



# PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

MORNING SESSION: 9.15 a.m. – 12.49 p.m.

Gibraltar, Thursday, 16th October 2014

## Business transacted

Prayer .....	3
Order of the Day .....	3
Confirmation of Minutes .....	3
Refurbishment of antechamber .....	3
Visit of Secretary of State for Defence, Rt. Hon. Michael Fallon.....	4
Good wishes to the Hon. Isobel Ellul-Hammond.....	4
Papers to be laid.....	4
Questions for Oral Answer .....	5
Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port .....	5
Q472/2014 Monaco Boat Show – Attendance .....	5
Q473/2014 Sandy Bay beach – Replenishment cost .....	6
Q474/2014 Tourism Department – Advertising expenditure .....	7
Q475/2014 Tourism and hospitality courses – Cost, attendees and content .....	8
Q474/2014 continued – Tourism Department – Advertising expenditure .....	10
Q476/2014 Gibraltar Bus Company – New livery .....	16
Q477/2014 Gibraltar Bus Company – New diesel fleet .....	17
Q478/2014 Peter Sardeña – Industrial Tribunal .....	17
Q479/2014 School bus service – Plans to introduce .....	18
Q480/2014 Urban bicycle rental scheme – Plans to introduce.....	18
Q481/2014 New bus fleet – Definition of ‘environmentally friendly’ .....	20
Q482/2014 South Mole, Detached Mole and North Mole – Industrial activity .....	20
Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.....	22
Q483/2014 Sports and Leisure Authority – Current vacancies .....	22
Q484/2014 Victoria Stadium – Upgrade to UEFA category 3.....	23
Q485/2014 Gibraltar Cricket Association – Alternative facilities .....	26

Q486/2014 Heritage-related sites – Details of works undertaken .....	26
Q487/2014 Sports grants – Payments in 2014-15 .....	27
Q488/2014 Cultural grants – Awards in 2014-15 .....	28
Health and the Environment .....	29
Q489/2014 Prohibition of smoking in public places – Further exemptions .....	29
Q490/2014 Wildlife Gibraltar Ltd gull culling unit – Numbers employed .....	29
Q491/2014 Wildlife Gibraltar Ltd gull culling unit – Details of employees and their firearms certificates .....	29
Q492/2014 Wildlife Gibraltar Ltd gull culling unit – Insurance cover for firearms accidents .....	30
Q493/2014 Wildlife Gibraltar Ltd gull culling unit – Rifles and bullets used .....	30
Q494/2014 Wildlife Gibraltar Ltd gull culling unit – Employees’ qualifications .....	30
Q495/2014 Wildlife Gibraltar Ltd gull culling unit – Prior experience of employees .....	30
Q496/2014 Wildlife Gibraltar Ltd gull culling unit – Night-time operation .....	30
Q497/2014 Wildlife Gibraltar Ltd gull culling unit – Safety protocols for shooting rifles .....	31
Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth .....	34
Q488/2014 continued – Cultural grants – Awards in 2014-15 .....	34
Health and the Environment .....	35
Q498/2014 Yellow-legged gulls – Removal of nests from buildings .....	35
Q499/2014 Yellow-legged gulls – Numbers culled since 1st April 2013 .....	35
Q500/2014 Yellow-legged gulls – Numbers culled in areas designated for imported partridges .....	35
Q501/2014 Feral cats – Numbers culled in areas designated for imported partridges .....	36
Q502/2014 Upper Rock Nature Reserve – Measures to reduce seagulls, feral cats and rats .....	36
Q503/2014 Electromagnetic emissions – Risks to health .....	38
Q504/2014 Nesting facilities for swallows – Provision at old St Bernard’s Hospital .....	38
Q505/2014 Environment (Control of Dust) Regulation 2010 – Implementation at GOG construction sites .....	39
<i>The House recessed at 11.24 a.m. and resumed its sitting at 11.37 a.m.</i> .....	40
Suspension of Standing Orders .....	40
Standing Order 7(1) suspended to proceed with a Government Statement .....	40
Government Statement .....	40
Statement by the Chief Minister – Visit of Secretary of State for Defence, Rt. Hon. Michael Fallon ..	40
Health and the Environment .....	42
Q506/2014 Ebola virus – Level of threat to Gibraltar and measures in place .....	42
<i>The House recessed at 12.49 p.m. and resumed its sitting at 3.06 p.m.</i> .....	52

# The Gibraltar Parliament

*The Parliament met at 9.15 a.m.*

[MR SPEAKER: Hon. A J Canepa GMH OBE *in the Chair*]

[CLERK TO THE PARLIAMENT: P E Martinez Esq *in attendance*]

## PRAYER

*Mr Speaker*

## Order of the Day

**Clerk:**(i) Oath of Allegiance.

### CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

**Clerk:** (ii) Confirmation of Minutes – the Minutes of the last meeting of Parliament, which was held on 25th and 30th June and 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th July 2014.

5 **Mr Speaker:** May I sign the minutes as correct? (**Members:** Aye.)

*Mr Speaker signed the Minutes.*

10 **Clerk:** (iii) Communications from the Chair; (iv) Petitions; (v) Announcements; (vi) Papers to be laid – the Hon. the Chief Minister.

### Refurbishment of antechamber

15 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, with your indulgence, before I start the process of laying various items on the table, can I just ask the House to reflect on the fact that the House has not met since June as a result of the works which have been carried out in the antechamber, which hon. Members will no doubt want to agree with me have greatly improved that area. We had hoped to return in September, but this was not possible because of the works affecting the sophisticated audio-visual equipment that is now installed for our live feeds.

20 Mr Speaker, I know that all Members will want to join me in crediting GJBS, as main contractor, who have carried out the works to meet a challenging deadline, to say the least. All their subcontractors in doing this work have been locally based, the House will be pleased to know. The refurbishment not only consisted of the upgrading of items of furniture and restoring of some other historic features, such as the fireplace and the window timber panels, but also saw a complete overhaul of the infrastructure to cater for today's demands, especially IT, which we do hope is working this morning after one or two tests yesterday.

25 Mr Speaker, importantly – and the Minister for the Environment will be pleased to note – the energy performance of the area has been improved with the introduction of more efficient air-conditioning systems and new lights, and new speakers, apparently.

Of course, it is also worth mentioning, Mr Speaker, your own and your staff's patience for having endured the inconvenience of being moved to alternative premises for much of the period of the works – but I trust that you will now enjoy the much improved environment.

**Visit of Secretary of State for Defence, Rt. Hon. Michael Fallon**

30 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, I should also inform the House that late yesterday the Secretary of State for Defence arrived in Gibraltar for a short visit.

I shall be absenting myself from the Chamber shortly in order to meet with the Rt. Hon. Mr Fallon and will return as soon as possible after I have concluded my meetings with him to report to the House on the outcome of such meetings.

**Good wishes to the Hon. Isobel Ellul-Hammond**

35 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, finally, before I sit down, can I also ask the House to note that one of the chairs opposite is empty. Mrs Ellul-Hammond has been unwell and is unable – as we all now know, for health reasons – to join us this morning. I am sure all Members will want to join me in wishing her well and that her speedy recovery should bring her back amongst us as soon as possible.

40 I know, Mr Speaker, that from the outside it sometimes appears that Members are constantly at each other's throats and that there is little of the milk of human kindness between us, but what is also very, very true is that although we defend our ideas and our ideology to the best of our abilities in this place, when one of us is down, she or he has the solidarity, friendship and respect of all of us across the floor of the House. I do wish that she is back in this House with us as soon as possible. (*Applause*)

45 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, on behalf of the Opposition, the Opposition would like to associate itself entirely with everything that the Hon. the Chief Minister and Leader of the House has said. It was a matter that I was going to be raising in relation to Isobel Ellul-Hammond, and I am very grateful that the Chief Minister has done so on behalf of this House.

50 As someone who – and indeed the Chief Minister – has been the subject of an unfortunate event in the past... When something like this happens to you, having the support and having the well wishes of not only people on your side but also people on the other side of the political spectrum is very comforting, is very important and shows that in a community like Gibraltar, which is a very small community, we may be politically very divided in terms of the issues of the day, but when it comes to standing shoulder to shoulder and showing compassion and empathy for people within our community, despite the political divides, that is exactly what happens, and so it should be.

55 So, Mr Speaker, on behalf of the Opposition, I associate myself and I thank the Hon. the Leader of the House for his kind words. (*Applause*)

**Mr Speaker:** May I also, on my own behalf and on behalf of the Clerk and the staff of Parliament, wish the hon. Lady, Isobel Ellul-Hammond, a speedy recovery. We look forward to seeing her amongst us as soon as possible.

**PAPERS TO BE LAID**

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, without further ado, I now have the honour to lay on the table the Annual Accounts of the Government of Gibraltar for the year ended 31st March 2013, and the Audited Accounts of the Gibraltar Regulatory Authority for the year ended March 2014.

65 **Mr Speaker:** Ordered to lie.

**Clerk:** The Hon. the Minister for Education, Telecommunications and Justice.

70 **Minister for Education, Telecommunications and Justice (Hon. G H Licudi):** Mr Speaker, I have the honour to lay on the table the Annual Report of the Gibraltar Police Authority for the year ended 31st March 2014.

**Mr Speaker:** Ordered to lie.

75 **Clerk:** (vii) Reports of Committees.

## Questions for Oral Answer

### TOURISM, COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS, PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND THE PORT

#### Q472/2014 Monaco Boat Show – Attendance

**Clerk:** (viii) Answers to Oral Questions.  
Question 472/2014, the Hon. D J Bossino.

80 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Port state who attended the recent Monaco Boat Show, and by ‘who attended’ – I have spoken to the Hon. Minister opposite – I mean, obviously, those in his Department, as opposed to all the attendees of the Boat Show.

85 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port.

**Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa):** Yes, Mr Speaker, the Captain of the Port, Commodore Bob Sanguinetti, represented the Gibraltar Port Authority, and Ms Diana Soussi represented the Gibraltar Maritime Administration.

90 I took it, on receiving the Question, that that is what he meant, and I am grateful that he did communicate that to me in any case.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, I know it was not in the Question, but does he have information as to the expenditure of the trip? I fully understand if he does not have the information; it was not part of the Question.

95 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, out of the nine supplementary paragraphs that I foresaw, that was not one of them. I apologise.

100 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, I am in quite a relaxed mood this morning, so he need not have prepared so much!

Can the hon. Member give me an indication as to whether this information will be published on the Gibraltar Government website at some point? Because I think it is, in relation to many of the other Departments.

105 **Hon. N F Costa:** Yes, Mr Speaker, the information, as is the case, will be published on the Government website, but should he not find it during the course of this month, he can of course ask me again, or write to me, and I will provide him with the information.

110 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, this may be one of the supplementaries he has prepared for: can he advise this House whether he has information as to whether this particular trip has produced any returns in terms of economic activity for Gibraltar?

**Hon. N F Costa:** Five paragraphs devoted to that supplementary!

115 Mr Speaker, the Captain of the Port and the Maritime Administrator met with several, I thought, important persons. They met with, for example, the editor, the senior sales executive and the associate publisher of *Superyacht Business*, which, as the hon. Gentleman knows, is the most high-impacting yacht magazine internationally. They also met with the owners of certain yacht companies and with members of other ship registries, such as the Isle of Man Ship Registry and the British Virgin Islands. They have also met with shipping agents, such as Custer Networks, AFM Insurance Brokers, Marine and Superyachts Willis and the *Boat Exclusive* yachting magazine. So they did hold, over the course of those two days, a series of, I thought, quite important meetings.

In respect of what Gibraltar may hopefully receive in terms of promotion, I do understand from the Captain of the Port that *Superyacht Business*, *Superyacht Group* and *Boat Exclusive* will all three be featuring articles in Gibraltar in the upcoming editions.

125 In respect of whether any of those meetings with superyacht owners and agents will provide any specific results, the hon. Gentleman I am sure will agree with me that, given that the festival was on 25th and 26th

September, it is too soon to be able to specifically quantify, but obviously we are hopeful that it will attract business to the Gibraltar Ship Registry here in Gibraltar.

130 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Just one other point of detail – of course, I am hopeful that it will attract such  
business as the Hon. Minister refers to. In relation to the publications he refers to – *Superyacht Business*,  
and I think there were another two; I have not taken a note of that – and the features they are going to be  
running on Gibraltar, are those as a result of payments which his Department is making, or is it an editorial  
as opposed to...? In other words, is it an editorial feature, for which we do not pay; or is it an advertorial  
135 feature?

**Hon. N F Costa:** The answer that I have, Mr Speaker, says that they will be including features on  
Gibraltar. It does not say whether it would be an advertorial or an editorial. Obviously, if it is an advertorial,  
I would be able to edit the content, which in a way I prefer; but I am also hopeful, on behalf of Minister  
140 Bossano and the entirety of the taxpayer that it is just a promotion feature which does not require the  
taxpayer to pay any money.

**Q473/2014**  
**Sandy Bay beach –**  
**Replenishment cost**

**Clerk:** Question 473, the Hon. D J Bossino.

145 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Minister for Tourism provide updated details of the costs of the replenishing  
of the Sandy Bay beach?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port.

150 **Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa):** Yes,  
Mr Speaker, the replenishment cost of Sandy Bay Beach was £1,441,590.

The hon. Gentleman may recall that when he asked me some time back, I estimated that the cost would  
be £1,490,000, so there was a little saving.

155 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can he give an indication as to why that is the case? Obviously, any saving must be  
welcome, but he is absolutely right: in his answer to a similar Question that I posed on 29th May, he did say  
it was £1.4905 million. It has now gone down slightly. Can he give an indication as to why that saving?

160 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, in the absence of any arachnids, we did not have to pay for those, of  
course. Apart from that, that was the contract value. It just so happened that we were able to obtain the full  
50,000 tonnes of sand for a slightly lesser amount – but we did obtain exactly what was sought.

165 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, in relation to the price of the sand for Sandy Bay, was that the  
cheapest option that was put to the Government at the time? Does the Hon. the Minister have that  
information?

170 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman perhaps will remember that, whereas we did start the  
process of replenishing the beach from a different source, that was cut short by actions taken at the border.  
So, whereas I cannot tell him, because I do not have the information before me, whether it was the cheapest  
option, I sincerely doubt it, given that we had to transport the sand from I think it was the Western Sahara,  
and we could not cross it through the border, so naturally... just thinking about it, without the information  
before me, I would think that it would not have been the cheapest option, no.

175 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, the reason why I am asking this question is because I have had a  
couple of people come to see me and complain that, in actual fact, this was not the cheapest option for the  
Government – not because the sand was to come from Spain, but because there was a cheaper option from  
Morocco itself. That is why I am asking the question of the Hon. the Minister.

Could the Minister, if he does not have the information – clearly, he does not – simply perhaps make  
enquiries and then come back to me in relation to this, so that I could allay the fears or the concerns of those  
people who have come to me and made that complaint?

180 Indeed, there may be a perfectly reasonable explanation – if it is true that there were cheaper proposals put to the Government – as to why the Government did not go with the cheaper proposals for sand from Morocco and went with this particular option.

185 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, what I can tell the hon. Gentleman is that, unfortunately, it is a fact of life for me that when I receive a recommendation on anything as to whom to award a contract, those who are not successful write in to complain. Unfortunately, I must be guided by the advice that my technicians provide me with. I am not an expert and therefore I am perfectly happy to always sign off on what the advice is.

190 Let me tell him what I told the hon. Gentleman the last time I was asked the question. The contract for the regeneration of the bay was awarded following a public tender, which was concluded in March of this year, and the tender document specified the specifications for the sand but did not specify the source. Following review by the team that was considering the tenders, the contract was awarded to Van Oord, which I am told was the most economically advantageous compliant bid. It may have been that within that architecture the sand *per se* may have been more cheaply sourced elsewhere, but the contract was awarded to the company that provided the most competitively attractive bid in compliance with the tender documentation.

195 I am sure that will assuage the persons who have come to see him – and if not, they can always call me.

200 **Hon. D J Bossino:** I overheard one of my colleagues mentioning, when he first answered the question, whether this is the total price tags – in other words, would this include the works in relation to, for example, the groynes?

205 **Hon. N F Costa:** No, Mr Speaker, sorry, the way that I read the Question was ‘the replenishing’ of the beach, so those costs only relate to the replenishing of the beach. If he wishes to know the cost of the total project, he will need to provide me with notice of that question and I will provide him with the information.

**Q474/2014**  
**Tourism Department –**  
**Advertising expenditure**

**Clerk:** Question 474, the Hon. D J Bossino.

210 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Minister for Tourism provide details of the advertising expenditure in each of the Departments he has ministerial responsibility for, together with details of the publications since he took office, to date?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port.

215 **Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa):** Mr Speaker, the details are as follows. In respect of the Gibraltar Port Authority: Panorama, £304.20 –

**Mr Speaker:** May I ask the Minister, does he propose to read out six or seven pages of figures?

220 **Hon. N F Costa:** Well, Mr Speaker, I may read them, or they may be taken as read and a copy provided to the hon. Gentleman.

**Mr Speaker:** I think the answer should be ‘in the schedule which I am providing to the hon. Member’, because to read six or seven pages of figures... not only is it time-consuming, but it is a pointless exercise.

225 I would suggest to the Hon. Minister that he changes slightly his answer to say, ‘The information which is requested is provided in the schedule which I am now making available to all hon. Members.’

230 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, of course I will bow to any ruling that you issue to this House, and if your advice is that I should do so in that way, I shall of course do so. I have no issue with it at all, but it certainly would not be the first time that a Minister has –

**Mr Speaker:** I am well aware that I have not been able to prevail upon the Hon. Mr Bossano (*Laughter*) to change his spots – I am well aware of that, but then the Hon. Mr Costa has not been here for over 40 years!

235 **Hon. N F Costa:** Well, Mr Speaker, in that case, and bowing to your advice, I shall certainly provide –

**Mr Speaker:** Unless the Opposition object. If they do not object, then I think (*Interjection*) –

240 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, in that case, I propose that I answer by saying that the answer that the hon. Gentleman has asked me for will be provided to him by way of a schedule, which the kind lady will photocopy and hand over to him.

**Mr Speaker:** Perhaps while that information is being photocopied, we can proceed with the next Question.

*Handout follows after Question No. 475*

**Q475/2014**

**Tourism and hospitality courses –  
Cost, attendees and content**

245 **Clerk:** Question 475, the Hon. D J Bossino.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** I must say, I am surprised by the Hon. Minister, because he normally does use the practice that the Speaker has suggested to him today. I think I have given up in relation to Mr Bossano, and I ask most of the statistical questions in writing because I know what the answer is going to be, but I did not expect it from Mr Costa.

250 Can the Minister for Tourism provide details of the costs of the tourism and hospitality courses which have been offered at Bleak House, together with details of how many attended and what the precise nature of the courses entailed?

255 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port.

**Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa):** Mr Speaker, perhaps, if I may be allowed, before I answer this particular Question, just to reply to the preface of this Question – the only reason why I decided to do it in that particular way was that sometimes, when I hand over the schedule, it has been suggested to me that the public is not able to fully digest what has been passed over and I thought that given the tremendous work that has gone into marketing Gibraltar abroad by the Gibraltar Maritime Administration, the Port Authority, my Ministry etc, I thought it would give the public a flavour of what is that is done, but as I say, I was more than happy to provide you with a schedule.

260 Mr Speaker, in answer to this particular Question, the total cost of this four-day pilot programme is broken down as follows: fee to Oxford Brookes University, £8,400; course materials, £1,202.85; and food and catering, £1,298.24.

A total of eight courses were offered between Monday, 29th September and Thursday, 2nd October, with 88 spaces available in total and 75 taken up.

270 The courses on offer were titled: ‘Leadership Development’, providing the necessary skills to managers to develop their leadership capabilities; ‘Getting to know and manage Allergens’, allowing attendees to ensure full compliance with regard to allergen control; ‘Our Customers, Our Business’, providing skills to deliver real and meaningful service excellence; ‘May I Suggest?...’, breaking down the fears of upselling by offering choice in the approach to customer service; ‘In the Line of Fire’ – perhaps something more suited to this Chamber – laying down the skills to handle challenging people and situations to achieve a positive outcome; ‘Wine and Spirit Education Trust Certificate’, an introduction to the main styles of wine and product knowledge in storage and service; and finally, ‘Menu Planning and Food Presentation’, which looked at the food culture in Gibraltar and techniques to enhance menus and food presentation.

280 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Just to understand how this works, Mr Speaker, as I understand it, there was no requirement to employ anybody outside of the... Presumably, Oxford Brookes University provided the tutors exclusively – is that the case? There was nobody who had to be employed locally to provide that tuition?

285 **Hon. N F Costa:** Yes, Mr Speaker, as press release 477 and press release 544 mentioned, the courses were provided by lecturers and trainers from the university.



**Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the detail in relation to the courses which were in fact provided. That was not, obviously, as one would have expected, set out in the press release. I am grateful for that. I take it that no formal qualifications resulted from these courses – is that correct?

290

**Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, actually, I will have to get back to him on that particular point. If I recall correctly from our discussions with Oxford Brookes lecturers, there was, on this occasion, a certification in terms of attendance but not on a particular grade as such. I will get back to him on that point though.

295

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes, I am grateful.  
Also, was there any involvement from businesses? I would have thought the local businesses, were there any businesses from outside Gibraltar?

300

**Hon. N F Costa:** Yes, Mr Speaker, as the hon. Gentleman rightly says, there was participation from the private sector. I have a few companies – the Caleta Hotel, the Lounge Bar, Calypso Tours, Le Bateau restaurant, the Lord Nelson, MH Bland and Pizza Hut – so there was significant uptake from private companies and not just from the Gibraltar Tourist Board.

305

**Hon. D J Bossino:** And, Mr Speaker, what was the nature of the involvement?

**Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, sorry, I was referring to attendees. I thought he asked me whether there was participation from the private sector, and I said that members from those particular companies had attended as attendees to the course.

310

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Of course, that question was open to that interpretation in terms of involvement, and that is fine and I am grateful for the answer; but can he also say whether there was any involvement on behalf of these businesses in relation to the courses themselves – or was that also exclusively provided by the university?

315

**Hon. N F Costa:** That is correct, Mr Speaker. It was exclusively provided by Oxford Brookes University.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Has he had any feedback from the businesses – are they happy with the course, have they suggested improvements, things like that?

320

**Hon. N F Costa:** Yes, Mr Speaker. At the conclusion of the courses, the attendees were provided with questionnaires, and although I do not have a copy of it, I remember reading that the response was overwhelmingly positive from the attendees. Again, I can give him the exact figures if he so wishes.

**Q474/2014 continued –  
Tourism Department –  
Advertising expenditure**

325

<b>GIBRALTAR PORT AUTHORITY</b>	
Panorama	£304.20
Gibraltar Chronicle	£1,104.00
Maritime Media Ltd	£3,000.00
Panorama	£197.10
Gibraltar Chronicle	£728.00
Seatrade Communications Ltd	£2,100.00
Cruise Media OY Ltd	£1,712.50
Elaborate Communications Ltd	£700.00
Seatrade Communications Ltd	£2,100.00
Seatrade Communications Ltd	£900.00
Cruise Port & Destinations Journal	£8,370.00
Tanker Shipping & Trade	£750.00
Business Outlook Ltd	£29,666.67
Elaborate Communications Ltd	£1,000.00
Herold Mediatel	£328.00
World Focus	£5,715.15

**CONT....**

**CONT. ANSWER TO QUESTION NO 474/2014**

Panorama	£162.00
Advert 'On Board' Magazine	£831.16
Seatrade Communications Ltd	£900.00
Colorworks	£300.00
Gibraltar Chronicle	£1,472.00
Panorama	£160.20
Informa UK Ltd	£1,998.00
Yacht Registry Advertisements	£29.00
Piranha Designs	£120.00
Elaborate Communications Ltd	£700.00
Piranha Designs	£80.00
The Report Company	£15,012.50
Seatrade Communications Ltd	£2,650.00
Panorama	£366.30
Gibraltar Chronicle	£1,080.00
Ship Management International	£700.00
Maritime Media Ltd	£2,500.00
Ship Management International	£800.00
Maritime Media Ltd	£4,000.00
Mercatormedia Ltd	£2,695.00
Panorama Ltd	£1,052.00
Petrospot	£1,250.00
Maritime Intelligence Ltd	£175.00
Petrospot	£800.00
Redactive Media Sales	£700.00
Elaborate Communications Ltd	£800.00
Maritime Media Ltd	£2,500.00
Herold Mediatel	£443.00
Gestion Cultural Hercules SL	£9,764.04
Informa UK Ltd	£2,287.50
Gestion Cultural Hercules SL	£4,828.97
Petrospot	£250.00
Gestion Cultural Hercules SL	£4,747.59
Gestion Cultural Hercules SL	£4,768.34
Informa UK Ltd	£14,432.50
Petromedia Ltd	£1,812.18
I H S Global Ltd	£3,045.75
Gestion Cultural Hercules SL	£4,796.55
Gibraltar Chronicle	£96.00
Panorama	£135.00

GIBRALTAR MARITIME ADMINISTRATION	
Ship Management International	£700.00
Ship Management International	£1,000.00
Tanker Operator Magazine Ltd	£450.00
Colorworks	£1,750.00
Ship Management International	£1,000.00
Tanker Shipping & Trade	£625.00

CONT....

**CONT. ANSWER TO QUESTION NO 474/2014**

Tanker Shipping & Trade	£625.00
On Board Magazine	£825.70
On Board Magazine	£825.70
Superyacht Business	£2,000.00
Yachting Pages	£1,250.00
Ship Management International	£700.00
Ship Management International	£800.00
Tanker Shipping & Trade	£600.00
Tanker Shipping & Trade	£600.00
Tanker Shipping & Trade	£600.00
Container Shipping & Trade	£600.00
Seatrade Publications	£710.00
Tanker Operator Magazine Ltd	£375.00
On Board Magazine	£834.53
On Board Magazine	£823.35
Superyacht Business	£2,300.00
Yachting Pages	£2,300.00
Ship Management International	£800.00
Tanker Shipping & Trade	£625.00
Tanker Shipping & Trade	£600.00
Tanker Shipping & Trade	£625.00
Tanker Shipping & Trade	£625.00
Container Shipping & Trade	£600.00
Seatrade Publications	£710.00
Tanker Operator Magazine Ltd	£290.00
Tanker Operator Magazine Ltd	£290.00
Tanker Operator Magazine Ltd	£290.00
Superyacht Business	£2,300.00
Superyacht Business	£1,150.00

<b>GIBRALTAR TOURIST BOARD</b>	
Daily Mail Spain Edition	£3,990
Intouch Magazine	£613
Highlife Magazine Ba	£30,000
Al Paraiso Magazine German Lang	£3,393
Future Airport Magazine	£4,100
The 123 Gibraltar Street Map	£2,000
The Olive Press	£1,113
The Mail On Sunday	£25,000
Daily Telegraph	£14,200
Radio Times	£22,023
Revista Confetti	£787
Readers Digest	£3,804
Brides Magazine	£3,500
Good Housekeeping Magazine	£10,000
Motoring And Leisure Magazine	£4,500
Perfect Wedding Magazine	£900

CONT...

**CONT. ANSWER TO QUESTION NO 474/2014**

Wedding Day Venues Magazine	£450
Woman And Home Magazine	£5,500
You And Your Wedding Magazine	£2,687
Homes And Gardens Magazine	£5,500
Sunday Telegraph	£3,000
The Times	£6,764
Wedding Travel Magazine	£1,926
Daily Express	£5,280
Daily Mail	£8,580
Sunday Express	£2,520
Sunday Times	£17,250
The Mail On Sunday Supplement	£5,127
Heritage Magazine	£2,500
Liverpool Echo	£6,000
Nottingham Evening Post	£17,600
The Mail On Sunday	£7,647
Daily Telegraph Travel Catalogue	£175
Bmi Baby Inflight Magazine	£3,501
Daily Mail Spain Edition	£2,527
La Razon	£5,006
Essential Magazine	£2,140
Capital Magazine	£5,711
Easyjet Inflight Magazine	£14,436
Superbreak Brochure	£12,500
Discover Pocket Guides	£1,120
Rock Hotel Guest Directory	£1,000
La Tribuna Marbella	£7,276
The Guardian	£15,013
Ryan Air Inflight Magazine	£4,774
Al Paraiso Magazine German Language	£1,262
Gib Int Song Festival Programme	£85
Balpa Magazine	£950
BBC History Magazine	£2,500
Daily Telegraph	£2,142
Meetings & Incentive Travel Magazine	£4,575
Perfect Wedding	£600
Radio Times	£12,500
Sunday Telegraph	£1,530
The Times	£3,300
Your Manchester Wedding Magazine	£502
Conference & Incentive Magazine	£3,671
East Midland Metro Newspaper	£3,090
Heritage Magazine	£2,550
Manchester Evening Newspaper	£3,351
Birds Magazine	£6,000
Brides Magazine	£4,511
Future Airport Magazine	£5,063
Gibraltar Song Festival	£85

**CONT..**

**CONT. ANSWER TO QUESTION NO 474/2014**

Sur In English Newspaper	£686
Routes Magazine	£5,872
Blue Planets Odyssey Magazine	£690
Essential Magazine Marbella	£5,215
High Life Magazine Ba	£35,000
La Tribuna Marbella	£20,775
Daily Mail Newspaper	£9,840
Strait Sailing Handbook	£600
Business Life Magazine	£3,600
International Cruise And Ferry Magazine	£2,750
Help For Heroes Journal	£1,000
Al Paraiso Magazine - German Language	£1,254
Vivek Magazine	£400
British Red Cross Magazine	£750
Seatrade Publications Magazine	£4,560
Daily Express Newspaper	£2,460
Daily Telegraph Newspaper	£2,100
Sunday Express Newspaper	£2,460
Sunday Telegraph Newspaper	£4,000
The Mail On Sunday Newspaper	£4,500
Cunard Yearbook	£4,344
Thomson Future Cruise Magazine	£8,000
Cruise Business Magazine	£1,944
City Of London & Docklands Times Newspaper	£125
Cruise Port And Destinations Magazine	£5,940
Ocean Village Magazine	£1,548
Bunker Bulletin Magazine	£594
Routes Europe Directory	£1,838
La Verdad	£28,915
Routes Europe 2014 Magazine	£4,571
Ragap Magazine	£1,631
Commonwealth Games Programme	£2,475
Essential Marbella Magazine	£883
Icj Magazine	£2,408
Olive Press	£1,260
Euro Weekly News	£239
Cruise Worthy Magazine	£1,200
Easyjet Inflight Magazine	£4,525
Inter Cruise And Ferry Review	£2,000
RIs Review	£530
Future Cruise Brochure	£8,000
Cresta Winter Breaks 14/15 Brochure	£1,000
Cruise Industry News Magazine	£2,247
Seatrade Cruise Review	£2,280
Help For Heroes Journal 2014	£1,000
BBC History Magazine	£3,000
Sunday Telegraph	£5,000
Perfect Wedding	£640

CONT....

**CONT. ANSWER TO QUESTION NO 474/2014**

Brides Magazine	£4,500
Your Manchester Wedding Magazine	£450
Meetings And Incentive Travel Magazine	£4,575
Conference & Incentive Travel Magazine	£3,500
Travel Bulletin	£2,310
Manchester Evening Newspaper	£4,935
Saga Magazine	£4,800
Readers Digest	£7,000
National Geographic Traveller	£4,210
BBC Wildlife Magazine	£1,210
Daily Telegraph Magazine	£10,000
The Times	£6,000
Sunday Times	£8,475
Daily Express	£2,460
Mail On Sunday	£7,380
Metro East Midlands	£3,000
Cruise Business Review	£1,856
Britain At War Magazine	£1,312
Daily Telegraph	£2,100
Radio Times	£11,600
Sunday Telegraph Stella Magazine	£3,500

**GIBRALTAR BUS COMPANY LTD**

None	£0.00
------	-------

**DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

None	£0.00
------	-------

**MINISTRY OF TOURISM, COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS, PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND THE PORT**

Gibraltar International Publications	£2,600
Insight Publications	£900
Insight Publications	£300
Olive Press	£1,798
Gibraltar International Publications	£800
Gibraltar International Publications	£300
Gibraltar International Publications	£500
Insight Publications	£300
Gibraltar International Publications	£800
Insight Publications	£300
Herold Mediatel	£284
Chase Publishing	£4,500
Develop IT	£1,970

**Mr Speaker:** If at any stage, having considered that lengthy answer, the hon. Member wishes to raise anything as a supplementary, I would be quite happy from him to do so.

330

**Hon. S M Figueras:** Perhaps, Mr Speaker, if I could just ask one of my Questions to give my hon. Friend an opportunity to review the schedule, that would be very helpful.



**Q476/2014**  
**Gibraltar Bus Company –**  
**New livery**

**Clerk:** Question 476, the Hon. S M Figueras.

335 **Hon. S M Figueras:** I am grateful, Mr Speaker.

Can the Minister for Transport say whether the new Gibraltar Bus Company buses will be liveried in a similar fashion to the existing fleet of buses?

340 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port.

**Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa):** Mr Speaker, no. The new buses will have a new livery, which I am sure the hon. Gentleman will shortly see as the buses are deployed over the next three months.

345 The hon. Gentleman will agree with me that the new and excellent, if I may say so, livery is consistent with Gibraltar's image as a vibrant and modern destination, and will undoubtedly congratulate the Government on its impeccable taste.

**Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, well, not necessarily.

350 Perhaps the Hon. Minister would tell the House on whose recommendation these changes were brought about.

**Hon. N F Costa:** In respect of the livery? Well, the designs were presented to me by the Bus Company at the Ministry. There was consultation with the relevant Ministers and it was very much a group effort.

355 I do not think the hon. Gentleman should be so sour as to suggest that he may not like the livery. I am sure that he will actually like it very much.

360 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, the issue is not whether I like it or not – and having seen some snippets of the buses themselves, I have to say I do quite like them and I have no problem recognising that. That is not what is in issue in the House. My question is whether... Obviously, the answer to the question is yes, but why was it felt that a change in livery was desirable, given the fact that it would interrupt the continuity of the last 10 years of the existing bus fleet being the colours that they have been?

365 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, a clue to the answer that he asks me now by way of supplementary is in the original answer that I gave. As the hon. Gentleman knows, we are trying to take that quantum leap in terms of tourist offering and tourist hospitality and the different strands that make Gibraltar the vibrant and dynamic city it is today. Apart from the physical investment in capital works in the Upper Rock and in our beaches and so on, it is also the case that this Government has made sure that, in addition to hard cash on infrastructural projects, we have also brought additional culture – in terms of the Jazz Festival, the International Literary Festival and so on – and I think that tied in... He asks me the question and I am giving him the answer. Yes. Tied into that, I think the livery does very much tie in with everything the Government is trying to achieve in terms of the image of Gibraltar as a modern and vibrant city. I am quite sure that the livery does in fact achieve that.

375 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, could the Hon. Minister just answer the last question? I suppose the answer is – in the answers he has given to the other supplementaries – that effectively this was a decision taken at Cabinet level, and it is really as simple as it is.

380 **Hon. N F Costa:** No, Mr Speaker, it was not a decision taken at Cabinet level. There were designs proposed to... may I call it 'the first team', which is comprised of the Bus Company, the Bus Company directors, relevant officials from traffic, and I discussed the particular livery with certain Ministers, not all of the Ministers. As a result of the discussion that flowed from that original meeting with the officials and also discussions with certain Ministers, I made a final decision on the livery. But as I said, like liveries, it was very much a fluid art.

385 **Hon. S M Figueras:** And of course one can imply that this was not a decision that was linked, thankfully to the Sustainable Traffic and Transport Management Plan, then?

**Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, the livery did not form part, as I recall it, of the STTPP; but I will tell you what did form part of the STTPP, and that is making transport in Gibraltar accessible – something which I



390 am sure that the hon. Gentleman opposite will very much appreciate. Not only did the teams that met take  
into account what would make, in effect, a beautiful bus, but we also took expert advice from my hon.  
colleague's Department as to what would make the interior of a bus accessible, not just for those with  
reduced mobility, but those as well who may have difficulty in seeing, so that the contrast in the colours  
395 aesthetics makes it easier for people with visual impairment. So it was not just aesthetics, although it very much was  
aesthetics too, but it was also making sure that the colour schemes made the buses accessible to the entire  
community.

**Q477/2014**  
**Gibraltar Bus Company –**  
**New diesel fleet**

**Clerk:** Question 477, the Hon. S M Figueras.

400 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, the Hon. Minister has already alluded to part of the answer to this  
Question a moment ago, but I will ask it anyway, for more detail.

Can the Minister for Transport say when we can expect to see the new fleet of diesel buses in operation  
in Gibraltar?

405 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port.

**Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa):** Mr  
Speaker, the first vehicle should be in operation by the end of next week and the full fleet should be in  
operation – by that I mean operating the routes – by the end of December.

410 **Hon. S M Figueras:** I am grateful. Perhaps the Minister could provide me with information that he may  
not have – and if he does not, I will understand and I will give notice of the question, if he considers it  
necessary, at the next session, but is the whole existing bus fleet being replaced like for like, or are there  
additional vehicles being added to the fleet?

415 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, as I mentioned during the course of the Budget debate, there are currently  
18 midi-sized buses – we bought 20 midi-sized buses – and as I have also said during the course of the  
Budget debate, and I think I may have mentioned it during the course of a television interview, in addition  
to the midi-sized buses, we will also be purchasing small, but again fully accessible, vehicles for those  
routes that negotiate and travel through the very narrow parts of Gibraltar.

**Q478/2014**  
**Peter Sardeña –**  
**Industrial Tribunal**

420 **Clerk:** Question 478, the Hon. S M Figueras.

**Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Transport say whether, further to his answer to  
Question 351/2014, the decision of the Industrial Tribunal has now been received by the Government?

425 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port.

**Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa):** Mr  
Speaker, yes. The hearing of the claim has concluded and we now have received a decision from the  
Industrial Tribunal.

430 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Can the Hon. Minister say what the decision of the Industrial Tribunal is vis-à-vis  
compensation or any other aspects flowing therefrom?

435 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, perhaps he would like to ask me specific questions on the judgment –  
unless he wants me to read the whole thing?

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, what is the compensation that has been awarded to Mr Sardeña?

440 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, let me just start by saying that the information is a public document. I am more than happy to go into the questions that the hon. Gentleman asks me – I have brought a specific file to answer all of them. I just start by saying that the information is a public document, but if I am told to continue to answer these questions I shall.

445 **Mr Speaker:** Strictly speaking, the original Question is whether a decision has been received. If the answer is yes, it does not compel the Government at this stage to state what the decision is, because that was not the question. The question was not ‘Will the Government say what is the decision of the industrial tribunal?’ So, you have answered the Question. If the Opposition ask supplementaries, it is up to the Hon.... I am prepared to allow it if, in the judgement of the Minister, he wishes to deal with that matter – with the actual decision – but he is not compelled to do so because it does not, strictly speaking, arise from the  
450 original Question.

**Hon. N F Costa:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. If I may just...

Mr Speaker, perhaps if I may start by answering the question of the hon. Gentleman: the compensatory award was £46,238.40 and the basic award was £5,000.

**Q479/2014**  
**School bus service –**  
**Plans to introduce**

455 **Clerk:** Question 479, the Hon. S M Figueras.

**Hon. S M Figueras:** Can the Minister for Transport say whether the Government is contemplating the introduction of a school bus system?

460 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port.

**Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa):** Mr Speaker, at present there are no plans to start a bus service for schools.

465 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, has the Government given any thought whatsoever to the possibility, even though there may be no plans?

**Hon. N F Costa:** Yes, Mr Speaker, this has also been a live discussion between the Bus Company, my Ministry, the Minister for Education and the officials from the Department of Education. It has been studied  
470 and looked at in quite some detail, and after lengthy consideration and consultation the Department of Education took the view conclusively that there was no need for a dedicated bus service for schools at this juncture.

The hon. Gentleman knows that, should that view be revisited, we will be more than happy to consider it at a future point; but at this juncture, after what I think have been exhaustive discussions, there has been a  
475 decision not to provide a dedicated bus service for schools.

**Q480/2014**  
**Urban bicycle rental scheme –**  
**Plans to introduce**

**Clerk:** Question 480, the Hon. S M Figueras.

**Hon. S M Figueras:** Can the Minister for Transport say whether the Government is, in the context of the evident increase in cycling in Gibraltar, contemplating investing in an urban bicycle rental scheme  
480 during this term of office?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port.

**Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa):** Mr Speaker, given the *bonhomie* so far, I am now somewhat loath to read the way I have written the answer, but I hope he takes it in the spirit in which I now offer it, which is to say the following. (*Interjection*) It's quite mild!

Mr Speaker, in the first place, I do not accept the premise of the Question. I would be grateful if the hon. Gentleman provides me with the data that suggests to him that there has been an increase in cycling in Gibraltar. That was the part that I was referring to as perhaps a bit terse.

Further, I refer the hon. Gentleman to my answer to his Question 126/2014, where I already provided him with the answer.

**Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, taken with the same dose of *bonhomie* as he warned me I should take it, I will tell the Hon. Minister that I have no data on which I have based this Question, merely my own experience and possibly... and I assume by making an assumption I do certain things which may be dangerous, but on the assumption that the Hon. Minister for Traffic himself is also a keen cyclist and gets around on a bicycle, I think the increase in volume of bicycles on our roads is something that is entirely inescapable.

It is my view, as I will express in respect of other Questions later on in this session, that an urban bicycle rental scheme within this term of office – which clearly, with the passing months, three months since we last met, becomes less and less of a possibility – is entirely necessary.

Whilst the Minister disagrees with the premise on the basis that he has received no data, is the Minister prepared to reconsider at any time before the conclusion of this term of office the position vis-à-vis the urban bicycle rental scheme and its viability or necessity in Gibraltar?

**Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, again, with the same level of kindness, may I say that these questions have been asked of me and I have already answered them. I refer him to that particular Question: Question 126. If I were to read him the *Hansard*, we would once again be expressing exactly the same issues.

**Mr Speaker:** What is the date of that?

**Hon. N F Costa:** The date of that is February this year.

**Mr Speaker:** February?

**Hon. N F Costa:** Yes. It is over six months, Mr Speaker. I have got the answer here and I am perfectly happy to rehash the debate, but essentially what I tell him is that the hon. Gentleman will recall that it was the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition who said in this House, in answer to that particular Question, that:

'I should limit myself to saying that the Government is looking for alternatives, should this prove necessary, given that there are currently legal proceedings in the Supreme Court and any debate may prejudice that litigation.'

I think he can read between the lines of what it is that I am telling him.

**Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, yes, and I have not made enquiry in respect of the litigation, because frankly I had no hope whatsoever that, given the way these things go, that there had been much progress, if any, to report.

The basis of my questions, and the reason why I pursue this point eight months on from the last time I raised it, is because I see on a daily basis how more and more people are using it, and I effectively just enquired of the Minister whether he is considering today whether that decision is one that he might revisit, given what is at most anecdotal evidence of the increase in cycling in Gibraltar. I think that is fair enough in the circumstances.

I am aware of what we debated on Question 126 in February this year, but it has been eight months since, and the basis of the Question is: does the Minister consider at this stage – today, in October 2014 – whether that is something that is likely to be revisited within this term of office? If the answer is no, then the answer is no, but that is effectively the answer I am seeking to get from the Minister.

**Hon. N F Costa:** And what I am trying to perhaps clumsily express to the hon. Gentleman opposite is that that answer is tied into the present litigation.

**Hon. S M Figueras:** But, Mr Speaker, even if they were looking at another possibility independently of the one that is already the subject of litigation...? Are they looking for another option?

**Hon. N F Costa:** Yes. Mr Speaker, let me put it another way: I am firmly of the view that the Government should facilitate an urban bicycle scheme.

545 **Hon. D A Feetham:** He is talking about Government policy: Government policy is that Government is committed to an urban cycling scheme?

**Hon. N F Costa:** Yes, Mr Speaker; otherwise, we would not have taken any action and would have let the matter drop quietly. We have not done that.

**Q481/2014**

**New bus fleet –**

**Definition of ‘environmentally friendly’**

550 **Clerk:** Question 481, the Hon. S M Figueras.

**Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Transport confirm that in the context of the new bus fleet, when he refers to them as – and I quote – ‘environmentally friendly’ vehicles, he means new and more modern diesel-engine buses but diesel nonetheless, and not alternative energy, hybrid or, much less, electrically powered new buses?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port.

560 **Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa):** Mr Speaker, the facetious tone, clumsy wording and long-winded articulation of the Question aside – (**Several Members:** Oh!) (*Laughter*) There was a lot of ironical expression in the formulation of the Question, which has been allowed, and I am only replying in the way that he has asked the Question. If he does not like my sardonic expressions, he should not laden his Question with sardonicism for me.

565 I refer the hon. Gentleman to my Budget speech of 2014 and to my previous answer to Question 125/2014 and answers to his supplementary questions thereto, where I answered everything he has asked me in that particular Question.

**Hon. S M Figueras:** So the answer, Mr Speaker, is yes, they are just diesel-engine buses.

570 **A Member:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, no. I refer the hon. Gentleman to the Budget speech and to answer 125/2014, where I say that they *are* environmentally friendly vehicles.

**Q482/2014**

**South Mole, Detached Mole and North Mole –  
Industrial activity**

575 **Clerk:** Question 482, the Hon. J J Netto.

**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Government state which industrial activities are operating from the South Mole, the Detached Mole and the North Mole, stating the name of the company or public sector organisation, and which application or applications he has received for consideration at the DPC for any type of industrial activity on the sites mentioned to date?

580 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port.

**Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa):** Mr Speaker, the only occupiers of land on the South Mole are Gibdock Ltd, southern half of the Mole, as part of the dockyard lease; and the MOD, northern half part of the Mole.

585 There are no leases in respect of the Detached Mole, which is Crown Land. As confirmed by the Town Planning Department, there is an application from Vemaol Ltd for the siting of a floating oil-storage facility on the Detached Mole.

The occupiers of the North Mole (Western Arm) are as follows: the Gibraltar Government, 3 North Mole Road, which is the cruise liner terminal; Nature Port Reception Facilities Ltd, 1A North Mole Road, which is the oil treatment plant; Giboil Ltd, 1B North Mole Road, which is the fuel depot; and Nature Port Reception Facilities Ltd, 1C North Mole Road, which is the company's offices and stores.

**Clerk:** Question 483/2014, the –

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, can the Hon. the Minister perhaps help and answer this supplementary: what is the Government's attitude to the Vermaoil application in relation to the North Mole? I understand that it is going through, it is an application that has been made to the DPC, but obviously the Government, as presumably holders of the land, must have an attitude, a policy in relation to it. Is it supportive or is it against it?

**Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, I am not entirely sure how appropriate it is that I express an opinion on a matter that is the subject of an application before the DPC, where two Government Ministers sit.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, I am not asking the hon. Gentleman to express an opinion on the application for planning. I quite understand that, first and foremost, in actual fact, he is probably not responsible for that because it is the DPC that is going to be making the decision.

I am asking about Government policy in relation to the application, bearing in mind that in relation to the use of the land... Perhaps let's focus it in that way, in relation to the use of the land for this particular purpose, bearing in mind that, as I understand it – and I could be wrong, and if I am wrong he can correct me – we are talking about Government land.

**Hon. N F Costa:** No, Mr Speaker, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition is correct. I have stated that the Detached Mole is Crown Land, so it is Government land.

What I would say in answer to the question perhaps is that the *Vemaspirit* is currently at the Detached Mole and is supplying bunkers from there, so that does provide an indication of the Government's view, yes.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Therefore, it must follow that you are effectively supportive of the use of the land for that purpose.

**Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, the *Vemaspirit* is berthed currently at the Detached Mole. This was a request that was made by that particular company to the former Captain of the Port, which on consultation with me was agreed. It is not permanently berthed there, it is not permanently moored; it is berthed there, and from there it is providing its operation of bunkers.

That does not mean that the Government or Members of the Government on the DPC would take a similar view on a permanent fixture at the Detached Mole with structures that would, in effect, make it a semi-floating storage. That is not to say that it is not supportive either. All I am saying is that the attitude of the Government to date has been supportive of a particular company to provide a non-permanent facility from there. How the Government expresses that support at the DPC would be a matter for the Minister for the Environment and the Hon. the Deputy the Chief Minister.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** But Mr Speaker, with respect, it is not about the attitude of the Government in the DPC. With planning, it operates on the following basis. You can apply for planning permission to build on anybody's land. Whether you have the right to build on somebody's land depends on the landowner. In other words, there are two separate issues. There is one about planning; the other one is about consent. Therefore, if the Government were to take the view that we are not providing consent for this particular project, they can apply for as many planning permissions as they want. They would not be *able* to do it. So therefore there are two separate issues.

The reason why I am asking this particular question is, of course, there are plans, or there was an indication that there were going to be plans, to build as well the natural gas installations on the Detached Mole. So it is a matter of interest to us how this particular operation would actually co-exist with an operation for the siting of natural gas, bearing in mind that there are EU requirements and safety requirements about exclusion zones around a natural gas installation. That is the reason why I am asking.

**Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, I entirely see why the hon. Gentleman is asking me the question, but what he is asking me is... the company acquire the Government as landlords of the Detached Mole. But that, I am afraid, is not a question for me; that is a question for the Hon. the Deputy Chief Minister, as

Minister for Lands. All I can tell him is that the attitude of the Port so far has been supportive of the company.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, presumably, no company is going to be making an application for planning permission if it has not cleared its lines with the landowner, because without the consent it just would not go ahead anyway. I would have thought – (*Interjection*) No, Mr Speaker, I have not said the opposite.

There are two separate issues here. There is the question of planning: as a matter of planning one has to apply for planning to do something. The other question is whether consent is provided by the landowner for the project to go ahead. You can actually have no consent and still have planning permission, I accept that; but of course no commercial entity in its right mind is going to be making an application for planning, and go through the expense of making an application for planning, unless there has been some preliminary discussion with the landowner, whereupon the landowner has agreed.

It has happened, I have to say. In my practice as a lawyer in England, I have seen it happen in situations where there has been a speculative application for planning – people get planning on a speculative basis and then they do a deal with the landowner – but I cannot see that that is what is happening here. Hence why I am surprised that the Minister who has responsibility for the Port would not be in a position – or indeed the Minister for Utilities who is also sitting here – is in a position to actually tell me whether the Government has indicated, even on an in-principle basis, that they are going to be providing consent for this particular project.

**Mr Speaker:** The Minister does not wish to add anything further?

**Hon. N F Costa:** No, Mr Speaker, merely to reiterate that that would be a question appropriate for the Minister for Lands, who is the Hon. the Deputy Chief Minister.

## SPORTS, CULTURE, HERITAGE AND YOUTH

Q483/2014

### Sports and Leisure Authority – Current vacancies

**Mr Speaker:** Next Question.

**Clerk:** Question 483, the Hon. E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Sports provide details of current vacancies at the Sports and Leisure Authority, together with details of when these vacancies will be advertised?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

**Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, at present there are two vacant posts at the Gibraltar Sports and Leisure Authority, these being Pool Operative, and Deputy Chief Executive Officer.

The Pool Operative post has become vacant due to a resignation and the vacancy will be registered with the Employment and Training Board imminently.

The Deputy Chief Executive Officer vacancy is currently being looked into, together with the Chief Executive Officer and the union.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, Mr Speaker, but my Question was saying ‘details of when these vacancies will be advertised.’ I hear that the Minister is discussing this with the union, but does he have an indication of when these will be advertised?

**Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, whatever he wants to interpret as ‘imminently’. Usually ‘imminently’ does not take more than a couple of weeks, maybe a month. ‘Imminently’ is it should be happening any time now.

**Q484/2014**  
**Victoria Stadium –**  
**Upgrade to UEFA category 3**

**Clerk:** Question 484, the Hon. E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Can the Minister for Sports say if it is Government's intention to upgrade the Victoria Stadium's football facilities to approved UEFA category 3?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

**Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, no, sir, it was never the intention to upgrade to UEFA category 3.

As explained in answer to Question 224/2013, in which I stated, and I quote:

'We are looking in order to put Victoria Stadium into a Cat 2, which is like a minimum category of the stadium, in order to have international competitions and even looking at some areas in which the stadium can become even a Cat 3, so only in parts.'

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, my Question is because from previous answers and so on I am a little bit confused as to whether it is a short, medium or long-term intention of Government to get to UEFA category 3 approval.

Mr Speaker, although, strictly speaking, the Government is not necessarily answerable to what the Gibraltar Football Association says, they do however come up with publications and a double-sided colour A3 spread, leading us all to believe that the Victoria Stadium is going to be upgraded to category 3, and that that was what Government was going to do – and Government was silent on the issue, without coming out saying, 'No, that is not what is going to happen.' So the public does stand a little bit confused, and more so...

The Minister knows that I am very very supportive of improving and upgrading the stadium as far as possible, and we would both dearly love to see as much international football being played locally as possible, but again my understanding is that unless we attain that category 3, then other than friendly games, which by mutual consent the opposing team agrees to play on this pitch, we do not really have the facility to host a game.

The arrangements of having to go to Faro, which... If I may give you a personal experience, the round trip on the coach actually took me over 22 hours, Mr Speaker. In order to be able to support our team, many supporters, whom I joined, left Gibraltar at 10 o'clock in the morning on Tuesday and actually –

**Mr Speaker:** Would the hon. Member please ask a question.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, so the question is – can we have a more clear-cut answer? – is it the Government's intention, short, medium or long term, to actually look into the possibility and upgrade the Victoria Stadium to UEFA category 3 approved?

**Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, this was answered by the Chief Minister in the same Question that I have just stated, and I can quote him:

'There are different criteria for different sorts of UEFA competitions.'

As he well knows, there are competitions in which under-19s and under-17s can be played in what is the upgrade to Cat 2 and some parts being a Cat 3, so therefore not probably a full international... which is, there is no full international that can be played unless it is a Cat 3, but there are other competitions – and the Chief Minister explained that to him last time, that there are many other competitions which can be played in what we are now upgrading the stadium to be.

So the stadium cannot be a Cat 3, but there are many competitions with which UEFA... and we are working closely with the GFA and UEFA to make sure that the upgrades meet the requirements to have some other competitions – which is not the one that is played currently in Faro.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, does the Hon. the Minister accept that if the Victoria Stadium were to be upgraded to a category 3 UEFA stadium, that the GFA would be able to play its home games here in Gibraltar in the absence of an alternative Cat 4 stadium, which of course we do not have?

**Hon. S E Linares:** Yes, Mr Speaker, but the problem with that is that in order to make the Victoria Stadium into a full Cat 3, you would need a parking, for example, of 50 cars. Where do you put the 50 cars?

Do you put it in the MUGA area, where then you will deprive children from playing? Do you do other things that make it into a Cat 3 and therefore you deprive other people from doing their sports? I am the Minister for *Sports*; I am not the ‘Minister for Football’, and therefore I have got to look at the interests of... Even if I take what he is saying and we convert the Victoria Stadium into a full Cat 3 by closing down pitch no. 2, where children play leagues, and we put the car park there, then what we are doing is converting the Victoria Stadium into a Cat 3 and depriving everybody else of the use of the stadium, which is a multi-sports complex. That is the problem.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, a number of supplementaries in relation to that, but I will just deal with each at a time, so that they are understood.

Is the Minister saying that the only thing that prevents the upgrade of the Victoria Stadium from what he described as a Cat 2.8 – which I took to mean just below a category 3, with which I agree – to a category 3 is parking facilities for 50 cars?

**Hon. S E Linares:** No, Mr Speaker, because then it would be a 2.9, rather than a 2.8. There are other smaller issues why you cannot make it into a Cat 3. I just gave him that as an example. Right! There are other issues which, in the UEFA criteria, we cannot fulfil physically unless we do many other things to the Bayside complex to make it into a Cat 3. Therefore, what I am saying is that in the 2.8, the ‘point 8’ aspect are *some* parts which UEFA actually tells us to do. I will give him an example: a media centre, a doping room, facilities for officials –

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Those are all being done.

**Hon. S E Linares:** Exactly, and these are the ones that are being done, but in the whole list there are some which, if we did them, it would be physically impossible without affecting other sports. That is what I am trying to say. (*Interjection*) It would not be a 2.9 if it was just one; it is a 2.8 – and look, it could be a 2.7. If you are going to be specific that there are only two points... it is not exactly two points, because there are about a hundred... then you could say there are 20 or...

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Yes, but, Mr Speaker, I am just trying to explore exactly what is necessary in order to upgrade the Victoria Stadium to a Cat 3 stadium, so that the GFA can play their home games here in Gibraltar, so that fans do not need to travel to Portugal in order to watch them, and indeed, for all that economic activity that is wasted outside Gibraltar can come into Gibraltar. Can I –

**Mr Speaker:** Just a moment. I am going to allow the Hon. Leader of the Opposition and any other Member to make supplementary questions arising from this issue. I am not going to allow a debate on the upgrading of Victoria Stadium to a category 3. Not a debate. He can ask questions for clarification and pursuing the matter, but I am not going to allow a debate. It is right and proper for this House to debate the whole issue of the Victoria Stadium, and any other new stadium if they wish to do so.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** I apologise if, in Mr Speaker’s judgement, I have overstepped the bounds of what is reasonable. I had not realised that I had done so.

Having prefixed my question in that way, he has said if we provide the 50 parking, it then goes up to a 2.9 – (**Hon. S E Linares:** No.) Yes, that is what he has said, and he has said that there are other little things. What other little things does the Government need to do in order to upgrade it to a category 3? Because it does appear to me that, bearing in mind all the benefits – and that is why I prefixed the question in the way that I did – to Gibraltar and to fans and to football, of having football here in Gibraltar, it is not really a massive ask to convert the Victoria Stadium into a category 3 to allow all that to actually happen.

I just want to explore with the hon. Gentleman what it is that is impeding the Government from taking that step and widening the scope of the contract – which is a substantial contract in itself: £2.7 million – in order to upgrade to a Cat 3, because none of the issues that he has pointed out, with respect, are big issues, as far as I can see, and they are not insurmountable.

**Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, if he does not think that a big issue is 50 parkings, then I do not know how he would solve it, because...

And that is only one issue. I did not say that it was two issues; there are many. There are about a hundred-odd tick boxes of different things, of which the upgrade... If I said 2.8, it was because I was thinking of two others – one being the parking, which is virtually impossible, to have 50 parkings within the Bayside complex. So that the hon. Member knows, the 50 parkings are for VIPs. The VIPs have to have 50 parkings in the Bayside complex in order... One issue.



I will give him another one, which he can then work round: the capacity has to be 4,500. You cannot put prefab or scaffolding type of stands behind the goal – UEFA will not allow that. It has to be a permanent stand.

If the hon. Member is saying that he is happy to put 50 parkings and put the capacity to 4,500, to the detriment of all the other sports, then he should come out clearly and say it, because that is what he is saying. He is pressing us to make the Victoria Stadium into a Cat 3, to the detriment – and we have analysed it – of all the other sports. Therefore, he should be clear and say, ‘Right, I would put the Victoria Stadium into a Cat 3 in order that people do not have to travel to Faro.’ I have travelled to Faro, I know what it is to travel to Faro, so I would like the stadium here, yes, at the Europa Point; but it is the GFA that will do the Europa Point Stadium.

What I am saying to him is... and those are only two issues. There are many other little issues which UEFA require us to do in the stadium, which for me is not only physically impossible for some of them, but unacceptable, and that is what I am trying to make the hon. Member understand.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, why is it that the Government cannot use the multi-storey car park, which is just simply across the road from the Victoria Stadium, in order to provide these 50 VIP parking spaces, so that you can deal with that particular issue? That is one supplementary.

And the second one: if I were to demonstrate to the hon. Gentleman in correspondence that it is actually possible to upgrade the Victoria Stadium to a Cat 3 stadium with minimal disruption to other sports... If I am capable of demonstrating that to the hon. Gentleman, will the hon. Gentleman undertake to rethink the question of upgrading Victoria Stadium to a Cat 3 so that the GFA can play its home games in Gibraltar? Doesn’t that seem like a reasonable suggestion to him?

**Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, I do not know how he is going to do that, because in the first supplementary he is absolutely wrong. I cannot put the 50 parkings in the Devil’s Tower car park; UEFA does not allow that. UEFA says that the VIP parking has to be immediately where the VIP area is, for security reasons. He can either agree or disagree with UEFA. That is UEFA’s requirement, so whatever he is going to present to me already falls down the line – *(Interjection by Hon. D A Feetham)* Well, as long as he is clear that he is going to take pitch number 2 of the MUGA area away.

Mr Speaker, like you said, we can have a discussion here about different issues about the Victoria Stadium becoming a Cat 3, but the issue here is that I have already explained to the hon. Member that at present it cannot be a Cat 3. Whether it will in the future – they have to decide whether it will be to the detriment of all the other sports. That is the only way you are going to put a Cat 3.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, with respect, he has not answered my question. The question was: if I can demonstrate to him that with minimal disruption to other sports the Victoria Stadium can be upgraded to a Cat 3, will the Government rethink its policy?

**Hon. S E Linares:** No, Mr Speaker, because I would not be willing to say ‘the minimum effect’ to other sports. It should be with *no* effect to other sports. As I said to him, I am the Minister for Sports; I am not the Minister for Football.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, does he not accept that, in a Gibraltar that is limited in space, any building works are going to disrupt somebody somewhere at some stage? Good management of these particular issues is minimum disruption. As I understood the hon. Gentleman, his concern was that we would be depriving facilities away from other sports, but if I can demonstrate that in fact this can be done without depriving facilities away from other sports, will he undertake to revise the policy?

**Hon. S E Linares:** No, Mr Speaker.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Well, Mr Speaker, then I have to ask this particular question: is it not the case that the reason why the hon. Gentleman and this Government are blocking off the alternative of upgrading Victoria Stadium to a Cat 3 is because the reality is that they are full-square behind the Europa Point Stadium and they want this community to think that there is no alternative to the Europa Point?

**Several Members:** Hear, hear. *(Banging on desks)*

**Mr Speaker:** I want the Minister to answer that question, but I warn him I do not want him to get involved in a debate.

**Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, no, sir.

**Q485/2014**  
**Gibraltar Cricket Association –**  
**Alternative facilities**

**Clerk:** Question 485, the Hon. E J Reyes.

880 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Sports and Leisure provide details of the alternative facilities which will be provided to the Gibraltar Cricket Association as a result and consequence of the planned loss of Europa Sports Grounds for the playing, teaching and development of the sport?

885 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

**Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, until a final decision is taken on the Europa Sports Ground, the Gibraltar Cricket Association will continue to use the existing facilities.

890 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister explain to me how he can reconcile what he has given in answer to supplementaries in Question 484, while saying that by being Minister for Sport and not just football he cannot take actions that deprive other sports or facilities, and yet in Question 485 he has left the door open that could lead to the result of the Gibraltar Cricket Association actually losing a full-size pitch? Can he reconcile the two different answers, please?

895 **Hon. S E Linares:** Yes, Mr Speaker, it is very simple. We will be providing the Cricket with a ground. That has been said publicly, so I do not know what he is actually trying to channel the question... The Question is 'alternative facilities which will be provided to the... Cricket... as a result and consequence of the planned loss' – and he is saying 'loss'. We have already said that when the Europa Sports Ground is used for something else, the Cricket by then will have another ground.

900 So, yes, I am happy to say that, until the facilities... like I said here, the final decision is taken on the Europa Sports Ground, the Cricket will continue to use the existing facilities.

905 **Hon. E J Reyes:** I think the Minister has given us some good news. My understanding, which I hope is correct, is that alternatives will be provided to Cricket, so that if the Europa is lost for that, there... Can I bring the Minister, as well, to say... could he not look into the possibility as well of providing alternatives for other sports, so that then the Victoria Stadium can actually be upgraded to a category 3?

**Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, I will not get into the debate of the category 3 again.

**Q486/2014**  
**Heritage-related sites –**  
**Details of works undertaken**

910 **Clerk:** Question 486, the Hon. E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Can the Minister for Heritage provide details of all works, together with respective cost, undertaken at any heritage-related site since the Answer to Question No. W77/2014, stating by whom these works were carried out?

915 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

920 **Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, further to the answer to Question No. W77/2014, further works undertaken at Heritage sites, inclusive of costs and works carried out, are as follows.

Site, Charles V Wall: Work, conservation and restoration works; contractor, Knightsfield Holdings Ltd; total amount, £9,234.74, covering the period from May to September 2014

Site: Montagu Bastion: Work, refurbishment works; contractor, Bright Co. Ltd; total amount, £12,874.00.

**Q487/2014**  
**Sports grants –**  
**Payments in 2014-15**

**Clerk:** Question 487, the Hon. E J Reyes.

930 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can the Minister for Sports and Leisure provide details of payments made so far, pertaining to financial year 2014-15, in respect of 'sports grants' under each of the following: (a) grants to sporting societies; (b) international competitions; (c) sports development projects; and (d) hosting of special sports and leisure events?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

935 **Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, I now hand over to the hon. Member opposite the information requested in respect of payments for sports grants, the four of them, for this financial year 2014-15. May I add that these are all, every month, updated and posted on the www.gsla.gi website.

**Answer to Question 487/2014**

**(a) Grants to Sporting Societies**

Gibraltar Hockey Association	41,000.00
Gibraltar Amateur Basketball Association	11,900.00
Gibraltar Triathlon Association	787.50
Gibraltar Pool Association	31,252.11
Gibraltar Netball Association	6,250.92
Gibraltar Amateur Rowing Association	4,284.85
Gibraltar Federation of Sea Anglers	3,440.00

**(b) International Competitions**

Straits Games	80,709.56
Gibraltar Triathlon Association	3,937.50

**(c) Sports Development Projects**

Gibraltar Shooting Federation	13,000.00
Summer Sports Equipment	664.58
Gibraltar Netball Association	1,587.50
Gibraltar Amateur Athletics Association	5,906.38
Gibraltar Hockey Association	1,500.00
Safeguarding and Protecting Children	225.00
Thundercats	9554.00
Gibtelecom (Chess)	17,781.00
Gibraltar Shooting Federation	722.10
Gibraltar Squash Association	375.00
Gibraltar Amateur Basketball Association	1,200.00
Bathing Pavilion (eqpt)	20.00
Special Olympics	242.50
Gibraltar Chess Association	2,433.60
Summer Sports Programme (printing)	1,246.00
Gibraltar Taekwondo Association	1,203.30

**(d) Hosting of Special Sports and Leisure Events**

Matchpoint Tours Ltd	15,114.95
PDC Gibraltar Darts Trophy	176,987.75
Straits Games	2,581.98
Israel Rugby (accommodation)	1,120.00
Gibraltar Classic Vehicle Association	1,200.00
Strong Man Competition (accommodation)	6,300.00
Gibraltar Kennel Club	10,000.00
Tradewise Jnr. Chess Tournament	18,000.00
Gibraltar Amateur Basketball Association	19,413.50
Gibraltar Harley Davidson Club	3,400.00
Gibraltar Ten Pin Bowling Association	50,000.00
Thundercats	20,000.00
Gibraltar Squash Association	10,000.00
Gibraltar Amateur Basketball Association	74,877.05
Gibraltar Yachting Association	6,476.00
Gibraltar Chronicle Printing Ltd (Summer Sports)	4,601.09

**Q488/2014**  
**Cultural grants –**  
**Awards in 2014-15**

940 **Mr Speaker:** I suggest that the Hon. Mr Reyes asks the next Question.

**Clerk:** Question 488, the Hon. E J Reyes.

945 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can the Minister for Culture provide details of cultural grants awarded so far, pertaining to financial year 2014-15?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

950 **Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, I now hand over to the hon. Member a schedule containing details of all cultural grants awarded so far during this financial year 2014-15. May I also announce that, hopefully, within the next two months, when we have the website ready, these will also be published on the culture website.

Schedule to Question 488/2014

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
Gibraltar World Music Festival Sponsorship	£15,000.00
Dragonfly Arts Ltd - Solo comedy show	£ 5,750.00
Mrs Lutwyche – Son's Dance Summer School New York	£ 3,000.00
GNDO - World Show Dance Championships	£ 8,700.00
Gibraltar Photographic Society – Replacement of computer equipment	£ 1,800.00
Gibraltar Sea Scouts Band - New Systems for bagpipes & drumming equipment	£ 600.00
MO Productions - 13th Gib International Dance Festival	£ 6,700.00
Stylos Dance Studio - Participation at Dance Excellence 2015	£ 6,000.00
Allegro Music Productions- Gibraltar festival for Young Musicians 2015	£ 6,411.00
Kings Chapel Singers - Sheet Music for New Repertoire	£ 1,340.36
Santos Productions - Participation in World Choir games - Riga Latvia	£ 7,000.00
Gibraltar Philharmonic Orchestra - Woodwind instruments to develop Youth Orchestra	£ 10,000.00
Gibraltar National Choir - Creation of website/laptop to store tracks/ purchase of tracks/sheet music	£ 500.00
Janice Felices - Elmhurst School for Dance School Tuition Fees	£ 3,000.00
Gib Re-enactment Society - Repairs, refurbishment & additions to kit and weapons	£ 350.00
Gib Face & Body paint Association - 3rd Annual Face & Body Painting Festival	£ 2,882.50
Gibraltar Arts & Crafts - Works for community projects	£ 1,750.00
1st/4th Scout Group - Upkeep & purchase of musical instruments	£ 1,334.00
Manuel Ruiz - Book Grant - Life in Gibraltar's Patios	£ 929.00

955 **Mr Speaker:** We will proceed with the next Question, which is down to Mr Netto; and then, if the Hon. Mr Reyes wishes to ask any supplementaries when he has studied the schedules, he can do so.

**Mr Reyes:** Perfectly acceptable, Mr Speaker. Thank you.

**HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Q489/2014**

**Prohibition of smoking in public places –  
Further exemptions**

**Mr Speaker:** Question 489, the Hon. Mr Netto.

960 **Clerk:** Question 489, the Hon. J J Netto.

**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, does the Government have any plans to grant any further exemptions in relation to the prohibition of smoking in public places?

965 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

**Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, if I may, let me take the first opportunity I have had – the first time I have got up to speak this morning – to add my own personal best wishes to the hon. Member who is my opposite number in Health. I have, of course, kept in touch with her throughout her illness. I am glad to see that she is better, and very keen to see her fully recovered and with us in this House. *(Banging on desks)*

Mr Speaker, in relation to the Question, the Answer is no, sir.

**Q490/2014**

**Wildlife Gibraltar Ltd gull culling unit –  
Numbers employed**

**Clerk:** Question 490, the Hon. J J Netto.

975 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment state how many individuals are employed by Wildlife Gibraltar Ltd for the purpose of culling gulls, and what are their annual wages?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

980 **Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, I will answer this Question together with Questions 491 to 497.

**Q491/2014**

**Wildlife Gibraltar Ltd gull culling unit –  
Details of employees and their firearms certificates**

**Clerk:** Question 491, the Hon. J J Netto.

985 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment state how many individuals applied for the Wildlife Gibraltar Ltd vacancy of full-time gull cull operative in April of this year; how many were employed; of those employed, how many had a firearms certificate on commencement of their employment with Wildlife Gibraltar Ltd; and were there any other candidates who were not employed yet had a firearms certificate?

990 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

**Mr Speaker:** No, I do not think there is any need to say in each case what the answer is. Just continue to call the Questions up to 497.

The Hon. Mr Netto.

995

**Q492/2014**

**Wildlife Gibraltar Ltd gull culling unit –  
Insurance cover for firearms accidents**

**Clerk:** Question 492, the Hon. J J Netto.

1000 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment state if Wildlife Gibraltar Ltd has an insurance cover for their gull culling unit for any unforeseeable accident with firearms; and if so, could the Hon. Minister provide details of such?

**Q493/2014**

**Wildlife Gibraltar Ltd gull culling unit –  
Rifles and bullets used**

**Clerk:** Question 493, the Hon. J J Netto.

1005 **Hon. J J Netto:** Can the Minister for the Environment state what are the rifles and bullets used by the gull culling unit of Wildlife Gibraltar Ltd, and whether this would comply with the British Association for Shooting and Conservation, as applied in similar circumstances?

**Q494/2014**

**Wildlife Gibraltar Ltd gull culling unit –  
Employees' qualifications**

**Clerk:** Question 494, the Hon. J J Netto.

**Hon. J J Netto:** Can the Minister for the Environment state what are the qualifications per person employed by Wildlife Gibraltar Ltd for the purpose of gull culling?

**Q495/2014**

**Wildlife Gibraltar Ltd gull culling unit –  
Prior experience of employees**

1010 **Clerk:** Question 495, the Hon. J J Netto.

**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment state what, if any, prior experience in wildlife conservation, culling of feral animals and as a pest control officer have the various members employed by Wildlife Gibraltar Ltd had?

**Q496/2014**

**Wildlife Gibraltar Ltd gull culling unit –  
Night-time operation**

1015 **Clerk:** Question 496, the Hon. J J Netto.

1020 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment please state if the gull culling unit of Wildlife Gibraltar Ltd operates at night time; and if so, please state, since 1st April 2013, where has this taken place and the number of animals and type of culls on a monthly basis?

**Q497/2014**

**Wildlife Gibraltar Ltd gull culling unit –  
Safety protocols for shooting rifles**

**Clerk:** Question 497, the Hon. J J Netto.

1025 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment please state what are the safety protocols used by the gull culling unit employed by Wildlife Gibraltar Ltd prior to shooting their rifles throughout Gibraltar?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

1030 **Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, five persons are currently employed under the gull cull contract. The Department is not at liberty to divulge the wages of employees of private companies.

1035 The Ministry for the Environment cannot comment on the number of applicants, on how many recruits had a firearms certificate on commencement, or on whether anybody who was not employed held a firearms certificate, as it was not involved in the selection process, as is the case with all private contractors. What I can state is that an extra two persons were employed, increasing the team's complement to five. The ministry understands that both have extensive previous experience with firearms at a professional level.

The gull culling team has adequate insurance cover for the gull culling unit, identical to that held since the operation began in the late 1990s. The Ministry for the Environment does not hold such details for private contractors.

1040 The gull control unit uses semi-automatic and bolt-action rifles with .22 calibre ammunition. The contractor has a Gibraltar firearms licence, which is issued by the Royal Gibraltar Police under very strict conditions. Firearms legislation in Gibraltar is extremely stringent.

1045 The Ministry for the Environment was not involved in the employee selection process, as is the case, again, with all private contractors.

The gull control unit does not currently operate during the night time. This is mainly due to safety issues, as clear visibility is required to ensure that no members of the public are present in the areas where shooting is taking place.

1050 A number of safety procedures are in place to ensure the safety of the public and employees whilst the gull control unit is operating with rifles. These are: (1) a licence is granted by the RGP – this licence includes strict regulation of firearms and ammunition used, as well as restriction of activities that are deemed to be suitable and safe by the Royal Gibraltar Police; (2) the RGP is notified of the gull control unit's activities on a daily basis, including where the unit will be operating; (3) the gull control unit's employees wear uniforms that state that they are involved in avian control, as well as high-visibility arm bands; (4) a shooter is always accompanied by a second member of the team, who acts as a watcher to ensure that there are no members of the public in the area when a shot is taken; and (5) no shooting takes place when visibility is low.

1060 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman, in one of the answers to the Questions, said that out of the four, as I understand, two used firearms at a professional level. Can he expand what he means by that? Because, of course, there is a huge difference between the recruitment of two individuals – for example, individuals who have been within the army and have therefore, in that context, used firearms; and individuals who have specific experience in the culling of animals. Both are not the same, and therefore I want to explore with the hon. Gentleman what he means by experience at a professional level.

1065 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, as I said before, my Department and I have no direct involvement in recruitment. I believe – but this is only what I have picked up – that they may have had firearms experience with the army.

1070 I would hasten to add that the other members of the team, who were recruited *many* years ago, did not have previous firearms experience, were trained, and then were given firearms certificates by the Royal Gibraltar Police. In fact, at the time, a number of the new employees who came without that background were trained and then achieved the firearms certificates. So that is nothing unusual, but in any case, these gentlemen, I believe – it is something that I would have to confirm – did have experience, as I mentioned earlier.

1075 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, yes, he has confirmed that it is his understanding that they have experience within the army, and I accept that it may well be that a number of years ago things were done in a particular way, but does he not accept that there is a distinction between somebody who is trained to

effectively use firearms in the context of a war theatre as individual soldiers within the army, and people who are specifically trained?

Let me give the hon. Gentleman an example that has certainly been operating in my mind, because it has been brought to my attention. If you are using .22 calibre ammunition, which is effectively the type of ammunition that could potentially kill somebody, it is not only a question of really notifying the public or ensuring there is nobody in the area around where the culling takes place. For example, if you effectively use a rifle, a .22 calibre in the north face, you could potentially ricochet down to members of the population. That is the information that has come to my attention.

Therefore, what I want to explore with the hon. Gentleman is the type of training and whether the hon. Gentleman realises that there is a distinction between effectively just using two individuals from the army and people who are specifically trained – and I am told, actually, that there were other applicants for this particular job who have licences, both in Spain and also in the United Kingdom, as pest control and culling of animals across the board.

**A Member:** So there were alternatives.

**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, clearly the considerations about ricochet and so on form part of the training of people who are going to use rifles. I repeat: the firearms laws are very stringent in Gibraltar and nothing is done without the approval of the Royal Gibraltar Police. I can speak through personal experience, as I myself came from no firearms practice to actually holding a firearms certificate – and I happen to be a rather good shot.

Therefore, the training that is acquired by these gentlemen is one which gives me great confidence in their ability. People who have been working in the gull cull unit – and three of the five have been working there for maybe 15 years or so with... I will touch wood and thank God that there has been absolutely no incident in all the many thousands of shots. Clearly, they are very good marksmen and very responsible officials.

Whether there were other people with or without qualifications, I do not know. I have not got involved. I will not get involved. They may have had experience in all sorts of other things, but you never know – in a selection panel the person may not come across well, or they may have some kind of record which would be inconsistent with allowing them a current firearms certificate. I do not know; I was not involved.

It is not correct for me to comment on the selection procedure of private companies contracted to the Government. Would the hon. Gentleman have asked me the question for example of employees of Sharrock Shand or Hassans, just because they work for Government?

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, I am tempted to say that the hon. Gentleman has amply demonstrated that he is a good shot in destroying the 1999 Fishing Agreement and in the laying of the blocks; but, Mr Speaker – (**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker that is completely out of order.) It is below the belt and I apologise. It is below the belt. (*Laughter and interjection*) I apologise, Mr Speaker; it was below the belt.

He said that these individuals who have been recruited have been issued firearms licences. Is the issue of the firearms licence before or after they have completed training – it is just that that was not clear from the answer that he has given me; and what is the length of training that these individuals get in the culling of gulls, which is actually different from just simply shooting a particular gun, which no doubt a lot of people, members of the public, can also do? The culling of animals requires very specific training and I am just trying to explore the kind of training that these individuals have received.

**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I am not aware of the specific training that these individuals have been given. I can only say that the training that has been given in the past has been one of competence and has been under proper supervision; but these particular individuals, I do not know.

**Hon. Sir P R Caruana:** Mr Speaker, given that the hon. Gentleman is both something of a good shot and a nature environmentalist, and making due allowance for the fact that I have never been taught biology, could he just perhaps put my mind at rest on the following?

Some Members of the House will recall that when I was sitting on that side of the House and we had apes culled by shooting, I was very roundly indicted by the then Opposition, now Government, for... I cannot remember if it was murder or assassination, although I am sure – (**A Member:** Genocide.) Yes. Again, making due allowance for the fact that I have never been taught biology, can the hon. Member explain to me, just for my own interest, why shooting a monkey is genocide and shooting a seagull is not?

**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I do not think either is genocide, therefore I cannot really explain the difference between them.



**Hon. Sir P R Caruana:** Would it alter his answer if, instead of ‘genocide’ it was ‘murder’ or ‘assassination’? He must remember the debate. I ask the question in good humour because it is not earth-shatteringly important, but is there an issue – a distinction that the hon. Members make – between the animal ‘macaque monkey’ and the animal ‘seagull’ when it comes to the acceptability of culling by shooting? (*Interjection*)

**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, the question of culling or killing of any animal is a question which has been discussed and debated in many different fora, and obviously these are things that are sensitive – and some people will find either offensive and other people will find either acceptable.

I think that the general view – and I am not saying that I can associate myself fully with what I am about to say – is that the similarity of a macaque, a monkey, as a primate, to our own species is what normally worries people when they are actually shot for wildlife-management purposes. I cannot offer more explanation than that.

If you look at it very coldly, you are controlling a population of wild animals by removing them, by culling them; but I think that the general perception is that a monkey perhaps is more intelligent, more conscious, more aware and certainly shares a lot more genes with us than the yellow-legged gull. I cannot offer much more than that.

**Hon. Sir P R Caruana:** I draw some comfort from the fact that, had he been sitting on the jury when I was standing trial in this House, indicted for murder of macaques, he would not have found me guilty then.

**Hon. J J Bossano:** Mr Speaker, I think perhaps the dividing line... Let me say that I am against the taking of life of any creature, so therefore I am certainly not happy to see gulls killed – or culled; I call it ‘killed’ – but I think perhaps the dividing line is whether you belong to basically the same group. We are primates; they are primates.

There is indeed now a test case going on in the United States, arguing that they have got feelings to such an extent, that are so similar to ours, that they should be protected in law as of right, similar to the rights that humans have. But of course I suppose if, instead of this debate taking place amongst primates, it were taking place in the bird species, doves might feel that killing gulls would be genocide. (*Laughter*)

**Hon. Sir P R Caruana:** Yes, Mr Speaker, indeed they might, and many other forms of animal life as well, so we have to be careful not to make the killing of any animal acceptable, because one never knows when it might stop – because the definition of ‘animals’ differ, as the hon. Member knows.

I do not ask this question from any great concern. Frankly, I have never found, so long as it is done in a humane way and for good reason, I do not, in my mind, distinguish between one animal and another as to whether their culling by shooting, or I suppose by any other means, is unacceptable. They take place in both forms everywhere in the world. I have just this summer returned from a holiday in South Africa, where the culling of animals by shooting is a common phenomenon, and it is boasted about as being absolutely essential for the preservation of a healthy natural life.

I just wanted to know whether there had been a slight change of focus of policy, and as the Hon. Mr Bossano has made clear, it is not an issue on which it is vital that every Member of the Government has the same view. Indeed, there may have been different views on the question when *we* did it in *our* days. I just wanted to pinpoint whether a line had been consciously drawn between monkeys and seagulls, or whether this was just repentance at my indictment.

**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Yes, Mr Speaker, I think I answered the point earlier. I think a point that has to be made is that whenever culling – or killing, correct, absolutely – is carried out, it is normally to redress a balance that has been upset by the interference of man. In South Africa, the loss of predators has meant that some species have become more common. For example, with gulls, the fact that we produce so much rubbish which is in excess of the natural food source and we have removed the predators means that the gull population increases, and therefore man is trying to rectify what, sadly, he has put wrong himself. I just thought I had to add that comment.

**Mr Speaker:** Does Mr Netto have any further supplementary?

**Hon. J J Netto:** Yes.

**Mr Speaker:** Yes, by all means, and then I will allow Mr Reyes to come back to the previous Questions.

1200 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, my understanding is that the two particular individuals who were employed at the time of the advert and went to the interview did not have the required certificate for firearms; and as a consequence of that, they have to now undertake the training in the form of going to the Gibraltar Shooting Club and doing all the lessons there. Once they are satisfied that the training, depending on the merits of the individuals, is up to a certain standard, they will get a certificate from the Commissioner of Police. That may take... whatever it takes – whether it is three months or six months.

1205 However, my understanding also is that the one person who did not succeed in the interview is the actual person who, in fact, did have all the qualifications, did have all the certificates and did actually show the amount of work that he has done in the past, both in Britain, in Spain and in South Africa. It just seems odd, and I put it to the Minister for the Environment, whether he will look into that and actually get an explanation from Gibraltar Wildlife Ltd, as to whether what I am saying is correct; and if so, whether he will ask them to look into the matter.

1210 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I will not get involved with selection processes in private companies. I would not for them, I would not for Sharrock Shand and I would not for Hassans.

1215 What I think we must consider is that we are not present at the selection board and we do not know whether that person, whoever it may be, may have had other considerations which may have made him unsuitable for other reasons – fitness, record, character. We do not know that, we cannot judge that, and I think it is unfair to carry out this discussion any further.

1220 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, does he not accept that there is a distinction between the analogy that he has provided – a distinction between Hassans and a distinction between Sharrock Shand, who at the end of the day are private entities who will recruit whoever they want; and Gibraltar Wildlife, which is getting a significant subsidy and moneys from the taxpayer?

1225 Therefore, there is a responsibility resting on the Hon. the Minister's shoulders to ensure that effectively things are done in a transparent way and that the right people are effectively chosen for a particular job, not only because we are interested in value for the taxpayer in terms of recruiting people who have the necessary experience, but also from a safety point of view – also ensuring that we are recruiting the right people for something which can have repercussions, not only for the gulls but for humans as well.

1230 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I am sure that those other companies and many others get a lot more taxpayers' money than this particular one, and therefore I do not think that that reference is valid.

Mr Speaker, I have no reason to doubt the ability of the team that has been selected.

I am quite amused at the fact that Members opposite – or *some* Members opposite – are taking more time out to discuss gull culling now that I am on this side of the House than when I was actually working with them on that very project. But there we are.

1235 I do not think I can add anything further to this discussion. I do not have the information, and I think it is unfair to discuss individual applicants or otherwise in this forum.

1240 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Well, Mr Speaker, can I remind the Hon. the Minister that actually this particular contract was for a substantial amount of money – £207,000? That is a lot of money for the taxpayer. Will he therefore undertake, at the very least, to investigate what the Hon. the Shadow Minister for the Environment is saying, and indeed what I am saying, because we have separately both effectively received complaints about this and received information that causes us concern; otherwise we would not be raising it in this House.

1245 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I do not think there is any need for me to carry out any further investigations. If the Members opposite have concerns, they are always free to write to me – they could have written to me before bringing it up here – and then I will reply accordingly.

## SPORTS, CULTURE, HERITAGE AND YOUTH

### Q488/2014 continued – Cultural grants – Awards in 2014-15

**Mr Speaker:** The Hon. Mr Reyes.

1250 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me leave to come back to the Minister for Culture.

I refer to the schedule the Minister kindly passed in answer to Question 488.

I would like to clarify, Mr Speaker, that I know in past years the Gibraltar Philharmonic Society has been given a £10,000 grant – that is the annual sponsorship that Government gives to them – and on this schedule it now comes as Gibraltar Philharmonic *Orchestra* with a side note that is for woodwind instruments to develop a Youth Orchestra.

For the avoidance of any doubt, can the Minister confirm that the Gibraltar Philharmonic Orchestra and the Gibraltar Philharmonic Society are both the same and one entity; or are they separate entities – and perhaps the Minister can then shed some light.

**Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares):** Yes, Mr Speaker, I fully agree with the hon. Member and I will check why the word ‘Orchestra’ after the word ‘Philharmonic’ is there, because I think this is an error and it should probably say ‘Gibraltar Philharmonic Society’, of which they are doing wind instruments to develop the Youth Orchestra. I will check on that, and thank you very much.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, thank you, Mr Speaker, I shall await for the Minister, whenever he is able to verify, to inform us; and then, if need be, we could follow it up at other future sessions.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

## HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

### Q498/2014

#### Yellow-legged gulls – Removal of nests from buildings

**Clerk:** Question 498, the Hon. J J Netto.

**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment state how many removals of nests of Yellow-legged gulls from homes and buildings have taken place since 1st April 2013 on a monthly basis?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

**Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, I will answer this Question together with Questions 499 to 502.

### Q499/2014

#### Yellow-legged gulls – Numbers culled since 1st April 2013

**Clerk:** Question 499, the Hon. J J Netto.

**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment state how many Yellow-legged gulls have been culled since 1st April 2013 on a monthly basis?

### Q500/2014

#### Yellow-legged gulls – Numbers culled in areas designated for imported partridges

**Clerk:** Question 500, the Hon. J J Netto.

**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment state how many Yellow-legged gulls have been culled in areas designated for the partridges imported from Morocco since 1st April of this year on a monthly basis, in order to avoid having these partridges and their chicks eaten by the seagulls?

**Q501/2014**

**Feral cats –**

**Numbers culled in areas designated for imported partridges**

**Clerk:** Question 501, the Hon. J J Netto.

1290 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment state how many feral cats have been culled in areas designated for the partridges imported from Morocco, since first April of this year on a monthly basis, in order to avoid having these partridges killed as has happened to the previous indigenous Barbary partridges?

**Q502/2014**

**Upper Rock Nature Reserve –**

**Measures to reduce seagulls, feral cats and rats**

**Clerk:** Question 502, the Hon. J J Netto.

1295 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment state what pest controlling measures have been in place in the Upper Rock Nature Reserve since December 2012, and what success have these had on the control of reducing seagulls, feral cats and rats in the Upper Rock Nature Reserve?

1300 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

**Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, a total of 190 eggs, 219 chicks and 37 fledged – adult, sub-adult or juvenile – gulls have been removed as a result of house calls since April 2013. These have been removed from nests or in the vicinity of nests. Details of monthly totals are provided in the schedule I now hand over.

1305 A total of 4,011 Yellow-legged gulls have been culled since 1st April 2013, the majority of which have been adult birds. Details of monthly totals are provided in the schedule also going over now.

1310 Removal of Yellow-legged gulls from areas designated for partridges may not have the effect of avoiding partridge chicks being taken by gulls, for the following reasons. First, gulls are highly mobile birds. Most foraging takes place at a considerable and sometimes very great distance away from nesting areas.

Removal of gull nests from small areas would therefore not guarantee reduced predation of partridge chicks in those areas.

1315 Secondly, the aim is for the partridges to disperse and colonise as much habitat in Gibraltar as possible. Further to this, gulls are culled in all areas of Gibraltar that are deemed suitable and safe by the Royal Gibraltar Police.

1320 Mr Speaker, no instruction to cull feral cats in the areas designated for partridges have been issued by the Ministry for the Environment or the Department of the Environment since 1st April 2014. The Department of the Environment has been surveying the areas designated for the release of Barbary partridges and these are, to the best of our knowledge, suitable for release purposes.

1325 As far as the Yellow-legged gulls are concerned, culling is ongoing. Long-term data show that culling is successful in controlling the gull population in Gibraltar. Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar has taken the additional measure of providing means for the employment, as we saw earlier, of two locally based, full-time members of the gull control unit. No instructions to cull cats or rats have been issued by the Ministry or the Department.

**Answer to Question 498**

Monthly totals are:

April 2013	2 fledged, 18 eggs
May 2013	3 fledged, 45 chicks, 27 eggs
June 2013	53 chicks
July 2013	14 fledged
January 2014	1 fledged
February 2014	2 fledged
March 2014	2 fledged
April 2014	108 eggs
May 2014	4 fledged, 88 chicks, 37 eggs
June 2014	9 fledged, 33 chicks

The months August to December have been excluded because these lie outside the breeding period. Not all house calls result in removal of nests, eggs or chicks, due to access and safety issues. For example, over 200 house calls were attended to during Spring 2014. House calls are also attended to outside of the breeding period, as shown by the January and February records.

1330 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, in the answer provided by the Hon. Minister I think he alluded to the fact that it does not necessarily follow that by culling the seagulls we are protecting the partridges. However, I put it to him that the main culprit of the reduction of partridges in Gibraltar clearly comes as a result of either seagulls or feral cats. There may be other predators, but indeed the bulk of the predators come either from seagulls or cats – is that not the case?

1335 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Yes, Mr Speaker. What I said in my answer is specifically in areas where the partridge release is going to be – culling gulls in that particular area may not be effective, or any more effective than in any other area, because the gulls would come in from the other areas. That is the distinction.

1340 The gull culling is proceeding, as I said earlier, but is not necessarily relevant to cull them in an area where you are going to release... because they will be moving in from other areas, and also because the release area is only temporary because we are hoping that the partridges will spread throughout the whole of Gibraltar.

1345 **Hon. J J Netto:** I am grateful, Mr Speaker, for that clarification by the Hon. Minister. However, could he perhaps elucidate a bit further in his answers, in the sense that although the culling is not taking place necessarily in those particular designated areas but rather perhaps on a much wider area within the Upper Rock Nature Reserve... can he actually provide some information as to the culling that is taking place both of seagulls... and perhaps explain why no instructions have been given as to the culling of feral cats?

1350 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Yes, Mr Speaker. As far as gulls are concerned, it is a general cull. I have given figures and it covers the whole of the area.

1355 As far as other predators are concerned, we have noticed, even before the release this year, a certain increase in the number of partridges, probably related to the clearing of more vegetation, which has opened up more habitat. Surveys are being carried out, which seem to suggest that there may be no need at this point in time to have any further involvement in the removal of potential predators.

1360 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, I notice that the Hon. Minister has not replied to one component of my supplementary question, which is as to why the reason why no instruction has been given for the culling of feral cats.

1365 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Yes, that is what I meant – because without that happening it seems that the local population was able to expand. It seemed that it was the habitat which was more of an issue. We have tackled that one; there may be no need to tackle the other. This is obviously something that is being continuously assessed.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Yes, but, Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman *has* been taking measures in order to reduce the feral cat population – is that not the case?

1370 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** There had been measures taken in built-up areas, which led to something of a controversy some months ago, and for the moment the culling is not taking place. What is happening is that the Cat Welfare Society has been supplied with equipment by the Department and is removing cats and taking them to their premises. So that is what is happening at the moment.

**Q503/2014**  
**Electromagnetic emissions –**  
**Risks to health**

**Clerk:** Question 503, the Hon. J J Netto.

1375 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health and the Environment say whether the Government has had the opportunity to consider the ESG concerns over the possible risks to health due to emissions from radio-frequency radiation by the use of cell and portable phones, cell towers, mast antennae, wireless monitors and routers etc; and if so, state what the Government position is in relation to the Bioinitiative Report of 2012?

1380 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

1385 **Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, the Gibraltar Regulatory Authority (GRA) is responsible for the management of the electromagnetic spectrum in Gibraltar. This includes compliance with electromagnetic field emissions (EMF) from transmitters as per international guidelines by an organisation known as ICNIRP. As part of the licensing process, the Authority conducts a site inspection on all mobile base station installations, and routinely audits base stations throughout Gibraltar for compliance.

1390 In relation to the Bioinitiative Report of 2012, this was raised at a presentation organised by the ESG on Tuesday, 7th October – this month. The relevant Departments are in the process of reviewing the contents of said report.

1395 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, obviously, I welcome the fact that the Government has taken the opportunity to engage with the concerns raised by the ESG, and that as a result of that, various Government Departments – presumably the Department of Education, and others indeed – will look into the matter in relation to those particular hazards.

1400 Does the Minister for Health and the Environment have a specific view as to whether those particular guidelines he referred to – the international guidelines – do actually match with the European Council in relation to the safety of these particular issues?

1405 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, this is an interesting question. For example, when one is talking about emission of pollutants, there are EU guidelines and other international guidelines – and my own personal guideline would be that it would be wonderful to have zero emissions, but that is obviously not practical. Therefore, whether I think that the international guidelines are absolutely correct is taking it a step too far.

1410 It is my duty, as Minister of the Government, to ensure that we keep to international regulations. It is my duty also to try and ensure that the risk to the public on anything that goes out into the atmosphere – be it gaseous emissions or be it electromagnetic radiation – is the least possible when it is established that these are harmful. We are sticking to international regulations. I have been discussing with the ESG and others, including the operators, for a number of years, and with the GRA, and we have a policy in which we try, even within the international guidelines, to minimise emissions as far as possible.

What I can say is that we are certainly complying with international regulations and we are constantly reviewing and keeping in touch with developments elsewhere to ensure the maximum safety to the people.

**Q504/2014**  
**Nesting facilities for swallows –**  
**Provision at old St Bernard's Hospital**

**Clerk:** Question 504, the Hon. J J Netto.

1415 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment please state whether nesting facilities for swallows will be reprovided on completion of the old St Bernard's Hospital conversion?

1420 **Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, the simple answer is no, sir. However, I suspect that the hon. Member opposite... In fact, swallows have not been recorded nesting in Gibraltar in recent times, probably since the 1970s or early 1980s, but the Hon. Member might be referring to swifts, in which case I can add, before a supplementary is asked, that swift boxes will be provided upon completion of the project.

**Q505/2014**

**Environment (Control of Dust) Regulation 2010 –  
Implementation at GOG construction sites**

**Clerk:** Question 505, the Hon. J J Netto.

1425 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment state whether all GOG construction sites are implementing the Environment (Control of Dust) Regulation 2010?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

1430 **Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, to the knowledge of the Environmental Agency, yes, they are. As my hon. colleague across the floor will be aware, the Environmental Agency is the competent authority for dust control in *all* construction sites.

1435 **Hon. J J Netto:** Yes, indeed, Mr Speaker, the Environmental Agency is the policing authority in these matters, but the fact is that it does not happen in all Government construction sites.

I have taken the liberty of taking some photographs from the old St Bernard's Hospital, not only yesterday but a couple of months ago, and if I can pass the photographs over to the Hon. Minister he will see that they are not complying with the legislation, the contractor on a Government project.

1440 Given that they are not complying with the legislation, does it mean that... What I would like to know is whether the particular contractor – I am not sure whether it is GJBS – has actually solicited, prior to starting the works, the necessary paperwork to be considered; and whether the Environmental Agency has given them permission to do so. If they *have* done so, then probably they are committing an offence under the law, so can the Minister respond to that?

1445 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I do not need to see the photographs. I am grateful for the Member opposite having taken the time to provide them.

1450 The fact that there is an incident of dust in an area does not mean that the regulations do not apply, or are not being applied, or will not be applied. An incident of dust in an area will alert the Environmental Agency to approach the contractor and to enter into a discussion with the contractor to ensure that the regulations are applied. In fact, it has happened in a number of different sites throughout Gibraltar – private and for Government projects – on which there have been incidents. The Environmental Agency has engaged with them and they have subsequently complied. The Environmental Agency will not allow a breach of the law, and will not breach the law in allowing a breach of the law.

1455 Therefore, I am satisfied that dust control... the Agency is on top of these things, regularly dealing with contractors. Sometimes contractors may not have taken the steps initially, but the dialogue, as I said, is entered into, and ultimately the question of dust is controlled as per the requirements of the law. So I am satisfied that this has been the case in all projects, including Government projects.

1460 **Hon. J J Netto:** Well, Mr Speaker, the Hon. Minister may be satisfied, but certainly the whole neighbourhood around this particular construction site are not satisfied, because they have a situation of dust going into their own houses and they are having to clean, on a daily basis, the amount of dust emanating from the construction site. So, whilst he may be satisfied, certainly the neighbourhood is not satisfied, and the question remains whether the Environmental Agency has provided a certificate to put the dust panels on the scaffolding, or not.

1465 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I am often approached with complaints – all sorts of things, actually – of dust in certain sites. This one has not come to my notice. If the neighbours are concerned – which

obviously they might well be, if there are such incidents – then I will ask the Environmental Agency to look into it and ensure that we comply with the law.

As I say, there will be incidents in all sites, which are then tackled, and contractors – including the ones who are working for the Government – do co-operate and take steps and go out of their way to ensure that the inconvenience to the public is minimised. I will now certainly take this up and ensure that all the proper processes are in place.

**Hon. J J Netto:** Can I further ask the hon. Member whether he can also look at the fact of whether the contractor has been in breach of the legislation; and if so, whether they will be fined?

**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I will ensure that the law is enforced, but I do not think I can go into details as to what may or may not have happened in a speculative manner.

**Mr Speaker:** This is perhaps a convenient moment to have a short break of eight to 10 minutes.

*The House recessed at 11.24 a.m. and resumed its sitting at 11.37 a.m.*

### SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

#### Standing Order 7(1) suspended to proceed with a Government Statement

**Mr Speaker:** The Hon. the Chief Minister.

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, I beg to move, under Standing Order 7(3), to suspend Standing Order 7(1) in order to proceed with a Government Statement.

**Mr Speaker:** Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye.) Those against? Carried.

### GOVERNMENT STATEMENT

#### Statement by the Chief Minister – Visit of Secretary of State for Defence, Rt. Hon. Michael Fallon

**Mr Speaker:** The Hon. the Chief Minister.

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, I have today welcomed the Rt. Hon. Michael Fallon MP, the UK Defence Secretary, to Gibraltar for a short visit.

The Defence Secretary and I jointly paid tribute to all those working in support of the Ministry of Defence activities in Gibraltar and agreed that the current threats to regional and global security arising from West Africa to the Middle East underscored once again the strategic importance of a permanent joint operating base in Gibraltar, very much of the current agreed size and shape going forward. Mr Speaker, this will be very welcome news to locally employed civilians at the base, and in particular the statement by the Defence Secretary this morning in the press conference that no job losses are envisaged for there. (*Applause and banging on desks*)

Mr Speaker, we are announcing in a joint statement being released to the media today that the Ministry of Defence will shortly invite commercial tenders for the resurfacing of the runway at Gibraltar Airport, with the work expected to begin next summer. The airfield will remain open for civilian and military air traffic during the works, which are a tangible indication of the Ministry of Defence's long-term commitment to Gibraltar. The runway was last resurfaced in 1993.

I and the Defence Secretary also announced that we have agreed that in future – *in future*, but not now – the cost of replacing key elements of Defence infrastructure at the airfield would be shared equally in recognition of the strategic importance of those assets to commercial use of the airfield, and hence to Gibraltar's economy as well as to its military use.

Also on airfield issues, the Defence Secretary and I reaffirmed the joint commitment to the transfer of the Defence Fire and Rescue Services to the Government of Gibraltar, and we also took the opportunity to welcome the joint work that had already been carried out to this end and look forward to approving the



transfer at the earliest opportunity. Mr Speaker, this will be very welcome news for the men of the DFRS who have previously seen the MOD blow hot and cold on this issue.

Under agreements dating back to 1974, the Ministry of Defence has transferred areas of land it held for defence purposes, and which it no longer needs, to Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar for it to retain or dispose of for community or commercial use. The Defence Secretary and I have welcomed the recent progress that was made on such transfers and have initiated work on a further Lands Agreement to be agreed in early 2015.

This is expected to include a commitment to transfer to Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar a block of warehousing at the naval base, once key elements of the 2011 Lands Agreement have been completed. The aim is to achieve this transfer within 12 months of today's agreement in principle. It is also expected to include a commitment for the transfer of the site at Rosia Bay, previously known as Fortress Headquarters, on completion and implementation of all previous Lands Agreements, and this is likely to occur in the course of 2017. Hon. Members will know that this is an iconic site, which the whole of the community will be very happy to note will be handed over to the nation's Government shortly. In both instances, Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar will *not* be making any contribution to re-providing these MOD facilities.

Finally, I welcome with the Defence Secretary the commitment to introduce by this Government legislation to the Parliament in the next few weeks to place the Royal Gibraltar Regiment on the same footing as its British Army counterparts, highlighting its continuing valuable contribution, both in Gibraltar and deployed on operations. Mr Fallon stated, Mr Speaker, that he expected that the Royal Gibraltar Regiment would remain at its current size and shape for the foreseeable future. (*Banging on desks*) With a strategic defence and security review to be held in the next 12 months, this language will be very welcome by members and family members of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment, as well as the whole community.

Mr Speaker, this morning, the Defence Secretary shared with me the latest concerns and proposed actions which the COBRA committee, chaired by the Prime Minister, had discussed in relation to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. We have agreed to continuing close contact at a political and official level on this issue of fundamental importance.

Before meeting with me at 6 Convent Place, Mr Fallon was able to get out into the full extent of British Gibraltar territorial waters with the Gibraltar Squadron and observe for himself the geography which is much the subject of debate in respect of the repeated incursions by the Spanish state vessels in our waters.

Finally, I want to acknowledge that in relation to the cost of the resurfacing of the runway, the hon. the backbencher, Sir Peter Caruana, has assisted me greatly on this issue when he highlighted, at the time of the transition from one administration to another, that this was an issue that the Ministry of Defence had raised with him and on which there was an element of negotiation still to go. He has been very helpful in the past months in providing access to his administration's files and providing a written record of his recollection of events, which has assisted me in my negotiations and strengthened Gibraltar's hands generally.

I am also grateful for the generous assistance of my own Cabinet colleagues in respect of these negotiations. (*Applause and banging on desks*)

**Mr Speaker:** The Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, the Opposition certainly welcomes the Statement that the Hon. the Leader of the House has made. It is welcome on a number of fronts. It is welcomed in particular because it adds to the security and the stability of a lot of families that work in the MOD as a sector, and that is always to be welcome. It is always something that we will support – any initiative and any result that leads to the security of jobs, not only in that sector but also in other sectors.

Mr Speaker, in particular I also welcome the confirmation of the transfer of the Defence Fire Service from the MOD into the Gibraltar Government. It is something that we were very much committed to when we were in Government and I am glad that it is finally happening and that it has been announced by the Government today. So, on the whole, Mr Speaker, we welcome it and it is very good news, not only for those working in the sector but also for Gibraltar generally.

**Mr Speaker:** Does any hon. Member of the Opposition wish to ask any question for clarification?

HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Q506/2014

Ebola virus –

Level of threat to Gibraltar and measures in place

**Mr Speaker:** We then proceed with the next Question on the agenda, which is Question 506.

The Hon. Danny Feetham.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, what threat, if any, does the Government believe is posed to the population in Gibraltar by the Ebola virus, and what measures has the Government put in place in order to deal with that threat?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

**Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, the outbreak of Ebola virus disease has now been active since mid-March 2014, as we clearly know from the media, in several West African countries. The disease is a viral haemorrhagic fever with high mortality, but as it spreads to humans by direct contact the risk of infection is usually limited to close contacts of the ill person, such as relatives and healthcare workers.

The risk of the disease manifesting in Gibraltar is extremely small. Typically, it requires that someone who has been in direct bodily contact with an infected person travels to Gibraltar within 21 days and takes ill after arrival. This complex scenario is unlikely to be the case with casual visitors, passing ships, or asylum seekers; the greatest risk lies in the case of returning humanitarian aid and healthcare workers, which is not relevant to Gibraltar.

Although European authorities and the World Health Organisation have not advised travel restrictions to or from the affected areas, the Government has put in place a number of precautions for increased vigilance at the points of entry. The Port of Gibraltar has strengthened the standard medical protocols already in place based on public health laws – such as the Quarantine Act, and the International Health Regulations which were implemented earlier this year – with specific scrutinies and measures applied to ships and passengers. Government Departments monitoring points of entry – including the Borders and Coastguard Agency, HM Customs, the Airport and the Police – have also been issued with protocols and training. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) rules will apply to all scheduled airlines entering Gibraltar.

All doctors in Gibraltar have been issued with guidance designed by Public Health England to identify persons who could have the disease. This guidance has been exercised and applied strictly on three occasions, but other common illnesses, like malaria, turned out to be the causes. Nevertheless, these false positives are a necessary price to be paid for continued vigilance. I would like to add here that the guidance has been issued to private doctors as well as GHA doctors.

If a case is suspected, the Gibraltar Health Authority has in place a comprehensive viral haemorrhagic fevers policy covering preparedness, disease recognition, staff protection, infection control, clinical treatment, specialist advice and waste disposal. The hospital has prepared a dedicated isolation unit with ample stocks of the recommended personal protection equipment. A remote facility for isolating, monitoring and managing the contacts is under preparation.

Since early September, the infection control nurses have delivered training to over 100 GHA staff and 100 other officers.

The Director of Public Health participates in a regular teleconference with Public Health England to stay abreast of developments and guidance.

In summary, the risk of encountering a case of Ebola virus disease in Gibraltar is and remains extremely remote, but the first-level precautions are in place, facilities for swift response are ready, safe practice is being embedded in the workforce and vigilance continues to be maintained.

Mr Speaker, I do have a report on the preparedness, prepared by the Director of Public Health, which is not a formal schedule but I will make this available to Members who may be interested to read it.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, I am very grateful to the hon. Member for indicating he is prepared to share that information; the more information that we share – not only across the House, but indeed with members of the public – on something as important as this, the more people's concerns will be assuaged and calmed, because of course people see the images on TV every single day and the devastation that this particular illness is wreaking in West Africa.

Mr Speaker, in the press release that the Hon. the Minister issued – and indeed he has quoted from it today – he said that typically the disease:

‘requires that someone who has been in direct bodily contact with an infected person travels to Gibraltar within 21 days and takes ill after arrival.’

Then it says:

‘In this complex scenario it is unlikely to be the case that casual visitors, business travellers, passing ships, medical tourists, asylum seekers or indirect contacts...’

are likely to effectively come to Gibraltar without the disease having effectively taken hold.

The Hon. the Minister again said today there is a potential risk in the case of humanitarian aid and healthcare workers, but that is not applicable to Gibraltar because, as I understand it, there are no such individuals from Gibraltar working in that field.

But, Mr Speaker, has the hon. Gentleman, or the Government, or agencies on its behalf, done an actual risk assessment of where it is that there might be higher risk – and I accept that we are talking about very low risk – but higher risk, of somebody with this disease coming into Gibraltar? For example, has the Government done an assessment that indicates that perhaps – and I am just talking from common sense; I am not an expert, although I have been briefed by some experts in some of the questions that I am going to be asking the hon. Gentleman – through the ferry from Morocco to Gibraltar might be a potential higher risk than in other areas?

Has that kind of risk assessment being done; and if it has, what kind of extra measures have been adopted in relation to those riskier points of entry?

**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, certainly all these things are constantly being considered, and there is a tremendous amount of communication between different Government Departments. The Director of Public Health certainly himself has been for months now in contact with different Government Departments.

I can say that last Friday, immediately upon his return from New York, the Chief Minister chaired a meeting of the C3. All relevant agencies were present and they were able to advise the Government and the Chief Minister – and my hon. Friend, Minister Linares and I are also members of that body – and they were able to advise in respect of all the respective competences.

No further action is recommended at this stage, in keeping with the protocols established by the experts at the time of the swine flu outbreak, which also saw a lot of concerns, even though swine flu is easier to spread than Ebola, fortunately.

The situation is under daily review, given Gibraltar could receive an infected person by land, sea or air, as could anywhere else in the world. Controls will likely identify easy arrivals by sea or air coming in from the most infected regions, or showing symptoms of the infection manifesting. It would be harder to detect, of course, at the land frontier if the person came in by vehicle, but all these issues are under active consideration and the Government rules out nothing in dealing with the outbreak if it is advised by experts to take a particular measure.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, I am grateful for that answer and I hope that the hon. Gentleman does not detect – and he will not detect – any criticism from me in the handling by the Government of this particular issue. My sole purpose today is to explore what precautions have been taken, and indeed for the public to actually listen to the Minister explaining some of the questions that have certainly been put to me, so that their concerns can be alleviated, if they have any.

Mr Speaker, I take it from the answer that the Hon. Minister has given me that really the authorities are treating all the entry points into Gibraltar in exactly the same way and the protocols apply to each one, and there is not any heightened scrutiny, shall we say, in relation to any particular point of entry than any other?

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, if I can be of assistance, as the Chair of the C3 last Friday – that is not quite correct. Each entry point requires a different level of scrutiny to be applied in respect of people coming into Gibraltar. For example, at the Airport, one of the things that is being done is the monitoring from where people may have transferred on another aircraft or transited from another aircraft. If somebody were trying to transit from one of the affected areas to a flight to Gibraltar, then that would be highlighted. If somebody were to manifest with the symptoms, that is also something that is being looked out for at the Airport. So it is common at the three entry points to look for symptoms. That is something that we have our Borders and Coastguard agents, our Customs agents, and indeed our police officers, looking for in each of these areas.

What the hon. Gentleman has said is that the hardest place in which to detect a symptomatic patient, or a symptomatic entrant, is the land frontier, if that person is coming in by vehicle. If somebody is coming in symptomatic at the ferry terminal, they will be as easy to spot to the trained eye of a Borders and Coastguard agent, or a Customs agent – and they have had the basic training to spot it – as they would be at

the Airport or walking across the land frontier. So what we have identified as a particular risk is somebody who might come in in a vehicle, and because they are in a vehicle it is almost impossible to detect whether that person is symptomatic.

If somebody is coming in through the ferry, then the protocol does involve noting whether that person – through their passport, and at the ferry there is a much deeper scrutiny of passports than there is perhaps elsewhere – whether that person has been in one of the affected areas in the recent past. All of the affected areas, as I understand it, still stamp passports, and there would therefore be an immigration signal on the document that the person had been in the infected area.

So the advice that we have is that the protocols developed in respect of each of the entry points involves a risk assessment particular to the entry point, so that we understand that different things have to be done at each of the different entry points to try and detect these individuals. What we cannot discard, and what no nation can, unfortunately discard at the moment, is that somebody who is *not* symptomatic comes into Gibraltar and then *becomes* symptomatic. There is absolutely no way at the moment that it is possible to detect that, short of giving everybody who is coming to Gibraltar a test, and making them wait for the required period whilst that test verifies.

I know this is not going to be a subject on which there is going to be a partisan division in Gibraltar. It is going to be a subject on which we are all going to want to achieve the same aim, and what we are going to want to do is ensure that the relevant agencies – which are Government agencies, and in effect advise the Government – have all the resources available in order to be able to do the work that they need to do. Unfortunately, there is not, at the moment, a silver bullet out there that we can buy for our agencies that they can obtain and have available to them to deal with this issue. In the swine flu epidemic it became the position that there was an antidote for the flu, and therefore the Government at the time bought a large quantity of that antidote – and in fact when the swine flu epidemic manifested in Gibraltar it was no longer an epidemic in the world. There were a couple of individuals affected by it, we had the ability to deal with them, but it was well-nigh, I think, a year or two years after this had been big news and was actually catching fire around the world.

So, at the moment, the advice that we have is that it is very unlikely to manifest in Gibraltar, but that advice is based on good faith and reading all the relevant international medical and immigration information that there is available. As I have said to the House a moment ago, I have exchanged views on the subject with the Defence Secretary, who was at a meeting of COBRA yesterday dealing with the subject, and we have agreed to continue in contact with the UK authorities as they develop their own protocols to deal with the subject. The Convent is a conduit for that and has been important in ensuring that we are availed of the same up-to-date information that the Borders Agency in the United Kingdom has available to it.

At this stage I think that the House will be pleased to know that the advice that the political Government has from those who are responsible for risk assessment in the C3 is that there is not much more to do at the moment because there is not a huge risk at the moment.

It is also true to say, and I am happy to inform the House, that when people have sought disembarkation in Gibraltar in the past two or three weeks, who have embarked on merchantmen in the affected areas, we have either prevented disembarkation for the quarantine period, so it is clear that they are not infected with the virus, or simply said that if they are not prepared to put up with the incubation period and not prepared to put up with the test, then although we will allow embarkation of new crew men to merchant shipmen, we will not allow disembarkation.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, thank you very much for that answer.

As the Hon. the Chief Minister rightly points out, you can have a situation where somebody does not reflect the relevant symptoms coming into Gibraltar and then develops the symptoms later on, and that really is the difficulty.

When somebody is travelling from the United Kingdom, for example – and at the Airport, that really effectively is what we are talking about – it might be very... it might be easier – not very easy, but easier – to monitor where that person has actually been traveling from, because if that person is or has been in transit from an affected area, that information is readily available.

The problem with the entry via the ferry is that you are talking about people who have entered from Africa, and of course they may not have visited the affected states or affected countries but they may have come in contact with people who have visited those affected states. I just wonder whether there are any additional protocols in relation to that entry point that are over and above the protocols in relation to the Airport, for example.

Of course, in this particular case, if there are going to be additional protocols, we are talking about additional questions, perhaps more frequent checking of passports, of people. I cannot for one moment... unless of course the situation were to get considerably graver, that you are going to stop every single person in a line and ask every single person a series of questions. If the situation gets worse, then it may come to

that, but what additional protocols, if any, are there in relation to this particular entry point? It has been identified to me as potentially riskier – if we can call it that – than other areas.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, let me start at the end: I do not think it is riskier, because today, a lot of people who go to Africa and come into Gibraltar actually choose to do so by going to Algeciras or Tarifa, doing a ferry transfer there and then coming back into Gibraltar through the land frontier, simply because of the frequency of ferries. Somebody can choose, unless they have not got a British passport, to make the entry at any time of their choosing any day of the week and not have to wait for the Friday ferry and the Sunday return. That is why I am telling the hon. Gentleman that there needs to be equal scrutiny at the land frontier in respect of such persons who may have travelled to North Africa.

In respect of the ferry itself, what I told him before was that people are being subjected to very detailed passport checks, so he must not think... He said ‘more frequent’ passport checks. He must not think that at the ferry terminal people are not subjected to passport checks. They are all subjected to exhaustive passport checks – indeed, at the Airport as well. It is not just a question of more frequent checks – every passport is checked at the ferry terminal. What is happening is it is now being checked to see whether there is a stamp from one of those affected areas.

The other question of course is, as the hon. Gentleman has postulated: what happens in the case of an individual who has only been to Morocco, but in Morocco has been with somebody who has been in that area? Indeed, it does not matter whether that person has been to that area: somebody who is infected. You could have a person infected in Morocco, who has been infected in some chain from an infected area. So the question is there, as the hon. Gentleman has suggested, of questioning, and that is also happening at the ferry terminal; but not just questioning – also information. The questioning is a difficult one – ‘Have you been in contact with anybody who has manifested any of the symptoms of Ebola?’ – but of course if somebody has been in touch with somebody who does not manifest the symptoms of Ebola, then the medical advice is that there should be no risk because it should only be contagious once it is symptomatic and in various contact, which is close contact, once it is symptomatic. That is the advice at the moment.

At the Airport, you have the advantage that the flights are all from the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom is communicating to us whether somebody is transiting from those areas, but you have the added difficulty that somebody may not transit from those areas. Somebody may arrive in the United Kingdom, leave the airport – not do a transit – for a few hours or for a few days, and then wish to come to Gibraltar. So again, there is the need for vigilance and they are looking at passports and not simply relying on the fact that we may have been told that that person has been in transit. So we are looking at everyone to ensure that this vigilance is maintained, and any hint that somebody has been in the area is picked up in the best possible way.

I want to leave him with a thought that I gave him earlier: first, about the land frontier being particularly problematic because of transfers through North Africa; and second, the issue that our Port is not just the ferry.

This is where I told him that we have a strong business in bunkers and in transshipment. In other words, crew are coming onshore in Gibraltar and changing crew in Gibraltar. We have already had instances of a vessel having to remain in quarantine before it was allowed to dock for a particular period of time, and until everything was confirmed and all tests had been done *and* the quarantine period – in other words, a double filter had been done – they were not allowed to dock. That was uncomfortable, that caused demurrage, but we were not prepared to put the community at risk in any other way, and we have prevented people who are not prepared to put up with that wait from actually coming ashore to disembark here and then fly home from here, because they were not prepared to put up with the testing or the demurrage time.

So this is a difficult issue. There are some instances where the risk is there, and that is why the risk assessment is made, to see how best to manage the risk without, in effect, closing our borders, which I am sure is not something that hon. Members would want to see the Government doing unless we were to reach almost the stage of global meltdown, where each community, in effect, shuts itself in. Economically, what that would mean for the world would be actually quite disastrous, and we sincerely hope we are not going to reach that stage and that we can put reasonable measures in place at each of these entry points – which we already have done – to ensure that the right questions, the right checking etc, are asked; and also, if I may say so, in relation to the particular part of our community that is more likely to be traveling to North Africa, information.

One of the things that the C3 has recommended, and is now happening, is that there will be information disseminated amongst our Moroccan community, our Moroccan workers community in particular, to advise them of what a symptomatic person may be reflecting, so that they can understand for themselves, if they are back home in Morocco, what they need to be looking out for and what they need to report, so that they have no fear that in coming back into Gibraltar they might be treated like a pariah and prevented entry and that actually what will happen, if they are in contact with someone, is that they will be given the medical

treatment they need to ensure that they are not going to become symptomatic, and are dealt with appropriately.

**Hon. Sir P R Caruana:** Yes Mr Speaker, I had wanted to ask the hon. Member a supplementary on a subject that he has, in fact, just touched on a few minutes ago in that last response.

First of all, might I just express my personal view that, in addition to whatever sense there might be in taking particular precautions in respect of particular risk areas at particular borders, which I imagine the Government will do there what it can, I think the Government is right in focusing on training of staff – in other words, focusing on what we would do if a case occurred in Gibraltar, rather than trying to prevent the needle from falling into the haystack in the first place, which is really for calming of public concern, but actually is probably very ineffective.

I have been taken, only as a layman... I have absolutely no training on these things, except the knowledge that I acquired, as he is now acquiring, from being exposed to having to handle the issue. We talk about spotting symptoms at entry points. The reality is that the symptom, by which time you are contagious, is little more than a low temperature. Well, how do you spot, unless you measure everybody's temperature with a temperature gun, which I understand is being contemplated in some places now, how do you spot the fact, however vigilant you are, that somebody has a low temperature? It is not even a blistering temperature with sweating. You are not bleeding at the nose; all that comes much later. By the time you have only a low temperature you are already symptomatic and in a contagious state, so the idea that we can prevent the needle from falling into the haystack called Gibraltar is certainly worth doing everything that we can, and I think the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition is right to spot to be more concerned about some entry points than others.

But my question is this. The Hon. Chief Minister has said that the Government is looking out for people who travel from particular destinations in transit or whatever. Can the hon. Member be just a little bit clearer – he has just touched on it – about what the consequences would be if somebody did turn up at the Airport with a Sierra Leone stamp in his passport? If I went to Sierra Leone and came back with a Sierra Leone stamp, what is the Government... What is the policy? (*Interjection*) Yes, the temptation to – (*Laughter*)

Alright, let me just pick an easier example for the hon. Member to grapple with, then. If some dye-in-the-wool GSLP activist, the biggest cash donor to his party coffers, personal friend of all the Ministers on the other side, were to travel to Sierra Leone, what would be the protocol? Would it just be a question of assessing the risk there and then, at the spot, by the officer on duty, or is there something... I am not for one moment suggesting that I think there should be any such thing; I am just asking what actually the Government's policy is.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, it is good that we have a moment of levity dealing with something quite as serious as this is.

I know that we have had, in fact, three Members of this House out in Cameroon for some time, and they were welcomed back despite that little adventure.

There is a protocol in place, when you spot somebody who has been to that area, to take them aside, ask further questions and offer health cover and, if necessary, if that report goes up to the relevant health official, to detain them to carry out tests – obviously, initially at invitation, if necessary.

These are not things that are going to manifest often, simply because one of the things you do, as he will know, in these situations is to say, 'Well, how often do we have, on average, visitors from Sierra Leone and from Guinea etc?' What I am trying to say to them is that actually it is more often than they might think, but it is not through the Airport usually; it is usually through the Port. It is usually when they come off ships, having embarked there as crew members. We receive a lot of people usually from further east – from the Philippines – who embark in Gibraltar, but most of the people who manifest themselves from those destinations are coming in merchant ships and they are coming to Gibraltar from the sea on the way to the Airport.

So the protocols that we have in place, which I have explained to the hon. Gentleman have kicked in twice when this has manifested itself at an entry at sea, are the sorts of protocols we would put in place if somebody were to manifest in person before an immigration official, either at the land frontier – where it is, as he will know, much harder to spot – or at the Airport.

**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** If I may, Mr Speaker, just to add that the Director of Public Health, should he need to use them, has powers under the Quarantine Act to take any person he suspects may be a risk to health and detain him for supervision and treatment.

I would also just like to add something that I did not mention earlier. There will be a simulation exercise carried out by GHA professionals within the next couple of weeks to ensure readiness. A similar one was carried out in the UK, as people may have picked up from the news media. And of course the hard work of

the Director of Public Health and the infection control nurses, who are leading on this, continues in training and increasing the readiness of everybody in Gibraltar.

1870 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, I have got a number of supplementaries in relation to this, but there is a point that has arisen from the exchanges between the Hon. Sir Peter Caruana and the Chief Minister, and it is this. The Chief Minister gave an example of the protocols kicking in for entries via the Port, and what he said was, 'Well, look, on a previous occasion we have had to prevent people from coming onshore for a period of time beyond the incubation of the disease to make sure that those people do not have the disease.'

1875 But of course you cannot do that – or can you? – when somebody is effectively entering Gibraltar via the Airport.

I think the question that I have is: what happens if, effectively, we know that somebody is coming from those affected areas via the Airport? Because if they were coming from the Port, they would be prevented from coming into Gibraltar, as the Hon. Chief Minister has said, until the incubation period of the disease has elapsed; but it is much more difficult in relation to the Airport, unless of course you force people – and

1880 then we are into the realms of whether it is possible to force people – to effectively be tested for the disease.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, I think to a great extent the Hon. the Minister for Health has given the answer to that question now when he has referred to the quarantine issue.

1885 It would be very peculiar for us to receive somebody at the Airport from one of these destinations without knowing that they are coming, because the person will have transited through the United Kingdom and, as I have told the hon. Gentleman, we are told by the United Kingdom before people embark that there is a person from one of these destinations coming, and we may be able to prevent them from coming whilst they are dealt with in the UK, which is better prepared to deal with these issues at airports because they

1890 know who is coming from where.

So, if we were not to be alerted to the arrival of a person through that mechanism – which could happen, as I told the hon. Gentleman if that person did not transit through an airport in the UK but left an airport in the UK, having got off a plane from one of those places and having passed the UK protocol... So they get off the plane, they pass the UK protocol for arrivals from that area and they leave the airport – they are not

1895 in transit – and the next day, or later that day, because they wanted to go out... Let's assume they are not trying to avoid the transit alert system... they get on a plane to Gibraltar. That could happen, and therefore the person could arrive here having been in one of those places. Then the protocol kicks in that the hon. Gentleman has referred to. That person would be taken aside, health professionals would be engaged, they would be offered the test; and if the health professionals thought it was appropriate, they might be

1900 quarantined, and if the individual did not wish to assist with that period of quarantine etc, they might have to be forcibly quarantined. It may be that that is something that we get to.

We are painting pictures that I hope we will never reach because people will not manifest in this way, people will be responsible if they come from one of these areas and they will understand that the health authorities do not just want to protect the general public from this disease, they will also want to help

1905 anybody who may have been exposed to it, to ensure that they get the right treatment from the moment that they say that they may have been exposed to it. Exposure to it, in geographical terms, does not mean that they are suffering from it. Somebody can be in Sierra Leone and come back from Sierra Leone without any difficulty – they have not been exposed to a person who has it; they have therefore not contracted it, they are not going to become symptomatic and they are okay. They are tested and then we can say to a great

1910 extent – unless it decides to mutate in a different way – that the virus is not present in the individual and that is it. But those are the types of protocols that would be engaged if somebody manifested with some transit through one of those countries.

There are other situations where people might not declare that they have come from one of these places – might have been able to avoid a stamp, might have been able to avoid the UK authorities. There are many

1915 ways in which this could happen.

My biggest concern, Mr Speaker, is not the Airport. My biggest concern is the land frontier. That is the most likely place for somebody to be able to get in. They simply get in a vehicle. If they have got a European passport, they flash it as they do at most times, and we would be very hard pressed to implement a harsher system now for people to come in in vehicular traffic without ourselves causing very, very

1920 lengthy queues indeed, probably of the sort that we complain the other side politically create in a reckless and negligent fashion.

We have to be careful not to put ourselves in a position, as the Hon. Sir Peter has said, where we are simply trying to ensure that nobody comes in with any chance of having been exposed to the disease – because what we need to do is be ready to treat it if it does manifest. Given the range of estimations that I have seen, this disease is either going to be dealt with very quickly or is going to explode before it is dealt with, but all the health professionals I have spoken to and all the advice I have read suggests that when the disease 'hits' western medicine, it is likely not to result in as many deaths as one is seeing in West Africa at

1925

the moment, although we have seen deaths in Western Europe and in the United States, but all of those cases had manifested themselves a long time before treatment had actually commenced to the standards of western medicine.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, I am grateful for that. Moving on... Although, before I move on, there is a tension here in the protocol, in the sense that the protocols for entering via the Port appear to me to be very resilient indeed – the Government is insisting on people effectively not disembarking unless the incubation period expires – whereas, of course, the protocols in the United Kingdom, the protocols they may have for entering the United Kingdom may not be as resilient as the ones via the Port. Therefore, effectively, via that route one may be allowing people – I just leave the Hon. the Chief Minister with this – to come in under less stringent protocols than via the Port, unless of course one is prepared to take the decision to effectively quarantine people coming from these particular areas at the Airport, which causes difficulties in itself. I just leave the Hon. the Chief Minister with that.

Just moving on, if someone arrives in Gibraltar and develops symptoms and believes that they are developing symptoms – for whatever reason: they have been in contact, or at risk, or whatever – and it is not detected at the entry point but they develop those symptoms, what is the advice that the Government gives those people? Of course, everything that we have said today deals with protocols for the GHA dealing with the particular disease at entry points, but equally I have not heard anything – and it is important for information to be provided to the public as to what the public or a member of the public has to do in that kind of situation. It may not be as obvious as some Members or indeed listeners listening to my question believe it to be.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, I am going to let the Hon. Minister for Health deal with that question, but in relation to the first part of it, when he talked about the more stringent conditions at the Port than at the Airport, he must not get away with thinking that we have had an instance at the Airport which has been dealt with any less stringently than at the Port. What I am telling him is that we have had incidents of people traveling from those places already manifest at the Port, and that is how we have dealt with it. We have not had any manifesting itself at the Airport, but as I have told him, we would deal with it in the same way. What I cannot tell him – and this is the real concern if we are going to flag some – is that we have not had somebody come through the land frontier who has actually been exposed, and that is the issue.

So that takes us neatly to the second part of his question, which is: what happens if somebody has been exposed and is in Gibraltar undetected? Take it from me, it is more likely to happen through the land frontier than anywhere else. So, what is the position in that situation? There is, to some extent, already information put out in the public domain. There was a recent statement, I think, from the GHA, from Dr Kumar, but I will allow the Hon. the Minister for Health to deal with the substance of that.

**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I think the question is what do you do if a member of the public feels they may have... What we must be clear about is that if you took a random sample of 100 people, you would probably have at least 10 who have some kind of temperature, for a variety of reasons. So, a member of the public who has reason to suspect that he or a relative may have the virus – and as I say, at the moment in Gibraltar that should be zero – would have to have had some contact. So everybody who has got a temperature should not now think, ‘Oh, I may have this!’ We cannot have that; but if there is a genuine reason to think that they may have come into contact and they have a concern, then they should present to the medical authorities, be it in the Primary Care Centre or in St Bernard’s Hospital, informing immediately, obviously with some kind of justification. You cannot just go, ‘Here I am, I think I’ve got Ebola,’ and you get a hundred people, assuming that, then they will be fast-tracked.

As I said before, we have isolation facilities, we have all the necessary gear, and all the necessary procedures will be followed that are necessary to deal with such a case. So in that respect we are certainly ready to receive; but as I say, at the moment it should be zero.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, I accept that it should be zero and I accept... Again, I do not want to alarm anybody that there is a huge risk here in Gibraltar, but the answer that the hon. Gentleman has given me does cause me some concern, having myself sat down with some experts both in emergency management and also in other areas in relation to this.

The point that has been made to me is that the last thing that you want, if there is a concern that somebody has picked up this disease, is for that person to be advised to either go to the Primary Care Centre or to casualty, because the moment that that person visits the primary care centre or casualty you are then risking actually closing down the Primary Care Centre and casualty because people there will have then come into contact. All I am wanting is for the information to get out to the public, so the public know what they need to do. That is my only interest, and it has been suggested to me that the best advice is for those people to effectively remain at home, to contact the authorities from home, and you will then have a



1990 medical team, properly equipped with all the necessary equipment and safeguards to visit that individual *in situ* where that person is, in order to prevent a spread of the disease. I just wonder whether the Hon. the Minister agrees with that and whether he wishes to perhaps clarify the answer that he gave me originally.

1995 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, that is one scenario and there are many potential scenarios. This is all speculation, and what I think we must guard against is alarming the public when we realise that this is all speculative.

I did not say go and sit down in A&E; I said inform the authorities. If they are at home... The thing is there is such a wide range of possibilities. At what stage is it that you happen to have been to one of those countries? Do you have certain symptoms? What grade of symptoms do you have?

2000 What I can do, Mr Speaker, is... The Health Authority has a viral haemorrhagic fever policy, which goes to 36 pages, which covers all those areas. At the appropriate time, those parts of it would obviously... They are all available on the GHA website, or will be very shortly. I will make a copy of this available to the Member opposite. That covers all those scenarios, but what we cannot do now – well, we can do, if we have got time to go through it all – is look at all these. What I can say is that the protocols are ready. Anybody who has concerns should inform the health authorities, but as I say, it is speculation because at the moment there should be no people in that situation. If there are, then obviously we want to know.

2010 **Hon. Chief Minister:** There is another angle to this, Mr Speaker, which is that people who might have a light fever should not call the GHA and ask to be seen at home, because there are likely to be hundreds of those people in Gibraltar today, and if everybody who has a light fever decides that they might have Ebola and wants to have the doctor go and see them, it is just going to put us in an impossible position.

2015 Therefore, the hon. Gentleman has to remember that what he is dealing with here is not swine flu. This is not an airborne epidemic; this is an epidemic that only passes through contact. Therefore, what might have been good in that instance – and there are some things which are similar and some of the triggers that were developed by the international community and which were adopted by C3 here at the time are still triggers that we will look for as the disease develops – are not necessarily the ways that we need to treat Ebola. Therefore, people who have a light temperature, who therefore *might* have Ebola – are not very likely to, but *might* have Ebola – should nonetheless manifest at the Primary Care Centre or at A&E.

2020 If you are going to give anybody advice, Mr Speaker, you should say, ‘Please don’t touch anybody else and don’t spit on anyone, please don’t have sex with anyone to exchange body fluids, and please don’t kiss anyone,’ because this is – as I read in *The Times* the other day, and I therefore do not say this frivolously – this is a disease that you can catch only from people who you are likely to have seen naked or somebody who you have touched. This is the way *The Times* described it, because it does require intimate contact.

2025 Therefore, if you are on a plane with somebody who has Ebola, you are not going to catch Ebola unless you come into contact with them. The important thing is contact. The advice should be to avoid contact with other people if you think you have Ebola – and ‘contact’ means in any way transferring fluid to a loved one, either on their skin or otherwise, but it does not mean do not turn up at a Primary Care Centre or at an Accident and Emergency Centre.

2030 If somebody is in the later throws of Ebola, the hon. Gentleman needs to understand that they are unlikely to be able to move and therefore they are unlikely to be able to go to a Primary Care Centre or an Accident and Emergency Centre. They are only likely to be able to be seen at home, because they would then be really manifesting very severe signs of this particular disease, and it will require the health professionals to come to them because they will not be able to go anywhere.

2035 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, if I may add to that –

**Mr Speaker:** May I? We have a problem here. The problem that we have is that here we are, all laymen, discussing a highly important and grave matter, but we are all laymen, and we are triggering off each other, Government and Opposition, additional points – and we could be here with additional points until tomorrow. But that is not the purpose, here in Parliament.

2040 This is a very grave issue. The public require information. They are not going to get all the information perhaps that they require by watching the transmission of the proceedings of the House or from reading whatever reports there are in the newspapers. The matter goes beyond that. For instance, press conferences: the media asking the specialists the pertinent questions on the matter.

2045 What I am saying is that we cannot ventilate the matter fully here today and what is happening is, rightly, a supplementary question is asked, an answer is given by lay persons, which in itself then triggers other supplementaries. As I say, if hon. Members wish to, we can carry on, because the last thing I want is to be accused of, as Speaker, is interrupting and not allowing a proper ventilation of what is a matter of public importance. But it is up to hon. Members, really.

2050 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, if I might be of assistance, I think that is important guidance. We have two doctors on this side of the House, but neither of them has ever dealt with Ebola before, as I understand it.

If the hon. Gentleman will allow me, the advice that is out there at the moment and what we have published is what the specialists have advised we should say at this stage. There are other things that we would say at a later stage. Should the disease manifest in a different way, there are other protocols that we would put in place. That includes communications protocols.

2055 I am quite happy, if he wishes, to deal offline with any of the concerns that he may have, but he should have the confidence that the experts who are advising the Government – who are all, I am sure he will agree, entirely and fully versed with the concerns that are manifesting themselves throughout the medical and immigration community the world over, particularly in Western Europe and North America – are giving us the advice to say the things that we have said to date. But I am quite happy to deal with any issues that he wants to continue putting to the Government, to give him the satisfaction that there is not more that should be done or said at this stage and to deal with that offline so that we do not continue to ping-pong off each other, as you rightly say, as laymen, when in fact what has been done to date is what the experts have advised.

2060 **Mr Speaker:** May I also add that if at any stage, for instance later on today or even tomorrow, if hon. Members were to feel that it was necessary, there are rules which would allow the matter to be debated for 35 minutes without any recourse to the rules of Question Time. That could happen tomorrow evening, if Members so wish.

2070 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, may I assist just by... If I may follow on the point that you made earlier, that none of us are experts – this is why I referred to the clinical policy which has been developed by clinicians and which, as I said, I will make available. It is a very thorough document, which shows the protocols that would be in place.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** I am happy to correspond with the Government, but of course it is a matter of significant public interest. I do not want to necessarily debate it. There is no debate point.

2080 **Mr Speaker:** What I mean by ‘debate’ is that there would be 35 minutes allowed. Three or four Members of the Opposition could rise and raise a number of issues, and a Government Minister would then attempt to answer those issues.

2085 As I say, I intend to continue to be liberal. If Members wish to continue to ask supplementaries, I am not going to stop them. No-one is going to accuse me of interfering with the right of the public to be... know on what is a very serious issue. It is up to the Members.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Well, Mr Speaker, I have very few supplementaries, if I may be allowed to just simply plough ahead.

2090 Nobody is suggesting that anybody who has a slight sniffle should call the GHA and then be visited by several men in suits, which will scare the entire neighbourhood! Nobody is suggesting that, but it has been suggested to me that perhaps more information... and I just leave it with the Government to consider what information it releases, or more information, bearing in mind everything the Chief Minister has said about the land frontier... and it is really virtually impossible, if there is a worldwide epidemic of this, for this not to reach Gibraltar... that the public is advised as to what somebody from the public does if reasonably, based on solid foundations, that person believes that, for whatever reason, that person maybe has contracted Ebola.

2100 All the advice that I have received – and I accept I am not an expert myself – is that the advice that those people should be receiving is not to leave their houses and to basically telephone the medical authorities, and then for any protocol of visits to those people to kick in, because what you do not want is for that person to effectively be walking either from their house to the Primary Care Centre, or indeed the Accident and Emergency. Indeed, the knock-on effect in those two places could be catastrophic.

2105 But can I move on and ask the Hon. the Minister for Health whether he is satisfied that everything is in place to properly diagnose the disease, and that the safety as well of Members of the laboratory staff in conducting those diagnoses is fully protected, and that everything is in place so that this disease can be properly diagnosed at the laboratory?

2110 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, dealing with his first point, what I need to emphasise to him is that he is telling the House that all the advice that *he* has is as *he* has stated, and what *I* am telling the House is that all the advice that *we* have is as *I* have stated. I just wanted to be clear that this is not the Government deciding to take a different course to the one that he is suggesting. He tells us he is advised by an expert,

and I am sure I know who it is that he is being advised by and I would have a lot of time for the advice that that person would tender, but what I am saying to him is that we are being advised by the medical experts on the subject and we are obviously therefore following the advice of the medical experts and not transposing our own political view on what is the clear medical advice.

2115 Mr Speaker, before I allow the Hon. the Minister for Health to deal with the next substantive point the hon. Member is making, I would simply reflect with him that the way that this issue has manifested politically in a number of different countries when Ebola has arrived there has been either in parliaments working together with government and opposition, ensuring that they do the best for the community in order to try and deal with this in the least alarmist and most positive way; or, where a government has  
2120 perhaps obviously dropped the ball, in a very contentious way in order to try and score political points. I am grateful that that is not the attitude he is taking this morning, and I want to invite him to continue on that course. This is not Spain. The Government here has not created a problem that has brought Ebola into the territory. There is no need for us to have that sort of debate. We need to be working together to ensure that we best protect our community from this disease, and the only risk we have taken is to allow the three  
2125 miscreants who are Members of this Parliament, who went to Africa two weeks ago, to come back. The risk seems to have been well taken – they do not seem to be manifesting anything too dangerous yet, although I never enjoy being on the wrong end of Samantha Sacramento, whether she is feeling well or not!

**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, the question of how to deal with an Ebola, or the outbreak of any other disease, does obviously include testing and so on, and these protocols are all part of the policy and the preparation that the GHA has in place.

My last recollection on the lab in particular was a meeting held last week in which it was identified that there were a few items of equipment which could improve the way in which we were able to deal with this, and my last information is that these were on the way by courier, and once that has... It may well have  
2135 arrived already, I do not have the full details, but once that is in place, my information is that we would be ready to be able to deal with this.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Thank you very much, because my understanding was that at the moment we could not deal with this, but he has confirmed that we cannot at the moment but we will be dealing with it in the future.

What about the isolation ward, Mr Speaker? Where is that going to be located and how segregated, and what is the distance between that isolation ward and other wards or other areas where patients and indeed staff are located?

2145 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, it is relevant again to remind ourselves that we are not talking about a cold or the flu. This is not something that is airborne, so you would have to have close contact with the affected patients.

The area that has been equipped to deal with any manifestation of this disease is the area that was formerly... well, that was earmarked but never opened as a hydrotherapy pool in the extreme south-east corner of the hospital. It has an airflow which is completely independent and does not flow into anywhere else in the hospital. There is separate access, which can be both vehicular and pedestrian, from behind the hospital, and therefore there would be no contact with the body of the hospital itself. The pool area has been boarded over so that it can be used, there are already beds there and so on, and the equipment is there in preparation. I am hoping that we will never have to use it, but it has got totally separate access and it is  
2155 separated from all the wards in the hospital.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, that is very comforting to know, because that was one of the issues that I had in mind.

What about CCTV cameras in both this particular ward and also in any decontamination unit? The reason why I ask is this: the hon. Gentleman may remember that in relation to the nurse in Spain who contracted the Ebola virus, it is thought that she contracted the Ebola virus when she was taking her equipment off. A period of a week or two actually elapsed. She had gone on holiday before she was diagnosed with the Ebola virus, and one of the points that has been raised in that context is that it is important to have both the patients but also the decontamination unit under 24-hour surveillance so that  
2165 somebody can go through the film, so that they do not see anything that can possibly be deemed risky. In this particular case, it is thought that this particular nurse, when she was taking off her equipment, she then touched her mouth or her eye with a gloved hand that had been treating the patient. That is thought to be important. Is that something that the hon. Gentleman is also including within these two areas?

2170 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I am not aware of the setting up of any CCTV cameras. Setting up CCTV cameras in the hospital can have all sorts of other considerations by way of dignity, privacy and so

on, because it is not the same as having a nurse constantly looking over a person – it is something that can then be stored and you never know where it might end up.

I do not have that information. I will seek it. What I can say is that the beds are located just outside a screened-off, glassed-off area, so that there would be a 24-hour-monitoring, direct visual access to the patients in question.

As far as what may or may not have happened in the case of the nurse in Spain, there has been a lot of controversy, as we all know, about that, that we have picked up in the media and so on, and it does seem that it was the derobing which is the dangerous part. When you are putting this protective clothing on, there is no infection; when you are derobing, there could well be. Tragically, one learns from other people's mistakes, but we have ensured, even before this came out, that the 200 or so people who have been trained are aware of the correct derobing procedures. Sadly, we are human, and human error occurs, but we are taking every possible step to avoid that.

I must add that, in the absence of the hon. Opposition Member spokesman for Health, I would like to make myself available to any Member of the Opposition who may want to stay in contact with me on developments, if they want to have any reassurance or further information as the weeks ahead hopefully pass without incident, and with, hopefully, the development of a vaccine – which some say is close and some say is not – which will be able to stop this tragic disease.

We are concentrating, clearly, and for very good reason, on what would happen in Gibraltar, but we must spare a thought for all those thousands of people who are suffering in West Africa without the resources and the recourses that we fortunately have in Gibraltar.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, I have further questions, but it has been sufficiently ventilated and I will now deal with any more of my concerns and the concerns that have been expressed, or questions that have been expressed that have been put to me, with the Hon. the Minister directly. I thought that it was important, rather than do that – which I could have done – for at least members of the public to see that the Government has got a handle on this and that issues that may be of concern to them, certainly of concern to us, have been properly ventilated in this Parliament, which has been my concern and the purpose of my questions.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, that might be a convenient moment to recess the House to 3.00 p.m.

**Mr Speaker:** The House will now recess to this afternoon at 3.00 p.m.

*The House recessed at 12.49 p.m. and resumed its sitting at 3.06 p.m.*