finally under the Airport operations there is 79k pounds set aside for St Helena Airport, that is money we received previously with FCDO funding which they've agreed we can use for capital purchases for the airport and that includes the runway sweeper for the airport it includes a cover way area to protect their vehicles that sit outside from the weather. And finally there are some kind of small items of purchases they'll make out of that 479k.

Madam President –

Thank you Deputy Financial Secretary, Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Does that capital funding for the airport also include some of the items that have to be written off because of their bad condition, for instance the boarding ladders to the aircraft and so on?

The Deputy Financial Secretary –

Yes so I don't think it was specifically allocated for those particular replacements, but I do know that the runway sweeper and the cover way there was a small amount left they will use that to do some replacement assets but I not 100% sure of those specific items.

Madam President –

Thank you Deputy Financial Secretary, no further questions? I put the question that Head 17 - Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development - standing in the amount of five hundred and fifty nine thousand pounds do stand part of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam President –

I put the question that Head 23 - Health and Social Care - standing in the amount of five hundred and thirteen thousand pounds do stand part of the Bill. Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care would you like to provide an overview?

The Hon. Minister for Health and Social Care –

Thank you Madam Chair, I will follow my Honourable Member and hand over to our Finance team but just to say this half a million pound is dedicated to the cost centre of Health and acute care for various improvements to the structures. I will like to hand over to Deputy Financial Secretary Madam Chair.

Madam President –

Deputy Financial Secretary.

The Deputy Financial Secretary –

Thank you, so as the Minister said this 513k is specifically for the Hospital work that is required here is to ensure there is hot water throughout the whole of the Hospital which includes all of the piping work that is needed. There is some areas in need of rewiring as well for that and there is also some other kind of refurbishment works that will be done at the Hospital to kind of do some repairs. So that's the main things but the biggest areas would be the provision of hot water services there. And also the backup generator required and the rewiring associated with that backup generator. And the last item would be some of the coroner treatment in one of these reports works required to the morgue itself, so to kind of upgrade it and to kind of build it up to particular standard so it would be required in the cost all included within the 513k.

Madam President –

Thank you Deputy Financial Secretary, any questions or comments Honourable Members? Ok I put the question that Head 23 - Health and Social Care - standing in the amount of five hundred and thirteen thousand pounds do stand part of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam President –

I put the question that the total of one million and eighty six thousand pounds do stand part of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam President –

Thank you Hon Members, now we turn back to the main part of the Bill. The Title, the Enactment Clause and Clause 1. I put the question that The Title, the Enactment Clause and Clause 1. Do stand part of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam President –

Thank you Hon Members, Clause 2 – Consolidated Fund – Provision for Financial Year 2022/2023. Does any Honourable Member has any proposal or questions on this? Thank you. I put the question that Clause 2 – Consolidated Fund – Provision for Financial Year 2022/2023 do stand part of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam President –

Thank you Hon Members, that brings us to the end of that and we will go back into formal session now. The Hon Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development, Bill to be reported please.

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

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, I beg to report that the Appropriation Bill 2022 passes the committee with zero recommendations, and to be moved to this Council.

Madam President –

Can I just interrupt here, amendments zero amendments.

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

The Appropriation Bill 2022 passed the committee with zero amendments, and to move that this Council approves the said Bill to the Governor that it should be enacted.

Madam President –

Do I have a seconder?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

Madam Deputy Speaker, I beg to second.

Madam President –

Thank you. Mover you may speak to the motion.

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

Thank you Deputy Speaker, no I do not wish to speak to the motion thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you. I put the question that this Council approves the Appropriation Bill 2022, and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted. Members would like to speak on that? ok thank you.

Question put and agreed to, with the exception of 1 Member not agreeing.

Madam President –

Clerk to announce the next item of business please.

## 6. **ADJOURNMENT DEBATE**

Madam President –

Adjournment Debate. Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

Honourable Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this Council adjourn sine die.

Madam President –

Is there a seconder? Honourable Chief Minister? I beg your pardon, Honourable Minister for Environment, Natural Resources and Planning?

The Hon. Christine Scipio –

Thank you, I beg to second.

Madam President –

Thank you. The Motion is that this House now adjourn sine die. Honourable Members you may speak up to 10 minutes? The Honourable Rob Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise in support of the Adjournment. Firstly Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to congratulate my Ministerial Colleagues on taking the very bold first step towards re-opening our island to tourists and visiting friends and family; however, I believe that we need to go far further in this respect over the next few months, if we are going to see any significant impact from doing so on our economy. I am also very pleased to note the invitation to tender released by Saint Helena Government relating to leasing the former cannery building in Rupert's Valley; however, again, I strongly believe that unless there is some significant change in current mind-set and direction of travel, we are unlikely to see any significant impact on our economy from this either. So, Madam Deputy Speaker, with shrinking budgetary aid funding from the UK Government in real terms, and no significant increases in local revenue expected, where does that leave us? Certainly not delivering some of the aspirations that were voiced by members of this House during the General Election last year. Madam Deputy Speaker, earlier today, we heard from the Chief Minister that the reason we haven't yet had sight of the draft policy and legislative programme, we were told in this House would be presented by the end of March, is because the Government has been busy developing a Strategy from the Vision that was produced, and that this was needed first, in order to inform the Policy and Legislative Programme. We also heard from the Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs on Friday, that he expects the proposed amendments to the Road Traffic Ordinance to come forward

sometime in the next six months, even though this was worked on significantly by previous Councils. Madam Deputy Speaker, you could well be asking what is the point that I am trying to make here; well, simply put, it is that many of the questions that keep coming forward to this House are doing so because of the time it is taking to change existing Legislation, some of which has been taking the St Helena Government, granted not necessarily members of this current Council, several years, and based on the response given to my colleague the Honourable Gillian Brooks earlier today, I must admit to being none the wiser as to when this will actually be addressed. Madam Deputy Speaker, the main concern that is regularly raised with me, by my Constituents, is the apparent lack of transparency that remains, despite the commitments that were given to the public prior to and during the General Election last year. Of particular concern is the closure of ExCo meetings to the public, and the citing of “collective responsibility” as the reason for doing so. Madam Deputy Speaker, I recently heard this statement also being made in respect of the Scrutiny Committees, and I sincerely hope that our Ministerial Colleagues will not be using this as a general catch all, like that of “it’s commercial in confidence” for everything that they wish to exclude from the public and other Elected Members. Madam Deputy Speaker, whilst there is clearly still division between us regarding the Select Committees Order, and in particular the manner in which this was eventually enacted, I have every desire to work closely with my Ministerial Colleagues to deliver positive progress for this island and our people, however, we can only do so if we are collectively inclusive, not exclusive or divisive; and in this respect I strongly believe that we, first and foremost, have a responsibility for delivering what the public were told they would get. Again, I make reference to the recently enacted Select Committees (Establishment) Order, which I believe falls woefully short of what the public were told to expect by the St Helena Government firstly when the Consultative Poll was undertaken, and then secondly in the run up to the General Election last year. Madam Deputy Speaker, to be perfectly honest, after the discussions that took place between all of the Elected Members, and the understanding that we reached on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March, which was then emailed to the Governor on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> March and copied to all Elected Members; with what has now been enacted by Executive Council, it feels to me like we are living under a system of Government that is akin to George Orwell’s “1984”, whereby, what has been issued in writing, can simply be changed “after the fact” because someone somewhere believes that the public shouldn’t actually get what they were promised. I certainly hope that in time I am proven wrong in this respect, however, as everything of a policy and legislative nature would appear to be taking so much time at the moment, I certainly won’t be holding my breath. Madam Deputy Speaker, I think that I have said enough, other than in closing to congratulate yourself on the sterling job that I believe you have done over this Session of Legislative Council, and again to note my concerns regarding the situation in Ukraine, which I hope and pray will soon end peacefully. Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Member. Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Sorry Madam Deputy Speaker and for our listeners, we had issues with the mic. Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise in support of the Adjournment. When I campaigned, I highlighted priorities areas to include Health, Social Care, Education, Employment and Housing, all of which contribute to our pressing concern, the retention of our people. We know our health system has fought to keep going with staff limitations, responses to overseas recruitment has not been forthcoming and salaries paid to local staff does not incentivise all to remain in their jobs. There has been issues with necessary hospital equipment and certain pharmaceutical supplies. I



would hope going forward there will be response to recruitment and a review of salaries for local medical staff, so that consistency in staffing will enable this important front-line service to function effectively without the problems they have faced and continue to face. Social Care provides an invaluable service to our elderly and those in our society whose needs cannot be met on their own. I hope that, as we move further into our financial year and planning is done for the next budget, Social Care will be one of the priority areas, enabling it to continue to develop and grow this much-needed service to our aging population. Affordable housing is still a major worry for constituents, especially those who are not in the position to purchase land, build their own homes or pay for private rentals. I note from the Budget Speech, Government will implement schemes and policies to provide options for affordable housing and enable, where possible, the opportunity for people to own their homes. We welcome this and hope it will be given the urgency it so rightly deserves. Education is key, not just for children and we are fortunate to have the opportunity to further ourselves academically and I am a firm believer that “you are never too old to learn”. St Helenians are known to be resourceful and able to learn and turn their hand to new skills and I would like to see more done to encourage people with specific skills to share and pass on their expertise. All of what I have mentioned is necessary for us to be in a better position to retain our people on island, attract those abroad to return home and to encourage those who may be interested in relocating and possibly investing in St Helena. We are now seven months into our term of council and, understandably with a new form of government and 75% new members on council, it was expected that there would need to be time to get necessary legislation and procedures in place to progress the Ministerial System – however, there needs to be more urgency placed on getting our house in order, so that we can make progress in our work and meet and manage the expectation the general public so rightly expects of us. Madam Deputy Speaker, we need to work together, we need to be honest and open and remember what we stood for in our campaigns. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Member. Honourable Andrew Turner?

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, here we are over six months into our term of office and I’m sad to say it feels like “one step forward and two steps backwards.” Over six months ago people took a step forward, they came out in vast numbers and shouted with one voice “we want change.” People came out and voted for openness, for transparency and for improved accountability from their decision makers. What a shame that these are the areas that have taken such massive steps backwards. It wasn’t long ago that I could sit in an ExCo meeting as a member of the public and I could see if the decision makers were making the calls I elected them to make. It wasn’t long ago that I could see if an ExCo member stood against a poor decision or fought for a better compromise. At the very least they would have look you in the eye if they didn’t. Now however openness and transparency have been pushed aside and ExCo takes place behind closed doors. A very disappointing step backwards. In a system that allows Ministers to shy away from this kind public scrutiny, it is all the more important that Backbenchers be given the tools they need to effectively scrutinise Ministers. After all, scrutiny of Ministers was one of the key parts of this new Ministerial system. What a shame then that Ministers appear to have chosen to work in isolation, ignore Backbenchers and push ahead with a scrutiny system that does not provide what the public were promised. What a disappointing step backwards. We as Backbenches even had to discover over the radio that this very system had been implemented. Before the election, many if not most of us said in our campaigns that more needed to be done to enhance accountability, openness and transparency. How is it that now we have less of these key principles than ever before? Perhaps

it's time for all of us to look inwards and ask ourselves, have we become everything we swore to destroy? Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Member. Honourable Dr. Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, I wish to declare my interest as President of the Helena Chamber of Commerce. Madam Deputy Speaker I take this opportunity to flag some of the issues surrounding our ability to attract back Saints from overseas and to reduce the current exodus of our working age population. Some possible steps are not rocket science and do not have large resource implications. Indeed some may appear small and trivial but this does not mean that their impact is insignificant. In the last Legislative Council, former Councillor Lawson Henry and I, with the support of other Elected Members and Officials, pressed consistently for relevant previous experience of job applicants to be recognised, not just formal qualifications. It is pleasing that this is now the case, together with more robust succession planning. I gather that the long awaited graduate scheme is also in place at last. These are all positive steps forward, but there is still much more required to be done. In March 2018, yes over 4 years ago, I tabled a Motion carried unanimously in this Honourable House, requesting that consideration be given to developing an appropriate scheme to assist St Helenian families living overseas, who wish to return here to work. To date, no such scheme has been developed although I was told that the Labour Market Strategy provided a step in this direction. Surely St Helena Government in collaboration with the Bank of St Helena and possibly other stakeholders, could explore options and at least come up with suggestions that could be market tested. This would demonstrate to the diaspora that St Helena Government is serious about wanting to attract them back home. Another area that needs urgent attention relates to the way in which job opportunities are advertised. I will draw my examples from St Helena Government, although the problem goes wider. For saints working overseas, the SHG website is a key 'go to' place however the web page entitled "find jobs", states underneath the heading of "Available jobs", "Sorry, no positions are currently available." And I verified this myself yesterday. This statement is clearly incorrect as several vacancies are posted elsewhere on the site, but is someone reading that statement likely to browse further? I very much doubt it! The problems do not stop there as if the individual gets as far as the recruitment page and he or she has been residing off-shore, they are informed that they must produce a vetting/DBS certificate from their former place of residence, or and I quote "undergo one of the following checks", but no checks are listed so the interested persons are none the wiser and very likely to be annoyed by the absence of the information needed. Another turn off. For those lucky enough to reach the vacancies page, there are still potential hurdles. The opening words in some advertisements can be off putting, and I quote from one not extremely high level post "Do you have excellent communication skills?" Only a very confident person would be likely to rate themselves at that level and many perfectly competent candidates might read no further. At the base of the same page there is a link given to the CASH site and when one logs on to that, it is revealed that the page is a year out of date and there is also a link to the page to which I alluded - the St Helena public service pages- but these are basically relevant to ex-patriates because they give background information about St Helena. Unless issues such as these identified are addressed, the negative experiences encountered by potential applicants will inevitably cause some to drop out. There is also a pressing need to become proactive in interacting with the diaspora, not merely through sending out survey forms for them to fill in but by establishing much better links. Earlier this year, I drew the attention of this Honourable House to the need to reach out to those who will have to return from Ascension and the Falklands because they

have chronic medical conditions. As far as I am aware this has not happened and the absence of contact from St Helena is very likely to contribute to individuals seeking jobs in UK and further afield. St Helena cannot afford to keep on losing tricks or it is certain to end up with the booby prize. As the Hon Minister said on Friday, there is hope. I strongly believe this too, but only if we take the opportunities that present themselves and make an effort to really strive for improvements. I make no apology for reiterating what the Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs said earlier today, as it is so crucially important. I know I did not have his computer to steal his words. Investment opportunities for Saints are also made unnecessarily cumbersome and off-putting. Processes and procedures must be stream-lined, consistent and clear, with a greater emphasis upon the welcoming of bids and expressions of interest and on smoothing their passage towards implementation, instead of presenting potential local investors with what can appear to be an overwhelming series of obstacles. I could expand considerably on this point, but am aware of the time limit. Therefore I will end by stating that I have great confidence in the potential benefits to St Helena of aiding investment initiatives currently in the pipeline and trust that they will prove successful. I do not expect the Honourable Chief Minister to respond in detail now, as she is looking quite worried over there but the reality is that all the issues that I have raised need to be addressed, together with others, which I accept are more difficult to implement, if we are to achieve the aim of increasing our Saint working age population, which is absolutely essential to achieving economic and social development that will provide a sustainable future for our island. Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam President –

Thank you Dr. Corinda Essex. Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Honourable Ronald Coleman –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. We have just had 2 successful days of LegCo. We've been in office for 7 months and just approved a budget of £48.68m. As mentioned in my budget response, we must spend this money wisely and we must ensure we have proper management in place, so that the money is spent to take the island forward but also to take our people with them, continuing to improve their quality of life, making sure that no one is left behind. The budget is behind us but we need to show that we are a caring government. We talk about finding work development programmes and re-training of the unemployed. Has this been taken seriously and when will we see some actions on taking this forward? Social Housing for families is serious. It is even difficult to find emergency houses for those who need it. The Housing section don't have any answers when finding houses or the Social Care. What is the real progress on this? I believe that work is now moving on the drainage system for Half Tree Hollow and Jamestown. This is long overdue as there is a hold-up on the house building programme in Half Tree Hollow and for those also who have built but cannot occupy their houses, until there is a better drainage system in place. Let's hope this will be sooner rather than later. I would also like to pick up on Minister Scipio's point about farmers not taking up the agricultural support, only 42% on pasture and 60% for water subsidy. Maybe the policies are not farmer friendly or needs reviewing to encourage more farmers to participate. People still complain about the state of the roads but sadly there is no funding for our roads to have an uplift. Many people still have difficulties with paying utility bills. Let's hope the renewable energy that we are embarking on, so that utilities can be more affordable to our people, is the way forward. Also the increase in the cost of living, I hope that we as a Government we can keep an eye on this and can give the support to our people if needed. People want me to say something about the quarantine. Just to say these people of St Helena are looking for we, the Elected Members, especially the Ministers, to keep St Helena and its people safe. Finally

Madam Deputy Speaker, as a Government and as a Council, we need to put our people at the forefront of the decisions we make to improve their quality of life, making sure no one is left behind. And finally thank you Madam Deputy Speaker for presiding over this House for the last few days. A job well done. Thank you.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Ronald Coleman. Honourable Minister for Environment, Natural Resources and Planning?

The Hon. Christine Scipio –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, firstly I would like to congratulate you on the presiding over the House during the last 2 sittings. So well done. Madam Deputy Speaker it has been agreed that St Helena Government should expedite preparation of a project to rectify the inadequacies of the current irrigation system at the ex-ADA fields. To enable an increase in agricultural production, outlined options are being investigated which will formulate preferred options for consultation with the relevant stakeholders. As the Honourable Dr Corinda Essex mentioned earlier today, in respect of introduction of a work scheme for farmers, I thought I would take an opportunity to provide an update on this and Dr Corinda Essex, in her capacity as the President of the Chamber who represent the farmers, she is fully aware of the update, as I've been trying to keep her updated on a regular basis. For the benefit of our listeners, outlined options are also being explored for the re-introduction of a labour subsidy for farmers, to assist them with increasing their outputs. Different scenarios are being investigated where support could be given towards labour for particular tasks relevant to arable and livestock production for a particular period of time; or introducing a three day work scheme in partnership with Career Access St Helena and Income Related Benefits Office or the Portfolio operates a casual work scheme in partnership with the Career Access St Helena. Conversations are being held with Human Resources department to understand the procedures of operating a casual work scheme where an updated policy is still awaited to determine how such a scheme could contribute to a labour subsidy policy assisting agricultural production. The objective being, is to have a group of workers readily available to assist with particular production tasks throughout the year. I can reassure the Honourable Ronald Coleman, who mentioned earlier about the water subsidy and the lack of uptake on funding towards farmers that policies are reviewed on a regular basis. Unfortunately the position for Senior Veterinary Officer is still vacant, after completing the recruitment exercise in late last year, the candidate has now declined the offer. The recruitment process is still ongoing but on a good positive note, the substantive Chief Planning Officer is on island and I look forward to meeting him this week. Whilst we are experiencing delays in receiving airfreight, work is still ongoing with the procurement of day old chicks. We look forward to a successful celebration on St Helena's Day and the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. I would like to convey a huge thank you to the organisers of these events. Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, I beg to move.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Minister. Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development.

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker and I rise in support of this adjournment debate. Madam Deputy Speaker it's been a busy few weeks leading up to the formal LegCo, which we refer to as the budget session. For my portfolio and for myself, the weekend wasn't much different

either Madam Deputy Speaker however I did manage to watch the FA Cup final, so well done to all those Liverpool fans, 2 in the bag, possibly 2 more to go, we'll see. Madam Deputy Speaker it was important for me to deliver a budget that lines with our vision and incorporates the long term goals for St Helena and its people. We are working under a new Ministerial Government with our new Ministerial team. As Ministers we have a duty to deliver our collective vision for the sectors that come under our portfolio. A vision on paper is one thing but delivering that vision in reality is another. I have through my budget speech tried to give a bit more reality for our vision by communicating my Portfolio's plans and priorities over the coming years, laying a roadmap of how we intend to achieve it. I've given some options for new streams of revenue and have already communicated this to this House. In other words Madam Deputy Speaker it is important for me to know if I'm doing a good job, or if I'm doing a bad job, by my Ministerial team, by the Backbenchers and by the people in our community. And I welcome this type of feedback in order to improve and will, not just me but also my Portfolio. If we are to be effective, accountable and transparent Ministers of our Portfolios, we must communicate and justify our decisions to all. Last of all Madam Deputy Speaker I would like to thank all of those who have worked incredibly hard over the last few weeks, preparing for this budget session, especially Dax, Nicholas, Damien, Derek, Chief Secretary and all those that played a part in putting together this piece of vital work; also doing it under pressure and also with many missing key staff and implore them for their hard work, dedication and accomplishment that has been achieved over the recent few weeks. And I would also especially like to thank you Madam Deputy Speaker for the last 2 sessions of formal Legislative Council, for which I would say have run quite smoothly. So in that I would just like to sum up by thanking everyone who has been involved with the budget preparation, including FCDO colleagues in the UK. Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, I beg to move.

Madam President –

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

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise in support of the Adjournment. In respect of the Honourable Rob Midwinter's comments on the Road Traffic Ordinance, I believe I covered this on Friday during questions. I had no part in the previous Government's proposed Road Traffic Bill. I have been going through this Bill to ensure we have an Ordinance that will be fit for St Helena. I will be the one who will be accountable for the delivery of road safety on St Helena so it is proven that I go through the Bill with a fine tooth comb. So just to say it has not taken years to deal with this matter, I have only been a Minister for 6 months. On to another topic, I'm aware that members of the public are concerned about Covid on the Falklands. I would like to inform this House that this Cabinet is closely monitoring what happens on the Falklands in relation to Covid because the Falklands is an island and has a small population similar to that of St Helena but also has a large number of Saints living there. As a government there is much we can learn from the Falklands to enable this government to make informed decisions, as we contemplate on the next steps ahead for St Helena. As I understand Health are also monitoring New Zealand as well, to also see that we can take from what is happening there in relation to Covid, so again we can make informed decisions going forward. As a matter of information, as of Friday 13<sup>th</sup> May last week, we were informed that there are 151 cases in the Falklands community and no hospitalisations. On to another matter, celebrating our people. It is important that we value and celebrate our people on their achievements. It might be a bit late but nonetheless I would like to celebrate our oldest person, who not too long ago turned 103 years old, what a milestone to reach. 100 is a feat and I know of a number of people on St Helena who have reached this milestone but I only know of one person who have reached 103

and that is Elizabeth Peters formerly of Half Tree Hollow, just up the road from me. Well done Mama Lizzie we celebrate you. I beg to move.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Minister. Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Chief Minister –

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Okay I'm trying to keep this as short as I possibly can as well, bearing in mind it's been a long day. I thank all Elected Members who have spoken in the adjournment debate today and I'll try my utmost to go through most of what has been mentioned. There is talk of opening of the island and indeed I thank the Honourable Robert Midwinter for highlighting this. As the Cabinet has said for a number of months now, obviously we all understand that we need to make St Helena attractive to people to live, work and do business and in doing so we need to consider our business environment in respect of our quarantine. We have taken the first steps and as Minister Ellick has just mentioned, we are also mindful how islands such as the Falklands is dealing with their outbreak in the community at this time and we can learn a lot from it. As I've reassured the community and Elected Members before, we will take these decisions when we've got information on the table and the confidence that St Helena Government and the wider community can indeed cope with what we need to do to be able to open our island again, so that we can make tourism our number one revenue generator again. There was talk about the Legislative programme, I gave an answer to the Honourable Gillian Brooks earlier today with regards to this. We're meeting this week, so I've been told to look at our strategy and policy priorities and then the Legislative programme is being worked upon and we can work on that together to ensure that we've got the Legislative programme completed. Minister Brooks has given a very good overview I think on what the legislation will be as in priorities in respect of the budget speech. I think that's given a very good idea of the things we see as priority. Under the vision, if we go back to what the vision said, that will give you clarity as well, as to the details of what it is that we see as priority going forward. Minister Ellick also mentioned Immigration and indeed the Road Traffic Ordinance. For my own Portfolio we will be working on the Education Ordinance, which is a huge piece of work and hopefully that will encompass Career Access and we talked about unemployment through this and hopefully through all the different schemes, be it student finance, graduate scheme and the service provider for Career Access, this will hopefully give the right platform to start with. There was mention again of Executive Council, the lack of openness and transparency, I think I just need to remind the listening public and Elected Members in the room that we are bound by section 36 of the Constitution, which requires collective responsibility. So in Executive Council we will only be able to make our collective responsibility known as soon as decisions are taken within ExCo. We proactively move to the radio stations as quickly as we possibly can and we've given updates via the media, this has happened only last week when a development application was done and Minister Scipio went on to the radio and she's had some very good feedback from that and people really appreciated that so we'll continue to do those things. We've had radio discussions, we gave once a month but as I said with ExCo or Governor in Council, we go as soon as we possibly can, we have regular dialogue with constituents and also we are trying to do radio programmes as well to promote our portfolio directorates. So with that said I would like to say that the first one will be going live tomorrow, so it's thanks to Minister Ellick of Safety, Security and Home Affairs. His Portfolio will be the first one showcasing tomorrow afternoon on SAMS radio 1 and that will be followed hopefully weekly by all the other portfolios on rotation. So that's hopefully something that will get information out there on what the different portfolios are doing. I think Honourable Gillian Brooks you mentioned about priorities being Health, Social Care,

Education, Housing etc. Again I think that was highlighted in the budget speech and in our vision so it's good to know that we're on the same page going forward. I couldn't agree more, we need to ensure the frameworks do come into play very soon so we can go on with our business through Standing Orders, Codes of Conduct, Ministerial Code and indeed the Select Committee Order. And again I know that the Attorney General has agreed to have another session with us, it's almost a repeat session about the St Helena Legislative and Executive process and that's coming up a little later this month and hopefully there we can talk about the Select Committee Order to ensure that we iron out any areas of discontent. But I have to say, until we test it and try it, and as I've said publicly and I say here again today, then we can look at reviewing it if it is definitely necessary to do so. I also recognise Dr Corinda Essex. She talks about the need to value our people and the migration outwards and having to encourage returning Saints and talking about what more we could do to ensure our communication when talking about what's available here on St Helena. I think we all stand and say that we would like to ensure that we have improved communications and we will continue to do that. I would like to refer back to my response to the budget speech when I said it is poignant for me to hear that, to quote Minister Brooks when he said St Helena will never be home for everybody, this government's ambition is to make it home again for those who are out in the diaspora who yearn to return and I did say, and I'd like to add those who would wish to remain. So I would support you Dr Essex in what you've said in regards to that. I would also like to acknowledge what Honourable Ronald Coleman said with regards to monitoring the spend of the budget. I think we will all stand and want to be a responsible government and want to be held accountable, as we spend the precious resource we've approved here today. We talked about renewable energy and the need to try and, because of cost of living and what we need to do to try and move forward, so everybody can afford to live here on St Helena. And I do think the key to unlock this is our blue and green agenda, through our renewable energy and as Minister Scipio knows, obviously that's one of our priorities. So we look forward to working, as we go forward together to make sure that we address this. I'd like to end on a positive note as well. We spoke about Ukraine here again today. I think Honourable Robert Midwinter mentioned it and I was tasked to do a press release and haven't had time to do that, so I've used this platform now to say thank you to all Elected Members in the room here today for the support for the Quiz night held up Rosie's a few weeks ago and it was obviously led by Minister Scipio, so thank you for that initiative. And I'm pleased to let the public know that we raised for that event £731.95. We had a raffle that attracted £183, entry of £172 for the teams, donations of over £32, we had a successful auction and the ribbons. And all of that has been put into the account and from what I've learnt from Minister Scipio has now been sent away to Ukraine, so I'd like to thank everybody who participated in the Quiz night but also for everybody for donating very generously to it. I think we've waited long enough for our budget and now that we've got our budget, all I would like to say is I look forward to working with everybody to ensure that everything we set out to say we would like to achieve from this budget, that we can do it. And again I would like to thank Her Majesty's Government, all Portfolio Directors and their staff and indeed the Financial Secretary and his team and the Chief Secretary and off course my Ministers, as we move forward and the wider Elected Members to ensure we get the best of what we would like to achieve for 2022/23. Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, I beg to move.

Madam President –

Thank you Honourable Chief Minister. Thank you very much indeed. Honourable Members that concludes our business for this session and I thank you all for your contributions and participation. Thank you also for your kind compliments towards my running of the business

however I'd like to thank our Clerk of Councils as well, as it would not be without her that the business would run smoothly, so thank you Connie.  
I now put the question that this House do adjourn sine die.

Question put and agreed to.

**Council is adjourned sine die.**

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**Honourable Speaker**

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**Date**