

MARCH 2025

# ST HELENA AMBASSADOR



## Editorial

*Katelyn Benjamin*

Welcome to the March 2025 edition of the St Helena Ambassador!

This month, we celebrate the launch of St Helena's new Care Certificate programme, providing local residents with the skills and knowledge needed to become registered caregivers. Developed with UK Health Security Agency support and tailored by Gavin Thomas, this qualification ensures high standards of care for the community.

In exciting conservation news, two new species of Pirate Spiders have been discovered in St Helena's cloud forest, thanks to the dedicated work of British arachnologist Danni Sherwood and the St Helena National Trust. These newly identified species, *Ero lizae* and *Ero natashae*, highlight the island's rich biodiversity and the efforts of women in conservation.

Meanwhile, a community-led road repair initiative at Harpers has greatly improved safety for school buses and local transport. Thanks to collaboration between Councillor Rob Midwinter, government departments, and prisoners from the island's correctional facility, the project is a shining example of teamwork and resourcefulness. Simultaneously, the Roads Section has made significant strides in enhancing public transport safety by completing the installation of lighting at all bus shelters across the island, ensuring commuters are safer and more visible during those crucial early morning and evening hours.

The Roads Section completed a successful project to improve public transport safety by supplying all bus shelters across the island with reliable lighting, addressing previous gaps. Notable installations include solar lights at multiple locations. These upgrades greatly improve visibility and safety for commuters, especially during early mornings and evenings.

Finally, young students from Pilling, St Paul's, and Harford Primary Schools came together for the Early Years Sports Day, a fun-filled morning of races, games, and community spirit at Prince Andrew School.

If you'd like to contribute a story to the St Helena Ambassador or have suggestions for future editions, please contact [katelyn.benjamin@sainthelena.gov.sh](mailto:katelyn.benjamin@sainthelena.gov.sh) or call 22470.

## IN THIS ISSUE

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL  
CARE LAUNCHES CARE  
CERTIFICATE**

**NEW PIRATE SPIDER  
SPECIES DISCOVERED ON  
ST HELENA THROUGH  
CLOUD FOREST PROJECT**

**COLLABORATIVE EFFORT  
LEADS TO ROAD REPAIRS  
AT HARPERS**

**ISLAND BUS SHELTERS  
NOW ILLUMINATED  
THANKS TO ROADS  
SECTION INITIATIVE**

**EARLY YEARS  
SPORTS DAY**

# HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE LAUNCHES CARE CERTIFICATE PROGRAMME

St Helena has launched a new Care Certificate programme to train and register local residents as caregivers.

The programme is based on a similar model that is well-established in the UK and is being rolled out across other UK Overseas Territories with support from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA).

The launch event featured speeches from Dr Ian Cummings and Dr Natalie Wright of UKHSA highlighting the importance of this initiative on St Helena to provide the best care to everyone.

The Care Certificate is a vocational qualification, similar to an NVQ. Students who successfully complete the course will become registered caregivers.

Gavin Thomas, Head of Service – Operations (Social Care), has adapted the course to suit the context of St Helena.

The care certificate is a nationally recognised qualification that demonstrates that a person has the skills and knowledge to provide safe and effective care.

It covers a range of topics, including:

- Understanding your role
- Personal development
- Duty of care
- Equality and diversity
- Working in a person-centred way
- Communication
- Privacy and dignity
- Fluids and nutrition
- Awareness of mental health, dementia and learning disability
- Safeguarding adults
- Safeguarding children
- Basic life support
- Health and safety
- Handling Information
- Infection prevention control

The Care Certificate is a valuable qualification for anyone who wants to work in the care sector. It is also a great way to develop your skills and knowledge if you are already working in care.

If you are interested in learning more about the Care Certificate programme, please contact Gavin Thomas - Social Care via email: [gavin.thomas@sainthelena.gov.sh](mailto:gavin.thomas@sainthelena.gov.sh) or Carol Evanson-Coombe – Health via email: [carol.evanson-coombe@sainthelena.gov.sh](mailto:carol.evanson-coombe@sainthelena.gov.sh)



*Delegates Engaging With the Course Content*



*Gavin Thomas Delivers the Training to Delegates*



*Care Certificate Booklets*



## NEW PIRATE SPIDER SPECIES DISCOVERED ON ST HELENA THROUGH CLOUD FOREST PROJECT

Through funding from the St Helena Cloud Forest Project (SHCFP), two new endemic species of Pirate Spiders have been discovered within St Helena's cloud forest. The St Helena Cloud Forest Project is an exciting, highly collaborative project funded by the UK Government's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, working to up-scale cloud forest restoration within the Peaks National Park for St Helena's water, wildlife, and people.

The incredible study of the spiders of St Helena was led by noted British arachnologist, Danni Sherwood, who visited the island in 2022 through SHCFP funding.

Working closely with the project's Invertebrate Team at the St Helena National Trust, Danni was able to find and closely study the two species. This included the use of DNA sequencing after returning to the National History Museum in London following her visit.



*Ero Natashe*

These studies confirmed that the Pirate Spiders – named so due to their habit of taking over the webs of other spiders – are new to science and found only in St Helena's cloud forest; this after four decades of them being thought to be a single common species found in many other parts of the world. They were duly named in honour of the conservation efforts of two dedicated women in conservation on St Helena; *Ero lizae*, after Liza Fowler, and *Ero natashae*, after Natasha Stevens, both of the St Helena National Trust, a key local partner of the Cloud Forest Project.

Close examination of the spiders gave the first indications that they were, in fact, two different species. *Ero lizae* has two spike-like structures at the back of its body, while *Ero natashae* is significantly smaller.

"Having an invertebrate named after me is exciting as, in centuries past, women weren't recognised for their contribution to science," commented Liza Fowler. "I hope this will inspire other women to know that, one day, they can be acknowledged for their hard work in conservation, overall."

Showcasing the global significance of this discovery, it was recently listed at number 14 in 'Vocal Earth's' article on '20 of the Most Spectacular Species Discoveries in 2024'.



*Ero Lizae*

# COLLABORATIVE EFFORT LEADS TO ROAD REPAIRS AT HARPERS

A collaborative effort between various government departments and community stakeholders has resulted in much-needed repairs to the deteriorated road at Harpers. The road had degraded to the point where school buses struggled to safely traverse the route, prompting a concerned bus driver to seek assistance from Councillor Rob Midwinter, the representative for St Paul's.

Recognising the urgency of the issue, Councillor Midwinter reached out to Darren Francis, Roads Manager; Andrea Timm, Agriculture Development Officer; Paul Duncan, Superintendent of Prisons; and Mike Durnford, as this particular section of the road did not fall under SHG's routine maintenance portfolio. Councillor Midwinter called for a collaborative effort to address the problem, and all parties were willing to contribute to the solution.

Superintendent Duncan offered the assistance of prisoners for the repair operations, whilst the Environment, Natural Resources, and Planning (ENRP) Portfolio agreed to supply the necessary materials and equipment.

Following an assessment by both the ENRP and the Roads Section, it was determined that, due to limited resources, rubble would be the most suitable option for filling the potholes. ENRP also provided a small stone roller to seal the work once completed.

Following initial discussions, all parties met at the Harpers Road site to develop a comprehensive action plan. Operations soon commenced, with prisoners filling the worst potholes with the provided rubble, followed by the use of the roller to bind the materials together. This collective initiative significantly improved the condition of the road, benefiting those who rely on it for transportation, including school buses, the Prison Service, and Connect Saint Helena.

The project stands as a testament to the power of cooperation and resource-sharing in tackling community infrastructure challenges, demonstrating the positive impact of collective action on public services and safety.



*Prisoners Working on the Road at Harpers*

# ISLAND BUS SHELTERS NOW ILLUMINATED THANKS TO ROADS SECTION INITIATIVE

The Roads Section recently completed a successful mini-project to enhance the safety and convenience of public transport users across the island. The project, led by Roads Inspector, Darren Francis, focused on ensuring all installed bus shelters are equipped with adequate lighting, addressing previous inconsistencies where some shelters lacked illumination or had insufficient light sources.

The Roads Section is pleased to announce that every installed bus shelter now benefits from a reliable lighting solution. This improvement will significantly improve visibility and safety, particularly during evening and early morning hours.



*Light installations at Bottom Woods and White Gate*

The project involved various lighting installations tailored to each shelter's specific needs. Notable installations include:

- **Alarm Forest Bus Shelter:** A solar light was installed next to the block work building.
- **Two Gun Saddle Bus Shelter:** A new bulkhead with backing was installed in the glass shelter.
- **Bottom Woods Bus Shelter:** A new solar light was installed, replacing the previous lighting.
- **Nr Harlyn Bus Shelter:** A bulkhead was installed.
- **Longwood Bus Shelter and Ropery Field Bus Shelter:** Bulkheads were installed
- **Rosemary Plain Bus Shelter:** A bulkhead was installed
- **Sunnyside Bus Shelter and High Point Bus Shelter:** Bulkheads were installed.

The Roads Section remains committed to improving the island's infrastructure and enhancing the experience of those using public transport. This project is a testament to their dedication and hard work.



*Light installations at Rosemary Plain and Longwood Avenue*



## EARLY YEARS SPORTS DAY

On Wednesday, 26 February 2025, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Sports Day took place at Francis Plain organised by Harford Primary School. The event brought together students from nursery and reception, parents, and supporters from St Paul's, Pilling, and Harford Primaries for a day filled with activities and non-competitive races.

The day began with an opening speech by Patricia Williams, headteacher of St Paul's Primary. She welcomed everyone, emphasising that the purpose of the day was to have fun and enjoy the spirit of the event. Pat also provided a brief overview of the schedule.

The races started shortly after, with students from all three schools participating in an open race, followed by a variety of fun events such as the sack race and the shopping race.

Parents were also included in the action, with a three-legged race, a parents' race, and a parents-and-child race adding to the excitement.

The day concluded around 13:00 with a communal rendition of the Hokey Pokey, in which all the children, parents, and supporters took part, marking the end of a fun-filled event. The EYFS Sports Day was a great success, bringing the community together for a day of enjoyment and shared experiences.



*The "Shopping Cart" Race*



*The "Egg & Spoon" Race*



*The "Sack" Race*



*The "Carry Your Child & Run" Race*