



**St Helena  
Government**

**ST HELENA GOVERNMENT**

**GOVERNMENT OF ST HELENA  
PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
THURSDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2022  
FIRST SITTING OF THE SEVENTH MEETING**

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

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**THE PRESIDENT**

The Honourable Cyril Gunnell

**EX-OFFICIO MEMBER**

The Honourable Acting Attorney General, Ms Aine Hurley

**ELECTED MEMBERS**

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

The Honourable Dr Corinda Sebastiana Stuart Essex - Overseas

**CLERK OF COUNCILS**

Mrs Connie Johnson

## **PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2022

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

(The Honourable Speaker in the Chair)

### **ORDER OF THE DAY**

**1. FORMAL ENTRY OF THE PRESIDENT**

**2. PRAYERS**  
(Father Ernest)

**3. ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT**

Good morning Honourable Members, Ladies and Gentlemen and all those listening to this live broadcast from the Council Chamber at the Castle, Jamestown. Welcome to the First Sitting of the Seventh Meeting of St Helena Legislative Council. Honourable Members, Tuesday this week was hailed International Day for the Remembrance of Slavery and its Abolition. It was fitting that a ceremony marking the occasion was held ‘under the trees’ outside the Canister, Jamestown. Leading up to this important day in St Helena’s calendar of occurrences, over the last weekend there was a programme of well-attended events in Rupert’s Valley associated with reburying the remains of the exhumed Liberated Africans at the Liberated African Cemetery. I know that Honourable Members will want to speak about this so my contribution will be very short. Suffice to say all of the events were dignified, respectful and for some, quite emotional. I take this opportunity to say thank you to all those who contributed in any way both recently and since 2008 to this successful outcome. The business scheduled for this meeting comprises of 16 Sessional papers, 13 questions to be answered orally, 3 motions for debate and after that the traditional adjournment debate. The order paper includes also 3 questions for written response. I extend grateful thanks to Fr Ernest for prayers, SAMS for broadcasting these proceedings live and Merlin George for delivering the Mace. Patrick Young stood in for Merlin at the last formal meeting of LegCo; our grateful thanks are extended also to Patrick. Our Deputy Speaker, Hon Cathy Hopkins is not physically present at this meeting. I am assured however she is listening to the proceedings from her home and in the circumstances she finds herself currently in I respect her reasons for not being here today. One member of our team is off island. The Hon Dr Corinda Essex is representing St Helena at the 65<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia from 20<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> August and the CPA Trade

Workshop in London in September. During Dr Essex's time overseas she will also be participating in intensive training undertaken by St Helena Public Accounts Committee Members which will take place in London and Cardiff. The Honourable Karl Thrower and the Honourable Gillian Brooks are also Members of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and they will be leaving on 11<sup>th</sup> September along with the PAC Chair Mark Yon and Clerk to the PAC Anita Legg to also participate in the intensive training. All being well, all of the aforementioned will return to St Helena on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2022. Honourable Members, there is a significant amount of business to be dealt with today and so we need to press on. I therefore call on the Clerk to announce the first item, please.

#### 4. PAPERS

##### **Unconfirmed Sessional Papers.**

The Speaker –

Honourable Members, you will Oh, Honourable Minister Scipio, sorry, I didn't see your light.

The Hon. Christine Scipio –

Thank you, Mr Speaker; may I rise on a point of information?

The Speaker –

Yes, of course.

The Hon. Christine Scipio –

Mr Speaker, sorry, my microphone doesn't seem to be working, hopefully the listeners can hear me because the light is on.

Mr Speaker, I would just like to thank you for allowing me to rise on a point of information. In your opening remarks, Mr Speaker, you mentioned the Deputy Speaker and the name of the Deputy Speaker that you stated was Mrs Cathy Hopkins, I'd like to put on the record that the name of our Deputy Speaker is Mrs Cathy Cranfield. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much for noticing that, Honourable Minister and I did say that, didn't I, but I had it written down as Catherine Cranfield, she is listening at home, I do apologise to her for that. Thank you very much. Shows you are here with us.

Honourable Members, you will be aware that at the Legislative Council meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021, five Sessional Papers relating to the Proceedings of the Legislative Council were laid on the table, but they were not confirmed or signed. These Papers are – SP 49/2021, Proceedings of the Legislative Council, Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021, First Sitting of the Twenty-first Meeting. SP 50/2021, Proceedings of the Legislative Council, Friday, 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021, First Sitting of the Twenty-second Meeting. SP 51/2021, Proceedings of the Legislative Council, Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> May 2021, First Sitting of the Twenty-third Meeting. SP 52/2021, Proceedings of the Legislative Council, Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021, First Sitting of the Twenty-fourth Meeting and SP 53/2021, Proceedings of the Legislative Council, Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021, First Sitting of the Twenty-fifth Meeting.

Following on from the December meeting, advice was received from the former Attorney General and this has also been discussed in various meetings with all Members whereby it was

raised that only three of the former councillors returned following the General Election and in addition to this, it was felt that the transcripts were incomplete, I can confirm that the transcripts have now been rectified.

Honourable Members you will see from the Order Paper today that updated and complete transcripts are now being laid under the different Sessional Paper numbers. Following the advice received from the Acting Attorney General, I will begin by asking for a vote pursuant to the relevant Standing Orders on the Unconfirmed Sessional Papers from the First Sitting of the Second Meeting on the 10 December 2021.

Honourable Members, in accordance with Standing Order 2, section 3(a) I put the question that the following draft records be confirmed -

- SP 49/2021 - Proceedings of the Legislative Council - Friday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021 - First Sitting of the Twenty-first Meeting
- SP 50/2021 - Proceedings of the Legislative Council - Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021 - First Sitting of the Twenty-second Meeting
- SP 51/2021 - Proceedings of the Legislative Council - Friday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2021 - First Sitting of the Twenty-third Meeting
- SP 52/2021 - Proceedings of the Legislative Council - Friday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021 - First Sitting of the Twenty-fourth Meeting and
- SP 53/2021 - Proceedings of the Legislative Council - Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021 - First Sitting of the Twenty-fifth Meeting.

Those in favour say “Aye” and those of a contrary opinion “No”. The “Noes” have it.

(If the Noes have it the sessional papers remain unconfirmed)

Honourable Members for the record, and so as to avoid confusion, it will be noted on the face of each of the Sessional Papers in question that they are unconfirmed. They will not be published because, following a vote, they were not confirmed.

Thank you, Honourable Members. Next item of business, please.

***SP 21/2022 The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development***

The Speaker -

The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper No. 21/2022 Supplementary Appropriation (2022/23) Bill, 2022.

**Ordered to lie on the table.**

***SP 22/2022 The Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs***

The Speaker -

The Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs?

The Hon Jeffrey Ellick -

Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper No. 22/2022. The Health and Safety (Amendment) Bill, 2022.

**Ordered to lie on the table.**

***SP 23/2022 The Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs***

The Speaker -

The Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs?

The Hon Jeffrey Ellick -

Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper No. 23/2022, The Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2022.

**Ordered to lie on the table.**

***SP 24/2022 The Honourable Gillian Brooks***

The Speaker -

The Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper No. SP 24.

The Speaker –

Excuse me. SP 24/2022 – Report to Legislative Council on the formal sessions of the Public Accounts Committee held on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022 – Final. Honourable Member?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper No. 24/2022 entitled Public Accounts Committee – Report to Legislative Council on the Formal Sessions of the Public Accounts Committee held on 27 April 2022 – (Final). And with your permission I will make a short statement.

The Speaker –

Please go ahead.

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Mr Speaker, as a Member of the Public Accounts Committee, I am pleased to present Sessional Paper 24/2022 which covers the PAC scrutiny of the audited financial statements of the Currency Fund of 2019/2020. This includes issues raised by PAC and the explanations and assurances received from SHG Officers. Earlier in June, Sessional Paper 20/2022 was also laid covering the first segment of the PAC formal session held on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022. This report is now the culmination of that session. This report contains three recommendations for

Government to respond to and in due course it is expected the Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development will convey their response to Legislative Council in accordance with section 69(9) of the Constitution.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member.

**Ordered to lie on the table.**

*SP 25/2022 The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development*

The Speaker -

The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper No 25/2022 entitled St Helena Fisheries Corporation - Administrator's Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2020.

**Ordered to lie on the table.**

*SP 26/2022 The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development*

The Speaker -

The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper No 26/2022 entitled St Helena Fisheries Corporation - Administrator's Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021.

**Ordered to lie on the table.**

*SP 27/2022 The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development*

The Speaker -

The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development?

The Hon Mark Brooks -

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper No 27/2022 entitled Audit St Helena - Performance Audit: Enterprise St Helena – July 2022

**Ordered to lie on the table.**

***SP 28/2022 The Honourable Chief Minister***

The Speaker -

The Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas -

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper No 28/2022, Government of St Helena - Proceedings of the Legislative Council - Friday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021 - First Sitting of the Twenty-first Meeting

**Ordered to lie on the table.**

The Speaker

Honourable Members, in accordance with Standing Order 2, section 3(a) I put the question that draft record of the Proceedings of the Legislative Council held on Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021 - be confirmed.

Question put and agreed to.

***SP 29/2022 The Honourable Chief Minister***

The Speaker -

The Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas -

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 29/2022 Government of St Helena - Proceedings of the Legislative Council - Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021 - First Sitting of the Twenty-second Meeting.

**Ordered to lie on the table.**

The Speaker

Honourable Members, in accordance with Standing Order 2, section 3(a) I put the question that draft record of the Proceedings of the Legislative Council held on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021 be confirmed.

Question put and agreed to.

***SP 30/2022 The Honourable Chief Minister***

The Speaker -

The Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas -

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 30/2022, Government of St Helena - Proceedings of the Legislative Council - Friday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2021 - First Sitting of the Twenty-third Meeting



**Ordered to lie on the table.**

The Speaker -

Honourable Members, in accordance with Standing Order 2, section 3(a) I put the question that draft record of the Proceedings of the Legislative Council held on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2021 - be confirmed.

Question put and agreed to.

***SP 31/2022 The Honourable Chief Minister***

The Speaker -

The Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 31/2022, Government of St Helena - Proceedings of the Legislative Council - Friday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021 - First Sitting of the Twenty-fourth Meeting.

**Ordered to lie on the table.**

The Speaker –

Honourable Members, in accordance with Standing Order 2, section 3(a) I put the question that draft record of the Proceedings of the Legislative Council held on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021 - be confirmed.

Question put and agreed to.

***SP 32/2022 The Honourable Chief Minister***

The Speaker -

The Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas -

Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 32/2022 Government of St Helena - Proceedings of the Legislative Council - Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021 - First Sitting of the Twenty-fifth Meeting.

**Ordered to lie on the table.**

The Speaker –

Honourable Members, in accordance with Standing Order 2, section 3(a) I put the question that draft record of the Proceedings of the Legislative Council held on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021 - be confirmed.

Question put and agreed to.

***SP 33/2022 The Honourable Chief Minister***

The Speaker -  
The Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon Julie Thomas -

Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 33/2022 - Government of St Helena - Proceedings of the Legislative Council – Friday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2021 - First Sitting of the Twenty-sixth Meeting.

**Ordered to lie on the table.**

The Speaker –

Honourable Members, in accordance with Standing Order 2, section 3(a) I put the question that draft record of the Proceedings of the Legislative Council held on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2021 - be confirmed.

Question put and agreed to.

***SP 34/2022 The Honourable Chief Minister***

The Speaker -  
The Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon Julie Thomas –

Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 34/2022 - Government of St Helena - Proceedings of the Legislative Council – Monday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021 – Second Sitting of the Twenty-sixth Meeting.

**Ordered to lie on the table.**

The Speaker –

Honourable Members, in accordance with Standing Order 2, section 3(a) I put the question that the draft record of the Proceedings of the Legislative Council held on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021 - be confirmed.

Question put and agreed to.

***SP 35/2022 The Honourable Chief Minister***

The Speaker -  
The Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 35/2022 Government of St Helena - Proceedings of the Legislative Council - Friday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2021 - First Sitting of the Twenty-seventh Meeting

**Ordered to lie on the table.**

The Speaker –

Honourable Members, in accordance with Standing Order 2, section 3(a) I put the question that draft record of the Proceedings of the Legislative Council held on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2021 - be confirmed.

Question put and agreed to.

***SP 36/2022 The Honourable Chief Minister***

The Speaker -

The Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon Julie Thomas –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I present the final Sessional Paper 36/2022 - Government of St Helena - Proceedings of the Legislative Council – Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2021 - Second Sitting of the Twenty-seventh Meeting.

**Ordered to lie on the table.**

The Speaker –

Honourable Members, in accordance with Standing Order 2, section 3(a) I put the question that draft record of the Proceedings of the Legislative Council held on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2021 - be confirmed.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Next item of business, please?

**5.**

## **QUESTIONS**

***Question No. 1 – The Hon Rosemary Bargo to ask the Hon Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development***

The Speaker –

The Honourable Rosemary Bargo?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo -

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development say what plans SHG has for outsourcing their Tourism entity to private sector businesses?

The Speaker -

The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

Thank you, Mr Speaker and I would like to thank the Honourable Member for her question. Mr Speaker, before I talk about our future plans, I will give a brief summary on what has happened so far.

The Speaker –

Thank you.

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

So, in October 2020, when considering options for the future of Enterprise St Helena (ESH), Executive Council chose to bring key functions in-house and therefore authorised the creation of SHG's Sustainable Development team. This, however, did not include tourism functions. This only occurred after an attempt was made to contract the visitor information services out to the private sector. Information services, events organisation, and the St Helena Tourism website were a significant part of the contract that was put out to tender. It was envisaged that international PR and the tourism strategy would remain within SHG and be managed by the Marketing Manager within the Sustainable Development team. The divested service was expected to work closely with SHG, in particular the Marketing Manager, but also the Head of Sustainable Development, the Export, Trade & Investment Manager, and the Statistics Office. There was a sole, but unsuccessful, tender bid for the proposed divestment. As a result of the failed tender exercise, SHG's Head of Visitor Information Services role was created to ensure continuity and deliver on a wide range of tourism functions through the Tourist Office. Because of COVID and the impact of travel restrictions on visitors this significantly reduced visitor revenues, most noticeably from tourists, down approximately 80% on 2019's figures. Additionally, there has been significant outward-migration of skilled and experienced people across the tourism and hospitality sectors. As the island starts to open up, the loss of these key figures has greatly reduced the capacity to deliver quality tourism and hospitality services, which will impact the tourism recovery. So, Mr Speaker, that is where we are today. Now looking at our plans going forward, but we must bear in mind some likely scenarios and those scenarios we estimate to be that Pure tourist arrivals will not recover significantly in this calendar year 2022, due to entry restrictions for most part of this year with quarantine. Recovery in 2023 is hoped to be 70% of the pre-Covid tourist levels; and in 2024, we're estimating to see a growth of 10% over the 2019 figures, and it's just a hope at the moment, Mr Speaker, as no-one knows what the future holds, but this is our best estimates using the people who has experience in the tourism sector. So, for visiting friends and relatives, or Saint-related travel, as we refer to it, 60% of pre-pandemic levels is expected for the latter part of 2022, so that is as we move into our summer season, our festival season and also as the flight frequencies increase and restrictions are lifted, this will also obviously help towards bringing in more growth. So, it is hoped that in 2023, we would see a 10% increase and 2024, we're hoping to see a 20% increase over pre-pandemic levels, but this is also associated with the assumption that the airbridge connections via Ascension to Brize Norton and the Falkland Islands is reinstated, but, again, Mr Speaker, this is external factors and beyond our control. Business travel was the other form of travel and this basically was non-existent in 2022, with recovery to 70% and 90% of pre-pandemic levels hoped for in 2023 and 2024. So, with the lifting of COVID-restrictions significant barriers to tourism recovery have been removed, providing a timeline for tourism recovery. The strategic objective for recovering from COVID is simple: *To see a return to arrivals numbers experienced in 2019/20 for season 2024/25, with appropriate tourism and hospitality services in place to meet the demands.* There will be a number of actions required to get us to where we want to be. These will include: Improving the St Helena visitor experience and increasing average spend, developing and

diversifying our tourism product Strengthening and expanding our tourism services Increasing accommodation capacity, increasing destination awareness through targeted marketing campaigns, Re-engaging and developing key markets, including increasing the number of tour operators selling St Helena, Developing the skills of those that work in the tourism and hospitality sectors in order to improve the St Helena experience and increase customer satisfaction, Establishing a St Helena Tourist Board to represent the sector and provide oversight to visitor information services and tourism functions, And finally, Mr Speaker, to develop ‘St Helena Tourism’ as an attractive model for divestment in to the private sector once the tourism and hospitality sectors have recovered and seen a small growth, Given the effects of the pandemic, we believe that these actions are best delivered in-house by a dedicated team in the medium term. Delivery is the responsibility of the Head of Visitor Information Services and the Marketing Manager. All functions are overseen by the Head of Sustainable Development. We are monitoring targets that demonstrate recovery. When the sector is recovered, a comprehensive review of all tourism functions will take place (but this will not likely to happen until around the third quarter of 2024). So, a quick summary, Mr Speaker. We did have and we will have plans to outsource the tourism functions, I just feel that the timing needs to be right. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Rosemary Bargo, do you have questions?

The Honourable Rosemary Bargo –

Thank you, Honourable Minister for that detailed response, so we look forward in the future of your plans on how you can go about out-sourcing, this even though I know you’re looking at 2023/24, but hopefully will come up with a plan way before then, ensuring it’s fit for purpose and reachable. Thank you.

The Speaker –

The Hon. Mark Brooks

The Hon. Mark Brooks, Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development -

Thank you, Mr Speaker, no I’d just like to say thank you to the Honourable Member and, yes, give her assurance that we will start the work well in advance, but we’ll have to monitor how the recovery plans are going as well. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Any other Members wish to speak on that? No-one? Can we move on then?

***Question No. 2 – The Honourable Ronald Coleman to ask the Honourable Minister for Environment, Natural Resources and Planning***

The Speaker -

The Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Environment, Natural Resources and Planning tell this House what type of assistance is the St Helena Government providing for farmers farming private lands compared to farmers using the lands from the Crown Estates?

The Speaker –

If you could just re-read please and read it correctly, you should have said farmers farming, you said farmers using. Oh, I see, it's further along, sorry, you're correct in that. Honourable Minister for Environment, Natural Resources and Planning?

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

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, there are no services provided to farmers who are farming on private lands compared to a farmer using the lands managed by Environment and Natural Resources Portfolio, as all services are provided to all producers apart from when funding allows, labour support is provided to livestock producers on Environment and Natural Resources Portfolio managed land for the maintenance of invasive plants and is applied at a rate of £130 /acre cleared. Mr Speaker, currently there is a short programme of support for the years 2022 and 2023 for the upgrading of arable and animal production assets on Environment and Natural Resources Planning managed land through funding support under the EDIP Programme that my Honourable Member is fully aware of. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member. The Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Honourable Ronald Coleman –

Just to thank the Minister for her reply.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Any further questions? No? We move on then.

***Question No. 3 – The Honourable Gillian Brooks to ask the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development.***

The Speaker –

The Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development tell this Council what preparations are being made for this year's Financial Aid Mission and whether this will be held in St Helena now that quarantine restrictions have been removed?

The Speaker –

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

The Hon. Mark Brooks, Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development -

Thank you, Mr Speaker and I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for her question. Mr Speaker, planning has already commenced for this year's Financial Aid Mission. FCDO colleagues are in regular contact with SHG officials throughout the year particularly in areas such as Education, Health and Social Care and Finance to understand and discuss key sector issues, challenges and updates. These meetings provide invaluable background information and discussions ahead of FAM and enables a more efficient process and sharing of information. However, much of the information required for FAM is derived through the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) process, which is the process used by SHG to prioritise and allocate resources to achieve the objectives and outcomes outlined in the SHG Strategy. Key

documents that will be developed through this process will include the Macro-economic forecast and a revenue plan; Portfolio Strategies and Delivery Plans based on SHG Strategy; the three-year draft SHG Budget that deliver the SHG Strategy; Performance Reports; an update on key risk and budget pressures; and an update on key work streams and reform programmes. So, I hope that explains there is a lot of work going on throughout the year, continuously with discussions backwards and forwards with our friends, our colleagues in FCDO and SHG Officials. So, at this time, Mr Speaker, it is planned that the FAM will take place virtually, that is through video link, between FCDO officials, SHG Ministers and SHG Officials in December with initiate discussions around the strategy, the budget and key budget pressures and risks. This will also be followed up in January 2023, next year, by a visit from the FCDO FAM team, so, yes, they will be making an appearance here on island to answer your question in short. The FCDO FAM team when they arrive will have face-to-face meetings I think can take place and FCDO Officials are able to see first-hand the work being done by SHG and their partners and the challenges the Island will face or are facing. So, thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Minister. Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Honourable Gillian Brooks -

Nothing further, Mr Speaker, but thank you to the Minister for his response.

The Speaker -

Thank you. Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman -

Thank you, Mr Speaker. The Minister did mention sharing of information, does this mean that all elected members will be involved during the process?

The Speaker -

Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks -

I don't understand the question.

The Speaker -

Honourable Ronald Coleman asked you who would the information be shared with.

The Speaker -

Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas (Chief Minister) -

Thank you, Mr Speaker. As Chief Minister, I will answer on behalf of my Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development. As we did last year, hopefully this year we'll be more prepared, we will have had a year experience behind us and, yes, we will be sharing all the documentation with the wider Council.

The Hon. Ronald Coleman -

I thank the Chief Minister for that.

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

The Speaker -

The Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Honourable Robert Midwinter -

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, will the Honourable Chief Minister tell this Council, when will the Draft Policy and Legislative Programme be presented to this House?

The Speaker -

Thank you. Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas (Chief Minister) -

Thank you, Mr Speaker and I thank the Honourable Member for his question. The Policy and Legislative Programme falls out of the vision and priorities for this Government. Since publishing our vision earlier this year in March, Members have been working with Portfolio Directors to refine and prioritise the strategic objectives that will deliver this Government's priorities. As a result of this work the SHG Strategy was published in May of this year. This Strategy sets out our Government's priorities for this financial year and the next three years. It includes our overall strategic framework and approach, and provides an overview of how we will focus on developments that will capitalise on the airport investment, prepare our people for the opportunities that will come with improved internet connectivity, and put in place policies which will make life better for those who live and work on the Island. The Strategy which has been shared with all Members and is published on our website, includes our Prioritised Policy Agenda which will form the basis of our Legislative Programme over the next three years. This Policy Agenda has since been further refined and a Rolling Policy and Legislative Programme has now been finalised and will be shared with all Members within the coming week. I will be very honest and say here that it has been completed, it's just because of the busy timetable we've had over the last week or so that I haven't actually had time to actually share that with the wider Council. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you, Mr Speaker and I'd just like to, again, thank the Chief Minister for her response, it's very pleasing to hear that this is finally about to be published. Thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you. Next item of business, please?

***Question No. 5 – The Honourable Rosemary Bargo to ask Honourable Minister for Environment, Natural Resources and Planning.***

The Speaker -

The Honourable Rosemary Bargo?

The Honourable Rosemary Bargo -

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Environment, Natural Resources and Planning inform this House what has been achieved with regards to putting in place a



strategy that supports an increase in local produce in order to reduce the Islands reliance on imports?

The Speaker -

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

The Hon. Christine Scipio (Minister for Environment, Natural Resources and Planning)-

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, an internal review was completed last year of the implementation of the provisions and actions of the outgoing National Agricultural Policy. It would appear, Mr Speaker, that this Policy was over ambitious and a series of key issues remains. A Working Group is now in the process of being formed to include key stakeholders, to begin discussions on a new Strategy that can be adopted before the end of this financial year. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member. Any questions? Honourable Rosemary Bargo?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo

No. Thank you, Minister, it's good to see that this Working Group is being formed to go ahead. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Any further questions? No?

***Question No. 6 – The Honourable Ronald Coleman to ask the Honourable Chief Minister.***

The Speaker -

The Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Honourable Ronald Coleman -

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the Honourable Chief Minister tell this Council, since the beginning of the Financial Year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 up until the end of July 2022 how much money has the St Helena Government spent on advertising in the three local papers?

The Speaker -

Thank you. Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas (Chief Minister) -

Thank you, Mr Speaker and I thank the Honourable Member for his question. I can advise that the sum of £10,601.50 has been expended on advertising in **two** local newspapers for the period April - July 2022. The third paper 'The Saint' was launched at the end of May 2022 and started to charge for advertising during the week commencing 6 June 2022. SHG did not immediately use the Saint for its advertising so no payments were made in June/July 2022. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Just to thank the Chief Minister for her reply.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Honourable Andrew Turner?

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Would the Honourable Chief Minister be able to tell this Council if there's a policy in place for selecting where SHG adverts are placed?

The Speaker –

Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

I thank the Honourable Andrew Turner for the supplementary question. Whilst we do not currently have an 'SHG Advertising Policy' we will be developing one when the new Head of Communications takes up their role in September, so next month. This will provide guidelines for Portfolios to help determine where to advertise given the ongoing budgetary constraints. In this regard, we have already begun to rationalize job vacancy advertisements whereby a number of vacancies are advertised on one page rather than taking out a full or half page advertisement. Thank you.

The Speaker -

The Honourable Ronald Coleman? No? The Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Mr Speaker, similarly to my colleague, Honourable Andrew Turner, but can the Chief Minister say is it really necessary for SHG to be advertising via even two of the three available print media bearing in mind the current budgetary situation?

The Speaker –

Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

I thank the Honourable Robert Midwinter for his question. I think this is all part of the process now, when formulating the advertising policy we can look at that, as you rightly said, considering the budgetary constraints that we have, so that will be taken into consideration.

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Mr Speaker, just to thank the Chief Minister for that response.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Next question, please?

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

The Speaker -

The Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Honourable Gillian Brooks -

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development tell this Council what progress has been made towards the

development of a new prison for the Island, and when is it anticipated that this work will be completed?

The Speaker –

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

The Hon. Mark Brooks (Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development) -

Thank you, Mr Speaker and I would like to thank the Honourable Member for her question. Again, Mr Speaker, I'll just give a brief description of the background, how we got to this point today. So, a new site for a new purpose-built prison was agreed by Executive Council in May 2018, in the Bottom Woods area. Full Development Permission was granted for the prison by the Governor in Council, acting as the Planning Authority, on 12 March 2020 and this permission will lapse in March 2025. The prison will be a single story building consisting of three residential units, 2 male and 1 female and separate accommodation for young offenders. The prison will have an operational capacity of 54 prisoners. The construction of the prison will be funded under the Economic Development Investment Programme (EDIP). It is a priority in terms of the socio-economic development part of EDIP, helping SHG to meet their legal and human rights obligations. The strategic case and economic case has been prepared and approved by the EDIP High Level Panel. Political approval of the economic case will be sought shortly. Due to capacity constraints it is anticipated that a consultancy service will be used to develop the approved concept of the prison design into a detailed design and be responsible for construction supervision of the prison. Terms of Reference for this service are currently being finalised with a view of appointing a consultancy firm later this year. It is anticipated that construction will commence before development permission lapses and that is in 2025. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much, Honourable Member. Any questions? Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks -

The Minister said the construction will commence before 2025?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Yes.

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

So, no sort of anticipated completion date, or apologise if I missed that?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

No, not at this time, we don't have an estimated completion date. Obviously, like I said, we need to employ a consultant firm that specialise in building these prisons, because of all the requirements a modern prison would need, we need to have those kind of detailed plans before we can put a timeline to completion of construction. Thank you, Sir.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Honourable Karl Thrower?

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Would the Minister just clarify one point for me? Originally in the design for the Prison was a water treatment plant that would also not only service the Prison,

but would allow us to develop the CDA for the Bottom Woods development area, is it still the case that that will be part of this costing that the EDIP is paying for?

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Thank you, Mr Speaker and I'd like to thank my Honourable Friend for his question. However, Mr Speaker, at this time I don't have those details to hand, but I can find out for him at a later date and provide my Honourable Friend with that answer.

The Speaker –

You said you can find out by a later date?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

If I can find out at a later date, Sir, and I can provide my Honourable Friend with that answer.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, the Honourable Minister Brooks mentioned that it is intended to commence before the completion or the lapse of the planning approval, however, can he confirm, because he's unable to clarify when it will be complete, that the EDIP funding will still be available when this project takes place?

The Speaker –

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

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Thank you, Mr Speaker and I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for his question. So, as I try to give some sort of background and where we are today, what is happening now is those discussions are taking place for the second phase of the EDIP programme, but what I will say is that the discussions that has taken place is looking promising for the finance to be committed for the Prison in the second phase of the programme. Thank you, Sir.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Any further questions on that? No?

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

The Speaker -

The Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

Mr Speaker, will the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care tell this Council, whether his Portfolio has been monitoring the Covid situation in St Helena since the removal of quarantine restrictions, and if he will make a statement on the matter?

The Speaker –

Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care?

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

Thank you, Mr Speaker and thank the Honourable Member for his question. The Health and Social Care Portfolio, as part of the overall Corona response, are undertaking daily monitoring of staff, staffing resources, testing, illness and service delivery by means of a daily briefing and completed data collation. This information will enable us to implement contingency plans in relation to the delivery of service, but also inform the wider community in relation to the prevalence of community spread. It is important that we acknowledge that whilst the service, and, indeed, wider Government and business community has put in place a number of plans to mitigate a significant rise in infection rates at a given time, it is impossible to predict or control all of the outcomes. As with any given event of this complexity, we must be ready to adjust our plans and in some cases simply respond to any changes predicted or otherwise. All of the data will be shared on a daily basis with the Chief Sec, Chief Minister and the Minister for Health and Social Care if there are any changes as well as a weekly update to the community at this stage. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Minister. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I wish to thank my Honourable Colleague for that response. Can he confirm at this point in time how many cases we have had in terms of community spread?

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Minister for Health and Social Care?

The Hon. Martin Henry –

Thank you for your follow-up question, supplementary question. I can confirm up to yesterday we have eleven cases.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you, Mr Speaker and is he confident that we have sufficient resources in place to cope with further community spread?

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Martin Henry –

I am confident at this current time that we have sufficient resources in place to continue the current plans that we have.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I just wish to thank my Honourable Friend, the Honourable Martin Henry.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Any further supplementary questions? No? Yes, Honourable Karl Thrower?

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Would the Honourable Minister be able to give us an update on the vaccination percentages currently on island?

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Martin Henry –

I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for his supplementary question and I just got an update. So, we currently have 99% for first and second doses and currently we stand at 89% for the first booster.

The Speaker

Thank you. The Honourable Karl Thrower?

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

I'd just like to thank my Honourable Friend for that extremely good news. Just out of interest, would 99% be one of the highest figures in the world?

The Speaker –

Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Martin Henry

I can indeed confirm from my latest research that it is.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much.

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

I'd just like to say that's great news, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Great news, thank you very much. Any further supplementary questions? No, we move on then.

***Question No. 9 – The Honourable Rosemary Bargo to ask the Honourable Chief Minister.***

The Speaker -

The Honourable Rosemary Bargo?

The Honourable Rosemary Bargo -

Will the Honourable Chief Minister say what plans SHG has for immediate and long-term review of the Public Transport System taking into account potential additional demand for seats due to ongoing fuel increases?

The Speaker -

Thank you. Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas (Chief Minister) –

Thank you, Mr Speaker and thank you to the Honourable Member for her question and I assume that the Public Transport System that she is referring to is the SHG contracted and subsidised Public Transport system.

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo –

Correct.

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

First of all, Mr Speaker, I would like to give a little background as to the framework of the timetables for the contracted Public Transport system, beginning to take a little bit of advice and idea from Minister Brooks. However, before doing so, it is important to note that this system should not be confused with what is often referred to as the ‘Home to Duty’ transport services, which is offered by various private sector businesses, primarily to meet the needs of employees of the St Helena Public Service who generally work from 8.30am to 4pm, Mondays to Fridays. SHG has no influence over the operation of those services, as they are private arrangements between the service providers and their customers. Ideally, the private sector transport operators who provide ‘Home to Duty’ services should view any additional demand for seats on the routes they operate as a business opportunity and endeavour to meet demand where it is possible to do so. It is my understanding also that a number of private sector employers provide transport to and from work for their employees and have been doing so for a number of years. Turning now to the subsidised Public Transport System for which there are two contracts in place i.e. one with Joshua’s Taxis and the other with Colin’s Garage. Following a review of the public transport services in 2012, it was decided that the Island would benefit from a new Public Transport System timetable, which, as a first step, would be designed to meet the needs of the St Helena Public Service shift workers (initially those in the then Health and Social Welfare Directorate). At that time, transport to and from work was being provided for them by the Directorate; this was both costly to SHG to provide and unreliable at times for employees. A while later, shift times for staff working in the Police and Prison services were adjusted to enable them to also make use of the Public Transport Service which resulted in the Police Directorate no longer having to provide home to duty transport for their staff. The move to divest the provision of home to duty transport for St Helena Public Service shift workers was seen as one which would be attractive to potential operators, as there would be a level of guaranteed income; at the same time it would offer opportunities for other members of the public to use the service. The framework around which the Public Transport System timetables were developed in 2012 continues to be followed and operated upon to the current day. With regard to a review of the Public Transport Service, Mr Speaker, I am pleased to say that within the St Helena Public Service, a working group has been established to develop a Green Transport policy; the group includes representation from the Legislative Council. At a workshop arranged to consider options for taking the policy forward, the need to review the existing arrangements for public transport was highlighted and it was suggested that surveys of vehicle fleets across the Island should be carried out; this would include St Helena

Government, private sector and public transport. It is anticipated that these surveys will be carried out within the next 12 months prior to the end of the current contracts, with the outcome being the possibility of introducing a comprehensive Public Transport model which meets current and future needs. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Rosemary Bargo?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo –

Thank you, Chief Minister for that detailed response and I'm sure the listeners out there will appreciate it as well. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Any further supplementary questions? Yes, Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the Honourable Chief Minister say whether any form of increased subsidy has been provided in relation to the Public Transport System?

The Speaker –

Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. At this time, no additional funding has been provided.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you, Mr Speaker and I thank the Honourable Chief Minister for her response. Is any consideration being given to increasing the contract sum being paid to the Public Transport Provider in order to help reduce the cost to the public?

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

Sorry about the delay, Mr Speaker, consultation was required on that one.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I just wish to thank the Honourable Chief Minister, because it is pleasing to note that there is consultation going on. Thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you. Honourable Karl Thrower?



The Hon. Karl Thrower –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Would the Honourable Minister be able to undertake that if the surveys are going to be done within twelve months would it be possible to start a survey earlier so that we can capture the opinions of the tourism, people who come up to the island for this year's tourism, because obviously that will be, normally that would end towards the end of March, so would it be possible to actually ensure that we can capture the opinions of tourists to the island in this season rather than next season?

The Speaker –

Honourable Chief Minister, are you able to take that question?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

Yes, Mr Speaker, I think I can, I've been given the assurance from the Officers that, yes, that can be undertaken.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much.

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

I'd just like to thank the Chief Minister for her answer.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much, Honourable Member. Next question, please?

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

The Speaker –

The Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Honourable Ronald Coleman -

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Environment, Natural Resources and Planning tell this Council, because of the seriousness of the effects of Climate change globally, and the recent proposal to increase electricity tariffs in St Helena, can the Minister inform this House what progress has been made with the Islands Renewable Energy Strategy?

The Speaker -

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

The Honourable Christine Scipio (Minister for Environment, Natural Resources and Planning)

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, St Helena Government and Connect St Helena Ltd remains committed to St Helena's Energy Strategy and its objectives under this Strategy remains, particularly becoming 100% self-sufficient on the national grid through renewable energy. Mr Speaker, we recognise the importance of transitioning to renewable energy on St Helena which is even more pressing due to the escalating costs of electricity generation following recent fuel price increases. Mr Speaker, in April 2018, a preferred bidder was chosen to provide renewable energy solutions which comprises of a new solar and wind energy infrastructure and battery storage which would have meant that less diesel would be used to produce electricity on St Helena, which would have reduced the Island's environmental footprint and reduce sensitivity to future increases in the price of diesel. Despite discussions

with the reserved bidder under this Project, much has changed in the interim, including constraints such as longer lead in times and increasing costs, as well as opportunities such as technical development. St Helena Government in collaboration with Connect St Helena Ltd, brought this renewable energy procurement exercise to a close in July 2022. Mr Speaker, work is now taking place to develop policy options towards an Energy Delivery Plan which is intended to map out options and steps needed to deliver this objective which is being prepared by Connect St Helena with input from key stakeholders. This work will focus on three areas: The first area is to ensure that we can continue to achieve the 20% contribution to electricity generation from the existing wind and solar farms. 20% electricity from renewables is already a significant achievement, although we still have a distance to travel before we reach 100%. However, some of the existing wind turbines have reached the end of their useful life and others are nearing this. In addition to the usual maintenance, Connect St Helena is investing in a specialist visit from Wind Energy Solutions to assess and maintain the wind turbines which is scheduled within this financial year. The second area, Mr Speaker, is to explore the feasibility of investing in the integration of battery energy storage systems with existing renewables. The final area relates to establishing a policy and regulatory environment to support the increased use of renewable energy, recognizing that the current Electricity Regulations were written in 1995, prior to the installation of the wind turbines. Areas of concern within the existing legislation will be submitted to St Helena Government for consideration. Mr Speaker, this Energy Delivery Plan is at the formative stage but will be consulted upon prior to finalisation. The first full draft of this Plan is expected during this financial year. Mr Speaker, at the first sitting of the fourth meeting of Legislative Council on 29th March 2022, this Honourable House agreed that a Working Group should be established to investigate how the Island's electricity generation and distribution systems can be improved. Mr Speaker, I have requested the Terms of Reference for such Working Group and to date I have not received. Thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Minister. Any supplementary questions? Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Just to thank the Minister for her comprehensive reply.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Any further supplementary questions? No? Can we move on?

***Question No. 11 – The Honourable Robert Midwinter to ask the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development.***

The Speaker -

The Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Honourable Robert Midwinter -

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development tell this Council, whether the Visitor Information Service has experienced an increased level of enquiries following the announcement that quarantine restrictions would be lifted, and if he will make a statement on the matter?

The Speaker -

The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

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

Thank you, Mr Speaker I would like to thank the Honourable Member for his question. Mr Speaker, with the uncertainty surrounding how long the pandemic would last, and with travel restrictions in place, from June 2021 St Helena Tourism's marketing efforts focused on an 'armchair tourism' campaign, keeping the inspiration and aspiration to travel alive until travelers were ready to travel again. The campaign was multifaceted and promoted St Helena through video, radio, travel guides, blogs, websites, social media platforms and print media. And if we cast our minds back, Mr Speaker, to early 2020, most people thought that the pandemic would last months and not years. Between June and December 2021, St Helena was promoted as a green-list, COVID-free destination to all established target markets through all available platforms, the travel trade, the media and direct to consumers – and especially the yachting community and our Saint diaspora, then they could fly via Titan flight directly from the UK – and these efforts may have been the only way to still attract some business despite the very limited accessibility. The drive for short-term tourism was largely unsuccessful due to long quarantine, lack of accommodation, and sporadic flights and this all detracted from St Helena's market competitiveness as a destination for visitors, especially for pure tourists. Now, Mr Speaker, with the removal of travel restrictions and a timeline in place for return of the weekly flights, plus the reopening of the Mantis hotel, we have ramped up our marketing efforts, notably with targeted campaigns to travel trade (tour operators) and niche markets, such as the dive community. We are maximising the outputs from our contracted Public Relations companies in our key two locations, which is the UK and South Africa. So, since the announcement on 8<sup>th</sup> of August of the island opening up, enquiries through the St Helena Tourism website and social media platforms have increased around 20%, but it's important to note the change in the nature of the enquiries, from general information requests that was geared to the inspiration to eventually travel now to requests for information that will help plan and book their holiday, so this is demonstrating that the intention is to travel is coming in with these enquiries. My team has seen journalists, photographers, and video and film makers enquiries increase in the past month. The Marketing Manager has secured a range of features through the UK and South African PR company and they are actively following the press releases issued about our reopening, featuring in some key publications such as The Independent, The Guardian and Getaway magazine, and various online tourism and travel sites, and I might add, this is at no extra cost to SHG and if you consider some of these publications, they have a big audience. So, since the Mantis Hotel announced it would be re-opening its doors on 15<sup>th</sup> October, it has seen an uptake in bookings from January and the February period, this is primarily from the Dive community and the Dive Groups. Our local tourism service providers are telling us a similar story. One local accommodation provider told my team there has been a "marked increase in the bookings" since the announcement. Another local operator has told us that booking enquiries for the period January to March 2023 has been "overwhelming". Mr Speaker, last weekend, we attended the burial of the Liberated Africans and one accommodation provider came up to me and said to me, Mr Brooks, how are you, are you busy? And then he paused for a little bit and smiled and say, that was a silly question, you must be always busy. So I smiled back at him and say, what I want to know is, are you busy? And his words to me was, man, man, I'm fully booked from February to March, he said, and I'm even turning people away or recommending other service providers on the island and I said to him, well, that's good, that means we're both busy. So, going on, Mr Speaker, and talking about some enquiries to do with our passengers, our air passengers side, we continue to see a steady increase in passenger bookings on the Airlink flight with an on average 6% growth in

numbers in the last 4 weeks, we must bear in mind we are still in the winter season, but already we have seen a 6% increase. We already have 11 Cruise Liners express a desire to return to the Island between now and January 2024 and this potentially could bring in an extra 10,000 visitors from the passengers and the crew of these liners. We are progressing well with the plans for the reinstatement of the Cape Town to St Helena yacht race and this is due to take place later this year and we anticipate seeing an additional 120 to 130 sailors and their family members on Island. So, all in all, Mr Speaker, the notice, or the decision to open up has seen really good movement for our tourism sectors. Thank you Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. I like your little story you had earlier on. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you, Mr Speaker and I would like to thank my Honourable Colleague, Minister Mark Brooks for that very detailed response, certainly very pleasing to hear that in connection with the question presented earlier by the Honourable Rosemary Bargo. Mr Speaker, will, because of this increase in visitor enquiries, will SHG be increasing the resources available at the Visitor Information Centre in order to meet increased demand on services?

The Speaker –

Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Thank you, Mr Speaker and I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for his question. I do know, Mr Speaker, that there is a recruitment process out for a Assistant to the Head of the Visitor Information Service and this is a more strategic role, so this Assistant will be covering more of a responsibility than previous, but we'll have to obviously again judge the increase in tourism numbers and able to ramp up any resources required through the Tourist Office. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Mr Speaker, yes, again I thank the Honourable Minister for his response. Is any support being provided to the private sector in order to help them prepare to meet the increased demand?

The Speaker –

Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development?

The Hon, Robert Midwinter –

Thank you, Mr Speaker and I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for his question. At this current time, we are not helping the private sector to do with tourist related activities, as you know the budget is tight and we have just announced a raft of measures that will be put in place to help with the cost of living. The short answer to the question is, we wish we could do more to support the community in these difficult times, but budget constraints won't allow us to. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you, Mr Speaker and I'd like to again thank the Honourable Minister for his response.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Are there any further supplementary questions? No? Honourable Karl Thrower?

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

I'd just like to thank the Minister for the response to the Honourable Robert Midwinter's question, however, I am extremely concerned as well. It's a fantastic niche, you've just said the Dive Club's, everybody's coming, but if we're not gonna find some money from somewhere to put into our tourism sector, what we're gonna have is, we're gonna have a lot of people coming to this island and then going back and putting on to Facebook and Trip Advisor and everything else how poor the facilities are. What are the divers gonna say when they come to this island and there's nowhere for them to get changed on the wharf, when the yachts come in and they can't throw their water off and get a shower on the wharf? Isn't it time that we actually find some money from somewhere to put into the infrastructure that we've allowed to become in such bad disrepair during the Covid pandemic?

The Speaker –

You started off there with a point of information I think, Honourable Member and then you had a couple of questions after that, but is the Minister able to answer that question or respond in any way?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Mr Speaker, yes, as you rightly said, there was a statement and a couple of questions, but I will try and just rise on a point of information and give clarity. So, yes, I do share my Honourable Friend's concerns about not having a suitable changing rooms and toilet facilities at the lower wharf area, however, you'll be pleased to know that we are actively working on putting together a Expressions of Interest for the private sector to adapt two containers into a female block and a male block with showers and a disabled toilet and toilets and we hope to have this in place, and my team have given me reassurance that this is achievable, in place come the start of the summer season, so these are two containers, male and female, being refurbished to be showers and toilets and will be placed at the seafront in time to welcome all our tourist visitors during the summer season. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much for that rather useful information I think. Any further questions to the original question? Nobody, no? Okay, thank you.

***Question No. 12 – The Honourable Andrew Turner to ask the Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs.***

The Speaker -

The Honourable Andrew Turner?

The Honourable Andrew Turner -

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs tell this Council what work has taken place to review reforms on the use of CBD products on St Helena following the successful Motion in the House to this effect on the 15 June 2022?

The Speaker -

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

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick (Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs) –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I'd like to thank the Honourable Andrew Turner for his question. My Portfolio has been in discussion with the Attorney General's Office, Health and started to scrutinise the Falkland Islands legislation which recently legalised CBD products. I'm pleased to confirm that we believe there is a solution to amending St Helena's legislation. This will allow certain consumer CBD products to be legally imported, sold and supplied in St Helena. As my Honourable Member is aware, our current legislation prohibits the importation, sale and possession of a product containing CBD or THC in St Helena. This has a detrimental effect to local businesses and consumers when wishing to buy normal products. We now propose to mirror the Falkland Islands legislation in a similar manner which would allow CBD products to be supplied to St Helena as long as they are not a health risk and contain very low levels of THC. In a nutshell, it will decriminalise the people buying or using low level THC and hemp related products such as clothes, masks, bags, cosmetic candles, soaps, shampoos etc, even CBD oil, which also contains low levels of THC would be exempt. In terms of the exact amount of THC, we will ensure that the levels are below 1%, it usually is 0.2 or, sorry, 0.02 or 0.03% in line with guidelines. We will be working with Health to agree the suitable level. My Portfolio are intending to bring these amendments to the next formal LegCo and just to reassure the Member I will have a discussion with all elected members before bringing this to the House. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Just for a bit of information, hopefully we can have the next formal LegCo before the end of September. Honourable Andrew Turner?

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

I just simply wish to thank the Honourable Minister for his response and for the excellent news he's just given.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much.

The Hon Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Honourable Karl Thrower?

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Would the Honourable Minister be able to tell us are we any place to being able to produce our own product, CBD products on island?

The Speaker –  
Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you, Mr Speaker; I thank the Honourable Member for his question. That's a wider piece of work that needs to be done, quite a large piece of work and the piece that we're dealing with now is mainly because we got the issues with the products coming through and I think the CBD oil, the issue you're talking about is going to require public consultation, because it's going to be quite extensive changes to the law in relation to that, so that's gonna take bit of time, but like I say, we'll deal with this first and then we'll work on the others, with the other piece after. Thank you.

The Speaker -

Thank you. Any? No? Next question please?

***Question No. 13 – The Honourable Gillian Brooks to ask the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development.***

The Speaker -

The Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Honourable Gillian Brooks -

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development tell this Council whether an application is being made to FCDO for a further Economic Development Investment Programme and, if so, what is being included in the second phase?

The Speaker -

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

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

Thank you, Mr Speaker and I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for her question. The current St Helena Economic Development Investment Programme, or EDIP, as we refer to it, was approved in March 2019, with the purpose of supporting economic development in St Helena through enhanced dialogue on policy reforms and infrastructure development. Initially the programme was for a period of six years, split into two phases, however following the EDIP annual Review in 2020, it was recommended that a one year no cost extension be granted on Phase 1, making it a seven year programme overall. £30m was allocated for the programme, with £15m being committed for the first phase (i.e 2019-2023) and the remaining £15m indicative for phase 2 (March 2023-March 2026). The programme will now conclude in March 2026. So we are now approaching end of Phase 1, and a breakpoint review is required in accordance with the EDIP business case and this is currently being conducted by Consultants appointed by FCDO. The outcome of the breakpoint review will not be known until early September 2022, so, in a few week's time, Sir. However, SHG is optimistic that funding will be made available for phase 2 and are keen to progress projects which are aligned with SHG's Vision, as well as the Independent Economic Review conducted in 2018, which formed the basis of the EDIP programme. The process to identify and prioritise projects for the second phase of EDIP is currently underway. The approval of projects is based on a multi-tier process of assessing the strategic, economic and financial and management viability of the projects.

At this time, it is currently too early to initiate any formal discussions beyond March 2026.  
Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –  
Thank you, Honourable Member.

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –  
Mr Speaker, just to thank the Minister for his response.

The Speaker –  
Thank you very much. Any supplementary questions from anyone at all? No? Okay, thank you very much. So we didn't have any tea, so it might be an appropriate time to stop and have an hour lunch, but just before doing that, earlier on I do thank the Honourable Minister Christine Scipio for spotting that I mentioned the late Cathy Hopkins name, I should have, of course I was referring to Cathy Cranfield, I apologise to her, I should really apologise to the family of the late Cathy Hopkins as well. I worked for a long, long time with the late Cathy Hopkins and I'm always thinking about her actually and maybe this is why it came to mind, but apart from that, time now I think to stop for lunch, an hour we shall take, quarter to twelve now, let's come back at a quarter to one.

**Council Suspended.**

**Council Resumed.**

## MOTIONS

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

### THE SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (2022/23) BILL, 2022

The Speaker –  
Honourable Minister?

The Hon. Mark Brooks (Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development) –  
Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Supplementary Appropriation (2022/23) Bill, 2022 be approved in principle and referred to the Committee of the whole Council. I'd also like to say that I have a.

The Speaker –  
Sorry, I need a seconder to proceed. Thank you, Honourable Member. Is there a seconder?  
Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas (Chief Minister) –  
Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –  
Thank you. Mover, you are now able to speak.



The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, with the world emerging from the impacts of COVID and the conflict in Ukraine and other global issues, the Island is feeling the impacts of the increase in cost of living. The Island is heavily reliant on imported goods and services, the effects of global price increases reach the Island very quickly and have far-reaching consequences for the economy. Last month, Ministers considered policy options to mitigate the impacts of high inflation, estimated to be between 7% and 14% in this financial year; substantial fuel price increases which relates to the increase in the production of electricity; a higher shipping cost, in the way of the BAF, so we have agreed a package of measures designed to mitigate, where possible, the impacts of these economic shocks. The package includes a reduction in customs duty on certain essential items from either 5% or 20%, down to 0%, these items include essentials such as basic foods, animal feed, PPE, in terms of the demand for the most essential for low-income households; a reallocation of the freight-transport subsidy so that only essential items, for example, provisions, animal feed and reefers, will be subsidized going forward. We also put a increase in for the Income Related Benefits (IRB) and Basic Island Pension (BIP) of £2 per week; and we also approved an increase in the subsidy for Connect Saint Helena Ltd to cover the rising cost of fuel. And last but not least a Utilities Credit scheme was also agreed to enable families with low incomes below the minimum wage and who have less than £4,000 of savings in the Bank to receive a quarterly utilities credit of up to £33 per quarter. Some of these measures, for example, the customs tariff changes and the freight-transport subsidy will be cost neutral but others will come at a cost to St Helena Government. It is estimated that the additional subsidy required by Connect Saint Helena Ltd will be £1.35 million for the rest of this financial year, assuming though that there are no changes to fuel prices between now and then. If there is a reduction in the cost of fuel, this will mean less subsidy being required by Connect. However, and I would like to stress, that Ministers have advised that if there is another increase in the cost of fuel during the period between now and the end of the financial year, we will not be able to supply another subsidy or an additional subsidy to Connect, so in other terms, we have given all that we can give and if there's any more fuel increases we will not be able to cover that. The Utilities Credit Scheme is estimated to cost around £50,000 over the next six month period and that will take us up to the end of the financial year. So, this package cannot be accommodated within the recurrent budget for 2022/23. A supplementary appropriation is required to give authority to increase the budget to implement this package. Therefore, the Supplementary Appropriation (2022/23) Bill, 2022 is presented to this House today to increase the appropriation under Head 17 *Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development* by £1.4 million. The increase in IRB and BIP weekly payments is estimated to cost an additional £50,000 for the rest of this financial year, however, since the IRB and BIP payments are not required to be appropriated, these costs have not been included in the Bill, they will however be factored into the budget forecast for the rest of this financial year. The supplementary appropriation will be financed through the call-down contingency funding available under the UK Government financial aid settlement for this financial year and I'm pleased to say this has already been agreed by the FCDO. Thank you, Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. So I put the question that the Supplementary Appropriation (2022/23) Bill, 2022 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council. The question is open for debate, Honourable Members. Honourable Andrew Turner?

The Hon. Andrew Turner -

Mr Speaker, today's supplementary appropriation bill is, in theory, being put forward to address potentially the worst cost of living crisis in living memory. And yet it is my duty today as a representative, to stand against this Bill. Although I agree with many of the cost of living measures being introduced, the fact is that the majority of the money being appropriated today is essentially going to be burned. £1.35 million additional subsidy is being granted to Connect St Helena to, and again, I stress "in theory", stabilise electricity tariffs and yet because this move is being combined with a change to a flat rate, people, particularly the low end users, are going to see huge increases on their electricity bills and yet Ministers have been bold enough to suggest this is to address the cost of living crisis? They have said that the move benefits businesses, but having spoken to a number of business owners, their reality is very different. A number have said that they won't see any financial gain because although their electricity costs will go down, they will be acting in good conscience and will have to raise staff wages so that their staff can cope with the huge increases that lower income households are now facing. This will combine with the wider issue of people having to pay higher electricity bills, meaning that people will have less disposable income to spend in businesses such as shops and restaurants. So for economics, it seems the move far from helps businesses, if anything it appears to hurt them. SHG on the other hand may well save a small fortune in its utilities costs seeing as how it is one of the largest consumers on the island, but it's Government's role in times like these to ensure that when this hit comes, it is those who are able to take the hit that support those who cannot. This not only fails to protect the vulnerable but makes them pay to keep SHG's electricity costs down. Now, we have announced a pay-out for people under minimum wage but the fact is that even those well above minimum wage are going to struggle to pay these bills, so, not only are we spending 1.35 million pounds and singularly failing to help our community, we're also failing to address the root cause of expensive electricity on St Helena, which has, quite rightly been pointed out, is the cost of diesel. The fact is renewable energy has been a reality in the real world for almost a decade and Connect have singularly failed to incorporate this into their business. And yet now they've come and asked for more money we're going to tell them yes? Mr Speaker, this move simply carries on the trend of throwing good money after bad and kicking the can further down the road. It solves nothing and we will continue to solve nothing until we come to our senses and start investing money into projects that get us away from diesel and into cheap renewable energy. The only way, and I do mean the only way that I could support this move is if the Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development will give a guarantee that by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2023 they're on a concrete solution, a short-term plan to halve the cost of producing electricity. On paper a flat rate of 30p is doable and I would urge the Ministers to work with us to achieve it. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member and just to remind Honourable Members that the debate is confined to the principles of the Bill and not the details. Any other Member wishes to speak? Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter -

Mr Speaker, I rise in support of this Motion, however I again do so reluctantly, as I strongly disagree with the provision of "blanket" subsidies that serve to benefit those who can afford to pay at the same rate as those who cannot afford to pay. Mr Speaker, the provisions made in this Bill are merely a quick fix sticking plaster, that in the main serve to benefit SHG and others who are in a position to absorb the increased cost of living, however they do not address the root causes, or provide any mechanisms that will assist in doing so in the longer term. In this

respect, I strongly feel that we should only be providing targeted subsidies that help to support those within our community that are suffering the most, and also provide funding that serves to address those matters relating to minimising the increased costs themselves, such as through reducing our dependence on fossil fuels. Thank you Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Any other Honourable Member wishes to speak? Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. This is a difficult one as the Government needs to steer away or limit handing out untargeted subsidies, especially of this magnitude, in today's economies of scale we cannot afford to. For me, in times like this, any additional money or extra money should really go into the pockets of our people, especially those on low incomes, our pensioners, the elderly and those on minimum wage and below, therefore, letting the people make the choices for themselves and the lifestyles they wish to choose. The struggle with the cost of living, which is only going to get worse, the time of increasing the personal tax allowance was a great opportunity missed for this Government to put additional money into the pockets of those in these critical times. We are having the problems here and now and this would be benefit to everyone across the island who needs the help. Of course I want to help as many people as possible, but before making this decision today, I was going to ask the Minister for an undertaking from Connect to provide viable options for reducing the cost of energy to the public, taking into account how valuable free wind and solar energies, which we have been depending on for some years now, which is already producing with no storage capacity, what a waste thus far. We cannot continue to give out handouts in this economic climate to burn. Mr Speaker, because of the work being undertaken by Connect, explained by the Minister for Environment, Natural Resources and Planning this morning, I reluctantly support this Bill. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Members, anybody else wish to speak? Honourable Karl Thrower?

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Let me start off by saying that I have a clear conflict of interest in this; obviously I have a company that installs renewable energy, however, I feel that I should be allowed to speak on this matter because obviously that also gives me somewhat expert knowledge in this particular subject since we're clearly discussing mainly the 1.35 million pounds subsidy for the diesel towards Connect, so I'll stick, hopefully you'll guide me on this, but I'll try and stick within the boundaries. So, first of all, I was actually, I looked at positively the information that the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources gave us this morning, you know, that batteries have now been separated off, because, you know, this was always the key. You know, this is what Connect have always told everybody, we can generate the energy, we can't store it. By separating that off, that's a very positive move in the direction, but I feel that once again I absolutely agree with my Honourable Colleagues when they're saying there were still no timeframes, you know, we know some of what's been put, this has been going on 2016 is when the Energy Strategy came out and we are actually now doing the work that should have been done in 2016, you know, we're doing a grid stability report, which is good and, you know, I fully back that, but we, decades almost behind the rest of the world on this and we have to have a timeline, you know. As the Honourable Mark Brooks said, you

know, the subsidy only works at today's fuel cost. Now, hopefully, the worldwide fuel costs are dropping now, so hopefully we may actually see less money needed for them, but then, let's face it, something else could happen in somewhere like Ukraine or the Middle East that could easily put them back up and even higher again. We've got to start addressing this cost of diesel, 22p, you know, one thing that's been made very clear by Connect to everybody on the island in the last couple of weeks is that it costs 39p to make a unit of electricity, 17p of it is for costs and 22p is for generating costs of which 17p is for the cost of diesel. You know, we're not talking about sacking people, we're not talking about reducing workforces here, we are talking about simply reducing the cost of fossil fuels this island burns through and we have to address it and I would really, really urge that you take onboard exactly what my Honourable Friend Andrew Turner said by the 1<sup>st</sup> April we have to at least have a solution for battery storage being installed on this island. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Mr Speaker, I support the Bill, but here again I would just like to ask the Minister to give us some reassurance.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Anyone else wish to speak before Honourable Mark Brooks try to give that assurance? Honourable Rosemary Bargo?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo –

Mr Speaker, I, too, in agreement with my Honourable Colleagues here, we need to ensure a workable plan to reduce the cost of electricity that all can benefit from and not a select few going forward, so I look forward to that plan as well. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Any other Honourable Member wish to speak? Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas (Chief Minister) -

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Obviously I second this Motion and I'd just like to, I think, support the Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development in saying that this was not an easy decision, it was based on the generating cost of electricity and I appreciate that this has been ongoing since 2016, we have only been in this position not quite a year yet, so I can tell you, on behalf of the whole Cabinet, we all would like to move towards renewable energy, but, to continue with a price that was not related to anything was a very difficult one for us to do, so if there is an increase, and let's hope there's a decrease, everybody should see a reduction – businesses, domestic, low incomes, whatever it is, because the 39p now is directed at the cost of generating a unit of electricity directly, so although I appreciate the different feelings, I should say, from businesses, there are some business, so if I take the example given by Honourable Andrew Turner, you spoke about some believe that this will not save money, they'll do the good thing, and I'm pleased to hear that, to increase staff wages, but if they hadn't made that saving where would they have given the staff wage increase from, so I'm just giving some examples of how that could be seen. It's not a long-term plan, I can tell you that now, but we do need more time, as Councillor Karl Thrower mentioned, the grid stability assessment is something that we're patiently waiting on so we can better understand exactly what is

happening with our grid and we've been told that that is due to be published or completed by December of this year. It would be a little, how can I say, unplanned or shows ill preparedness on our behalf if we were to go and make decisions on the way forward without that grid stability assessment, so all I want to say is, all of the things that you've raised here today was discussed, but we needed to do something that shows that we are trying to move towards targeted subsidies and targeted costs as well, because at the moment the 30p and, indeed, what was the 42p was based on nothing, it wasn't even to do with the cost per unit generated, so I'm not sure what my Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development was about to say, I would also just like to mention, just to come back on what Councillor Ronald Coleman said about the income tax bracket, I think we've told, said in this House, that looking at the tax brackets is something that a group is already looking at and this decision was taken to consider the cost of living in the short term because obviously nobody knew what was going to happen with Ukraine etc, so the long-term plan, and when I say that, for St Helena I'm not going to say it's going to take a long time to look at, is happening with regards to taxes and all the renewable energy that most of you have mentioned here today, so as obviously I've second this, so you know that I support this Motion. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. No other Honourable Members wish to speak, Mover, you may reply to the debate.

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Thank you, Mr Speaker and I'd like to thank my Honourable Friends for responding to the Bill and I'd also like to thank the Honourable Chief Minister for supporting the Bill. Just for a point of information, Mr Speaker, I just want to make it clear, especially to the listening public, that the decision or the recommendation made by Connect for a standardized tariff was not part of these measures put in place by St Helena Government, that is a recommendation from Connect which still need to be approved by the Utility Regulatory Authority or the URA. With regards to giving you the confidence in a set date and a set time, I'm afraid I cannot do that, but what I can do is assure you that other than Health, energy generation is now becoming this Cabinet's main priority, so we will be working very hard in the near future to try and progress the transition between diesel generation and the renewable energy generation. So I'd just like to thank everyone who supported the Bill and also to reflect on what the Chief Minister said is that, you know, these measures was only designed to put in place quickly to address the economic shocks of the time, we do realise that long-term we need to be working towards reducing the cost of electricity overall, but in the short-term that is not doing anything is not going to solve the problem of the issues that we have with energy generation. We do recognise that that is something that we need to work with in the future, so I'd just like to thank everyone for supporting the Bill, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member.

Question that the Bill be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council, put and agreed to.

The Speaker –

Mover?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

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

The Speaker –

Thank you. Is there a seconder?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Chief Minister.

Question that the Council resolves into a Committee to consider the detailed provisions of the Bill, put and agreed to.

### **Council in Committee.**

The Chairman –

Honourable Mark Brooks?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, may I have your permission to invite the Financial Secretary to the table please?

The Chairman –

Yes, of course.

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Chairman –

Honourable Members, in accordance with Standing Orders, procedure on Appropriation Bill, Order 32, we first of all need to work through the Schedule. Schedule I, Recurrent Expenditure. Head of Expenditure 17 – Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development, £1,400,000. So I put the question that Head 17 – Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development standing in the amount of £1,400,000 do stand part of the Bill. Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development, would you like to provide an overview?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, at this time I would invite the Financial Secretary to provide the overview.

The Chairman –

He's already with you, so go ahead.

Mr Dax Richards (Financial Secretary) –

Thank you, Mr Chair. So, as the Honourable Minister said in his exposition, the £1.4m is made up of £1.35m, or up to £1.35m available as additional subsidy to Connect St Helena and the other £50k is in relation to the proposed Utilities Credit Scheme. Both of those obviously will

need, as been mentioned in the conversation today, subject to the approval of the Utilities Regulatory Authority.

The Chairman –

Thank you, Honourable Minister and Mr Richards for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development. Are there any questions, Honourable Members, at all? No-one at all? Okay.

Head 17 – Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development - £1,400,000.

Question put and agreed to.

Total - £1,400,000.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Thank you, Honourable Members, now we turn back to the main part of the Bill, the Title, the Enactment Clause and Clause 1.

Title, Enactment Clause and Clause 1.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Thank you, Honourable Members. Clause 2 – Consolidated Fund – Provision for financial year 2022/2023. Does any Honourable Member have any proposals or any questions on this?

Mr Dax Richards –

Mr Chair, Clause 2 of the Bill authorises the Governor to issue from the Consolidated Fund the sum of £1.4m to meet the additional expenditure and for the amount to be appropriated for the purposes and services as described in the Schedule to this Ordinance.

The Chairman –

Thank you. I put the question that Clause 2 – Consolidated Fund – Provision for financial year 2022/2023 do stand part of the Bill.

Clause 2.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Thank you, Honourable Members, we will go back into formal session now.

**Council Resumed.**

The Speaker –

The Honourable Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development to report on the Bill, please?

The Hon. Mark Brooks –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I beg to report that the Supplementary Appropriation (2022/23) Bill, 2022 passed the Committee with zero amendments and to move that this Council approves the said Bill and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Is there a seconder, please?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

So I put the question that this Council approves the Supplementary Appropriation (2022/23) Bill, 2022 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker –

Next item of business, please?

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

### **THE HEALTH AND SAFETY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2022**

Mr Speaker -

The Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick (Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs) -

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Health and Safety (Amendment) Bill, 2022 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the Whole Council.

Mr Speaker

Thank you, Honourable Member. Is there a seconder please? Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Mover, you may now speak to the Motion.

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you, Mr Speaker; I have a short exposition on the Health and Safety (Amendment) Bill, 2022. As this House is aware, the primary piece of legislation governing Health and Safety in St Helena is the Health and Safety Ordinance 1977. The Ordinance provides safe standards of health and safety in the work places and sets out criminal offences for failing to ensure compliance with those standards. However, the Ordinance has not been updated since its enactment in 1977 and needs amending. As Honourable Members may know, currently the maximum penalty upon a conviction for a Health and Safety offence is £400. This is no longer



tenable, especially as a recent case in the St Helena Magistrates Court identified that its sentencing powers were wholly inadequate and the maximum penalty of £400 did not appropriately reflect the culpability and harm of the offending. The amendment will remove the £400 limit and sets £20,000 as the upper boundary. I should note though that this is only the first step and that further work will be undertaken to review St Helena's Health and Safety Ordinance before deciding on whether to approve unlimited fines. Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. I put the question that the Health and Safety (Amendment) Bill, 2022 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council. Honourable Members, the question is now open for debate. Just on a point of information that the debate is to be confined to the principle of the Bill only and not the details. Any Honourable Member wishes to speak? I see two lights on at the same time, so I'm going to call on the Honourable Karl Thrower.

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

Actually it's me.

The Speaker –

It's you, okay, you're sharing a mic. Honourable Andrew Turner?

The Hon. Andrew Turner –

Yes, thank you, Mr Speaker, apologies. For those listening, Councillor Thrower and I are having to share a microphone today hence the confusion as to whose red light it was that was on. No, I just wanted to stand up in support of this Bill. While I understand the importance of doing proper legislative reviews where you go over the whole Ordinance piece by piece and do the whole thing, when we find cases like this I'm very glad to see we are prepared to go in, fix the urgent issue at hand, so long as we, of course, go back and actually solve the long-term issues of updating a huge amount of outdated legislation that we have, but, yes, I'm very glad to see we are solving the issues of the day and not just shuffling that on to a later date when we're going to do a whole review, because we often find we don't ever actually catch up with this work. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member, I think I saw Robert Midwinter's light earlier on?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I also rise in support of the amendment to the Bill, amended Bill. Health and Safety is extremely important particularly in this day and age and it is good to see that we are moving to increase and remove the limits and increase the fine that is available to the Courts to impose and I similarly welcome the fact that this will be reviewed more widely. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Any other Honourable Member wishes to speak, if not, the Honourable Mover you may respond to the Bill if you want to, to the debate, I beg your pardon.

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I'd just like to thank the two Members who stood up in support of the Bill and I look forward to everyone else's support. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Mover.

Question that the Health and Safety (Amendment) Bill, 2022 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council, put and agreed to.

The Speaker -

Mover?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

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

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Is there a seconder, please? Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas (Chief Minister) –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you.

Question that the Council resolves into a Committee to consider the detailed provisions of the Bill, put and agreed to.

### **Council in Committee.**

The Chairman –

We are now in Committee of the whole Council and I put the question that the Title, Enacting Clause and Clause 1 do stand part of the Bill. Any Member wish to speak? Yes, I think at this stage I need to call on the Attorney General.

The Hon. Aine Hurley (Acting Attorney General) –

Thank you. Just on a point of information, just for the record, that it's actually the Acting Attorney General.

The Chairman –

I do beg your pardon.

The Hon. Aine Hurley –

But I am content, of course, to go through the, it will be very brief and largely self explanatory, but I am happy if you would like me to work through the clauses.

The Chairman –

Would you please work through it, yes?

The Hon. Aine Hurley –

This Bill amends section 16 of the Health and Safety Ordinance 1977 to increase the maximum penalties for offences under the Ordinance. Clause 1 of the Bill provides the short title and

Clause 2 of the Bill amends section 16, subsection (2) to increase the maximum penalties from £400 to £20,000.

The Chairman –  
Thank you very much.

Clause 1.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –  
And so then we can do Clause 2 and that's the amendment of section 16. Offences – Clause 2. Section 16 (2) of the principal Ordinance is amended by repealing the words “a maximum fine of £400” and submitting the words “a fine of £20,000”.

Clause 2.

Question put and agreed to.

**Council Resumed.**

The Speaker –  
The Mover to report on the Bill.

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –  
Thank you. Mr Speaker, I beg to report that the Health and Safety (Amendment) Bill, 2022 passed the Committee without amendment and move that this Council approves the said Bill.

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

The Hon. Julie Thomas –  
Thank you, Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –  
Thank you, Honourable Mover, do you wish to speak once again to the Motion, if you want to?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –  
Thank you, Mr Speaker, no, I do not wish to speak any further other than to thank the two officers for their support.

The Speaker –  
Thank you, Honourable Member. So I put the question that this Council approves the Health and Safety (Amendment) Bill, 2022 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted. Does any other Member wish to speak? No? And you have nothing further to speak, Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –  
No.

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

The Speaker –

Next item of business, please?

***Motion No. 3 – The Honourable Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs***

**THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL, 2022**

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick (Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs)

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2022 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council.

The Speaker –

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

The Hon. Julie Thomas (Chief Minister) –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Mover, you may now speak to the Motion.

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. As Honourable Members will remember, we have already approved the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2022, the first amendment. However, the Attorney General's Chambers subsequently noted an error which needs addressing and therefore it was not published. The Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2022, the first amendment, amended section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Ordinance 1975 by repealing subsection (1) (a) in order to remove the limit on the amount of compensation that may be awarded by a Court. Inadvertently the repeal of the reference to subsection (1)(a) in subsection 1 was not included in the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2022. The Criminal Procedure (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 2022, the second amendment, would rectify the abovementioned oversight and would remove the reference to now obsolete subsection (1)(a). The first amendment repealed section 1(a) which set the limit of compensation which could be awarded. Subsection 1 is an enabling section which empowers the Court in accordance with specified parameters with the authority to award compensation. Each of the foregoing sections have specific functions and stand on their own as separate subsections. As such, the second amendment is a substantive amendment which also stands on its own and must be dealt with as a separate amendment by Legislative Council. The second amendment is not and cannot be treated as typographical or simply amended because of the nature of the amendment, therefore, I've brought it back to Legislative Council to be approved. However, the intention is that, if passed, the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2022 and the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 2022, the second amendment, be published simultaneously. Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. So I put the question that the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council. Honourable Members, the question is now open for debate. Just on a point of

information, debate is to be confined to the principles of the Bill and not the details. Any Honourable Member wish to speak? Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –

Mr Speaker, thank you, I do rise in support of the Amendment Bill again, it's really unfortunate that this has come this way, we did support the previous amendment and the principles of that so I do support this and it's just regretful that it's happened this way. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Any other Honourable Member wish to speak? Honourable Mover, you may respond to the debate or someone else wish to, Honourable Ronald Coleman?

The Hon. Ronald Coleman –

Sorry, Mr Speaker, I just raised in support of this Amendment Bill, I see it as a tidying up exercise, so I support the Bill.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Does anyone else wish to speak? Honourable Rosemary Bargo?

The Hon. Rosemary Bargo –

Yes, I support this as well. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Any other Honourable Member wish to support otherwise Honourable Mover you may respond to the debate.

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I'd just like to thank those who rise in support for their support. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Thank you, Honourable Mover.

Question that the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 2022 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the Whole Council, put and agreed to.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member, you may continue.

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

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

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Is there a seconder, please? Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas (Chief Minister) –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you.

Question that the Council resolves into a Committee to consider the detailed provisions of the Bill, put and agreed to.

### **Council in Committee.**

The Chairman –

We are now in Committee of the whole Council and I put the question that the Title, Enacting Clause and Clause 1 do stand part of the Bill. Any Member wish to speak? I need to call on the Attorney General to assist at this stage.

The Hon. Aine Hurley (Acting Attorney General) –

Thank you. I will just begin by confirming on a point of information for the record that it is the Acting Attorney General.

The Chairman –

Short memory, sorry about that.

The Hon. Aine Hurley –

Again this, the Honourable Minister has explained this, and, again, it's largely self-explanatory in that regrettably there was an oversight when, in the first amendment, which was the amendment which was passed at the previous sitting of Legislative Council and as a result of that, this No. 2 amendment will be published, if passed, they will be published simultaneously and when they're together they will make the necessary changes and the changes will make sense because at present the difficulty would cause, difficulty in people reading or interpreting the Bill as the reason, an oversight. This Bill amends, therefore, section 125, subsection 1 of the Criminal Procedure Ordinance 1975 to remove the reference to subsection (1) (a). Clause 1 of the Bill provides the short title. Clause 2 of the Bill amends section 125, subsection 1 of the Criminal Procedure Ordinance 1975 to remove a now obsolete reference to subsection (1) (a). The Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2022 passed earlier this year amended section 125 by repealing subsection (1) a) to remove the limit on the amount of compensation that may be awarded by the Court. Section 125, subsection 1 contains a reference to subsection (1) (a) but was not simultaneously amended to delete that reference. This second amendment, this Criminal Procedure (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill would delete that second reference and that is the amendment which is being proposed.

The Chairman –

So I put the question that Clause 1 do stand part of the Bill.

Clause 1 –

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 2 –

Question put and agreed to.

### **Council Resumed.**

The Speaker –

The Mover is to report the Bill, please?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I beg to report that the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 2022 passed the Committee without amendment and move that this Council approves the said Bill.

The Speaker -

Thank you, Honourable Member. Is there a seconder, please? Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas (Chief Minister) –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Mover, do you wish to speak to the Bill again?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. No, I do not wish to speak at this time, Mr Speaker. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Nothing further to say. So I put the question that this Council approves the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2022 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted. Does any Member wish to speak? So, Honourable Mover, you may respond, although there's nothing much to respond to, although the Attorney General may wish to say?

The Hon. Aine Hurley (Acting Attorney General) -

On a point of information, there was reference to the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2022, however, it should be referenced to the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 2022 just to be clear between the two amendment Bills.

The Speaker –

Okay, thank you very much for that. So, Honourable Mover, do you wish to say anything more at this stage or anything at all?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, no, as the Attorney General just said, it's an amendment.

The Speaker –

She put that right for us, thank you very much for that.

Question that the Council approves the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 2022 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted, put and agreed to.

The Speaker –

Next item of business, please?

## 7. ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

The Speaker –  
Adjournment Debate. Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas (Chief Minister) –  
Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn sine die.

The Speaker –  
Thank you. Is there a seconder to the Motion, please? Honourable Christine Scipio?

The Hon. Christine Scipio –  
Thank you, Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –  
Thank you, Honourable Member. The Motion is that this House do now adjourn sine die. The Motion is now open for debate. The Honourable Robert Midwinter?

The Hon. Robert Midwinter –  
Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I rise in support of the Adjournment.  
Firstly, Mr Speaker, as the Elected Member representative on the Liberated African Advisory Committee, I wish to provide this House with a formal update on the re-interment of remains exhumed in 2008, as a part of the preparations for the Airport Project. Mr Speaker, as you are aware, at our formal sitting held on 10<sup>th</sup> December last year, I put forward a Motion that *“this House resolves that the re-interment of the Liberated African remains is a matter of grave societal concern and urge the relevant Minister with responsibility for any matters resulting from the airport project to address this issue as a matter of urgency.”* Mr Speaker, this Motion was not only supported unanimously by my Honourable Colleagues, but in addition, my Honourable Colleague the Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development agreed that a sum of funding would be made available to assist in the procurement of materials that would enable students at Prince Andrew School to manufacture the caskets to be used for the re-burial. Mr Speaker, to cut a long story short, over the past few months there has been a considerable amount of community and voluntary work put in by so many people and organisations that there are simply too many to mention, other than to say how impressive it was to see the active participation of the community during the reburial that took place last weekend. In this respect I would like to add my own thanks to that of the Chair of the Committee, Helena Bennett, as it was indeed wonderful to have worked alongside so many members of the community who were committed to making this momentous occasion run as smoothly as possible. Mr Speaker, earlier this week we celebrated International Day for the Remembrance of Slavery and its Abolition, a day designated by UNESCO to memorialize the transatlantic slave trade. The theme for this year’s commemoration is *“Stories of Courage: Resistance to Slavery and Unity against Racism”*, and whilst it is pleasing to note that a story which started in 2008 has finally reached a certain point of closure, there is still much work to be done in respect of ensuring appropriate, respectful memorialisation, and I would again call on my Colleagues here in this House to ensure that we continue the work that has been started here, in order that the stories of this island’s involvement can continue to be told to those generations that follow in our footprints. Mr Speaker, I am also pleased to report that with your own support and that of the Clerk of Councils, work has commenced on addressing the various recommendations contained within the Benchmark Report, and an update of the progress made to date has recently been shared with Honourable Colleagues. Mr Speaker, it was very pleasing



to note that during the Speakers Conference that you recently attended in the UK reference was also made to the need for appropriate facilities, and that this forum is calling on the UK Government to provide ring-fenced parliamentary funding to ensure that each Overseas Territory legislature has a dedicated building in which to carry out its activities and duties. In the meantime, Mr Speaker, we continue to push for improved access to the Council Chamber, and in this respect I hope that something formal will be coming to this House from my Honourable Colleague the Minister for Treasury, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development in the very near future. Mr Speaker, I would now like to turn to the two statements made in this House earlier today by my Honourable Colleagues, Minister Henry and Minister Brooks. Mr Speaker, we have now been open for just under three weeks, so it is very early days indeed, however, I believe that this has been a positive move for the island, so I stand completely and firmly behind the decision that was taken. Mr Speaker, I now wish to declare an interest as a former Executive Director of Enterprise St Helena, as I would like to make reference to the ESH Performance Audit Report that was laid on the table earlier in today's proceedings. Mr Speaker, as a former Executive Director of ESH, this Report contains no surprises for me, however, I would like to place on record how pleased I was to read the contents of this report, especially as the findings would appear to concur with those of the FCDO who financially supported the ESH Project. Mr Speaker, it is my own view that ESH should never have been closed down, without at least some alternative arrangement in place to support the Private Sector, and in particular the Tourism Sector, and I believe that such support is particularly important right now as we try to restart those aspects of Economic Development that were placed on hold as a result of the pandemic. In this respect, Mr Speaker, I believe that we should be making a bid to the UK Government for some form of Private Sector Development related project programme, and using the Performance Audit and the FCDO's own Project Completion Report as a springboard for doing so. In this respect, I would most certainly be pleased to offer my own previous experience to my Honourable colleague Minister Brooks, should his Portfolio decide to pursue such a bid. Mr Speaker, the refurbished fish processing facility was due to be open this week, and at this point in time there is still a lack of clarity regarding how exactly this will be operating, which is not a good position for our local fishermen to be in. I therefore trust that my Ministerial Colleagues and our Public Service Officials will ensure that this is clarified as soon as possible, in order that this facility can finally start contributing towards our economy in a positive manner. Mr Speaker, there has been much public concern raised over the past few weeks, particularly regarding the increased cost of living and the removal of quarantine restrictions. However, being the optimist that I am, I would hope that over the next few months our community will see for themselves how these two issues are actually intrinsically linked, in particular as we move towards the re-instatement of weekly flights in October, and become completely open to receiving our overseas community back home again this Christmas, essentially for the first time since the pandemic hit. Mr Speaker, it is regrettable that the revised Standing Orders were not quite ready to be presented to this sitting of Legislative Council, so I hope that we will have a further formal sitting in September, where these and the revised Code of Conduct can hopefully be formally laid and accepted by this Council. In closing Mr Speaker, I would simply add that I am pleased to hear that we should soon have sight of the draft policy and legislative programme, and I look forward to engaging further with Colleagues in this respect. Thank you Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Any other Honourable Member wish to speak? Honourable Rosemary Bargo?

The Honourable Rosemary Bargo -

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I rise in support of the adjournment. Mr Speaker, we are facing possibly the most challenging economic times ever in St Helena and worldwide, challenges that were primarily brought on by the world pandemic Covid-19 and the war in Ukraine, and on top of that Global Warming continues to cause even more challenges, especially with the recent heat waves, coupled with fires and flooding's that countries including the UK are experiencing. Whilst we have taken measures that are geared to being 'quick fixes' to help relieve the impact of imminent increases in the cost of living, I along with other honourable colleagues share the concerns of the rising cost of essential goods including utilities, such quick fixes are not the ideal solution and I trust that other means and ways are explored and implemented that provides reduction in costs for our utilities and a reduction in subsidy that can be used for other crucial areas in need of support. As a representative for the people I have had to address cases related to the increase in the cost of living, this has caused me great pain, things are becoming increasingly unaffordable for everyone and more so for single income families. Whilst the solution in some of my cases is possibly an easy fix, our legislation does not allow it or it takes months to years to make a change, having said that I am happy to say that our Ministers are receptive in considering viable solutions for good change and I thank Minister Brooks for his understanding and openness to receive and adopt such viable solutions on such important cost of living issues. Mr Speaker, I declare my interest as a Private Sector Business Owner. I am proud to acknowledge that in St Helena we have a wealth of talented, intelligent and experienced people. We have people in the Private Sector who have used their considerable skills and invested financially and wholeheartedly into the island, I applaud them for doing so. SHG has an important role in enabling the private sector when it comes to the outsourcing of services, However when outsourcing services, consideration must be given within the terms of contracts that unrealistic targets/budgets are not being implemented, and as such poses a great risk of failing for that private sector. SHG has a duty to encourage and support a thriving private sector, which ultimately brings a win-win situation for all. Mr Speaker, I just wanted to make reference to my question with relation to the outsourcing of SHG's tourism department. Whilst I appreciate my honourable friend, Minister Brooks' response, I believe we as elected members need to assure ourselves that we are getting the best value for money with regards to the advertising of the island. After carrying out research I am concerned that this is not the case. When comparing the number of views and positive feedback between the online media created by SHG and that created by the private sector, the media from the private sector is significantly more successful. On another note, Mr Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and commend the Chief Minister and her Team on having to make if not the most difficult decision since being in office the lifting of quarantine. Mr Speaker, I want to take this opportunity also to thank all of those involved in the works since the discovery and reburial of the Liberated Africans, their devotion, passion, selflessness and perseverance is a testament to all of us, so thank you. I would also like to thank my Honourable Friend Councillor Midwinter for championing this cause within council. To end on a brighter note, as Children's Champion I want to wish all of the Prince Andrew Students who recently took their exams, the very best of luck for results day tomorrow, and for those students who are returning to all Schools good luck in your upcoming studies. As Children's Champion I am starting a program in the upcoming months that provides regular access for our children to elected members enabling the opportunity for them to voice their concern and to engage interest in the revival of the youth parliament. Yesterday I commenced an outreach program for our Children, starting with our Children in Care and am very keen to work with other groups to continue such outreach programs. Thank You Mr Speaker

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Any other Honourable Member wish to speak? The Honourable Andrew Turner?

The Honourable Andrew Turner -

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker I have already spoken at some length about electricity as I see this as one of the key issues facing our community. I was glad to hear assurances from ministers that this is being treated as a priority and I look forward to working with them on a solution. I therefore don't intend to reignite that debate here and will instead confine myself to some of the more positive news that has come out of this session. But first, Mr Speaker, this week we have been remembering one of the darkest parts of human history – of our history and I was proud, in my role as Culture Champion, to have been involved in the events earlier this week in remembering the horror of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. I want to echo the thanks and the sentiments expressed by my honourable friend Cllr Midwinter to all those involved. I reiterate here today how important it is that we learn the lessons of our past and ensure that going forward we remember not to devalue and dehumanise each other, to learn not to exploit each other and show that we have learned from those mistakes. As decision makers we can do our part by remembering that behind every chart, graph and piece of paper that we are presented with, our decisions, our actions and, we must remember, our lack of actions, are affecting real human lives. It was heartening to hear that there has been at least little progress in funding the build of the new prison as progressing this would I think show that we do value the concepts of human rights and fair treatment of people. It was also wonderful to hear how we have achieved a 99% double vaccination rate and I want to thank and congratulate all those who are involved in the vaccine roll-out. But the best news of the day for me was hearing the progress that has been made in making CBD products available on St Helena. I'm glad that this is being progressed quickly and am looking forward to the amendments coming to this house at the next Session. With all the work that we've heard today is "waiting-in-the-wings" it promises to be a very busy session. So let's get going because there is plenty we still need to fix.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. I see two lights down there; I'm going to call on the Honourable Ronald Coleman first of all?

The Honourable Ronald Coleman –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Firstly, I would like to extend a warm welcome to His Excellency the Governor, Nigel Phillips CBE and his wife Emma to our Island and hope that they will enjoy their time here with our people and that it will be a fruitful time for everyone. Mr Speaker, St Helena is facing many challenges and it seem that times is only going to get worse. With the Leadership challenge in the United Kingdom within the Conservative Party we wait to see how it's going to turn out for the overseas territories and especially St Helena. We listen and watch with bated breath as the people in the United Kingdom are also going through a very rough time. I would now like to thank the Government and all those involved with the reburial of the exhumed Liberated Africans and making this happen. This journey has been long but is being completed. May they finally Rest in Peace with the dignity they deserve, thank you to everyone once again. Mr Speaker, now I would like to say something about climate change. I am concerned about climate change even though the effects of climate change may not be noticeable on St Helena. This is a worldwide issue which is everyone's business. The recent heatwaves across Europe, including the United Kingdom, the fires were devastating. Now Europe, including the UK is heading for a drought, the worse in five hundred years, so changes are taking place. So, for St Helena, are we serious about the effects of climate change? We

heard today about the Renewable Energy Strategy and the measures that's going to be put into place. This is not something to be sneezed at, everyone can make a difference, it's not going to be easy, but it's time that we make a start and sustain it. Where are the expertise? St Helena really needs help and I hope the Government is listening today. Mr Speaker, we always talk about rallying our people, we speak about creating opportunities for our young people. We talk about housing, we talk about rewards, but nothing seems to be happening. We talk about the exodus of our St Helenians to jobs overseas. This is so that they can get a better life, which we all want. Now opportunity knocks, Sodexo is providing job opportunities in the United Kingdom. They're looking for Chefs to Cleaners, Stewards to Retail Assistants. The advert says "Searching for amazing people to help deliver quality of life services". This describes our very own people, St Helenians and who can blame them? Whoever takes up this exciting challenge, I want to wish them the best in life and hope they will return someday. Now for our fishing industry. We are all surrounded by sea and I for one, along with my Colleagues fully support a viable fishing industry for St Helena and its people. I hope soon that all fishermen, together with the fish factory, will provide a lucrative local market and a high value export market of some of the best fish in the world for the benefit of St Helena and our fishing industry. Finally, Mr Speaker, I would like to end with a little quote from Mandy Hale. "To make a difference in someone's life you don't have to be brilliant, rich, beautiful or perfect, you just have to care". Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. I think the next Member who was going to speak does care. Honourable Gillian Brooks?

The Hon. Gillian Brooks –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Mr Speaker; I rise in support of the Adjournment. Mr Speaker, since our last Sitting in the House, there has been some challenging issues, to include the lifting of quarantine restrictions and the necessary measures to help mitigate the impact of the high cost of living here on island. Mr Speaker, I feel that every time I present my adjournment, I harp on the same thing of retaining our people on island and encouraging returning Saints. Cost of living here, as most of the world over, presents social and economic challenges. Thankfully, Government has put forward a plan to initially help cushion the blow of rising costs, but we need to remain proactive in forward planning for a future that, understandably, we cannot change overnight. We recently saw an advertisement for job opportunities abroad that really make you stop and think "will we be losing more people" and soon. We must continue to find opportunities for people and provide reassurance we are striving to put them first. We have very talented people here who should be motivated to meet their goals, knowing that positions are here for them and most importantly, that they will be afforded the chance to fill roles that meet with their qualifications or, where equally, the necessary experience and skills they have to undertake these roles. Within our private sector there is talent and skills that have, in many cases, been gained by personal sacrifice. We cannot overlook when there is a chance to utilise these skills; to do so, would be at our detriment. We want to keep people and not keep people down. We are rightly encouraging tourists and visiting family and friends, so we should be addressing how tired some of the areas of the island appear. When you see something every day you may become complacent, but visitors seeing this for the first time will notice and make their own judgement. Can Government give a commitment that we address the appearance of Government buildings and infrastructure that may just need a lick of paint or a wash-down to give them a face-lift? I would like to express a huge thank you to the Liberated African Advisory Committee and all who dedicated themselves to ensure the remains of the African slaves were given the dignified re-interment they so rightly deserve and their history preserved

in our history. St Helena should be proud of the work that has been done and the dedicated efforts that has been put in. Mr Speaker, I am very honoured to have been elected by my fellow members to be the Champion for 'Older Persons' on island. An 'Older Persons' Champion is an ambassador role, held by an Elected Member, enabling the designated person to work with Government, other Elected Members and Multi-Agencies to ensure the holistic wellbeing of older persons within the community. Finally Mr Speaker, I would like to extend congratulations to Year 13 students of Prince Andrew School, who last week received their examination results from respective examinations boards. I understand some excellent results were gained and we should be very proud. If St Helena continues to churn out academia at this level, it is highly promotional for us as an island. We want our young people to have access to a good future, so should ensure we have the pathways for their success and for their leadership on the island in the future. I would like to extend a thank you to the teachers who dedicate themselves to helping our young people achieve. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Any other Honourable Member wish to speak? Honourable Karl Thrower I think?

The Hon. Karl Thrower –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I rise in support of the Adjournment. Mr Speaker, since our last formal Legislative Council we've had a certainly very busy time. We're all aware of the cost of living crisis that is going across the island and I believe we have taken some very positive steps into trying to mitigate that as much as possible with the funds that we have available to do that. In essence, what we've done is, we've reduced the cost of cargo, vastly, and that should really help. Now, what we're really relying on is for the private sector to pass those savings on to the people and personally I trust them to do that. I know that not all of them will do that, but I trust the majority of our merchants to pass what savings they can on to the people and I believe that the ones that do...it will almost be forced to do it purely because when people see that products are a lot cheaper or cheaper in other people's shops and retail outlets they will risk this fact that they will lose the business if they don't. So, firstly, I would say congratulations to everybody in this House on passing that and getting it through as swiftly as they did. Now, that's the start of it, so that's the good step forward. The problem is, of course, we are all aware of the financial restraints in what happens if it gets much darker, hopefully it won't, but then you have to look at the positive niche you know. The figures given by Minister Brooks for the tourism numbers and the bookings on the planes is extremely encouraging, I know from personal information that I've received from some of the operators and the businesses on the island that that is reflected in their bookings, deposits are being paid for trips and this is all helping them then develop their businesses ready for tourism, so that is another good, positive way forward. Now, I have to say once again I am obviously conflicted on the next, I am very briefly going to touch on electricity, but only briefly and that is simply to say that it's good news what we heard from Minister Scipio today and the fact that obviously under the new management of Connect they are looking much more positively and clearly moving forward and I feel that did not happen since the Energy Strategy was developed in 2016, so whether people agree with it or not, I think we are moving positively forward in a general direction. Okay. So, the next thing I wanted to say is today we passed the Sessional Paper from the Public Accounts Committee and in there was actually some more positive news. I know that members of the public don't generally read it, so that Paper was specifically about Commemorative Coins and a bit of research that the PAC did and some sessions we had on Commemorative Coins and to give you an idea, so this is to do with the sale of bitcoin Coins, these are collector's coins that we sell. They're sold off island by a company called the East India Company which we then interface

with to get those coins out and they mostly go off to collectors. One of the criticisms that did come in, it would be nice to see some of them for sale on the island, but to give you an idea of the money involved in this is in the 2018/19 financial year we received £25k from that. In 2019 to 2020 it increased to £69k. In 2020 to 2021 it increased to £154k. In 2021 to 2022 it's estimated it will increase to £278k, so, in a very short time we have gone from £25k to £278k of income that comes in. We do not have to invest in these, this is quite literally, this is just what we receive for people making coins that are linked to St Helena and we're hopeful, the PAC has made, there was three recommendations in that report, hopefully if they're implemented we can see an increase on that year by year until obviously, you know, who knows where that goes. You know, as we get more tourists once again, if we look at selling them on island, hopefully tourists will be able to buy them, so maybe we have to look at increasing the market for those on the island. It's very encouraging also to hear that we are gonna have a FAM, is it, in 2023, that is great. You know, I think nothing represents St Helena like a visit. It's very hard to sit specifically in this Council Chamber with, let's face it, slightly out of date decoration and represent St Helena to a group of people on the other end of a webcam, the visit is good news. So, the next thing is, obviously, to touch on the 99% vaccination rate for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> boosts that is fantastic, you know. We all know what's coming, you know, whether we all agreed on the precise way to open the island or whether the island should open, it is open. We all know that at the minute we are seeing a very slow spread of Covid amongst the community and we all know that this will increase significantly in the next few weeks, but I do believe that if we are 99% vaccinated we should have, you know, a way of hoping that that really has a minimal impact on our day to day lives, you know, and I think so far it has to be said that although we didn't see much support and things in certain areas, that overwhelmingly the people of St Helena since we opened the island have actually acted remarkably responsibly in this regard and I think the congratulations has to go out to the people of the island for how they've handled that, you know. You know, I'm really impressed personally, you know I've seen people whether they believe it or not when they go into the Star they're sanitising their hands, you know, they're respecting the marks, some shops just let you queue at the tills as normal, some shops safely say stay two metres away and queue slowly and everybody is obeying and respecting the rules in each individual establishment and that's very important I think for people. And I would like to finish by congratulating the absolutely positive way that the people we went off to the Commonwealth Games acted throughout the Games and are still acting and I think that that is once again overwhelmingly positive for St Helena at the moment. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Any other Honourable Member wishes to speak? Honourable Martin Henry, Minister Martin Henry?

The Hon. Martin Henry –

Thank you, Mr Speaker; I rise in support of the Adjournment. Just to follow on from Honourable Thrower's statement there, I will just speak about the Commonwealth Games. So, one of the most memorable and heartfelt moments of my recent visit with the Commonwealth Games actually had minimal to do with sports. My interest and passion in addressing and supporting the need for a holistic approach to health was understanding the many complexities and blurred lines between its service delivery and our personal responsibility led me to spend much of my personal time in the temporary field clinic on our Games Village site. I became friends with a number of respected professionals at the Clinic and as the medical contact for Team St Helena, I was part of a large, professional group who shared information and opinions on a daily basis with regards to Covid, sports injuries and general practice. This support

network has continued after the Games, we use it to share ideas and while St Helena has its own set of unique and sometimes difficult circumstances, so does all other members of the Commonwealth, especially other small island states, something I think we should remember. What I found and would like to share with you is how much more than sports the Commonwealth Games really is in supporting its slogan “Sports is just the Beginning”. During the first week in the Clinic, there was an endless queue of athletes from many countries with very limited or no access to medical services. The Clinic offered dental care and surgery, eye screening and free spectacles, in-depth, long-term injury rehabilitation, an MRI and many other services. This was provided by Opticians, Dentists, Specialist Nurses, Physiotherapists, Medical Doctors and support staff who all gave up their own time to run an entire voluntary service. What cannot be underestimated or expressed in words is the pure joy on the athlete’s faces when they walked out with their new spectacles, dental care after suffering for a period of time and/or support given with injuries which have prevented them from improving their performance. I took time to engage with some of them, to hear their personal struggles, despite numerous communication barriers. Talking to some of the Health Care professionals who have given up their busy time, busy hospital times, to voluntarily run a busy Clinic was quite humbling, it reinforced to me what it meant to be part of a real caring community regardless of different cultures and/or physical boundaries. So why is this important to us here on St Helena at this particular time? There has been many opinions expressed since the decision was made to lift the Covid 19 restrictions, be it professional, fearful, emotional, unfounded and dare I say, in some cases, strategic statements and/or alignments for future personal ambitions. All of the heated debates, talk shows and protests formed part of what it is like to live in a society where we can openly express ourselves, they are all just opinions in various degrees of credibility, but we are now in the period that really counts where the island has begun the actual process of living with Covid. It is time for us to set aside our differences and start to truly act as the community which we pride ourselves on. Many people remain afraid and fearful, live alone and some already have health conditions to manage. We need to now support each other as a community through this period and we can do this by simply checking on a neighbour who lives alone, report any worries you may have for a friend and neighbour or relative to the Health team, stop the unfounded fearmongering and gossip. If you have a genuine question, don’t assume and then add some, ask. Questions can be passed to me directly or through any member of the Legislative Council. As we navigate our way through this uncertainty, the best possible outcomes are only achieved if we work together to support each other. We can overcome emotions, such as fear and anxiety, but not with debating facts or fiction, but with exercising and care and compassion. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Any other Honourable Member wish to speak? Honourable Chief Minister?

The Hon. Julie Thomas (Chief Minister) –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise with this Adjournment Debate this afternoon and actually feel that we’ve come a long, long way. Today, I really believe that although there’s challenges, we are finally starting to work together as a team and I have to say that is really warming for me as Chief Minister, it’s not been an easy ten months, I don’t think we ever said it was going to be and we’ve got challenges, but I think from what Minister Henry has just done, prior to me speaking now, confirms the need for us to work together, whether we’re elected members, whether we’re members of the community. As I always do, I’ll try and go across everything that people have said and then I’ve got a few comments at the end that I’d like to pass on to the listening public. A lot has been talked about the economic challenges, the global warming, the

cost of energy, water, cost of living. I think we all recognise that this is hitting St Helena and the international, the world really and we're doing everything we can, on such a small island that is reliant, heavily reliant on grant-in-aid, to do all that we can as a Government, but we need to go further than this, we need to face this as an island, we need to create local solutions to the problems that we have, we need unity, we need to work together and I'll go back to our Vision, because we talked about it when we spoke about the Legislative Programme earlier. In March 2022, we released our Vision and it said that we want to work towards a Sustainable Environment that creates opportunity and inspires social and economic progress, ensuring a better quality of life for all. I can assure you that that is still the Vision that this Council and, indeed, the Cabinet, is working towards, we've actually not changed the order of priority. When we think about it, when we put this Vision together, at the top of our list was to ensure a more robust Healthcare Service, which acknowledges and focuses on holistic health, taking into account our ageing population and the complexity of our health and social needs whilst encouraging a more responsible approach to improving our individual lifestyles. I appreciate that we haven't achieved everything, but our Health Service is in a better place. When I recall Minister Henry coming to us in October/November of last year and what Health was dealing with there, compared to where we are now, I think the fruits of the labour will soon be seen. I want to do a special thanks to Health and Social Care a little later, but I just thought I'd mention it. The very next priority on our Vision list is the development of our renewable energy and water security plans which ensure that we primarily protect our environment whilst delivering both resources at affordable prices, so although the community might feel the cost of living is hitting hard, we as a Government recognise that renewable energy is the way forward if we are going to allow for a climate whereby businesses and domestic homes can thrive. We talked about energy generation and the need for battery storage, and, again, I thank Minister Scipio for sharing the plans in place which I think most every elected member has mentioned here today. The potential exists within the EDIP, which Minister Brooks spoke about, to move forward this work. Officers will be tasked to work with all relevant stakeholders to explore options and develop the business case necessary to trigger funding to take this agenda forward, which is the Energy Strategy. Climate Change, Councillor Coleman mentioned it and dare I say, I think it has hit our shores to be perfectly honest, climate change. There's a lot of change that's impacting St Helena when it's linked to our water supply and the distribution and storage. As with Energy, Officers will be working with stakeholders to develop the Water Resource Management Plan as per the Water Strategy. It is pleasing to note that we have made progress with opening our island and I thank all Members for our support with opening the island. I will agree with you, it has been the hardest decision for this Government yet and we're now living with Covid and as Councillor Thrower I think mentioned the spread is slow and I thank the community for being responsible and ensuring that we can cope with this on our island. It was never an easy decision, but the information, evidence and information provided to us by our professionals within the Health Department has been tremendous and thus far it shows it works. Our community has also been very responsible, we've talked about the vaccine rollout and at those percentages we should all be proud of what we've achieved thus far. With regards to Covid, I would like to say thank you to the community for your efforts, but I must thank Dr Derek Burke, Dr Peter Moss and Julie George who's been the one who's been pushing out the information on behalf of the Press Office team, they have worked extremely hard and with the Portfolio Director, Tracy Poole-Nandy, I think we've put enough information out there for everybody, whether it was through TV, papers, bulletins, we've spoken to young people and we've been on the radio, it demonstrates that if we listen to the facts we can do this together. I then now would like to talk about our young people. Tomorrow I will be at Prince Andrew School for Result Day. It's a huge day in the lives of young people and as everybody else has done I would like to say congratulations to those who've received results thus far and I hope



that tomorrow the results will continue to flow in and that it will be positive for the individuals, but also for St Helena Island. I do appreciate there's lots of opportunity elsewhere for our young people, but we are working diligently to try and make St Helena a more attractive place for our people to work and live. I will want to say a few things regarding our Champions as well, this is a new thing for this Council and I would encourage the support from St Helena Government, the NGO's and the private sector. We've got four Champions, they've mentioned themselves as well, but I'll just remind everybody Honourable Andrew Turner is the Champion for Culture and Arts; for Culture, okay, I thought it was Arts attached to that; Councillor Gillian Brooks for Older Persons; Councillor Rosemary Bargo for Children and, of course, Councillor Dr Corinda Essex is for Innovation and Business, so for those of you, and I know that I will be working a lot with Councillor Rosemary Bargo in trying to see how we can work together in respect of Education, Skills and Employment, so I look forward to that. I would also like to address, but I'll need to declare an interest, about fishing. It's good to know that we are hoping that there will be some progress made now in respect of fishing, I think it's fair to say our fishing industry has been strained for the last two and a half years and we sincerely hope that we now will be seeing a fully operational factory and it will be, as most have said, for the benefit of St Helena and those that work within that sector. Now to a few thanks of my own. I think a lot of people have mentioned the Liberated African re-interment that happened that happened over the weekend, so I won't go on for too long on that, but I do want to say thank you to everybody that was involved, that include volunteers, the private sector, Government Officers, staff of the National Trust, students of Prince Andrew School, Ngo's and most importantly the Liberated African Advisory Committee for their diligent management and I look forward to continuing to work and support those as we proceed, because that was Stage 1, if I can put it that way. Minister Henry mentioned going away with the Commonwealth Games so we'll be saying welcome home to the Commonwealth Games team on the weekend, so I do hope that the community will join us in showing that they have a warm welcome back to St Helena. For me personally, it's lovely to have Minister Henry back. As much as it was nice to learn about Health and Social Care, it was at the most tiresome time ever so welcome back Minister Henry, but I'd like to say a huge thank you to Health and Social Care Portfolio for their support, advice and guidance during the absence of Minister Henry. It was indeed a pleasure to work with you all, making a challenging time more bearable and productive, so now I hand them back to Minister Henry with extreme glee, but it was an experience. And now, as this is the first formal LegCo since the arrival of our new Governor, Governor Nigel Phillips and his wife Emma, I would also like to extend a warm welcome to both of them and I'm sure we'll all look forward to making their transition to the island a smooth one. As new Governor to the Island, I know that we'll be looking forward to building a strong working relationship with him to ensure the best outcomes can be achieved for the Island. To achieve such, we will require cohesive collaboration between our Public Service FCDO, St Helena Government and the community in general. These are difficult times, but I must say that we are the owners of our own destiny and if we work together we can achieve what is the best for St Helena, even though times are difficult and I just want to reiterate what Minister Henry said, it is difficult, I'm not gonna say it isn't, but there are other places in the world that are in a worse place than we are and we must just continue to hold on to that as we progress and work towards a better future for us all. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Well, we've come to the end of the meeting. Minister Henry, I apologise for not welcoming you back and, of course, hearing what you had to say I should have done that. You know, Robert Midwinter, he mentioned a couple of things, talking about the Standing Orders and the Code of Conduct and Access you mentioned as well and I know

that these things are going to be dealt with. You know, the reason why my Deputy isn't here today is because she couldn't get up those stairs, yeah. Now she could have listened from downstairs but where does she wash her hands, where does she go to the loo, it's all the way over there by the Jacob's Ladder, yeah? Not comfortable at all, so I, you know, as far as she wanting to maybe stay at home today, you know, I was all for that, but we are going to have a meeting at the end of September, the last week in September, because that's when Karl Thrower and Corinda Essex and Gillian Brooks will be back, so we want them to be at the meeting, so we will have a meeting and hopefully by then we'll have the Code of Conduct that you mentioned, Rob, and the Standing Orders ready for then, looking at our Deputy or Acting Attorney General, shall I get that right, to try and help us with putting that in place by then, ten months, Chief Minister you say you've been in office already, let's try and get these things done before the one year is up anyway, but what a good, sort of, meeting it's been, very constructive. And I think that's all I want to say, but I'm not supposed to be saying too much anyway, but very pleased to hear about the Champions though, you know, we've got our Champions and, you know, any help you want from the Speaker's Office, do get in touch, yeah. Okay, so that's the end of the meeting. Honourable Members, that concludes our Business for today and I thank you all for your contributions and participation here today. I now put the question that this Council do adjourn sine die.

Question that the Council adjourn sine die, put and agreed to.

The Speaker –

Thank you all very much.

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**Honourable Speaker**

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**Date**