



PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

MORNING SESSION: 9.15 a.m. – 12.37 p.m.

Gibraltar, Thursday, 18th December 2014

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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

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Clerk: (i) Oath of Allegiance. (ii) Confirmation of Minutes. The Minutes of the last meeting of Parliament which was held on 20th November, 2014.

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

5

Mr Speaker signed the Minutes.

Clerk: (iii) Communications from the Chair; (iv) Petitions; (v) Announcements; (vi) Papers to be laid; (vii) Reports of Committees; (viii) Answers to Oral Questions. We start –

Congratulations and good wishes

10

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Excuse me. Mr Speaker, before we start with the questions, before the House starts its business, first of all I happily congratulate GBC for an excellent fundraiser yesterday which has seen them collect almost £100,000 and reflects on the generosity of this community which is exemplified throughout the year but in particular at this time... (*Banging on desks*)

15

Mr Speaker, I think it would churlish to start this session without congratulating you on the publication of your memoirs and your recollection of the things that happened here. I think it informs all of us and perhaps might bring some semblance of history to our debates during the course of today, given that it is no doubt fresh in our memories.

20

And note that Ms Isobel Ellul-Hammond is still not with us and wish her a very speedy recovery and return to our group.

Procedural

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, this morning the Ministers who will be answering questions will be answering in respect of the portfolios they held before the reshuffle in order to be of maximum assistance to the House, otherwise we would be dealing only with Ministers who had been holding portfolios for a week, answering questions. So I think it would be helpful to the House to have the fuller answer that can be given by the Minister who has been holding the portfolio for longest.

25

Tribute in memory of children in Peshawar, Pakistan

30 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, finally before we launch into our discussions and our debates at this time of year in particular, I think it would be remiss of the House not to want to reflect on what has happened in the Peshawar Province of Pakistan in the past 48 hours, which has seen 132 children die.

35 At this time of year in particular which is so characterised by children, I would invite the House to spend a moment in silence reflecting on that and perhaps the words of the Band Aid single that says 'And tonight thank God it is them instead of us.'

Members stood in silence.

Questions for Oral Answer

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Q761&763/2014
Development aid –
Details

Clerk: We now start with Question 761/2014, the Hon. D J Bossino.

40 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, now that the Hon. the Chief Minister has mentioned the Speaker's Memoirs which I am reading through and finding them of great interest, I think yesterday was in fact the 40th anniversary of a demonstration which was occurring outside this House and I think it was on the day of Mr Speaker's probably 30th birthday when the Tupamaros, I think they were, threw a stone into this Chamber and almost hit Mr Isola from the Opposition benches. I think the cause of the demonstration had
45 to do with parity, I think I am right in that.

Mr Speaker, if I could pose a question formally: can the Minister for Inward Investment provide details of all EU funding provided since answering Question 359/2013 to include all applications made with details of whose applications were rejected?

50 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Economic Development and Telecommunications.

Minister for Economic Development, Telecommunications & the GSB (Hon. J J Bossano): I will answer this question with Question 763, Mr Speaker.

55 **Clerk:** Question 763, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Can the Minister for Business Development please provide details of which entities have applied for development aid, with details of the nature of the projects and the amount of aid provided to each successful applicant since he took office?

60 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Economic Development and Telecommunications.

Minister for Economic Development, Telecommunications & the GSB (Hon. J J Bossano): Mr Speaker, since the answer given to Question 359/2013 there have been no applications for development aid.
65 Since May 2013, the following ERDF funds have been provided:

A J Sheriff Electrical Ltd	£147,371.23
ANS Project Management Services Ltd	£5,662.41
Astute Investments Ltd	£19,999.06
70 DC Leisure Ltd	£78,670.90
Decor Construction Ltd	£9,242.42
Everleigh Ltd	£19,040.59
Gibraltar Tourist Board	£9,932.00
Gibraltar Tourist Board	£88,842.00

75	Gibraltar Sports & Leisure Authority	£174,636.46
	Horatio Holdings Limited	£68,092.63
	Jets Diner Ltd	£19,917.57
	Roxbay Holdings Ltd	£16,103.29
	Technical Services Department	£197,237.40
80	Technical Services Department	£198,697.62
	Technical Services Department	£1,467,033.24
	The (Gibraltar) Laundry Services Ltd	£12,699.70
	The Atlantic Café Ltd	£65,283.00

85 No obligations for EU funding have been rejected since answering Question 359/2013.

Hon. D J Bossino: Mr Speaker, does the Hon. the Minister have a total of the figures? I have very roughly calculated it and may be completely off the wall at about £2.6 million to £2.7 million, perhaps slightly higher, but am I in the right range?

90 I can do the additions later when I have got the information, particularly from *Hansard* or I will listen to it on the audio service provided by the parliamentary website, but I wonder if he has that information ready to hand? I do not expect him to bring out his calculator and calculate it.

95 **Hon. J J Bossano:** I have not got the total, but I would say it is probably higher than the figure that he suggests at first glance.

100 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, does he have an explanation – I have no idea what... I cannot think of an explanation myself – as to why it is that there is such a difference between the figure that he provided to me in answer to my original question which was posed in May 2013, which covered the period December 2011 to May 2013, and this period from May 2013 to date, which is more or less the same period?

I think the sum total of the grants given in respect of the first answer to the first question was just under £1 million, whilst this is *possibly* three times that or very close to that. Does he have an explanation for that?

105 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Well, this is demand driven, that is to say the amount of money has to be spent within a certain period of time and I think what tends to happen, and what has always happened, is that when we are getting close to the period where we would lose the money if we do not spend it, if there are not enough private sector entities in the pipeline, Government projects tend to be put in to make sure that we do not finish up having to give money back. Quite apart from losing that money, it becomes more difficult to get more money the next time if you do not spend everything they gave you the last time.

115 **Hon. D J Bossino:** I am grateful for that, so given that explanation, Mr Speaker, was money given back shortly after I asked the question in May 2013? The thing is I do not have the exact period as to when the funding has to go out. I do not have that information, but as I said before, as at May 2013, when the period covered was in the region of a year, a year and a half, the expenditure was more or less a third of what has been expended more or less in the same period now, and I just wondered whether money was given back in the first tranche, when he was in office.

But I may be posing the question wrong because I am not aware of what the period is.

120 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Well, if it had happened, I would have been very angry and I do not remember being very angry, so it cannot have happened.

125 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, I take this opportunity to ask the Hon. the Minister to confirm to this House, a report which appeared in the *Gibraltar Chronicle* on 16th December, which reported on further funding from Europe in the sum total of £9 million. It was expressed as being £1 million more than the current tranche. Can he confirm that that is what Gibraltar is receiving?

130 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Well, I think the report that the *Chronicle* had was something that emanated from statements made in Brussels. We have not yet had confirmation officially of the approval of the amount. So I am not going to make a statement in Parliament on something that is based on a report in the *Chronicle* which is based on a report in the press in Brussels.

135 But I asked, when that report came out and I was told, 'We have not yet been told.' The Government has not yet been told that it has been given the amount that it was asking for, so the answer is I cannot tell him what the amount is because the report in the *Chronicle* is based on a report from the media in Brussels.

Hon. D J Bossino: Mr Speaker, again not being aware of how these things work in practice, presumably from the answer that he has given, there is no prior negotiation between the Gibraltar Government and the relevant EU department as to what funding Gibraltar could receive. Do you simply wait and see what is given to you? Is that a correct exposition of how these things work?

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Hon. J J Bossano: The negotiation is between the United Kingdom and the EU as to what the United Kingdom gets. What we get is something out of the United Kingdom allocation, which was first obtained in fact by Robert Mor when the GSLP was in Government and it was the first time, because prior to that, the UK had argued in their own self-interest that because we did not pay VAT, we were not entitled to access EU funding, which comes from VAT. But we actually were able to challenge that interpretation which had been going on from 1972 until we were in Government after 1988, and the EU said that it was purely an internal matter as far as they were concerned.

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For example, if Spain has a situation where Ceuta does not pay VAT, it does not mean Spain cannot use EU funds in Ceuta. So we were able to establish that it was a matter for internal negotiations other than the fact that we can only access the pool of funds that is not destined for areas of very high unemployment, for obvious reasons. So the level of funding that is available is broken down into chunks for regions based on the regional unemployment rate, and we are only eligible for the chunk that is for the place that has the least level of unemployment.

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Therefore when we are looking at the United Kingdom, for example, there will be areas of the United Kingdom – for example at one stage, it was Northern Ireland; at another point in time it was the area around Liverpool, where unemployment was like it is in Spain for example – and they would be a category 3 and they would get a higher level of funding. We have to compete with the ones that have got the least level of funding. The negotiation is conducted by the unit that handles the distribution of these funds and it takes place predominantly with London, but our representative goes with the London team also to deal with Brussels.

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Hon. D J Bossino: Mr Speaker, which representative would that be? Presumably it is a civil servant, from within which Department? Can he answer that question?

It is actually interesting what he is saying, because the *Chronicle* report quotes the relevant – I do not dare pronounce... oh yes, Corina Crețu, who is the European Commissioner for Regional Policy and actually she is quoted as referring to Gibraltar's specific needs, not just the UK, but she seems to be very conscious of what Gibraltar's small businesses' needs are. It would be interesting to learn, given the explanation he has just given, what precise involvement Gibraltar has as part of the UK delegation, if I can put it in those terms, in the negotiations.

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Hon. J J Bossano: Well, I imagine what this lady said was because it was a question from the *Gibraltar Chronicle*. If they had had the question from the *Diario de Cádiz*, they would have talked about the needs of Andalucía. So it is not that we are held in such high esteem by the Commissioners of the European Union, that they are particularly conscious of our problems.

175

We have got a unit which has always been there, at least since we started, which is part of the Ministry for Enterprise and is in the budget. It is a unit that is headed by a senior executive officer and he is the one that has been doing it longest – well, I think he has been doing it from the beginning, he has been doing it all the time. Therefore he is the expert in the matter and certainly he tells me that he has not had an official confirmation of the funding. So if he does not know, then I do not think I can be expected to know.

Q762/2014
Nuffield pool site –
Update

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Clerk: Question 762, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Can the Minister for Inward Investment provide an update in relation to the development of the Nuffield pool site?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Economic Development and Telecommunications.

Minister for Economic Development, Telecommunications & the GSB (Hon. J J Bossano): Mr Speaker, the Government continues to be in discussion with the successful tenderer of the Nuffield pool

190 site. However, it is still the case that the re-provision of the pool has to take place before access to the site is
obtained.

Hon. D J Bossino: Mr Speaker, in answer to the question which I posed back in October 2013, which is
195 the second occasion I have asked questions in relation to this particular project, the Hon. the Minister for
Inward Investment explained that the.. well, I will read it – and it has really progressed from that stage,
which is the initial stage when he walked into office –

‘to the point that it has now in effect been awarded to him [i.e. the applicant] and he is now in the planning process.’

Can he provide me information? I am sure it is publicly available, but can he advise this House whether
the planning process element of the project is now complete or whether there are things still to be done in
that regard?

200 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Well, it is not the Government’s planning process; it is the process of the person that
was successful in the tender. I do not know... He does not communicate to me how his planning processes
are going, so I do not know how close he is to finishing it or not finishing it, or if there has been objections,
if it is nearly over, but I know that in any event this is part of the Project Euston where we have to re-
205 provide the assets that the MOD lose in one area in another area. As the Member may be aware, one of the
things that was changed after 9th December 2011 was the nature of the sequence of the payments.

So for example in the Improvement and Development Fund, the reason why we have a sum of money
there unspent is because that is money that has been obtained from the sale of MOD properties, which is
ring fenced and can only be used as far as we are concerned for the re-provisioning needs of the MOD.
210 Otherwise, it would then mean that the money had been spent on something else and we would not then
have the money to do what we are required to do in order to get the release of those sites.

So the answer is that even if the planning process was finished, until the pool is re-provided, the guy
cannot get on with the job but I am not aware, because it is not something I am involved in, in how much
more he has got to do to get the necessary clearance for the project.

215 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, I asked the question as a supplementary on the last occasion. I am not
sure he answered it. Is the project still a hotel project? He talks about the applicant still being in the
planning process but surely we must know, the Government must know what it is that he intends to do
there.

220 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Well, I do not deal with planning, but I am not aware of any changes from what was
intended. As far as I am concerned, the nature of the hotel may change but it is still a hotel and a tourist
project because in fact the investor happens to be the person that brings the highest number of tourists to
Gibraltar.

225 Part of the philosophy of the investment, as he has explained it to me, is that he wants to have his own
hotel here because he believes he can bring more tourists and therefore, he would rather, as it were, have a
vertical integration of the whole process, where he does the advertising in the United Kingdom, he
organises package tours and he puts them in his own hotel here.

Q764/2014
Unemployment –
Details

230 **Clerk:** Question 764, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Can the Minister for Employment provide details on a monthly basis of the
registered unemployed since asking Question W266/2014?

235 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Economic Development and Telecommunications.

Minister for Economic Development, Telecommunications & the GSB (Hon. J J Bossano): Mr
Speaker, to my knowledge, eating disorders have had no effect on the level of unemployment.

240 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, yes, the hon. Member is absolutely right. I have been in error in quoting the written question number, it should have been 226 and not 266. So perhaps he could answer the question which he knows I intended to ask – but I suppose it is the season to be jolly so I will take it on board.

245 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Well, Mr Speaker, I have many qualities but mind reading is not amongst them. I read the questions very carefully and the numbers very closely and I try to answer what I am asked.

But if he wants to know what the answer is, if he had put the correct question and said 226 then the answer is, of course, one that he already knows because I gave him the answer to 226, which is that we continue with the policy introduced by the previous Administration of providing the figures quarterly.

250 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes and actually I could not find the... because I have asked this question on a written basis previously, and the answer came back as he has just given it verbally over the floor of the House.

255 But, Mr Speaker, the reason why I ask this question now orally is because the Hon. the Chief Minister made a reference to a particular figure during the course of his party political broadcast of the latest unemployment figure. It does not tally with the latest unemployment figure which I have, which is the last quarterly figure which is the latest that I can possibly ask because that represents the figure as at the latest quarter. But I think the Hon. the Chief Minister referred to a figure of something in the region of 261 or 281 as being the latest available – (*Interjection*) 269, as being the latest available figure.

260 I assume that figure is one which would be the last monthly figure, I can only assume that and that is why I thought I was able, given that that information has been provided to the public through a broadcast that as a Member of this Opposition I was able to ask that question quite freely in this House and the hon. Member would be able to provide it across the floor of this House.

265 **Hon. J J Bossano:** In fact he should not be asking the question because if it is in relation to information that has already been put in a political broadcast, then it is already in the public domain and he is not supposed to be asking questions to obtain answers which have already been put in the public domain.

270 But in fact as the policy was defended previously when it was questioned previously by Members who were previously on that side, the position of the Government then and the position of the Government now, which continues to be the same, is that the Government thinks that the correct policy and practice that the figures should be given on a quarterly basis because it smooths out the movement up and down.

275 Therefore it is misleading to say there is a downward trend because of one day's figure or an upward trend because of another day's figure. I think when this was first explained in Parliament by the Hon. Mr Netto as far back as 1967 – 1997 sorry! (*Laughter*) I am the only one that has been around that long! The argument was indeed that he use an example that there could be a vacancy for a particular job in a particular part of the private sector and an influx of people who were only there because they knew of the vacancy and they were interested in that vacancy and they were not really available in terms of being willing to look at other jobs, and when the vacancy was filled, those people would then disappear.

280 So in fact if one were to give a particular snapshot of the figure for unemployment, that snapshot changes not just on a daily basis but virtually on an hourly basis during the day. While I am talking, there will be people who are registering unemployed and there will be terms of engagement that are being inputted.

285 So the figure that was given, was given as an indication of a direction in which we are going and we hope that the final quarter figure – I cannot guarantee it, but I am hopeful that it will be – will be around the 300 mark or just under, which as the Leader of the Opposition said in his first debate with me in 2012, in his judgement would then mean really that we have got no unemployment because it is very difficult when you get to the 300 mark, clearly the people who are easiest to employ have been employed already. The ones who are more difficult to employ are the ones who are left when you start going below 300.

290 That has always been the case, it continues to be the case but we may not bring it down to 300 but that is my target for this quarter, and the figure will be available early in January.

295 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, it is not that... and I will try and formulate it in a question. May I just try and refresh his memory? It is not that I said that there is zero unemployment; it is that the unemployment, except for three years in the early 1990s... The figures started in 1990, so it is the hon. Gentlemen's Government that started with the unemployment figures. For the first three years, of course we were transitioning from an MOD economy into a private economy, the figures were oscillating around the 700 to 800 figure.

300 After that date, the figures have stayed stable always, it does not matter which Government has been in power, it has stayed stable between the 300 and the 500. That seems to indicate, not that there is zero unemployment – and I am asking whether he agrees with this analysis – but that 300 appears to be the base line in terms of unemployment that always has existed in the economy going back to 1994.

305 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Grammatically, zero unemployment means zero – no-one unemployed. I think that is impossible to achieve. But in fact I think that is the correct interpretation of the statistics, that it ranges between a maximum of 500 at any one given time and a minimum of 300, and the fluctuations are even bigger if you look at monthly figures, because you can have a particular month for example when there are a lot of people made redundant or a particular month when, for example, a gaming company comes in and takes on more people than would be normal. But the movement within the labour market in the time that I have been there is a movement of Gibraltarians which is quite high.

310 The movement has been in the region of 2,400 and therefore, even though the official figure is around 500, we all know that it went much higher in 2012, when we came in, because there were a lot of people not registered or people who were waiting to be put on the VTS and things like that, which he himself acknowledged when he computed the figure as being much higher. Those are no longer there. That is to say, the people who were there and recorded are now recorded as people in employment and that is why the employment survey records a much higher figure.

315 If I can quote the greatest Gibraltarian on this subject –

Hon. D A Feetham: Of our time. Of our time.

320 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** *Of all time – que no que cambia, para arriba, para abajo.* – of all time! – of our time! *Chiquillo estás más liao!*

Hon. J J Bossano: He explained to us, I think it was in the budget of 2006 if my memory does not fail me –

325 **Hon. Chief Minister:** In condescending terms.

330 **Hon. J J Bossano:** – that, really, the labour force of Gibraltar could only be understood in terms of adding people in employment and people in unemployment. When I was arguing that there was hidden unemployment, his argument was well, look, we have now exhausted the labour force of Gibraltar. There are no more Gibraltarians available, other than the 300-odd that are registered and therefore, if we do not import Frontier Workers, the economy will be incapable of growing. Well look, the reality is that if he adds the unemployed for example for October and the Gibraltarians in employment in October, he will find that since 2011 on that basis, the labour force has grown, adding those two.

335 So clearly they cannot have appeared out of nowhere, they must have been somewhere but they were not being recorded in the system.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q765-768/2014
Construction and engineering Training Centres –
Assessors and courses

Clerk: Question 765, the Hon. D J Bossino.

340 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Minister for Training provide details of the number of assessors currently working at both the Construction Trades and Engineering Trades Training Centres, together with details of courses for which they are qualified to assess?

345 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Economic Development and Telecommunications.

Minister for Economic Development, Telecommunications & the GSB (Hon. J J Bossano): I will answer the question together with Questions 766 to 768.

350 **Clerk:** Question 766, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Can the Minister for Training provide a breakdown showing how many trainees are currently training for NVQs in both construction and engineering trades, inclusive of individual courses being followed and the qualifications to be obtained?

355 **Clerk:** Question 767, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Can the Minister for Training provide details of how many instructors are presently delivering training in respect of NVQs in both construction and engineering trades, showing details of the training facility at which they are based and what courses they are delivering and indicating whether they are Government employees or employees of specific Government-owned companies?

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Clerk: Question 768, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Can the Minister for Training provide a breakdown with details showing how many trainees have attained NVQ's in 2014, pertaining to their construction or engineering trades, inclusive of information relating to the individual courses and level of qualifications achieved?

365

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Economic Development and Telecommunications.

Minister for Economic Development, Telecommunications & the GSB (Hon. J J Bossano): Mr Speaker, there are currently 11 assessors working at both the Construction and Engineering Training Centres who are qualified to assess carpentry, plumbing, painting and decorating, wall and floor tiling, plastering, bricklaying, mechanical engineering and fabrication and welding courses at levels 1, 2 and 3.

370

There are currently 74 trainees in the construction and engineering trades. The individual courses being followed are carpentry, bricklaying, plastering, wall and floor tiling, electrical installation, fabrication and welding, motor vehicle mechanics and mechanical engineering. The qualifications to be obtained are City & Guilds certificates at levels 1, 2 and 3.

375

There are 11 instructors, 10 of whom are Government employees, presently delivering training in both construction and engineering. They are based at the Construction Training Centre and Gibdock delivering courses at levels 1 and 2 in plumbing and levels 1, 2 and 3 in carpentry, painting and decorating, wall and floor tiling, plastering, bricklaying, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, fabrication and welding.

380

One hundred and thirty-four trainees have attained City & Guilds levels 1, 2 or 3 in 2014. The individual courses followed to obtain these qualifications were carpentry, plumbing, bricklaying, painting and decorating, plastering, wall and floor tiling, fabrication and welding, electrical engineering and mechanical engineering.

385

All these trainees, as well as those still in training, are being partly financed by the European Social Fund as has been the case in previous intakes.

A Member: Hear, hear. (*Banging on desks*)

Q769-772/2014
Gibraltar Savings Bank –
Update

390

Clerk: Question 769, the Hon. D A Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, can the Chief Minister please provide a breakdown of where and how all the monies deposited in the Gibraltar Savings Bank have been invested and the rate of return on each of these investments, as at 30th November 2014?

395

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Economic Development and Telecommunications.

Minister for Economic Development, Telecommunications & the GSB (Hon. J J Bossano): Mr Speaker, I will answer Question 769 with Questions 770 to 772.

400

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, can the Chief Minister please give a breakdown by bank and amount of that part of the aggregate –

Mr Speaker: Question 770.

405

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, can the Chief Minister please provide details of the value of Gibraltar Savings Bank debentures or other debt security as at 30th November 2014?

Clerk: Question 771, the Hon. D A Feetham.

410

Hon. D A Feetham: Can the Chief Minister provide this House with a breakdown by debenture issue of that part of the aggregate public debt which comprises Government debentures as at 30th November 2014?

Clerk: Question 772, the Hon. D A Feetham.

415 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Can the Chief Minister please give a breakdown by bank and amount of that part of the aggregate public debt which comprises bank debt, as at 30th November 2014?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Economic Development and Telecommunications.

420 **Minister for Economic Development, Telecommunications & the GSB (Hon. J J Bossano):** Mr Speaker, as at 30th November 2014, the aggregate public debt consisting of bank debt was: Barclays Bank plc, £150 million; and NatWest Offshore Ltd, £50 million.

Government debentures by maturity dates were as follows:

	2017 debentures	£90,716,800
425	One month's notice	£232,997,300

The value of Gibraltar Savings Banks and other debt security by maturity date was:

	One month	£29,013,000
	2015 debentures	£43,864,300
430	2016	£22,985,600
	2017	£169,687,400
	2018	£164,314,100
	2019 debentures	£113,018,700
	Other debentures	£13,293,559
435	Bonds	£102,712,826
	Deposit accounts	£271,607,862

The average yield in respect of the different categories of investment vehicles held by the Savings Bank for the month of November, are as follows:

440 On-call accounts with the Bank of England, the Crown agents and Gibraltar banks had an average yield of around 0.51%. The Gibraltar banks were: the Royal Bank of Scotland, Barclays Bank, National Westminster Bank, Jyske Bank and Lloyds Bank.

445 Floating Rates Notes quoted on the London Stock Exchange had an average yield of 0.91%. The Floating Rates Notes were issued by the following: European Investment Bank, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Neder Waterschapsbank, KfW, Republic of Finland, Volkswagen Financial Services, Dexia, GE Capital UK, Westpac Securities, Australia & New Zealand Banking Group, Centrica plc., ASB Finance Ltd, Royal Bank of Canada, BG Energy Capital plc, Suncorp Metway Ltd, BMW Finance and National Grid Gas plc.

450 Monthly Income Debentures with a 6% return and preference shares in Credit Finance with an average dividend of 5.6%. As previously explained, quoted stocks and call accounts fluctuate marginally on a daily basis and these fluctuations are not significant.

I shall now, Mr Speaker, hand over the Savings Bank Fund Statement listing the investments. I am not creating a precedent but since we are near Christmas and it is almost the same time, I will give it to him as a Christmas present. (*Laughter and banging on desks*)

455

Mr Speaker: Whilst the hon. questioner studies the further detailed statement that has been provided to him, may I suggest that we go back to Question 714, the Hon. Mr Bossino. Then I will give an opportunity to the Hon. Leader of the Opposition to come back –

Schedule to Question 772
 Answer to Question 769
 November 2014

SAVINGS BANK FUND
STATEMENT OF INVESTMENTS

DESCRIPTION OF STOCK	NOMINAL VALUE	MARKET PRICE ACCRUED INTEREST	MARKET VALUE ACCRUED INTEREST	TOTAL MARKET VALUE ON 30/11/2014
EIB FLOATING RATE NOTE 22/02/17	£20,000,000.00	100.330	£20,065,902.40 £2,483.01	£20,068,385.41
EIB FLOATING RATE NOTE 05/01/16	£20,000,000.00	99.976	£19,995,270.60 £19,069.18	£20,014,339.78
INTERNATIONAL BK RECON & DEV FRN 19/01/16	£4,235,000.00	100.002	£4,235,079.53 £2,891.14	£4,237,970.67
NEDER WATERSCHAPSBANK FRN 09/04/18	£12,200,000.00	100.000	£12,200,000.00 £12,809.61	£12,212,809.61
KFW FRN 09/03/15	£17,000,000.00	99.987	£16,997,779.80 £25,130.19	£17,022,909.99
REPUBLIC OF FINLAND FRN 25/2/16	£5,000,000.00	100.029	£5,001,437.45 £414.55	£5,001,852.00
VOLKSWAGEN FIN SERV NV FRN 12/10/15	£5,000,000.00	99.994	£4,999,688.05 £5,652.36	£5,005,340.41
DEXIA CREDIT LOCAL FRN 15/4/16	£4,000,000.00	100.026	£4,001,058.92 £3,980.60	£4,005,039.52
GE CAPITAL UK FUNDING FRN 9/5/16	£3,000,000.00	100.515	£3,015,441.42 £1,819.94	£3,017,261.36
WESTPAC SECURITIES NZ LT FRN 2/10/17	£5,000,000.00	100.000	£5,000,000.00 £8,266.06	£5,008,266.06
AUST & NZ BANKING GROUP FRN 4/2/16	£5,000,000.00	100.231	£5,011,535.60 £2,836.92	£5,014,372.52
CENTRICA PLC 5.5% 24/10/16	£6,000,000.00	107.646	£6,458,788.68 £33,452.05	£6,492,240.73
ASB FINANCE LTD LONDON FRN 13/03/17	£5,000,000.00	100.285	£5,014,242.20 £11,903.68	£5,026,145.88
ROYAL BANK OF CANADA FRN 4/6/19	£5,000,000.00	100.084	£5,004,187.05 £11,459.69	£5,015,646.74
BG ENERGY CAPITAL PLC 5.125% 07/12/17	£5,000,000.00	109.925	£5,496,261.25 £251,335.62	£5,747,596.87
VOLKSWAGEN FIN SERV NV 1.75% 21/08/17	£3,155,000.00	101.020	£3,187,181.00 £15,277.98	£3,202,458.98
SUNCORP-METWAY LTD FRN 06/10/17	£5,000,000.00	100.143	£5,007,144.10 £8,593.55	£5,015,737.65
GE CAPITAL UK FUNDING FRN 20/3/17	£2,000,000.00	99.759	£1,995,172.22 £2,707.79	£1,997,880.01
BMW FINANCE NV 1.75% 20/11/17	£5,000,000.00	100.209	£5,010,426.10 £2,397.26	£5,012,823.36
NATIONAL GRID GAS PLC 6% 07/06/17	£3,000,000.00	111.892	£3,356,766.33 £86,794.52	£3,443,560.85
GOVERNMENT DEBENTURES	£201,000,000.00	100.000	£201,000,000.00	£201,000,000.00
BANK OF ENGLAND	£22,395,524.18	100.000	£22,395,524.18	£22,395,524.18
CFC LTD SHARES	£400,000,000.00	100.000	£400,000,000.00	£400,000,000.00
GSBA LTD	£5,000,000.00	100.000	£5,000,000.00	£5,000,000.00
ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND GBP CALL A/C	£2,263,052.09	100.000	£2,263,052.09 £11.24	£2,263,063.33
LLOYDS BANK GBP CALL A/C	£20,392,925.61	100.000	£20,392,925.61 £6,509.63	£20,399,435.24
BARCLAYS BANK PLC	£105,710,208.49	100.000	£105,710,208.49	£105,710,208.49
NATIONAL WESTMINSTER OFFSHORE LTD	£25,705,999.86	100.000	£25,705,999.86	£25,705,999.86
JYSKE BANK	£20,100,827.43	100.000	£20,100,827.43	£20,100,827.43
CASH	£4,000,000.00	100.000	£4,000,000.00	£4,000,000.00

BUSINESS, EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS

Q714/2014

**Small Business Saturdays held 2013 and 2014–
Cost to Government**

Clerk: Question 714, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Can the Minister for Small Businesses state what the full cost to the Government has been of the Small Business Saturdays held in 2013 and 2014?

465

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business and Employment.

Minister for Business, Employment, Skills & Training (Hon. N F Costa): Mr Speaker, the cost of the Small Business Saturday held in 2013 was £7,937.59.

470

The cost of the Small Business Saturday held this year is expected to be in the region of £6,700.

Hon. D J Bossino: Mr Speaker, a question I do have and I think it kind of arises from the question in the Order Paper: out of interest, is there any empirical evidence which the Government can use to assess the success of this particular venture?

475

Certainly as far as the last Business Saturday is concerned, I attended and I supported it, Main Street was heaving that day – not only locals, but also I think because it coincides I think very usefully with a national holiday in Spain, the Constitution Day I think it is and also the *Inmaculada Puente* – Immaculate Conception – it was also visited by our neighbours, in very large numbers I may add.

480

But is there any empirical evidence? The reason why I ask is because apparently in the UK there is. Just looking at the relevant Twitter account, they have published how much was actually made on that particular day in the UK and I just ask that question, whether he has that information or if he does not, whether it is something that can be looked into for the future.

Hon. N F Costa: Mr Speaker, in the first place to concur with the statements that the hon. Gentleman has made in respect of the fact that Main Street on Small Business Saturday was in terms certainly of the number of people, the footfall and the volume up and down Main Street and the adjacent streets, in our view, very successful.

485

The statement that he refers to in respect of the UK measurement of the success of their equivalent is only an estimate. The way that I have read it, it is not actually a number crunch that is arrived at scientifically; it is more of an estimate of how they think the day has fared.

490

I do not have any hard statistics in the way that for example I would be able to give him hard statistics on the number of visitors coming to Gibraltar, hotel occupancy, overnight stays. There does not exist that research in respect of Small Business Saturday.

495

What I have asked, though, are the umbrella organisations – the GFSB and the Chamber of Commerce – to please revert to me with the assessment of their individual members, so that collectively we are able to ascertain the impact of the Small Business Saturday.

I did receive during the course of the day and after messages, not just from the GFSB but also from individual traders, who have told me that they have had the best day in the whole year. I do recall that last year as well there were some traders who said exactly the same thing.

500

So in our view it is a success. The anecdotal evidence does suggest that it does help to have the missing element which was put to me at the beginning of the term of office, which was entertainment. What brings the families down to Main Street apart from the shopping element, which is why they all attend, is also because families are able to entertain themselves with the different entertainment that we lay on.

505

But as I say, without empirical statistical data, the anecdotal evidence that I received, and I hope they will be confirmed by the GFSB and the Chamber, was that traders did extremely well on that day.

A Member: Hear, hear.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

510

Q715/2014
Recent trip to Hong Kong –
Cost

Clerk: Question 715, the Hon. D J Bossino.

515 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Minister for the Port provide details of the final cost of the recent trip to Hong Kong?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business and Employment.

520 **Minister for Business, Employment, Skills & Training (Hon. N F Costa):** Mr Speaker, the information requested by the hon. Gentleman is set out in the schedule that I now hand to him.

SCHEDULE TO QUESTION NO 715/2014

FLIGHTS	
Minister Costa	£2750
Krystle Acolina	£3471
Diana Soussi	£3229
Bob Sanguinetti	£2750
HOTEL ACCOMMODATION	
Minister Costa	£1527.99
Krystle Acolina	£1216.00
Diana Soussi	£1614.96
Bob Sanguinetti	£1527.99
TRANSPORT	
Minister Costa	£211.16
Krystle Acolina	£211.16
Diana Soussi	£220.23
Bob Sanguinetti	£245.16
FOOD & DRINK	
Minister Costa	£438.33
Krystle Acolina	£377.12
Diana Soussi	£650.94
Bob Sanguinetti	£350.94
MISC TRAVEL	
	£51.91
MISC	
	£818.04
PRINTING & STATIONERY	
	£4,472.91
VENUE RENTAL	
	£2,684.61
RECEPTION	
	£4,978.42
VIDEO & PHOTOGRAPHY	
	£801.26
GIBRALTAR CRYSTAL	
	£5,000.00
PORT HANDBOOK	
	£765.79

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Q769-772/2014 continued –
Gibraltar Savings Bank –
Supplementary questions

Mr Speaker: Does the Hon. Leader of the Opposition wish to come back with supplementaries –

525 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Yes please.

Mr Speaker: Do so now please.

530 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, can the Hon. the Father of the House provide me with the total aggregate public debt comprising Government debentures, rather than the breakdown? Does he have the figure there of the aggregate public debt comprising debentures?

Minister for Economic Development, Telecommunications & the GSB (Hon. J J Bossano): Mr Speaker, I gave him two figures, which are: one month's notice £232,797,300; and of the 217 debentures which have not all been withdrawn or repaid, the last time round the hon. Member opposite acknowledged that the final figure would not be known until after the end of December. There is still £19,716,800 of that outstanding which will not be there in January.

So the total of the two is about £250 million – £251 million I think.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, yes so we have seen a reduction in the aggregate public debt comprised of Government debentures, but am I right that effectively, we will see an increase in that figure, because the Gibraltar Savings Bank will then increase the figure for Government debentures, which at the moment stands at £200 million? That will probably go up closer to £300 million by the end of January and therefore the aggregate public debt comprised of Government debentures is likely to rise significantly above this figure of £251 million, once the exercise is done that we spoke about last month.

Hon. J J Bossano: No, Mr Speaker, that is not correct.

The figure that he had the previous time was the Gibraltar Savings Bank had invested £100 million of Government debentures. The figure that I am giving him in the list that he has got is now £200 million. **(Hon. D A Feetham: Yes.)** That £200 million is part of the £232 million that is shown as public debt, so it is already there and therefore, the only thing that is likely to increase is the £19 million that is still outstanding under 2017. So what you are likely to get in January is another £20 million of debentures to repay the £19.7 million, and therefore it would still be that we have got £200 million owed to the banks and about £250 million or £260 million so it will be around the figure that we have had before, which is £450 million between debentures and the bank.

Hon. D A Feetham: Yes, I understand. So effectively what the Government has done is converted the Government debentures, which with the exception of the £100 million has been held by individuals, they are Government debentures issued to individuals, they have converted that into Government debentures issued to the Gibraltar Savings Bank, but the gross public debt will remain at around £450 million to £460 million.

Hon. J J Bossano: That is correct.

Mr Speaker: Any other supplementaries? No?

BUSINESS, EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS

Q715/2014 continued – Recent trip to Hong Kong – Supplementary questions

Mr Speaker: Then we will come back to Question 715. Does the Hon. Mr Bossino have any supplementaries arising from the schedule?

Hon. D J Bossino: I am sure it is a question which the Hon. the Minister will have expected from me, because in the last session he said that he was quite brave to provide me with an estimate of the expected cost which he had at about £28,000. So the obvious question is can he give an explanation as to why the total cost which has been calculated by my hon. and learned Friend Mr Figueras quickly here, is slightly in excess of £40,000?

Minister for Business, Employment, Skills & Training (Hon. N F Costa): Yes, Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman is correct. The answer that I gave as an estimate was £28,000. In the first place I am advised by my officials that the original answer that I gave to him in this House last month should in fact have read £32,000 – £31,632.08. That was the estimate that was made by the officials at the time. They gave me the incorrect information, so I would like to rectify that to the hon. Gentleman for the record and the increase relates to the following. I will just walk him through it and he can make a note if he wishes, following the schedule that I gave him.

In respect of flights, the estimate would have been around £11,500. It actually came up to £12,200 so there is a slight increase there.

Hotel accommodation, the estimate was for £4,500. It came out to around £5,900' also an increase.

585 Transport was estimated at £650 and it came in at £887.71.
Food and drink for some reason was not estimated. It came in for the entire week at £1,817.33.
Miscellaneous travel was also not estimated. It came in at £51.00.
Miscellaneous – which meant expenses of the GMA, GPA, Public Liability Insurance for the reception
and logistics arrangements – was also not estimated and came in at £818.
590 The venue rental was estimated at £2,500 but came in at £2,684.
Reception was estimated at £4,091.86. It came in at £4,978.
Video and photography estimated at £7,579 and came in at £800.
So there were variances... I will allow him to confer with his colleague. I have taken him through some
of the estimated figures which then increased, but although I have taken him through some of the
595 breakdown; the general answer is that there was an estimate and then the actual figure incurred always
increased slightly up. I think I am right in saying that yes, it was slightly increased in all of them.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, perhaps – and forgive my voice but as a representative of the
community, I am dutifully enduring what is going around at this time of year.
600 From a marketing point of view, Mr Speaker, and it does not necessarily arise from the answers to the
question that he has given, but could the Hon. Minister provide us with a flavour of what the objectives – if
there are any specific objectives that he can allude to – were part of the process of planning for this event
and what it is expected or hoped that can be generated from what is a significant investment but which, in
the light of the objectives that he might offer, may in fact be considered reasonable in the event.

605 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, in the first place to say that I thought that the £40,000 – although I accept
that it is not an insignificant amount – was money very well spent. It is not a delegation that has been
comprised before to visit the Far East. I said to GBC that in fact in my view the Government has been
missing a trick in not having had a trade delegation attend Hong Kong on shipping matters since we were
610 elected into office. It is the first time that any Government has done it and I think it is a trade delegation that
should definitely attend Hong Kong annually.

I will tell him why. During the course of the four days that we were in Hong Kong, we met with 58
persons. Those 58 persons were divided into 19 round table meetings. Literally on the last day, we were
615 having our last meeting, getting changed and going off to the airport. We met what were the top companies
in terms of fleet management, fleet operators, fleet owners and we learnt a lot. For example, we learnt that
the Hong Kong register went from around 5 million tonnes to 91 million tonnes since 1997. Our tonnage is
around 3.4 million tonnes and it continues to grow steadily every year, as the hon. Gentleman knows.

620 But clearly, there is a lot to learn from being able to transform single-digit growth into double digit
growth in the space of time that the Hong Kong flag did so and there are lessons that we can learn which I
have advised my hon. colleague, Minister Isola who will now be responsible for maritime affairs.

It was also staggering to me that almost every company, if not every single company that we met, in fact
does business with Gibraltar. They either come here to take bunkers or they use Gibraltar for crew changes
or the provision of stores, spares, some light engineering work and of course for our docking.

625 So in effect Gibraltar, due to its strategic location, has enjoyed the business of the maritime trade from
the Far East since time immemorial because of our location. So I am convinced that now that they have put
faces to the people that run the port and the Gibraltar maritime flag, that we will be able, in the same way
that we have done with tourism, that by meeting people we have been able to increase the number of people
coming to Gibraltar for the UK transport operators, increasing air routes etc, by knowing us they will know
that we are now a phone call away to be able to service and to be able to attend to any of their needs.

630 I have no doubt that now that my colleague Minister Isola will carry on the work that has been started,
we will be able to tap what I do really consider to be an untapped mine of business to Gibraltar in the
maritime world. We have just come back so I cannot tell him whether the results of meeting 58 people are
yielding or translating into immediate business, but I can definitely tell him that I am extremely confident
that it shall do so. So that £40,000, I would in fact if I had to make an assessment, I would now remove
635 £40,000 of other marketing efforts and invest it in this. That is how confident I am that it is important that
we continue with these trade delegations to the Far East.

Hon. D J Bossino: Yes, Mr Speaker, the last point he makes and I do thank him for the very complete
answer he has given and for giving us the opportunity to hear his thoughts in relation to this particular trip,
640 but in relation to yielding business, how can that be assessed? I know that as politicians, especially when
you are on that side of the House and it is your initiative, you will use all manner of adjectives to make it
sound as positive as possible – and they may be true.

645 But, is there any way – and this sort of relates to the question asked in relation to small businesses – of
somehow empirically assessing that? One of the thoughts that come to mind is whether you can conduct a
survey by way of questionnaires asking the relevant stakeholders – they talked about at the last meeting of

the House when I asked him questions in relation to this topic – asking them whether they have indeed yielded – using his word – the results arising from this trip. If not, can some thought be given to pursuing this as a possible venture?

650 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, in the first place to say that whereas there is no collection of hard statistical data on the Small Business Saturday, clearly traders will be able to tell their umbrella organisations whether on that day they did more business. So whereas as there may not be a survey laid before Parliament as to whether the Small Business Saturday had more people down Main Street, certainly we will be able to receive from the umbrella organisations, whether traders reported on that day more
655 business than usual during the course of that month, or indeed during the course of the year. So no empirical statistics but certainly there will be evidence to be able to relate to the hon. Gentleman whether Small Business Saturday was successful.

In fact, it will be easier to tell the hon. Gentleman whether the meetings that we have held in Hong Kong have yielded results. Let me for example, tell him that we met with Bomin Bunker Oil Limited which
660 he knows is a very big company; we met with Fleet Management Limited which is also a very big company; the Wallin Group, another giant of the maritime industry, so these are recognisable names. If those companies, the ships that they manage or that they operate, call at Gibraltar through the local agents for bunkers, spares, provisions, light repair work crew changes, we will register that, so it is much more scientific in this respect.

665 So during the course of – well Minister Isola will be able to during the course of the next six months, ask local agents what business if any, has arrived from the 19 companies that the delegation met. If those companies have been calling at Gibraltar which most of them have, then we will be able to compare whether as a result of those meetings, there has been an increase in traffic to Gibraltar following those meetings and then we will be able to assess that for him more scientifically than the Small Business
670 Saturday assessment.

But I am sure that my hon. and learned colleague, Minister Isola will introduce processes that will be able to collate that information with ease to be able to advise the hon. Members opposite. Yes.

Mr Speaker: Let me intervene at this moment. Look we have had what is really a question asking for
675 statistical information – the *final* cost of the trip, because the House already had an indication of what the costs were. I have allowed two supplementaries, one asking the Minister whether he can make an assessment and he answered that.

Then Mr Bossino comes in and asks is there some empirical basis on which that can be done and the Minister answered. Now we are going further and further departing from what was a purely statistical
680 answer.

Now, I am going to allow the Hon. Mr Isola to reply and then that is it because we are really taking the whole issue far beyond the ambit of the original question. (*Interjections*)

Hon. A J Isola: Mr Speaker, I think we have had a similar discussion in relation to financial services in
685 terms of how you can monitor or cost benefit the investments made in marketing, very similar to the question asked in respect to the Hong Kong visit.

As we have discussed and I think we have agreed on various occasions, it is extremely difficult to monitor it but I can tell you that the converse is that if you do not go, you certainly will not get the benefits that you will if you do go, which I accept and concede are difficult to assimilate.

690 But I can tell you that, for example, if we had not gone to Bermuda we would not have the business that we have had from Bermuda. If we had not gone to New York, we would not have had the investment that we have had from New York in respect of the ILS business. And if you talk to – there is one instance where I went on a private visit to Holland with a group at their specific request to attend a meeting, supporting them, I can tell you that three weeks after my visit I have had a call from them saying, ‘Many, many thanks,
695 we have landed a huge client as a result specifically from that visit.’ So what I do know is that if we had not gone that would not have happened.

So there are two issues for me: one is raising the profile of Gibraltar generally, telling people about the quality of what we do and our reputation and the importance we attach to it; and the second thing is directly meeting people in the sector, talking to them about what we can do and there is an awful long way to go
700 before we actually get there in terms of explaining what Gibraltar can do.

We had an accountant in Gibraltar a month ago, a senior tax adviser to one of the large accounting firms, who did not know – and he is from the UK – who did not know that you could passport financial services from Gibraltar. So in terms of what has happened over the last 20 years, my personal view is we have failed and we have an awful lot of work to do to tell people what can be done from Gibraltar.

705 So, in my view, the money is extremely well spent and it is more than that: if you talk to the private sector, they will tell you it is absolutely vital that we continue this.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q716/2014
Employment –
Goals to achieve

Clerk: Question 716, the Hon. D J Bossino.

710

Hon. D J Bossino: Can the Minister for Employment state what goals he has been given to achieve by the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister, as he told GBC following the Cabinet reshuffle?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business and Employment.

715

Minister for Business, Employment, Skills & Training (Hon. N F Costa): Mr Speaker, in addition to the general duties of the Ministry of Employment, I have specifically been entrusted with the goal of continuing the extraordinarily successful work that the great Joe Bossano has done at the Ministry of Employment.

720

It is no mean feat, Mr Speaker, to have reduced unemployment from over 1,200 to 269 as at a week last Monday.

It is no mean feat to have employed well over 681 more Gibraltarians in full-time employment in just two years of Government up to October 2013 compared to less than half of that in the whole of the 16 years of the previous administration. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) (*Banging on desks*)

725

That means that in two years Joe Bossano did twice as much in terms of adding full-time Gibraltarians to the labour force, as all the Ministers of Employment of the Party opposite in all of the 16 years in Government. (*Banging on desks*) That figure will be even higher once the results of the last Employment Survey are published, which will provide the figures correct for last October. What a great record for Joe and what a dismal record for them, Mr Speaker.

730

So the Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister have set me as a goal that I should ensure that I follow the example of success set by Joe and not the examples of failure set by Employment Ministers of the Party opposite. It is certainly not going to be easy to follow in the footsteps of the true giant of Gibraltar politics but, Mr Speaker, I do relish the challenge of living up to the very high standards set by Mr Bossano at the Employment Ministry.

735

In part, Mr Speaker, I will also be working to design and implement programmes for the continuing and professional development of the public sector and to develop skills programmes of selected areas of the private sector in consultation with Gibraltar's small and medium-sized businesses. I have also been tasked with modernising the employment registration processes at the Employment and Training Board and placing all such new systems on line.

740

The Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister also wish me to prioritise the legislative reform to the Industrial Tribunal which has already been commenced, but which is a work in progress at the moment that we are committed to have finalised during this lifetime of Parliament. (*Banging on desks*)

Hon. D J Bossino: Mr Speaker, what a depressing reply from the Hon. Minister. (*Laughter*) What a depressing reply – because honestly, I really had high hopes. (*Laughter*)

745

Mr Speaker, in the letter which I published in the *Chronicle* only a few days ago, I did say that I hoped that the Hon. Minister, who I know pretty well and have got to know over the last three years as a reasonable guy with an open mind would be given sufficient autonomy to rethink their flag ship policy called the Future Job Strategy, but it clearly does not seem to be the case.

750

I was going to ask him whether he could put paid to any rumours that in fact the Hon. Mr Bossano, the previous incumbent in post, was in fact still pulling the strings in that particular Department and he has confirmed by his answer that that must be the case, because I do not believe for one moment that that particular answer has not had a hand in drafting by the previous incumbent.

755

Mr Speaker, but I still ask him this, with some trepidation, whether as part of those goals or indeed his own personal goals, whether he would consider – as the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition did when he had dealt with my portfolio in a shadow capacity and I have on many, many occasions – is whether the Government could consider to shift away from the Future Job Strategy. It has been criticised by us on many occasions for the reasons which are legion and they are all on record, but also in fact by Unite, the Union and other bodies.

760

So will he consider for one moment, the possibility of shifting away from that particular policy and amending it to provide proper training and proper jobs for our youth and unemployed?

Hon. J J Bossano: No, Mr Speaker. *(Laughter and banging on desks)*

Mr Speaker: Any other supplementaries?

765

Hon. D J Bossino: I'm speechless! *(Laughter and interjections)*

A Member: Speechless!

770

Clerk: Question 717 –

A Member: Presumably the answer was no. *(Laughter)*

**Q717-720 & 723-727/2014
Gibraltar Bus Company new buses –
Tender, preparation, maintenance and costs**

Clerk: Question 717, the Hon. S M Figueras.

775

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Transport say whether any consultants were contracted by the bus company for the purposes of assessing proposals received for the tender of the new buses to the Gibraltar Bus Company?

780

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business and Employment.

Minister for Business, Employment, Skills & Training (Hon. N F Costa): Mr Speaker, I will answer this Question together with Questions 718 to 720 and 723 to 727.

785

Clerk: Question 718, the Hon. S M Figueras.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Transport say whether any progress has been made identifying what works need to be carried out to Europa Road to support the weight of the new buses and what this might cost?

790

Clerk: Question 719, the Hon. S M Figueras.

Hon. S M Figueras: Can the Minister for Transport provide details in this House of the full amount of advertising revenues invoiced and received by Big Publications Ltd on a yearly basis for 2012, 2013 and the year 2014 to date, for advertising on the buses broken down into the following categories namely – back of the bus advertising; side of the bus advertising; bus stop advertising and any other forms of advertising sold by Big Publications?

795

Clerk: Question 720, the Hon. S M Figueras.

800

Hon. S M Figueras: Can the Minister for Transport say how many formal complaints the bus company has received from the public about the new buses?

Clerk: Question 723, the Hon. D A Feetham.

805

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, can the Chief Minister please provide details of the cost to the taxpayer of the maintenance contract for the new buses, including but not limited to the hourly rate charged by the entity undertaking the maintenance and the term of the contract?

810

Clerk: Question 724, the Hon. D A Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, can the Chief Minister please state who has been awarded the contract for the maintenance to the new buses?

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Clerk: Question 725, the Hon. D A Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, can the Chief Minister please state the price tendered by each tenderer in respect of the contract for the new buses (a) by reference to the price per bus and (b) the overall contract price?

820

Clerk: Question 726, the Hon. D A Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: Can the Chief Minister state how many entities tendered for the contract for the supply of the new buses?

825

Clerk: Question 727, the Hon. D A Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: Can the Government please state whether it has estimated the cost of reinforcing certain parts of the road system in Gibraltar in order to cope with the weight of the new buses and if so, what is the estimated cost?

830

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business and Employment.

Mr Speaker: May I suggest that at the end of the answer, the Opposition be facilitated copies of the answer before the end of Question Time. I think it will facilitate the conduct of business in supplementaries arising from these numerous questions.

835

Minister for Business, Employment, Skills & Training (Hon. N F Costa): Mr Speaker, no consultants were contracted by the bus company for the purposes of assessing the tender proposals.

840

As previously mentioned in my answer to question 639/2014, all matters relating to Big Publications, including revenues invoiced and received, are the subject of an internal audit that is currently ongoing. Once this audit has been completed, the Government will be in a position to provide the relevant details.

The records of the Bus Company show that no formal complaints have been received from the public regarding the new buses. Negative comments have surfaced in local and social media.

845

The bus company is still negotiating the maintenance contract with Bassadone Motors in order to maximise the value for the taxpayer.

The prices tendered by unsuccessful tenderers in the procurement process is commercial in confidence and cannot be disclosed. The overall contract price of the awarded tenderer is, as I have said in a previous answer to a question, £4,790,000.

850

I refer the hon. Gentleman to Question 552/2013 and 125/2014. As I explained then, a total of five companies were invited to tender. Out of these five, four submitted priced bids, of which all four companies were found unsuitable for Gibraltar.

All of the vendors were then invited to participate in the negotiated procedure as provided for under Regulation 4(1) of the Procurement (Public Contract) Regulations 2012. Subsequently three tenders were received from which one did not submit a new bid. Finally, two companies were left in the final assessment.

855

In relation to the weight of the new buses, I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer to Question 632/2014 where I informed him of the position in respect of reinforcing certain parts of the road system. In this respect, Golder Associates, a firm of specialised geotechnical consultants, was engaged on 4th November this year to carry out an assessment of the retaining walls which line Europa Road. The investigations are currently ongoing and results of the findings are expected this month.

860

Until the detailed investigation is concluded, it is not known whether any works might be required to strengthen the retaining walls along Europa Road.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the answer.

865

In relation to Question 717 and the answer that no consultants have been taken on, I asked the question in the context of information that has been brought to my attention in relation to the appointment of a consultant and of course, that information may, in the context of the answer the Minister has given, be unrelated and it has been mistakenly related to the Bus Company. So in that respect, Mr Speaker, I will certainly seek to explore it with the Minister behind the Speaker's Chair.

870

In relation to the answer that he gave to Question 719 and the revenue generated by Big Publications Ltd, I note the answer that he gave at the last session and the one today and wonder whether perhaps the Minister can give us an indication of how long this audit will take and perhaps more helpfully tell this House whether the audited accounts requested as he alluded to in the last session of Parliament have now been received from Big Publications Ltd?

875

Hon. N F Costa: Mr Speaker, as the hon. Gentleman is aware, the Bus Company, apart from having a Bus Company manager, has a board of directors. The board of directors have instructed that an audit be

880 carried out, it is an internal investigation and they are seeing to that. As I have explained to him, the audit has not yet been completed and therefore we cannot provide him at this stage, at this stage with the relevant details.

I have not been told in my supplementary information by when we can expect... oh yes, I have – by mid-January.

885 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, can the Hon. Minister say whether – and he will have seen, I suspect, the press release issued by Big Publications Ltd which stated that they had surrendered the contract in September – can the Minister say whether he was aware of that fact and if he was, why it is not a matter that was raised when we spoke last in November, of this issue in this House?

890 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, that statement was a statement that was issued by a private company. It was not issued neither did the Government or the Bus Company have any hand in writing that statement. I read it, along with the entirety of the public so I will limit myself to saying that we do not – the Bus Company, as I am advised, does not – think that the statement issued in that respect, in the respect that he has asked me specifically on when the contract was terminated, is accurate.

895 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Is the Minister able to say whether, given that Big Publications Ltd had actually submitted – and I quote the Hon. Minister at the time when we discussed it in the House a couple of years ago now, nearly – the most sophisticated pricing structure of all proposals at the time, including the one from the existing provider of the service – and given the sophisticated pricing structure, he is concerned that the Bus Company will not have the benefit of receiving those funds which were proposed as part of the proposal exercise?
900

Hon. N F Costa: Mr Speaker, he tempts me to stray into the very purpose of the audit, which I will not do because it is currently ongoing.

905 But I did tell him in the last answer to his question, if memory serves, that the difficulty has arisen because there is a difference as to the amount that is owing, so that I am advised – but this is subject to the audit currently being conducted so I cannot confirm it to him with any certainty – that once the audit is completed, the amount that the bus company will receive in terms of revenue will be higher, clearly, than what the bus company has collected.

910 I am giving him an indication of what I have been advised, but to tell him anything else is to basically pre-judge or try to clairvoyantly predict what the audit result will be and I cannot do that for him because it is currently being conducted. But we have committed ourselves in this House to tell him that once the audit is complete and the results are known, we are committed to giving him the relevant details.

915 As the hon. Gentleman will know, the Bus Company has the same interests in accruing all of the revenue that is owed to it, as the hon. Gentleman has in making sure that that happens. So there is no divergence of intention on either side of the House.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, can he confirm that, can the Minister confirm that Dennis Buses was one of the four unsuccessful bidders for this particular tender?

920 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, I am advised that the identity of the tenderers are not disclosable. It is not that I wish to be unhelpful; it is simply that I am advised that the tender bids are commercial in confidence and that I cannot disclose those to him. If I could, I would.

925 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Well, Mr Speaker, let me tell him, and I will get straight down to the point and I will tell him why, the purpose of this question.

The Opposition has information that one of the tenderers was Dennis Buses and that Dennis Buses bid substantially lower for this particular contract than in fact Man Bassadone which was the successful tenderer. Therefore in those circumstances, it is a matter of public interest and it is a matter that the Opposition is entitled to scrutinise.

930 The figures that I have been provided are that the Man Bassadone buses were awarded the contract and their bid was £155,000 per bus, whereas the Dennis buses were £130,000 per bus. Now the Hon. the Minister has also said in answer to my question that out of the five – the four that submitted bids, the unsuccessful ones – all four companies were found unsuitable for Gibraltar. Well, that cannot possibly be the case if it is Dennis because Dennis are of course the suppliers of the blue buses, so that company cannot
935 possible be unsuitable for Gibraltar. It would be very surprising indeed, bearing in mind their experience, if they made a tender of buses that was unsuitable for this community.

940 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, let me correct the hon. Gentleman. The original tenderers, the buses that they tendered for testing, they were all discarded because they were not suitable for the roads of Gibraltar. That is a question of fact. They brought in the buses, they were tested, they were not suitable and they were discarded by the team that were dealing with the procurement of the buses.

Hon. D A Feetham: Including Man Bassadone?

945 **Hon. N F Costa:** All four original tenderers, all of those buses, had to be discarded because of the unsuitability of the bus provided for testing for the roads. So I can correct him and tell him that that was certainly the case. It is not correct what he has said, as a matter of fact.

Hon. D A Feetham: Right, so all four, including the Man Bassadone buses –

950

Hon. N F Costa: I have not said that.

Hon. D A Feetham: Well, so all of them except for the Man Bassadone buses were unsuitable –

955 **Hon. N F Costa:** Let me clarify, what I have said is that I am not revealing to him the identity of the companies that provided the buses for testing. What I am telling him is that of all those companies, of the four companies that provided the buses for testing, those four buses that were tested were found unsuitable.

I am not, by answering in the terms that I have, accepting that they were either Man or Dennis. I am just telling him that of the companies that provided us buses for testing, they were unsuitable.

960

Hon. D A Feetham: Well, Mr Speaker, can I ask him whether out of those four, ultimately the successful tenderer, Man Bassadone – we know that Man Bassadone was the successful tenderer ultimately – whether Man Bassadone was also one of the ones that were deemed, that were submitting buses that were unsuitable for Gibraltar in those four that he has mentioned in answer to my question.

965

Hon. N F Costa: Mr Speaker, I am going to re-read the answer that I gave him, because perhaps he missed this aspect of the answer.

As I explained to the hon. Gentleman, a total of five companies were invited to tender. Out of these five, four submitted priced bids, of which all four companies were found unsuitable for Gibraltar's roads.

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Then I add: *all* of the vendors, i.e. all of the companies that provided the buses for testing, were invited to participate in the negotiated procedure under the relevant regulation. Subsequently three tenders were received from which one did not submit a new bid. In other words, by the end we were left with two buses.

975 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, is it the case, that effectively the Government has chosen, has allocated a tender which is higher to the taxpayer than a tender that it had which was lower from Dennis Buses who are the current suppliers of the blue buses?

Hon. N F Costa: Mr Speaker, I have already answered the question to the hon. Gentleman – (*Interjection*) Yes, I have in the terms that I am allowed to answer the hon. Gentleman in this House.

980

But if his question to me is whether the taxpayer did not obtain value because the award was not given to a company that perhaps bid at a less cost, let me tell him that when contracts are considered by officials, it is not always the case – certainly my experience in three years, that it is not always the case – that the company that has quoted the cheapest price gets the contract, because obviously the board will consider many other factors – *many* other factors. Therefore even if the award was given to a company that had a higher price, it does not mean that it was the least competitive.

985

I will give him an example. The Dennis buses in 2004 cost whatever they did and there was a maintenance contract that was meant to be £80,000 a year. He knows, because I have given the information to the hon. Gentleman, that whereas those I am sure at the time that board in particular considered that they were the best value for money because the per unit bus, the cost was however much, and because the maintenance would be so much, in fact there were certain years where the maintenance contract came up to almost £½ million.

990

I can also tell him that the Dennis buses were found to be unsuitable for Gibraltar's topography and I will explain to him why.

995

Only after four years of the buses doing the circuits, they really started to need serious maintenance work. So even if the bus of Dennis were to cost lower compared to the bus of another company, when you add in the repairs and the maintenance and the cost, which I have provided to the hon. Gentleman, in fact it is not as cheap any more.

1000 So the hon. Gentleman I am sure appreciates that the tender process is more sophisticated than just Unit A and Unit B: Unit A is £5, Unit B is £10. Unit A is cheaper, therefore it is Unit A. Because when you add the other factors that I have mentioned, not least the maintenance contract, of which he has the information, then it is not comparing apples with apples; it is comparing apples with pears.

The experience of the Dennis buses in Gibraltar had been, with all due respect to the Dennis company, not a very good one or successful to Gibraltar.

1005 Let me tell him that the only company, the only entity in Gibraltar that won when Dennis was awarded the contract, was the company that has the maintenance contract, because from £80,000 a year they all of a sudden saw themselves with £250,000 a year, over £300,000 a year, sometimes £½ million a year.

So I am sure that he appreciates what I am trying to tell him.

1010 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Yes, but I am sure that he appreciates too, that I am entitled to scrutinise what he has said, I am entitled to scrutinise this tender and the answers that he has provided to me, and the dearth of information he has provided me, prevents me from doing that.

1015 Because of course it is my job to scrutinise whether the Government is obtaining value for money and if I am told that effectively that the Man Bassadone buses have cost per bus £155,000 per bus, whereas Dennis has bid at £130,000 per bus – and I am giving the hon. Gentleman an opportunity to rebut that, if I have got my figures wrong – then it is up to him, the onus is then on him, to provide cogent reasons why they have chosen one over the other – not surmise a Micawberism.

1020 What you are effectively doing is you are saying well, because this could happen and this could happen, but I am not interested in what could happen in hypothetical situations. What I want to do is to examine this particular tender to ensure that the Government has obtained value for money and why has Man Bassadone been awarded this particular contract when there was another bidder that was substantially cheaper?

1025 And may I add this: the information that I have been provided is that in fact this particular bid, in relation to the buses, did not include a maintenance element that there were other companies that were effectively bidding in relation to the maintenance. But look, I may be wrong in relation to that but you are not providing me with the information, so that I can properly scrutinise this.

Hon. N F Costa: Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman is being mischievous – yes – when he knows full well and I have already started the answer by phrasing it in terms that I am advised that the unsuccessful bids of the unsuccessful tenderers are commercial in confidence and I cannot disclose them to him.

1030 **Mr Speaker:** The Minister says that he is advised. (**Hon. N F Costa:** Yes.) Where does that advice come from?

Hon. N F Costa: From the Procurement Office.

1035 Mr Speaker, simply to add that the hon. Gentleman says I speak in hypotheticals. I am not speaking in hypotheticals. The Dennis buses were on our roads from 2004. I have given them exact figures of what the maintenance contract costs so he can add the unit cost of the bus plus the maintenance in a year and actually start working out how much it costs.

I am afraid, Mr Speaker, I cannot add anything else to the information I have already given him.

1040 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, the actual bids – £155,000 and £130,000 – one with the other, there is a substantial amount, the difference. That is exclusive of maintenance and my understanding is that in terms of the maintenance element of all this, that that is being dealt with separately and indeed, it must be dealt with separately because the answer he has given me is that this contract has been allocated but indeed in relation to the maintenance aspect, there are still ongoing negotiations with Bassadone – not with Bassadone Man, but with Bassadone in order to see whether the Government can come to terms with Bassadone in relation to the maintenance. So one is separate from the other.

1045 I am focusing on the cost of the actual buses. But let me ask him this: does he know that Dennis Buses have written to the Government complaining about the allocation of this particular tender and has the Government responded at all to Dennis Buses and the complaints that they have made?

1050 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, I have not received nor been cited of any correspondence from Dennis Buses, so the answer is no, I am not aware of any correspondence from Dennis or of a complaint.

1055 But, Mr Speaker, let me also tell him that in my experience as well over the past three years when companies compete and they do not get the tender, they ordinarily almost always complain. So it will not be a surprise to me at all.

Hon. D A Feetham: Yes, Mr Speaker, but the difference of course is that you may complain but if at the end of the day yours was the substantially cheaper bid and your buses had been used successfully in Gibraltar over the last four years, then you may have cause to complain.

1060 I really do not want to get into the merits of that. I wanted to examine why one tender has been awarded over the other tender and obviously the Hon. Minister has not been able to provide me with the answer.

1065 Is he satisfied, bearing in mind the criticisms of the Dennis Buses that he has made in this House, and bearing in mind the unfortunate history – nascent history I should say, because this contract has obviously only recently been allocated and the buses are only recently on the streets – but is he satisfied given the unfortunate recent history in relation to the Man Bassadone buses, that this will be a significant improvement on the Dennis buses?

Hon. N F Costa: Yes.

1070 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, perhaps one supplementary – a supplementary, Mr Speaker, that arises from the comprehensive answers that the Hon. Minister has provided.

1075 Is the Hon. Minister able to say, and perhaps he may need notice of the question – because I do concede that I may venture a little too far into technical detail and that the Minister may need notice of the question, but could he tell this House what feature of the Man buses – or rather what *features* perhaps – make the Man buses so appropriate, so optimised for the topography in the way that he suggests will mean that they will be more reliable and require less maintenance moving forward?

1080 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, I am sure that I have answered this question before to him on the reasons of the engines and so on. I do not have the information before me, it is a very technical question, but the –

Mr Speaker: Could I suggest to the Hon. Minister that he investigates that, and check whether he has in fact, and then come back to the House later today and make reference to that answer and we can continue? Rather than leave the matter in the air, okay?

1085 **Hon. N F Costa:** Yes, Mr Speaker, thank you.

Mr Speaker: So we will now deal with Question 721.

1090

Q721/2014
Oil pollution within the port –
Marine Accident Compliance Officer's report

Clerk: Question 721, the Hon. J J Netto.

1095 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, further to the answer to Written Question 172/2014 in June of this year, can the Minister for the Environment say if the Marine Accident Compliance Officer has now completed the investigation of the oil pollution within the port and if so, please provide Parliament with a copy of his or her report?

1100 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business and Employment.

Minister for Business, Employment, Skills & Training (Hon. N F Costa): Mr Speaker, yes, but following the preliminary analysis of the MAICO, no full investigation was deemed necessary. As a result there is no report to publish.

The MAICO did provide me with a preliminary report.

1105

Hon. J J Netto: Mr Speaker, will the Hon. Minister please not accede to provide a copy to the Opposition of that preliminary report?

1110 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, if I may refer the hon. Gentleman to the relevant legislation, which is the Gibraltar Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 2012, it reads as follows:

‘The MAICO may at his discretion and to promulgate any lessons learnt, from time to time publish collective short reports of accidents which have not been the subject of a report submitted under Regulation 18(1)’.

which means to say a very serious marine accident.

I asked the MAICO who, as you know, is independent to the Government, although contracted by the Government to investigate accidents and to investigate on them. I did specifically ask him whether he would be publishing a report on this incident and he said to me as follows, by e-mail at 13:03 yesterday:

‘I do not consider this incident to be a major pollution incident and the company have implemented the recommendations. Therefore I do not propose to publish this report.’

1115 As the hon. Gentleman knows, I have no power to ask him to do anything.

Hon. J J Netto: Mr Speaker, in the answer provided by the Hon. Minister quoting the legislation, he mentions the aspect of lessons learnt as a result of an accident. Could I ask the Hon. Minister what lessons have been learnt and what, if any, actions taken to rectify or acknowledge... implement sorry, the lessons learnt.

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Hon. N F Costa: Mr Speaker, what I have told the hon. Gentleman was that the MAICO may at his discretion publish reports of accidents. It is entirely a matter for him in his sole discretion, whether... Yes well, I am reading from the legislation and that is the advice of the Maritime Administrator, and I have already told him that the MAICO has told me that he does not consider the incident to be a major pollution incident and that he has no intention to publish the report.

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Hon. J J Netto: So do we take it therefore that there were no lessons whatsoever from a situation where there was oil pollution very close to the west side of Gibraltar and therefore nothing to implement to try and avoid a likely repetition in the near future?

1130

Hon. N F Costa: Mr Speaker, what I can tell him is that the reason why the MAICO has decided not to publish a report, apart from the fact that he says that he does not consider it to be a major pollution incident in reference to the relevant legislation, he says and I quote him:

‘and the company have implemented the recommendations.’

1135 If he wants me to advise him on those recommendations, I am happy to ask the MAICO to set those out for me and he can either ask me at the next session of the House or I can write to him. I do not have those with me but I can ask for them if he so wishes.

Hon. J J Netto: I am grateful, Mr Speaker. Quite frankly if he gets the information and just simply passes it to me we can avoid asking the question next month.

1140

Hon. N F Costa: Thank you, Mr Speaker.
I shall so write to the hon. Gentleman.

Q722/2014
Literary Festival –
Cost to taxpayer

1145 **Clerk:** Question 722, the Hon. D A Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, can the Government please state what the cost of the Literary Festival was to the Taxpayer?

1150 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business and Employment.

Minister for Business, Employment, Skills & Training (Hon. N F Costa): Mr Speaker, the cost to the Taxpayer of the Gibunco Gibraltar International Literary Festival of this year is £251,891.

SPORTS, CULTURE, HERITAGE AND YOUTH

Q728-729/2014

**Gibraltar Sports and Leisure Authority –
Vacancies**

1155

Clerk: We now move to Question 728, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1160

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

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

1165

Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares): Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 729.

Clerk: Question 729, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1170

Hon. E J Reyes: Can the Minister for Sports provide details in respect of any vacancies which may have been filled at the Sports and Leisure Authority, since the answer to Question 483/2014?

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

1175

Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares): Mr Speaker, the vacancy for the Pool Operative was advertised and applicants interviewed. The successful candidate started employment for the Gibraltar Sports and Leisure Authority on 1st December 2014.

The post left vacant by the current CEO remains the same as in my answer to Question 483/2014 and just to recall, the answer stated that it was going to come out imminently.

1180

I can now report that we are looking at the whole of the structure of the GSLA and it might take more time than I said in my answer to the last question.

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Hon. E J Reyes: Mr Speaker, would the Minister... seeing that from imminently we have now changed to looking into the whole structure – does he have any timescales that he has instructed whoever is reassessing the whole establishment of the place to adhere to?

Hon. S E Linares: Mr Speaker, I have asked how long this will take and all the indications are that it will happen slightly before the end of the financial year, because the impact would be on estimates and things that have to be done for the budget.

Q730/2014

**Sea bathing facilities –
Reason closed to public**

1190

Clerk: Question 730, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1195

Hon. E J Reyes: Can Government provide details of all dates when the sea bathing facilities adjacent to GSLA's swimming pool have been closed to the public since its official opening, inclusive of reasons why any closures were necessary?

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

1200

Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares): Mr Speaker, the magnificent Gibraltar Bathing Pavilion, which has and will give our citizens a great deal of enjoyment and fulfils one of our manifesto commitments, was never closed to the public.

On Sunday, 21st September, access to the sea was restricted due to works being carried out to the second phase of the project.

Q731/2014
GSLA swimming pools –
Periods of closure

1205 **Clerk:** Question 731, the Hon. E J Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Can the Minister for Sports and Leisure provide details of all dates when either of the GSLA's swimming pools have been closed for public use during the present financial year, inclusive of reasons why any closures were necessary?

1210

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

Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares): Mr Speaker, the following are the dates when the GSLA swimming pools have been closed for public use during the present financial year, inclusive of reasons.

1215

Swimming pool – the 25 metre pool was closed on 22nd July and reopened on 22nd September. The reason, closed for summer maintenance nine days earlier than usual due to the installation of new filters and major maintenance works.

1220

Pool for the elderly, disabled and teaching – was closed three times, which were: on 14th and 15th October and reopened on 16th October; on 23rd and 24th October, reopened on 27th October; on 18th and 22nd November and reopened on 24th November. On these three occasions, closure was due to pool user incidents involving human faeces. Both pools were closed on 1st December and reopened on 2nd December. This was due to the torrential downpours; the water levels rose to the extent that the sewage water was emerging through the drains inside the changing rooms.

1225

Hon. E J Reyes: Yes, Mr Speaker, the last time or the last date the Minister has provided which is on 1st December due to the heavy downpours and so on: is the Minister aware, is this a new problem that has arisen because we have changed some system or other, or is this a recurring problem that has been ongoing for some time now?

1230

Hon. S E Linares: Mr Speaker, this is a problem that has been there for a very long time and we are now trying to deal with all the changing rooms within that pool, for the simple reason that during the time that the Gibraltar Bathing Pavilion was opened, although there are facilities of changing rooms and toilets for that place, many users were using the pool to change and use the facilities there. The complaint has always been the amount of smell that emanates from the drains. It is to do with something when it was constructed that a smell comes out from the drains and in this case, it was water that was coming out from the drains.

1235

We are currently looking at a whole maintenance programme there, which will hopefully alleviate this problem which has been there for, like he said, a number of years now.

Q732/2014
Heritage sites –
Works and costs

1240

Clerk: Question 732, the Hon. E J Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Can the Minister for Heritage provide details of all works, together with a breakdown of respective cost undertaken at any heritage related site, since the answer to Question 486/2014, stating by whom these works were carried out ?

1245

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

Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares): Mr Speaker, there have not been any further works or payments.

1250

I hasten to add there have not been any payments. I would think that there might be some payments coming in later on since, because this is the one they prepared for me, I am sure there will be payments coming in, but from Question 486, there have not been any payments made on any works.

1255 **Hon. E J Reyes:** I appreciate that, Mr Speaker: if no payments have been made, then the Minister cannot provide the information. I shall no doubt ask him again in a couple of months' time to see what Treasury have processed.

**Q733/2014
Mega Concert –
Total cost**

Clerk: Question 733, the Hon. D A Feetham.

1260

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, can the Government please state what was the total cost of the Mega Concert?

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

1265

Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares): Mr Speaker, the cost of the Gibraltar Music Festival is currently at £778,867.74. This is £121,132.26 below the projected budget in the estimates of £900,000.

1270

Hon. D A Feetham: Is this figure that the Hon. Minister has provided me the final figure? Because the actual cost of the Mega Concert last year, I believe from the estimates, came in at just over £1 million. So there is a substantial difference between this figure and what it cost previously. So is this the final figure or are there still bills to come in which will then be added on to the £777,000?

1275

Hon. S E Linares: Mr Speaker, when he said last year that the expenditure was over £1 million, what he did not take into consideration was the revenue. So it might have cost, the total cost has to be balanced off from what the revenues are to the expenditure.

1280

But to answer his question specifically, we are expecting a few more invoices to come but I would not expect it to make much more difference and in fact we are even getting some more revenue which is owed coming in as well. So this is the figure as from when you asked the question, it might vary but the variation will be very, very small.

HEALTH, THE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**Q734/2014
Blood department, St Bernard's Hospital –
Review of staff**

Clerk: Question 734, the Hon. J J Netto.

1285

Hon. J J Netto: Mr Speaker, given the complaint by service users of delays in the blood department of St Bernard's Hospital, will the Minister for Health ask for a management review of staff resources in order to expedite such delays encountered?

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

1290

Minister for Health, the Environment, Energy and Climate Change (Hon. Dr J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, the GHA is looking to implement a new appointment system within the first quarter of 2015. This will address the issue of delays. Patients required for blood tests by their GPs, consultants or other clinicians will be provided with an appointment for attending the Phlebotomy Clinic on a specific date and time either at the Primary Care Centre or at St Bernard's.

1295

The current complement is one full-time senior donor carer, one full-time donor carer and one full-time phlebotomy-trained nursing assistant. This should be able to meet the service demands once the appointment system is in place.

1300

Hon. J J Netto: Mr Speaker, I am grateful to the Hon. Minister for his reply. The reason why I actually asked this question was because a couple of weeks ago, I was actually doing some shopping in Morrison

and two particular ladies approached me – two ladies that go regularly to the blood department – and they were quite annoyed at the delays being encountered there. According to them, the delays were due to the fact that some member of staff had retired and that particular position had not been occupied yet. So this is the reason why they brought it to my attention and the reason why I am bringing it here to the Minister, and hence the reason why I have asked the question or framed the question that particular way in terms of management looking into it.

But it seems to indicate that that is exactly what you are doing. Well, the appointment system might help make the appointments go faster but I am not quite sure whether the management team sees a need for further recruitment there.

Hon. Dr J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, no. We are satisfied with the manning levels that we have in that department. What happens is because at the moment there is not an appointment system, everybody turns up at eight o'clock and you can never tell how many people are going to turn up.

Therefore even though the nurses work extremely hard and are extremely efficient and nobody I know doubts that, they take time, because it takes time to draw blood from the patients. If you come in a little bit later than others and there are many patients on that particular occasion, then clearly you will have to wait.

This is why we are now going to be piloting an appointment system in which they actually get a time and that should be able to distribute the number of patients who are having their blood taken during the course of the morning so that they know more or less what time they are due to arrive. So I think that will make an improvement and that is what we are going to be trying out early in the New Year.

Q735/2014

Alameda Botanic Gardens – Maintenance programme

Clerk: Question 735, the Hon. J J Netto.

Hon. J J Netto: Mr Speaker, will the Minister for the Environment please say if it is the intention to do a major maintenance programme in the Alameda Botanic Gardens, in order to replace all the broken wooden batons and benches and resurface the pathways due to the amount of potholes constituting a safety hazard to visitors to the gardens?

Minister for Health, the Environment, Energy and Climate Change (Hon. Dr J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, the management of the gardens has submitted a proposal for the paving of the pathways which the Government is studying. Benches are routinely maintained and a number of new benches have been added recently.

Hon. J J Netto: Well, Mr Speaker, I think I need to take issue on the question of the benches because the benches I am referring to in particular, and I think it is called Grand Parade Road which is the beginning there, the batons of the benches have been broken for some time, they have certainly not been replaced in the last 12 months. That said, one would hope that it does happen obviously and the benches are up to scratch.

In relation to the pathways, will the Hon. Minister please indicate to us whether it is likely for a programme to resurface the pathways in the Alameda Gardens perhaps in this part of this financial year?

Hon. Dr J E Cortes: Okay, Mr Speaker. Clearly if I had been asked that question a few years ago, I could have told him which benches and how many batons may have been missing, but obviously that is not my day-to-day role now. I take the point on the benches at Grand Parade and I will enquire as to where they are in the routine programme.

Regarding the resurfacing of pathways, this is clearly a problem because of the effect of tree roots and in the years that I used to work within the gardens, we tried many different methods of resolving this. What we have received now is a proposal for resurfacing most of the main pathways of the gardens but I expect that major replacement programme would not start this financial year it would start next financial year, but there would be routine filling in of holes as has happened in the past, during the course of this financial year.

Q736/2014
Commonwealth Park –
Restricted areas

1355 **Clerk:** Question 736, the Hon. J J Netto.

Hon. J J Netto: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment say when will the restricted areas closed to the public in Commonwealth Park, be re-opening?

1360 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, the Environment and Energy.

Minister for Health, the Environment, Energy and Climate Change (Hon. Dr J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, areas are routinely cordoned off in order to assist in the maintenance. This is totally at the discretion of the gardening staff.

1365

Hon. J J Netto: Mr Speaker, but my understanding is that there are some specific areas which have been cordoned off right from the beginning when it was first published in I think July this year. In other words there are specific areas which have been cordoned off since July or probably June July of this year and have not been reopened. When are those specific areas going to be reopened?

1370

Hon. Dr J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, this is probably the only Parliament in the world where we discuss the turfing of a few square metres of grass in a park, but I am happy to assist the Member opposite.

Mr Speaker: That is purely due to the nature of our Parliament. We are a Parliament in which national affairs are discussed and also those of a municipal character.

1375

Hon. Dr J E Cortes: Certainly, Mr Speaker. Alternatively, it might also be because there is very little else to pick on because we are doing such a good job. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) But I accept your comment of course, Mr Speaker.

1380

The areas we are talking about are the mounds which were particularly popular with children climbing up and rolling down and therefore they took more wear than the rest of the area. The area has been reseeded but there have been problems in relation to pigeons eating the seeds and the seedlings, which is now being addressed because the areas are covered until the grass is big enough and also the fact that whenever those areas are cordoned off, children will once again – and that is what they are there for – go up and roll on them and so on so they need to take more time than would normally be taken in an ordinary flat area of turf in order to recover.

1385

But when the grass is ready to take that, is at the discretion of the people there on the ground day to day. I have seen them recently, I often walk through there on my way between one office or the other and I suspect they will need a few more weeks yet until the root systems are firm enough to take the tread. But this as I say is something which is routine maintenance of a well-used turfed area.

1390

Hon. J J Netto: Well, Mr Speaker, first of all in relation to the first comment that the Hon. Minister made, it seems to me that he seems to suggest that highlighting this particular issue is not that important. If that is so, therefore –

1395

Mr Speaker: I have as Speaker of this Parliament dealt with the matter. I do not think the hon. questioner needs to make that further –

Hon. J J Netto: Well, the political point I was going to make –

1400

Mr Speaker: I do not think it has to be made –

Hon. J J Netto: If that is the case then his conversion from an environmentalist to a politician has been shorter than envisaged. (*Laughter*)

1405

But keeping on the issue, Mr Speaker, on the specific areas which have been cordoned off since June and continues to be cordoned off since June, can the hon. Minister say whether it is problems of wear and tear, despite the fact that it has been almost five or six months when nobody has been turfing on those particular areas or whether it is in fact a problem of the soil underneath the grass? The soil and the bedrock.

1410 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** The soil and the?

Hon. J J Netto: The soil and the bedrock.

1415 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Okay, Mr Speaker. I think this is the first personal attack across this House since the famous television hug!

Mr Speaker: Let us see if we can move on in the spirit of the day.

1420 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Very well, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker: Considering just a week before Parliament and after an embrace from the Chief Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, ushering in a new era, let us proceed on that basis.

1425 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Yes, Mr Speaker. My political abilities have been questioned but fine, that is for others to question, not for me.

1430 Mr Speaker, this is due to wear and tear. It is normal that if you step on grass and you step on it a lot, it is going to wear. I have no information that it is due to the soil, because the soil is exactly the same on the mound as it is on the rest of the park where the grass is growing in a good condition. There is no question of bedrock; there is gravel underneath. I do not think that there is another reason. I honestly think that it is due to the wear and tear on the grass.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q737/2014
Climate change –
Government Strategy to combat

1435 **Clerk:** Question 737, the Hon. J J Netto.

Hon. J J Netto: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Climate Change provide Parliament with the Government strategy for combating climate change?

1440 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, the Environment and Energy.

Minister for Health, the Environment, Energy and Climate Change (Hon. Dr J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, the Government strategy for combatting climate changes are multi-faceted and includes a combination of both top-down and bottom-up approaches.

1445 The Department of the Environment and the recently created Climate Change Task Force, chaired by the Deputy Chief Minister, have been actively addressing key aspects of Gibraltar's strategy during the course of the year. The strategy will be elaborated further in the revised Gibraltar Climate Change Programme which is currently being redrafted by the Department of the Environment.

1450 I can nevertheless inform the hon. Member that the strategy is generally divided into four main overarching themes which include: (1) adapting to climate change by building Gibraltar's resilience; (2) facilitating the transition towards a low carbon economy; (3) improving our understanding of climate change science; and (4) raising climate change awareness and changing consumer behaviour through educational initiatives.

This follows a strategic approach adopted by the United Nations Environment Programme for combatting climate change.

1455 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Hon. Minister indicate to the House when the Climate Change Study Report will be published?

1460 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, the Climate Change Task Force has been meeting virtually on a monthly basis for about a year. I said 'recently', but it is recently in relative terms. It is now close to completing its work and I would think that within the next few months we will have a document completed.

1465 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, how does the Hon. Minister see that the actual strategy, once it is finalised in the report, will be intertwined with the latest agreement as a result of the Lima Agreement reached, I think it was this last Sunday, 14th December at 1.00 a.m. in the morning in relation to the emissions that need to be obtained by 2020?

1470 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, it is interesting because depending who you hear reporting on the meeting of the parties in Lima, you get different impressions as to whether it was successful or not. The environmental lobby insists that it was not enough and other people insist that it was. I think it is a major step forward. Now we are no longer discussing whether climate change is caused by man, but how we are going to tackle it. This was certainly the impression that I got when I was fortunate enough to be at the United Nations General Assembly Conference on Climate Change.

1475 We will respond to the agreement and I would like to think that we will go beyond, because we have a potential in our small community of leading by example. It has been a tough job because clearly, climate change was not the in thing three years ago and it has been hard work to push this forward. But I am confident that we will have a robust strategy which Gibraltar can be proud of and which will be in fact, among the best in the world.

1480 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, perhaps just one more final question or supplementary question on this side. Is the Government, or rather is the Minister for the Environment, confident that Gibraltar will be able to obtain the level of emissions agreed to by 2020?

Hon. Dr J E Cortes: Yes, Mr Speaker.

1485 **Mr Speaker:** Next question.

Q738/2014
Eco Wave Power Ltd –
Electricity provision

Clerk: Question 738, the Hon. J J Netto.

1490 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment please say if the company Eco Wave Power Ltd has started building the buoys and the necessary infrastructure in order to commence producing electricity into a grid and provide Parliament with an update on this matter?

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

1495 **Minister for Health, the Environment, Energy and Climate Change (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** No, Mr Speaker, they have not. Eco Wave Power Ltd are currently involved in a tender process, I believe they are currently in Gibraltar, for the required engineering works to be done in Gibraltar.

The Department of the Environment and the Gibraltar Electricity Authority are in contact with Eco Wave Power Ltd in order to monitor progress and we expect works to commence on site next year.
1500 As I say, I believe they are currently in Gibraltar making preparations for the work to begin quite soon.

Hon. J J Netto: Mr Speaker, I am grateful for that but it seems to me that when the news actually came out in the newspaper *Bloomberg* in relation to this particular agreement, that they were talking then about everything being in place by the end of this year and starting to produce electricity at the beginning of next year.
1505

Could I ask the Minister why the delay or why the discrepancy between what the Minister has just said against what came out in the *Bloomberg* article?

1510 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, the *Bloomberg* article I believe was prepared by the company and therefore this may have been their perception.

Clearly when you actually start a project, you begin to realise the things that you have to go through. It had to go through the planning process which it did, there is their own tender process in sourcing the local firms that are going to be manufacturing equipment, which is clearly something that we welcome, so there are steps that need to be taken but I am not unduly worried at this stage, that these delays are going to be significant or rather that these delays mean that the project is not going to go forward.
1515

I am confident at this point in time that they are genuine procedural delays that one comes across whenever one is embarking on any project, particularly one which is fairly new technology, certainly for Gibraltar.

1520 **Hon. J J Netto:** Yes, Mr Speaker, can I ask just one last supplementary question because within that article, half way through the article there is a statement that can be confusing perhaps even contradictory and it states:

‘Gibraltar plans to produce 15% of its energy from renewable sources by 2020’.

Having been thrown in the middle of the article, it gives the impression that that is going to be the only source upon which the Government is going to rely for producing these renewable sources of energy.

1525 Could the Hon. Minister perhaps clarify that this is not the be-all and end-all to the Government strategy?

1530 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Yes, indeed, Mr Speaker. We are developing a strategy which includes analysing other renewable sources of energy. I dare say we have already seen in a small way, the introduction of some solar that will now take off next year, and we are talking to people about other forms of marine energy and we have not discarded other forms such as the more modern wind generators which are smaller and do not create a danger for migrating birds. So we are looking at the whole range of renewable sources and we are working out a strategy and trying to work out at what rate we have to introduce these and what percentage each is likely to take.

1535 Clearly there are some pilot studies which need to continue regarding marine current speed, wind energy and so on but I can confirm that we are not putting all our eggs in Eco Wave’s basket.

**Q739/2014
Macaques –
Illegal feeding**

Clerk: Question 739, the Hon. J J Netto.

1540 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment say how many individuals have been fined or cautioned for the illegal enticing or feeding of macaques, contrary to the existing legislation either inside or outside the Upper Rock Nature Reserve, stating where, the date, nationality, amounts imposed, which entity imposed the fine and whether some cases are waiting to be heard in the courts?

1545 **Minister for Health, the Environment, Energy and Climate Change (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, the information requested is in the schedule that I now hand over.

Answer to Question No. 739/2014

Illegal feeding of Barbary Macaques

DATE	NATIONALITY	INSIDE URNR	AREA	FINE/CAUTION	IMPOSED BY	COURT HEARING
12/2/14	SPANISH	NO	JOHN MACK. HALL	CAUTION	DEPT. OF THE ENVIRONMENT	NO
14/5/14	SPANISH	YES	ST MICHAEL'S CAVE	CAUTION	DEPT. OF THE ENVIRONMENT	NO
16/7/14	MOROCCAN	YES	APES' DEN	CAUTION	DEPT. OF THE ENVIRONMENT	NO
1/9/14	BRITISH	YES	APES' DEN	CAUTION	DEPT. OF THE ENVIRONMENT	NO
26/9/14	BRITISH	YES	APES' DEN	CAUTION	DEPT. OF THE ENVIRONMENT	NO
21/9/14	PHILIPPINE	YES	TRAFALGAR CEMETERY	CAUTION	DEPT. OF THE ENVIRONMENT	NO
7/11/14	BRITISH	NO	OUTSIDE MOUNT ALVERNIA	£500	DEPT. OF THE ENVIRONMENT	NO

Hon. J J Netto: Mr Speaker, can I ask given the information provided in the schedule, there are seven individuals of which six have been cautioned. Is that a policy with regard, cautioning as opposed to imposing a fine?

1550 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, in the early stages of introducing the feeding tickets, for want of a better word, the decision was taken by the Department that we would initially deal with these matters by way of caution, warning, informing people that this was something new but that they would face the

1555 possibility of fines and after that number of months, it was decided that there was a need to step up a little bit more and that is why the first fine ticket itself was issued in November. So there was a strategy of implementing this reasonably in a step-by-step way.

1560 **Hon. J J Netto:** And one final supplementary question if the Hon. Minister can help me. Of the three British mentioned in the schedule, is it possible to know whether we are talking about British Gibraltarians or other British – what is in the back of my mind basically is that I am trying to find out whether it is our local people or whether they are tourists coming for the day. I do not know whether he has got the information available.

1565 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I do not have that information but if he will remind me or get somebody to call my office, we will look it up and I am very happy to share that with him.

1570 **Hon. J J Netto:** The only reason is because I am trying to think whether there is a particular problem that needs to be dealt with, in the sense of it being tourists or being local, and whether we ought to create more awareness among the local population or more awareness with the tourists at a particular tourist point. That is the reason why I am asking this supplementary question.

Q740/2014

Sewage treatment plant and related works – Progress with construction

Clerk: Question 740, the Hon. J J Netto.

1575 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister of the Environment provide Parliament with an updated account of progress with regard to the construction of the sewage treatment plant and works to the other parts of the sewage system, giving a time limit for each aspect of works to commence and finish?

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

1580 **Minister for Health, the Environment, Energy and Climate Change (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, with regard to the construction of the sewage treatment plant, numerous meetings have taken place between the joint venture company, namely Northumbrian Water and Modern Water and Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar, since they were granted Preferred Bidder status.

1585 The Environmental Impact Assessment process has been initiated and the target date for completion of the plant is in 2016. Works to the other parts of the sewage system currently being carried out are: the de-silting and CCTV survey of the main sewer along Rosia Road – this is due for completion in early 2015; the de-silting and CCTV survey of the foul sewer along Main Street from the junction with Bell Lane up to King Street, due for completion in early 2015; and the last phase of the Wellington Front flood alleviation scheme, due for completion also in early next year.

1590 **Hon. J J Netto:** I am grateful, Mr Speaker, for that information, but can I ask the Hon. Minister in relation to the sewage treatment plant, because I did not hear when it is envisaged that works will actually begin. I mean, he has given me the process leading to commencement but not a commencement date or an approximate commencement date.

1595 When he talks about the completion being 2016, are we talking about the beginning, the middle or the end of 2016?

1600 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I do not have an initiation date. The discussions have included tweaking the technology, we are aware of the fact that we use a salt-water system which is not used in many other parts so the technology had to be tweaked and discussions I am told are almost completed and then the EIA has to be completed.

1605 So I would have said that it would be a few months before work actually starts, which would probably make the completion somewhere around the middle of 2016. But as we have seen with other projects, the exact start and finish dates, particularly the finish dates are always a little bit delicate because of things that need to procedurally take place.

Q741/2014
On-line reporting facility –
Update on progress

Clerk: Question 741, the Hon. J J Netto.

1610 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment say if the on-line reporting facility alluded by the Hon. Minister in his budget address is now operational and if so, provide a monthly account of the report submitted, broken down by categories?

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

1615

Minister for Health, the Environment, Energy and Climate Change (Hon. Dr J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, yes the reporting facility is operational. The Environmental Agency and the Government launched the on-line application Gibenviro in mid-November 2013. That is one of two; I will mention the other one in a minute.

1620

The application was advertised in the local media. Posters were also displayed in public buildings, schools and in St Bernard's Hospital and the Environmental Agency also has permanent advertising in three of its vehicles.

I have the information breakdown, unfortunately it was prepared for me as supplementary rather than as a schedule but there are not many so I will go through them and I can give the hon. Member a copy.

1625

Only 11 reports have been submitted through this app: one of feral cats, four of litter accumulation, two of housing defects, one of smells, two related to pest control and one related to smoke and fumes.

In addition, the Department of the Environment is currently working on a separate on-line reporting tool which has not yet been published. This refers to 'FixMyStreet' and the Department is currently working on the procedural documents for each stakeholder involved in FixMyStreet.

1630

Hon. J J Netto: I believe the Hon. Minister alluded to the fact that he is going to make a copy of the information.

Hon. Dr J E Cortes: Yes.

1635

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q742/2014
Revised Environmental Action and Management Plan –
Provision to Parliament

Clerk: Question 742, the Hon. J J Netto.

1640 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment provide Parliament with a copy of the revised Environmental Action and Management Plan earmarked for September/October 2014?

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

1645

Minister for Health, the Environment, Energy and Climate Change (Hon. Dr J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, there were no plans to produce a revised version of the EAMP in September/October this year. The EAMP was updated in January 2013.

1650

There may have been confusion because having researched what I believe I said in Parliament, I am not sure whether it was at the time of my budget speech, was that there was going to be a seminar in September/October, to review where we were on the EAMP and that may have been the confusion, rather than review the document itself.

Because of other exigencies, that seminar did not take place and is now scheduled to take place either at the end of January or the beginning of February. I just offer that by way of explanation, because perhaps the way I said it may have given the impression that it was the document going to be reviewed rather than the implementation of the document.

1655

Hon. J J Netto: So, Mr Speaker, just to be clear there is no intention to revise the existing plan and the existing plan was updated in 2013. Is that correct?

1660 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** What I said was that I did not say that there was an intention to revise it in September/October but to review progress on it. That will now happen early in the New Year. Following that discussion, there may be an update of it but I do not think I committed myself to updating it in September/October but to reviewing it. That is the distinction I am trying to make.

Q743/2014
Gibraltar Waste Management Plan –
Provision to Parliament

1665 **Clerk:** Question 743, the Hon. J J Netto.

Hon. J J Netto: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment provide Parliament with a copy of the Gibraltar Waste Management Plan?

1670 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, the Environment and Energy.

Minister for Health, the Environment, Energy and Climate Change (Hon. Dr J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, the Gibraltar Waste Management Plan is available online. A copy will also be provided electronically to the hon. Member today.

1675 **Mr Speaker:** Next question.

Q744/2014
Municipal Waste Treatment Plant –
Timeline for commencement and completion

Clerk: Question 744, the Hon. J J Netto.

1680 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment provide a timeline for the commencement and completion of the Municipal Waste Treatment Plant?

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

1685 **Minister for Health, the Environment, Energy and Climate Change (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, a precise timeline for the commencement and completion of the Municipal Waste Treatment Plant is not available at present. The plant is currently in the pre-qualifying questionnaire stage of the tender process. Invitations to tender are expected to be sent out to successful applicants shortly – I believe maybe as shortly as tomorrow – and the target date for completion is late 2015.

1690 **Mr Speaker:** Next question.

TRANSPORT, TRAFFIC AND TECHNICAL SERVICES

Q745/2014
Government rental homes –
Unpaid rents written off

Clerk: Question 745, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1695 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, further to Question 521/2014, can the Minister for Housing provide updated details of how much has been written off in respect of unpaid rents pertaining to Government rental homes so far in the financial year 2014-15?

1700 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Transport, Traffic and Technical Services.

Minister for Transport, Traffic and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban): Mr Speaker, no monies have been written off so far in relation to 2014-15.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q746/2014
Government rental homes –
Damage from rainwater ingress

1705

Clerk: Question 746, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1710

Hon. E J Reyes: Can Government provide details of the extent of damage caused to rental homes inclusive of locations as a result of rain water ingress during ongoing refurbishment works, since the answer provided to Question 522/2014?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Transport, Traffic and Technical Services.

1715

Minister for Transport, Traffic and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban): Mr Speaker, during November and up to 15th December 2014, 32 flats have been affected by water ingress.

As in my previous answer, I am advised that the immediate internal surface and window surrounds have been affected and the contractor has already undertaken effective repairs.

1720

The damage caused inclusive of locations is as follows: Moorish Castle Estate, water penetration through the ceiling and there were six flats affected. In Laguna Estate there were seven flats affected by water penetration through the ceiling. At Laguna Estate there were also seven flats affected by water penetration through the windows. In Glacis Estate there were three flats affected through water penetration to the ceiling and a further nine flats were affected by water penetration through the windows.

Q747/2014
Government rental homes –
Reallocation of empty homes

1725

Clerk: Question 747, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1730

Hon. E J Reyes: Can the Minister for Housing provide updated details in respect of all expenditure incurred since the answer to Question 524/2014 in respect of contracts awarded for making empty homes suitable for reallocation, stating to whom payments were made, how much has been paid, the number of residential homes pertaining to each payment, as well as indicating if the services contracted were for either repair works or cleaning services?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Transport, Traffic and Technical Services.

1735

Minister for Transport, Traffic and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban): Mr Speaker, I will now hand the hon. Member a schedule containing the information requested.

And if the hon. Gentleman could please note that all the services contracted were for repairs and none were for cleaning.

Answer to Question 747

Contractors	No. of Properties	Cost
Keyway Construction Ltd	1	£5725.00
A. L. Woodworks	1	£9930.00
Sarah Jane Construction	1	£3500.00
A & K General Builders Ltd	1	£4048.00
J I Construction	1	£9500.00
Ace Plumbing	1	£9290.00
Avanti	1	£5950.00

ALL SERVICES CONTRACTED WERE FOR REPAIRS
NONE WERE FOR CLEANING

Q748/2014
Government rental homes –
Tenants requiring urgent decanting

Clerk: Question 748, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1740

Hon. E J Reyes: Can the Minister for Housing provide details of how many tenants required urgent decanting from their homes since the answer to Question 526/2014, indicating the reason why, the date when said decanting became necessary and the date when the tenants were able to return to their homes?

1745

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Transport, Traffic and Technical Services.

Minister for Transport, Traffic and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban): Mr Speaker, since the answer to Question 526/2014 six persons have required decanting from their homes as follows.

Tenant 1 due to works was decanted on 15th October 2014 and returned home on 12th December 2014.

1750

Tenant 2 as a result of sewage problems, they were decanted on 17th October 2014 and were able to return to their flat on 23rd November 2014.

Tenant 3 as a result of works was decanted on 17th October 2014 and they were able to return home on 30th November 2014.

1755

Tenant 4 as a result of fire was decanted on 30th October 2014 and as yet there is no date set for their return as work is still ongoing on that flat.

Tenant 5 as a result of problems with the roof was decanted on 17th November 2014 and as yet no date has been set for their return.

Finally, tenant 6 was decanted as a result of repairs to the roof on 3rd December 2014 and once again, there is no date set for their return.

1760

Hon. J J Netto: Mr Speaker, thanks for the information.

The question said tenants requiring urgent decanting and obviously it is quite logical that with the sewage, the fire and the roof, it has had to happen, but the Minister on two particular occasions said that there were works. Does he have any further information as to what type of works because it should be urgent, rather than scheduled?

1765

Hon. P J Balban: Mr Speaker, I do not have the specific information but when there are urgent works required and obviously the works cannot be done with the family within, then that is the reason for the decant. Now exactly what the reason was, I do not know. I am aware of on certain occasions that the works could be due to humidity and because the remedial works have required the removal of walls or having to rebuild walls. Even things like rewiring, on occasions there has been a need for rewiring flats and the need to open up trunking has meant that the tenants have had to be decanted. But I do not have the specific information that the gentleman is requesting.

1770

1775

Hon. E J Reyes: Mr Speaker, is the Minister aware in any way of these six urgent decanting in any way connected with the 32 flats affected for which the Minister gave us information in respect of Question 746, where I see some of them related to water penetration through ceilings, windows and so on. Are any of these six somehow or another also included in the 32 for refurbishment works?

1780

Hon. P J Balban: Mr Speaker, once again I am not sure of the reply to the question. I would think that they are different but I would have to find out. I do not think that they are related because the timeframes for return have been quite long and I believe I did reply to the previous question that I think most of the repairs have now been done to the flats that were affected through water ingress.

1785

Hon. J J Netto: I accept, Mr Speaker, that I had not given adequate notice of that upon return to his office, should the Minister find that any of these six do coincide with the 32, would the Minister just kindly provide this information to me as and when he can and we can then move on to the next question?

Hon. P J Balban: Of course, sir.

1790

Q749/2014
Government co-ownership housing projects –
Updated details of allocations

Clerk: Question 749, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1795 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Further to the answer provided to Question 532/2014, can the Minister for Housing provide revised and updated details of how many houses have already been assigned or allocated in respect of Government's new co-ownership housing projects and how many still remain unsold, giving the room size composition in each case?

1800 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Transport, Traffic and Technical Services.

Minister for Transport, Traffic and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban): Mr Speaker, I will now hand the hon. Member a schedule containing the information requested.

Answer to Question 749

Mons Calpe Mews

RKB	ALLOCATED	UNALLOCATED
4 Bed flats	20	Nil
3 Bed flats	156	Nil
2 Bed flats	146	Nil
1 Bed flats	9	Nil

Beach View Terraces

RKB	ALLOCATED	UNALLOCATED
4 Bed flats	39	Nil
3 Bed flats	321	Nil
2 Bed flats	166	Nil
1 Bed flats	24	14

Hon. E J Reyes: Thank you for this schedule, Mr Speaker.

1805 Yes, I note that there has been further allocations and so on. Just so that I can make a note here, can the Minister tell me as up to when is this return in, because, as I have heard from some constituents that they were actually invited to GRP only earlier this week to be offered some of these as at yet unallocated homes? So is this information correct as of yesterday or as of a few days ago? I know the Minister has to collate information but whoever provided him the details should say as at when, what date.

1810 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, I am not sure of the exact date, but the GRP are still going down the pre-lists and in fact GRP have 10 appointments left before Christmas.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q750/2014
Government fleet of vehicles –
Non-polluting engines

1815 **Clerk:** Question 750, the Hon. J J Netto.

1820 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, further to the answer given to Written Question 182/2014, can the Minister for the Environment say if the assessment to the current Government fleet of vehicles has now been completed in order to meet their manifesto commitment to have a fleet of vehicles powered by non-polluting engines and if so, will the Minister provide Parliament with a copy of the report, coupled with the Government's action to fulfil the commitment by the time the next elections are called?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Transport, Traffic and Technical Services.

1825 **Minister for Transport, Traffic and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, the assessment of the Government's fleet of vehicles has now been completed. The internal report is in the process of being considered so as to determine options on how best to meet the manifesto commitment given to have the transport fleet powered insofar as possible by non-polluting engines.

1830 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, will the Hon. Minister allow the Opposition to have a copy of the internal report?

Hon. P J Balban: No, Mr Speaker. We do not publish internal reports.

1835 **Hon. J J Netto:** But you could of course make an exception to the Government policy and thus provide the report to the Opposition. Is that a problem?

1840 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Yes, Mr Speaker, this is a report prepared internally in order to enable the Government to assess how it is going to comply with a manifesto commitment. It is a report he could have commissioned when he was in Government, it is about the same fleet of vehicles. It was not his manifesto commitment to do it so we have a manifesto commitment to deal with the fleet in a particular way and this report is an internal report of the Government so there is no question of it being disclosed to the Opposition.

Q751-753/2014
Tesla vehicle lease –
Costs

1845 **Clerk:** Question 751, the Hon. D A Feetham

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, what is the term of the contract for the lease of the Tesla vehicle to the Government and what is the projected total cost to the Taxpayer of that contract?

1850 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Transport, Traffic and Technical Services.

Minister for Transport, Traffic and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban): Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 752 and 753/2014.

1855 **Clerk:** Question 752, the Hon. D A Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, what is the total amount paid by the Government to Bassadone Motors and/or any other entity in respect of the Tesla vehicle used by the Chief Minister?

1860 **Clerk:** Question 753, the Hon. D A Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: What is the cost to the Taxpayer per month for the Tesla vehicle used by the Chief Minister?

1865 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Transport, Traffic and Technical Services.

1870 **Minister for Transport, Traffic and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, the Government has entered into a financial agreement with IFC (Bassadone Motors Finance Company) whereby IFC will finance the sum of £56,594 which is outstanding after the payment of an initial deposit of €30,000 with an interest only deal of three years at a rate of 6%. This equates to a monthly interest of £282.97 per month. The deal includes an option to buy the vehicle at a price of £56,594 after three years. The monthly cost of running the vehicle is almost zero. It can cost a pound or two to charge it.

1875 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, can the Hon. Minister say whether there has been any need to conduct any maintenance or servicing on the vehicle since it was acquired?

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, I am happy to help, given that it is the vehicle that I am driven in.

1880 The vehicle is updated and serviced almost daily. It is connected by a 3G chip to the Tesla factory in California and software updates and servicing is carried out in that way which is really quite an incredible thing to see. It usually happens overnight whilst the vehicle is charging.

Other than that, there has been no need for any major overhaul of the vehicle. There may be a need to repair a small part of the door, which has not been working exactly as it should in the past week or so, but other than that, it has given a magnificent result.

1885 **Hon. S M Figueras:** And in terms of tyres and other moving parts on the vehicle, they clearly cannot be updated remotely. Is the Chief Minister aware of... well, actually could the Chief Minister say whether it is in fact Bassadone who will be conducting servicing as and when it is required in due course in terms of the motors themselves and whatever may need servicing in that respect?

1890 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Bassadone is through Tesla, Tesla the suppliers. The maintenance of the vehicle is done by Tesla itself through Bassadone in the same way as some other high-end marks do their servicing through agents. Tyres, etc I do not think are particular to the vehicle, I think it just carries Pirelli P1s or something like that, so those are available generally and the weight of the vehicle is such that it does not need changing of the tyres very often – unless I am in it, it is actually quite light. *(Laughter)*

1895 **Hon. S M Figueras:** I would warrant it might be a good idea never to give me a lift. *(Laughter)* Mr Speaker.

Hon. D J Bossino: I am alright Yes. Santa is fine.

1900 Mr Speaker, in relation to the arrangement with IFC. Is it the Government's intention to acquire the vehicle at the end of the term?

1905 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, there is nothing to suggest to the Government at the moment that we should not. Hon. Members need to understand that the reason why this vehicle was not bought outright is that this was a new technology, a very tried and tested technology, by the time that we were acquiring it the vehicle was being marketed generally, but in order to ensure that we did not end up with what might have been a dead duck – and the hon. Member is a follower of Jeremy Clarkson who is not a fan of the vehicle and there are one or two reviews that suggest that it might not be as good as the American market reports suggested, that there might be an opportunity not to have to acquire it.

1910 But every indication at the moment is that the vehicle is working exactly as it needs to for the purposes of the needs of the Chief Minister of Gibraltar and therefore the present intention is to proceed with the acquisition.

1915 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Or indeed, Mr Speaker, as the Norwegian market would suggest because it is if not the most popular, one of the most popular vehicles there.

That notwithstanding then, Mr Speaker, is it then the case that IFC was effectively the entity taking the punt on the vehicle when it was originally acquired by the Government?

1920 **Hon. Chief Minister:** That is exactly right, Mr Speaker, so in the event that the Government were not to proceed, then IFC/Bassadone but it would be IFC would then take the vehicle back at the end of the three-year period and they would be the ones who would market it.

I for one would certainly have been one ready to buy it at that stage, one Tesla vehicle, black in colour, slightly used, taken care of, much weight put on the right back seat, but other than that it is in excellent working order.

1925 **Mr Speaker:** Next question.

EDUCATION, JUSTICE AND INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

Q754-760/2014

**Students in full-time education –
Details of Years 10 to 13**

Clerk: Question 754, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1930 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Education provide details of how many students who were undergoing full-time education and enrolled in Year 10 at the start of the academic year 2013-14, have left full-time education before the commencement of the 2014-15 academic year, providing a breakdown by educational establishment, date – that is, month – of termination and age of student at the time, together with reasons for leaving if known?

1935

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Education and Justice.

Minister for Education and Justice & International Exchange of Information (Hon. G H Licudi): Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 755 to 760/2014?

1940

Clerk: Question 755, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1945 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can the Minister for Education provide details of how many Year 11 students left full-time education during the academic year 2013-14, before sitting GCSE examinations, providing a breakdown by educational establishment, age of student, date of termination and reasons for leaving if known?

Clerk: Question 756, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1950 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can the Minister for Education provide details of how many students have ceased full-time education in either Years 10 or 11 or equivalent, since the start of the 2014-15 academic year, providing a breakdown by school year, educational establishment and reasons for termination if known?

Clerk: Question 757, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1955

Hon. E J Reyes: Can the Minister for Education provide updated details in respect of any changes there may have been in respect of students currently enrolled for post-GCSE education in Years 12 and 13 or there equivalent, when compared to those enrolled at the start of the current academic year, together with reasons for termination if known?

1960

Clerk: Question 758, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1965 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can the Minister for Education provide details in respect of the number of students broken down by gender who are repeating subjects pertaining to GCSE examinations which they sat for during the academic year 2013-14, indicating at which educational establishment they are currently receiving revision tuition?

Clerk: Question 759 the Hon. E J Reyes.

1970 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can the Minister for Education provide details in respect of the number of pupils who sat Advanced Level and GCSE examinations or equivalent, broken down by gender and educational establishment where they received full-time education as at the end of academic year 2013-14?

Clerk: Question 760, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1975

Hon. E J Reyes: Can the Minister for Education provide details of how many students are presently enrolled for post-GCSE education in Years 12 and 13 or equivalent, for the academic year 2014-2015 broken down by gender and educational establishment?

1980

Clerk: Answer the Hon. the Minister for Education and Justice.

Minister for Education and Justice & International Exchange of Information (Hon. G H Licudi): Mr Speaker, the information requested is set out in the schedule which I now hand to the hon. Member.

Schedule to Question 760 of 2014

Answer to Question 754 of 2014

School	Year 10	Age	Date	Reason
Bayside	9	15	4/4/14	Employment
		16	30/6/14	Employment
		15	10/7/14	Employment
		16	9/4/14	Employment
		15	17/6/14	Employment
		16	6/7/14	Undecided
		16	5/11/13	Employment
		15	20/5/14	Employment
		15	20/12/13	Overseas school
		Westside	11	15
16	9/1/14			Not known
15	9/1/14			Not known
15	27/12/13			Overseas school
16	24/2/14			Overseas school
16	9/5/14			Undecided
15	27/9/13			Overseas school
15	27/9/13			Overseas school
15	20/9/13			Overseas school
17	2/9/13			Undecided
16	9/1/14			Overseas school

Answer to Question 755 of 2014

School	Year 11	Age	Date	Reason
Bayside	4	16	4/9/13	Employment
		16	20/9/13	Training Centre
		16	4/10/13	Employment
		17	16/9/13	Employment
Westside	5	17	9/9/13	Undecided
		17	9/9/13	Undecided
		16	31/1/14	Employment
		17	2/9/13	Undecided
		17	2/9/13	Undecided

Answer to Question 756 of 2014

School	Year 10	Year 11
Bayside	1*	2~
Westside	7+	11^

* Student left for UK

~ Both left for employment

Cont'd Schedule to Q760/2014

- + 5 Overseas school / 2 Not known
- ^ 2 Overseas
 - 1 Employment
 - 3 They are undecided
 - 5 Not known

Answer to Question 757 of 2014

School	September 2014		December 2014	
	Year 12	Year 13	Year 12	Year 13
Bayside	130 boys	102 boys	125 boys	97 boys
Westside	168 girls	107 girls	170 girls	106 girls
College	42 girls 36 boys	31 girls 30 boys	38 girls 31 boys	30 girls 29 boys

- Losses all left for employment
- + 2 gain "new enrolments"

Answer to Question 758 of 2014

School	GCSE (R)
Bayside	34 boys
Westside	17 girls

Answer to Question 759 of 2014

School	GCSE	AS	A2
Bayside	217 boys	121 boys	96 boys
Westside	204 girls	111 girls	97 girls
College	47 boys 65 girls	52 boys 28 girls	21 boys 23 girls

Answer to Question 760 of 2014

School	Year 12	Year 13
Bayside	125 boys	97 boys
Westside	170 girls	106 girls
College	38 girls 31 boys	30 girls 29 boys

1990 **Mr Speaker:** It is a fairly lengthy schedule, I suggest that I give an opportunity to the hon. Member to study it and while he is doing so, perhaps we can proceed with the question to the Hon. the Deputy Chief Minister which is Question 773, the Hon. D J Bossino.

DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

Q773/2014
Single Sky initiative –
Next steps

1995 **Clerk:** Question 773, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Can the Minister for Aviation state what steps are envisaged next in relation to the Single Sky initiative?

2000 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Deputy Chief Minister.

2005 **Deputy Chief Minister (Hon. Dr J J Garcia):** Yes, Mr Speaker. The Government has been assured that the dossier on SES2+ will not proceed to the next stage, which is discussion with the European Parliament, until the question of the applicability to Gibraltar has been resolved. The matter therefore remains with the European Council.

2010 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes, I am grateful for the reply, Mr Speaker, but is there any further information he can share with this House as to what the expected timetable is. He says that the matter is now with the European Council. As I understand it, basically we are in the *status quo* as we were previously, which is that the air liberalisation measures post the Cordoba Accord will apply to Gibraltar and that the new initiative, in respect of which Spain wanted to exclude Gibraltar, is not going to be proceeding.

But can he provide any indication as to what you know, in terms of what I said before, in terms of what timetable, what the European Council's next steps are likely to be?

2015 **Hon. Dr J J Garcia:** Mr Speaker, this very much depends on whether the Italian Presidency wants to push this or not. At the moment the position of the UK is that the inclusion of Gibraltar is a red line. This could go to a qualified majority vote, in which case anything could happen and it would be up to the UK to try and convince the other member states to support them and support us on this particular issue.

2020 The UK assures us that the Italian Presidency will not proceed with the matter until it has been resolved. The Council has not taken a position on the Gibraltar issue which is why the text was inserted in brackets. So really it is a question of waiting to see what the Presidency chooses to do.

2025 As I said, the next stage, once the Council approves the text in its entirety, including the Gibraltar clause, then it is to have negotiations between the Council and the Parliament. That is the next stage. That is the stage that we are not proceeding – we are told that will not be proceeded to until the Gibraltar question has been cleared up in the Council itself. But it is a matter for qualified majority voting.

2030 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Given that it is a qualified majority vote, the Hon. the Chief Minister will no doubt recognise that therein in many respects, lies a danger, would he not agree with me? Because although the UK has taken a very robust position in relation to this, something which the Opposition obviously supports, it is within the realms of possibilities that they could be out-voted. Is that analysis, which I am making sort of on my feet now as a result of the answer that he has just given, correct?

2035 **Hon. Dr J J Garcia:** Yes, Mr Speaker. That is an option. It is an option that you could go to a vote and the UK could be out voted. It is an option that we are told is not likely to happen because the Italian Presidency has now stood back on the issue. The Foreign Secretary we know called up his Italian counterpart to make the point soon afterwards, so really it is a question of waiting to see what it is that the Presidency chooses to do. Certainly the UK has made the position clear to them and we now need to wait and see what the next step will be.

2040 What we are told is that they will not proceed on to that next step which is discussion with the Parliament, until this matter has been resolved. What the UK has told us and has said publicly very clearly, is that if Gibraltar happens to be excluded from it, that legal action is an option they would consider.

2045 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Yes, in relation to that, just looking at exactly how robust the position the United Kingdom is in relation to this, have you been able to discuss with the United Kingdom a plan B? In other words, if there is a vote and it goes against Gibraltar, has the United Kingdom Government said to the Gibraltar Government, 'Look, in those circumstances we feel so strongly about this, that we will then take legal proceedings in the European Court of Justice in order to defend Gibraltar's position and challenge Gibraltar's exclusion'?

2050 **Hon. Dr J J Garcia:** Yes, Mr Speaker, in the public statements that the UK has made, I think it was the UK Minister for Transport who was present in the Council meeting and in other public statements that have been made legal action has not been ruled out as an option. So what they are saying is if this happens, and if Gibraltar is excluded, then the UK is contemplating taking the issue to court.

2055 **Hon. D A Feetham:** I understand that there is a nuance, there is an important distinction, simply because you do not rule something out, you are not effectively ruling it in either. How confident is the Government that the United Kingdom, if we do get to the stage where it is out-voted by a qualified majority, that it really will stick to its guns and it will take legal proceedings, because effectively that is the only way in which at that stage, you can challenge Gibraltar's exclusion?

2060 **Hon. Dr J J Garcia:** Mr Speaker, the hon. Member is asking me to express an opinion on something which has not happened. Obviously I understand where he is coming from but certainly the indications that we have had throughout on aviation issues – not just in this particular one, it is the first one that has come up; there are more in the pipeline – are that for the UK this is a red line issue. We saw it from the Minister for Transport the other day in the Council and we have seen it also from the Minister for Europe and others.

2065 So for the UK this is a fundamental red line issue and they are certainly prepared to contemplate every option that is open to them.

2070 **Hon. D A Feetham:** And bearing in mind that there is an election in the United Kingdom in May of next year and that that could lead to a change in Government, is this something that has also been discussed with the Labour Opposition in the United Kingdom to ascertain what its position is going to be in relation to this, which is obviously very important to Gibraltar?

2075 **Hon. Dr J J Garcia:** In the contacts we have had with members of different parties in the UK and indeed in the Foreign Affairs Committee Reports published recently, I think we are confident that this is a cross-party issue.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q774/2014
East Side project –
Projects under consideration

2080 **Clerk:** Question 774, the Hon. D J Bossino.

2085 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Deputy Chief Minister state how many projects are still being considered for the East Side project, with details of the entities which remain to be considered as well as the nature of each of those projects?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Deputy Chief Minister.

2090 **Deputy Chief Minister (Hon. Dr J J Garcia):** Mr Speaker, the answer was set out in a press release dated 3rd December 2014.

Hon. D J Bossino: Mr Speaker, the answer I suppose to the extent of the numbers of projects which are still being considered, I think if memory serves, but of course there could have been a change since the press release was issued, was six. Now, obviously by the answers given, I must take it that it remains the same.

2095 But can he give me details of the other information which I am seeking in the question, for example the names of the entities which remain to be considered; and if he cannot give me those, then at least the nature of the projects? I do not think that was set out in the press release.

2100 **Hon. Dr J J Garcia:** Mr Speaker, the Government announced that we were dealing with 17 entities that expressed an interest in the East Side project. There are now six left. Those six will come in January to give presentations to the Government, in more detailed presentations, as to what it is that they propose. Some of them are for the whole plot, some of them are for only parts of the plot and when we announced or advertised for expressions of interest, that closed in August. In the advert we explained what it was we were

2105 looking at which was a marina, leisure activity, hotels, commercial and residential, both high end and affordable. So really that mix is with different entities that were put forward to the Government.

Hon. D J Bossino: I am grateful, Mr Speaker.

Is he able to give me details of the entities which remain? I do not think he has answered that formally.

2110 **Hon. Dr J J Garcia:** Mr Speaker, the Government would treat that information as being confidential at this stage, given the nature of the process.

2115 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, am I right in saying that the Government's preferred way ahead in relation to this is to have one bid for the entire site, rather than have a situation where you are selling off parts of the plot to different people, which will then create a situation where perhaps the whole scheme will not be harmonious in relation to one part in relation to the other?

2120 **Hon. Dr J J Garcia:** Mr Speaker, at the moment the Government is open to both options. If you remember the West Side reclamation, the plots were sold to different developers for different land uses and it worked quite well. So really we are open to both at this stage, either to parcelling out the plots or to selling the whole plot for development.

2125 **Hon. D A Feetham:** In relation to those bidders that have bid in relation to just simply part of the plot, a part of it, are those in relation to housing or are they in relation to a marina? Can he give me some information in relation to that?

I assume that it is probably going to be housing, either affordable or luxury housing, probably the latter. But if he can provide me with some information?

2130 **Hon. Dr J J Garcia:** Mr Speaker, the hon. Member will forgive me for not elaborating at this stage, because if I divulge the nature of the information, I might prejudice the discussions with the different entities.

EDUCATION, JUSTICE AND INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

Q754-760/2014 continued – Students in full-time education – Supplementary questions

Mr Speaker: The Hon. Mr Reyes.

2135 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Yes, I rise... I must record my gratitude to the Minister for Education for the comprehensive breakdown of details, it is quite complete.

2140 May I just for clarification purposes, Mr Speaker, in respect of Question No. 758, I was asking for an indication of which educational establishments any students could be receiving revision tuition in respect of any GCSE exams they had to repeat, those exams that they took at the end of the last academic year. I have figures for Bayside and Westside, there is nothing reported there in respect of the College. Am I right then in assuming in coming to the conclusion that the College does not offer any revision tuition at all to any student they have enrolled in their books to allow them to repeat any subject that they failed at last year's GCSE exams?

2145 **Minister for Education and Justice & International Exchange of Information (Hon. G H Licudi):** Yes, Mr Speaker, as I understand it, the repeat programmes are conducted by both Bayside and Westside. Hon. Members will recall that when we came into Government, there was a programme conducted by Westside but not by Bayside, and it was suggested that that was unfair. We changed that and we made it clear that Bayside itself should offer a programme, so for boys there is a programme at Bayside and for girls there is a programme at Westside. It can combine possibly with other programmes in the College, but anybody who wants to do the repeat programme for GCSEs, if it is a boy they will do it at Bayside, and if it is a girl they will do it in Westside.

2155 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, Mr Speaker, if I recall correctly, I even praised the Minister for having brought into effect that Bayside also offered a repeat course and so on. Yes, but the way this answer has been

questioned, it refers that there are 34 boys enrolled in a repeat programme at Bayside and 17 girls in a repeat programme at Westside. But my question does go a bit beyond that; my question does not say how many are enrolled in that repeat year. My question says, ‘provide details in respect of the number of students broken down by gender who are repeating subjects’.

2160 Therefore there could be a student who is undergoing three or maybe even four AS-Levels but yet the school – I know it happened in my days – is able to provide... for example, someone wishing to enter teacher training, Mr Speaker, might be interested to know it is now compulsory that you hold GCSE passes Grades A to C in English, Spanish and also a Science subject.

2165 So you could have a very able student, a very good linguist for example, but yet mathematics is not his forte. Therefore the school, College, Bayside or Westside, could actually offer that student the opportunity, otherwise the student loses out and could end up with three or four A stars at A-Level and yet is missing GCSE mathematics and is unable to follow a teacher training programme.

2170 So perhaps I have now been able to explain the wider scope for my question. I was not just seeking information on the repeat year.

Hon. G H Licudi: Mr Speaker, I understand what the hon. Member is saying. This has clearly been interpreted as meaning the repeat programme which is available in Bayside and Westside. I do not know whether there are any other students, other than those engaged in the repeat programmes who are actually repeating any subjects at all, but I will find out the information and let the hon. Member know.

Hon. E J Reyes: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

2180 Just to help complete my whole picture, may I on a happy note say here Mr Speaker, looking at... because it has come through a schedule I know viewers and listeners through the media may not have been able to grasp some of the details.

Mr Speaker, the girls seem to be doing far better than the boys, because there is a greater number of them proceeding onto post- GCSE education, so that could be a reflection in the future that perhaps instead of only having two female Members of this House of Parliament, we will have far greater female (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) (*Banging on desk*) representation in this House if the trends of the good work carried out by the educationalists continue.

A Member: Hear, hear.

Procedural

Mr Speaker: The House will now recess until 3.00 p.m. this afternoon.

2190 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, there is only one question for three o’clock. Is it not possible to take this question today?

Mr Speaker: There are two Bills as well.

2195 **Hon. D A Feetham:** But can we not do the Bills...? Mr Speaker, if the issue is going to be one question at three o’clock, I am prepared to withdraw the question and ask it again in January. We can do the two Bills which are quite short *now*, can’t we? They are Bills that are likely to be supported by the Opposition.

2200 **Deputy Chief Minister (Hon. Dr J J Garcia):** Mr Speaker, the Leader of the House wanted to take his questions at three o’clock and also the Bills at three o’clock on the basis that there was a question on the Order Paper.

If there is not going to be a question on the Order Paper, we could take the Bills now because my colleague Mr Licudi is responsible for those two Bills.

2205 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, to come back at three o’clock for one question, I will withdraw the question and if necessary ask it again in January. I do not think it really makes sense for us to come back –

2210 **Mr Speaker:** I can understand the point that the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition is making. My own personal preference would be to stay on and conclude the business of the House. But it could well be that the Chief Minister, who I understand is not within the precincts of Parliament at the moment, may have something that he might wish to add this afternoon.

2215 If we conclude our business now before lunch, we are effectively precluding the Chief Minister from taking part in the rest of the business of the House. I would not... I think in his absence it might not be the right thing to do. Let me put it that way.

Hon. Dr J J Garcia: Mr Speaker, may I suggest a five-minute recess?

2220 **Mr Speaker:** We will recess for five minutes.

The House recessed at 12.25 p.m. and resumed its sitting at 12.31 p.m.

Procedural

Mr Speaker: I am informed that the Leader of the House would wish the House to recess until this afternoon at three o'clock as he really would like to be here before the House is adjourned *sine die*.

So the House will recess until three o'clock this afternoon.

2225

The House recessed at 12.37 p.m. and resumed its sitting at 3.00 p.m.