



PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

MORNING SESSION: 9.33 a.m. – 1.13 p.m.

Gibraltar, Wednesday, 6th July 2016

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The Gibraltar Parliament

The Parliament met at 9.33 a.m.

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

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

Order of the Day

Appropriation Bill 2016 – For Second Reading – Debate continued

Mr Speaker: The Hon. Dr John Cortes.

Minister for Health, the Environment, Energy and Climate Change (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):

5 Mr Speaker, in a speech I delivered last week at our University of Gibraltar, at the opening of an international conference on promoting sustainable development in further education, I said that the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union was the greatest threat to sustainability the world has seen in decades. Whereas, rightly, much of the emphasis on the impact of the UK's exit has been placed on economic considerations, potentially the greatest
10 long-term impact will be on the environment and on sustainable development.

Without a doubt, over the past 30 years the European Union, as a collection of largely progressive and environmentally aware states, has in its collective environmental decision-making been greater than the sum of its individual parts. Environmental policy and governance have been driven by the EU, not just in Europe but globally, and member states and countries
15 outside Europe have taken steps in responsible stewardship of our planet that in many cases would not have happened if the EU had not existed. This is the case with both the UK and with Gibraltar.

The developed world today sees the economy as the main driver of well-being, and well-being is the very purpose of my task as Minister for both Health and the Environment. This may
20 well be the case on a stable planet where monetary riches or industrial prowess can directly benefit the lives of many, but on a planet in the throes of climate change unprecedented since modern civilisation began this is far from the truth.

The last year has seen a great deal in the media covering the exodus of thousands from Africa and the Middle East, fleeing from war and social collapse. This will be dwarfed many times by
25 the attempts of millions, particularly from Africa, who will need to flee as drought and famine, caused by man-induced climate change, ravage their ancestral homes. Recent estimates put the price of battling climate change in Africa in order to prevent this at £2.7 trillion. The knowledge that 'the West', as it struggles with its own, in proportion, petty arguments about party leaderships and dubious presidential candidates, and as it buries itself in latter-day xenophobia,
30 that 'the West' will do little to assist, gives me no comfort.

Mr Speaker, it is climate change, and neither the economy as a whole nor Brexit in particular, that should make us lose sleep at night. But, Mr Speaker, there is hope. Only last week, scientists

reported a decrease in the size of the ozone hole of 40 million square kilometres, thanks to the work a decade or so ago to ban ozone-depleting chemicals. In the natural world, the control of catches of Atlantic Blue-fin tuna has resulted in a great recovery. And while neither have to do directly with climate change, my conclusion is that every little thing we can do to combat climate change must be given the utmost priority, by us in this House, and by every citizen in their homes.

And so, while I will cover a great deal in this, my fifth Budget speech, my message will be that there is a great deal more to do. When I took the reins of Environment as Minister at the end of 2011, there had been absolutely no direction in the Government, nor appetite in this regard. Gibraltar had decades to make up, and it has been that catching up that has left me pleased with the progress but frustrated still. We took the quantum leap; we must now consolidate and stride on. And so I will now need to push the environmental agenda ever more strongly, both in the public and the private sectors. Both have been increasingly responding to the environmental challenge. And the youth particularly, as we have seen by the success of environmental projects in the Young Enterprise Scheme, is with me.

Mr Speaker, if in the past I have been enthusiastic and passionate about the environment, I will now be ruthless too. In this context I think that it is important for me to state that, regardless of how things pan out, the Government has no intention of diluting environmental standards and will continue to apply in Gibraltar such laws that the EU may make. Moreover, if we do depart from European targets, I will do my utmost to ensure that the departure is in that we will achieve better standards, not worse.

Let me now dwell on the positive. Indeed, as I was working this, my first Budget speech in our second term of office, I reflected on the unprecedented achievements in environmental governance and sustainability. We have taken Gibraltar from the environmental dark ages and placed it firmly in the modern day in that international arena. The level of environmental dynamism and delivery has yet again ranked Gibraltar as the environmental leader among the UK Overseas Territories and many of the small island states.

Mr Speaker, we are making use of our ability to make the socioeconomic system more harmonious with the environment. The environmental policies which we have implemented have encouraged and promoted environmentally friendly products, services, business and technologies. One of the many examples which spring to mind is the steady increase in hybrid vehicles being used in Gibraltar. We led by example five years ago when there were almost no hybrids locally, and now not a day goes by when we do not spot these cars moving efficiently around Gibraltar. The sale of these vehicles is increasing as a result of the market incentives and leadership provided by this administration. This is the vision which this Government set out to deliver four years ago, a vision of environmental action and commitment, endorsed by each Minister within his or her respective area of responsibility. Our new schools and housing refurbishments are energy efficient and allow for the introduction of renewables, we are delivering eco-tourism by investing in the nature reserve, and we are actively looking at inward environmental investments.

These last four years have seen the Department of the Environment and Climate Change network regionally and internationally. We have proudly flown the flag of environmental governance and leadership, leaving our mark in the international arena. The attendance of our Chief Scientist in Cop21 in Paris, the climate change summit, is an example of this, and I am happy to say we will be announcing further developments shortly, again showing how our scientific delegation works at different levels with our international colleagues to deliver meaningful global environmental change. We may be small, but our environmental influence greatly outweighs our geographical size.

Mr Speaker, last year we hosted an international conference on sustainable partnerships, organised jointly with the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum. Its focus was on the UKOTs, Crown Dependencies and other small island states. The conference provided a forum for government environmental bodies, NGOs and commercial organisations to discuss key

85 conservation issues, highlight success stories, exchange ideas and, most importantly, forge
partnerships. One of the most important achievements of this conference was the creation of an
Environmental Ministers Council. It is our intention to meet again this year as guests of the
Government of Montserrat and continue our work to push our environmental mandate
internationally.

90 Moving on to our work at home, Mr Speaker, my team at the Department continue to work
in close collaboration with many departments across the public sector, including Education, Port,
Procurement, Technical Services, Tourist Board, GEA, Maritime Authority, RGP and Customs.
They are continuously involved in discussions and decision-making at all levels of Government,
working not only for my Ministry but for all other Ministers who call upon their input and advice
95 on a regular basis. Increasingly too, they continue to engage with the private sector.

The Green filter continues to work well and now constitutes normal practice within the civil
service. By way of example, departmental scientists have attended 15 tender boards and
reviewed 592 building applications in addition to attending all DPC meetings. Four EIAs have
been reviewed. The Environmental Action and Management Plan and the Climate Change
100 Programme are in the final stages of review and will be published before the end of this calendar
year.

Mr Speaker, once again, recycling figures have seen an increase from those reported last
year, with an increase of approximately 15.5% in mixed packaging waste and an increase of
18.6% on cardboard and paper. The biggest achievement, and thanks go to the general public –
105 clearly it is their contribution which is allowing us to fulfil our role in improving recycling
practices. Waste electrical and electronic equipment recycling figures also continue to increase
with a further 51.4% increase during 2016 compared to 2015.

Mr Speaker, I am happy to report that Gibraltar's first dedicated eco-park, a 2011 manifesto
commitment, is now open 365 days a year and has helped to boost our overall recycling rates by
110 25.23%. Greater volumes can now be transported in fewer trips due to the acquiring of a baler
and compactor, thereby reducing costs as well as our carbon footprint.

I can confirm that the Government remains committed to both a waste treatment plant and a
sewage treatment plant during this term of office.

Mr Speaker, since the appointment of our dedicated litter wardens, the number of instances
115 of fly tipping is reducing. These officers patrol Gibraltar daily, creating awareness and educating
and deterring people from irresponsible tipping. They have placed a total of 42 litter tickets in
just seven months. We still seeing certain problem areas where we will be increasing our efforts.
Works continue on refuse cubicles around Gibraltar and two new bin stores will be constructed
this year.

120 Meetings of the Litter Committee continue and we have progressed well on various fronts. I
once again take this opportunity to thank all the members of the committee for their hard work
and dedication, especially those volunteers from community groups and tenants' associations.

Collaboration with NGOs continues. Regular meetings take place between Government
officials, myself and the GONHS and the ESG, both of which continue to make a tremendous
125 contribution to Gibraltar, largely on a voluntary basis. The Nature Conservancy Council continues
to be consulted on all issues associated with the protection of Gibraltar's natural environment in
line with my statutory obligations. I have formally met approximately four times with each of
these in the past 12 months, and there is a great deal of informal contact too on a much more
regular basis.

130 Mr Speaker, this past year has again seen the Department spearhead environmental
education, which involves visits to all schools to raise awareness on key issues. The Department
has delivered a total of 34 talks and many field trips this year. In other work co-ordinated
between Environment and Education, small recycling bins have been delivered to infant schools.

The Department also participated in the World Maritime Day celebrations, organised by the
135 Gibraltar Port Authority last September. This was an opportunity to showcase the underwater
camera and our marine surveillance work.

140 The Government's Geoportal continues to be used both locally and internationally. The interactive map of Gibraltar continues to be updated, providing more specific Gibraltar spatial data than at any other time. To date more than 17,000 hits from 145 countries have been registered at the Geoportal.

Furthermore, the Department for the Environment continues to spearhead the use of GIS. GIS is not only used in relation to the Geoportal and the Government's international reporting obligations, but also in conjunction with leading terrestrial and marine ecological assessments, which support key legislative conservation tools.

145 Both the Gibraltar Electricity Authority and the Department of the Environment and Climate Change continue to work hard to deliver improvements in the field of energy. The recent appointment of a dedicated renewable energy officer is a testament to this. This year will see the delivery of a flagship solar project for the Government. Solar thermal and PV panels will be installed at St Bernard's Hospital, which will deliver large savings in water heating and will place
150 us on a par with many hospitals across Europe.

And the commitment is starting to deliver results, as demonstrated by the launch of the Eco Wave Power project in May. This project, which attracted huge international interest, demonstrates Gibraltar's pioneering attitude in the field of renewable energy. It is the first grid-connected wave energy power plant anywhere in Europe and while in the initial stages energy
155 production is still small, when the full project is completed it will deliver a significant percentage of Gibraltar's electricity needs.

Our interest in marine renewables also extends to marine current energy, and last autumn officials from the Department accompanied representatives of Blue Shark Power during their marine current survey. We remain committed to exploring opportunities with this and other
160 technology providers to find long-term sustainable solutions to Gibraltar's energy needs.

Gibraltar took a significant step in October when we committed to the Compact of Mayors, a global coalition of city leaders dedicated to reducing their greenhouse gas emissions, making their communities more resilient to climate change and regularly reporting their progress publicly. The Department will be making use of the tools and resources provided by the UN
165 through the Compact to deliver more accurate emissions assessments and to refine its Climate Change Programme, due to be published shortly.

In other areas, the Department organised Energy Auditor Training towards the end of 2015, providing an opportunity for individuals to become Accredited Energy Auditors. These audits form part of Government's wider initiative to increase energy efficiency and reduce energy
170 consumption. Energy efficiency has been deemed the most effective way of cutting carbon emissions and tackling climate change. The Government will shortly be introducing legislation which mirrors the UK Energy Savings Opportunity Scheme, requiring large organisations to conduct energy audits every four years.

In relation to the Energy Performance of Buildings, the minimum standards for energy performance for new and existing buildings are being tightened and these will be introduced
175 with the launch of the latest version of the Gibraltar Simplified Building Energy Model. In the last financial year, approximately 240 energy performance certificates have been issued.

Mr Speaker, the Department will shortly be inviting companies to apply for inclusion in an environmentally friendly companies register. This will result in the company being assessed on
180 its environmental policies and performance, and given an environmental rating to allow proper assessment of a company's credentials not just in relation to employment policies, as in the approved contractors' list, but to environmental impact too.

The Department's monitoring and surveillance programmes, which consist of sampling and monitoring of Gibraltar's coastal waters, groundwater aquifers and bathing waters, continue to
185 operate smoothly. The Department also continues to collect and monitor marine sediment, phytoplankton, fish and bivalve tissue samples. In addition, it will be commencing a marine litter monitoring programme as part of its obligations under the Marine Strategy.

190 In late 2015, the Department issued its second River Basin Management Plan, a centrepiece of the Water Framework legislation which classifies our water bodies. With the use of sampling and monitoring data, the classification exercise concluded that both Gibraltar's coastal waters and groundwater aquifers are meeting the objectives set out in the Water Framework legislation.

195 Regarding our beaches, with the exception of Western Beach, which as we know is a transboundary issue, water quality has improved in most of our beaches, two of which are now classed as excellent under the new EU classifications.

200 Mr Speaker, there are those within this Chamber who insist on concentrating on the negative and who pretend to believe that the fact that we still have illegal fishing by Spanish boats in BGTW is proof of the demise of our seas. Apart from the fact that such visits are dropping regularly in numbers and significance, these unfortunate, unwelcome and unacceptable intrusions are far outweighed by the huge positive steps taken in marine conservation over the past four years.

Mr Speaker, the Department continues making steady progress with its marine ecosystem restoration programme.

205 We have been working in close collaboration with the University of Algarve's Centre for Marine Sciences for well over a year. Mature seagrasses have been transplanted from sites in Portugal and the team is now gearing up to plant seedlings later on this year.

The oyster reintroduction programme began in May with approximately 125 kg of mature oysters strategically placed within different areas of the Gibraltar Marine Reserve.

210 Mr Speaker, the Department also installed an underwater camera last spring providing live footage to the general public, which is also being used as a research tool used by scientists. This installation is the first of its kind in Europe.

215 This Government's incessant desire to pioneer marine initiatives in British Gibraltar Territorial Waters also gave rise to the creation of no fishing and no anchoring zones such as that found in Seven Sisters, which is demarcated with specially designed buoys to conserve this important area of reef habitat.

The Department's Environmental Protection & Research Unit, working together with the scientific staff, has been collecting data on marine strandings and sightings involving dolphins and turtles.

220 The Department has noted an increase in sightings of marine mega-fauna, specifically whales such as fin whales, sperm whales and humpback whales. A first for Gibraltar has been the presence of a juvenile humpback in BGTW during the months of March and April. As of late there have already been 14 sightings of fin whales which have navigated through our waters on their route towards the Atlantic. Three basking shark sightings have also been recorded this year. All these give an indication of the improving quality and richness of our waters.

225 The Department is also rolling out a volunteer marine monitoring programme, which will assist in monitoring the ecological status of our waters and at the same time educate and create public awareness.

230 Mr Speaker, fisheries management is an issue that this Government has had the courage to regulate despite the challenges confronting us. Over a year after the implementation of the Marine Protection Regulations and the Tuna Preservation Regulations, I can report that over 7,000 licences have now been issued. This is a significant achievement that many thought would not be possible.

235 The creation of the Fishing Working Group has been critical to the successful implementation of both Regulations. To date, the group has met on eight occasions with representatives from all the different angling fraternities, as well as other stakeholders, actively participating in discussions regarding the sustainable management of marine resources in BGTW. The extension of the Seven Sisters no fishing zone and the creation of the new marine conservation zone inside the Gibraltar Harbour are just some of the outcomes that have been achieved as a result of the close working relationship that I have established with the group. I want to thank all its

240 members, who give of their time for free, for their work in this vitally important role. The revision of minimum fish sizes, the delivery of marine conservation awareness and the collection of valuable marine resources data are all areas that are being tackled in consultation with the group.

245 Mr Speaker, we have now commenced the regulation of Gibraltar's second Bluefin tuna fishing season. Last year's season was managed exceptionally well with officials from the Department and the landing point staff monitoring and recording catch data all the way through until October. I would like take this opportunity to thank local anglers for their co-operation and continued support in ensuring the successful implementation of these regulations. This year, building on the experiences gained during our first season, we have improved the facilities
250 available at the North Mole landing point and revised the procedure for reporting tuna catches. In addition, we have also reviewed the protocols for the Bluefin tuna tagging programme to ensure a higher level of protection for the species.

Mr Speaker, in the field of environmental health, the Environmental Agency continues to work on many fronts and expand its duties in the areas of building control, waste regulation,
255 food inspections and food import controls. In addition to the developments mentioned last year, the Agency has continued to provide the new Ship Sanitation Certificate service, which includes a service to superyachts. The Agency is the main point of contact locally for the UK's Health and Safety Executive and works with them on major projects such as the new power station and LNG plant, as well as any COMAH issues.

260 They service and calibrate all of our air quality monitoring stations and liaise with pollution specialists and form part of the European Network of Drinking Water Regulators (ENWARE).

Additionally, they are now a participant in the EU Vectornet programme. This programme is based on sharing data relative to the distribution of the mosquito, tick, sand fly and other disease vectors. This data sharing will assist those working in the fields of environment and
265 public health.

They also provide specialised training in waste management to waste industry representatives and continue to provide practical Environmental Health training for both local students and students from the University of West England.

270 They advise the Government on the provision of new legislation such as lifts, DNA testing of dogs and the storage of petroleum products, as well as advising on the updating of other existing legislation.

Mr Speaker, works on the improvement of the North Front Cemetery continue. Despite recent negative media coverage, in the past 12 months the surrounding wall of the cemetery has been repaired and maintained and the public toilets inside the cemetery have been repaired.
275 The cutting of the grass is now completed and is trimmed on a daily basis. Areas are cleaned daily and the cemetery is kept as a safe place for visitors. Signs continue to be installed around the different plots as required. We are presently upgrading the drainage system to avoid flooding during the winter months.

280 Mr Speaker, the cemetery is a difficult place to work in. We have an average of 260 burials a year, in addition to an average of 50 transfers of remains. Cleaning of the inside of the vaults is also done by the team, and I have to thank them for their work.

285 Mr Speaker, green spaces are a great benefit to our environment. They do not only provide areas for leisure and respite from the stresses of city life but they also filter pollutants and dust from the air, provide shade and lower temperatures in urban areas and reduce energy consumption by countering the warming effects of paved surfaces. Lawns can be up to 30° cooler than asphalt in summer. One tree can remove 12 kilograms of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere annually, equalling up to 18,000 km of car emissions. With all this in mind, the Government's tree-planting programme has been going from strength to strength. A total of 1,614 trees have been planted between 2015 and 2016 so far, although from a tweet I saw from
290 the Hon. Mr Hammond he has not quite found them yet. Tree planting will continue this year, Mr Speaker. At the same time, the Department continues to work extensively on the

295 maintenance and improvement of existing green areas. And of course the biggest contributor to this achievement continues to be Commonwealth Park. The park continues to be enjoyed by thousands and has now become one of Gibraltar's prime recreational areas. I am looking forward to working on the new park that will be created north of the leisure centre as part of the Midtown project.

300 The Gibraltar Botanic Gardens continue to grow in capacity and influence. Its work extends well beyond the recreational, with a role in taxonomy, ecology, conservation and education. As an Associate Partner of the University of Gibraltar's Institute of Life and Earth Sciences, it is involved in planning of the University's research programmes and other capacity-building measures. As is expected in a dynamic and developing garden, improvements to planted areas continue to be made. Its children's education programme is growing from strength to strength. As well as running activities within the Alameda itself, the Botanic Gardens' education team is now advising schools on the development of their own gardens and horticultural schemes. April 305 this year saw the 200th anniversary of the establishment of the Alameda Gardens. A number of improvements and activities took place to mark this, including articles in the press; a series of wooden sculptures; a special anniversary bed; children's activities; and the bicentenary's main celebration, the inauguration of Bicentenary House, a glasshouse that showcases plants from rainforest and arid environments and further enhances the Alameda's capacity for education work. A commemorative stamp issue is planned for later this year. 310

The Gibraltar Nature Reserve is yet another area where the hard efforts of the Environment, Tourism and Heritage Ministries are paying off and one that I take immense pride in overseeing. Work has steadily continued on all fronts and there is more to come.

315 The opening of the new suspension bridge at Royal Anglian Way serves to highlight the Government's commitment to improving and diversifying Gibraltar's main environmental and tourism assets. The 75-metre Windsor Suspension Bridge offers stunning views of the Bay and the beautiful city of Gibraltar below. It is part of a wider Nature Reserve renovation programme that has seen tonnes of rubbish, including asbestos, cleared from Royal Anglian Way and Rooke Battery to make way for user-friendly trails and the opening up of historic buildings and tunnels. 320 Although the bridge is firmly rooted to the ground, a slight wobble adds to the thrill of the experience. It is therefore no surprise that the general feedback received so far in Gibraltar and beyond has been extremely positive. There is no doubt in my mind that the upcoming Sky Walk in Mount Misery will be just as successful.

325 Mr Speaker, the Gibraltar Nature Reserve has evolved and developed significantly since the Upper Rock was officially designated as a reserve by the GSLP Government in 1993. As part of the continued effort to further protect biodiversity and natural habitats in Gibraltar, the then Upper Rock Nature Reserve was rebranded by this GSLP-Liberal Government in 2013 and its size extended to include new areas that would further help protect important habitats and species.

330 The Gibraltar Nature Reserve now encompasses more than 2.33 km², which is approximately 36% of Gibraltar's terrestrial area: a staggering statistic that shows our enduring commitment to environmental protection. Providing specific habitats with legal protection carries additional responsibilities. It requires a robust management framework together with a plan to ensure that conservation objectives are met. To this effect, the Government is about to publish the Gibraltar Nature Reserve Management Plan, a document that sets out the management priorities for the 335 different components of the Gibraltar Nature Reserve.

One of the key measures included in the plan is a renewed management structure and the creation of a Nature Reserve Management Board. The implementation of a co-ordinated and effective management regime will play a critical part in ensuring that all sites, habitats and species within the Reserve are protected.

340 Achieving the delicate balance between conservation and tourism is by no means an easy task. It must be guided by an adherence to the principles of sustainable development. The new plan seeks to apply these principles by considering the environmental aspects of the reserve as well as the social and economic dimensions. To achieve this, the plan will be a dynamic

document that will be regularly updated in response to changing pressures and management requirements.

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In keeping with the aim of improving the value of the Reserve, the new plan also includes a commitment to the continued removal of introduced invasive species, and to re-introducing species that were once found in Gibraltar. This is one of the most ambitious and exciting measures that the Department of the Environment and Climate Change will have ever embarked upon and it will require continuous effort and co-ordination. Co-operation with regional authorities and experts will also play an important role in the delivery of this measure; one that will undoubtedly increase the recognition of our Reserve internationally. Our success with the reintroduction of wild rabbits and the secretive Barbary partridge shows that we are able to do this successfully. The count of 52 partridges at the January winter bird count, only a proportion of the current population, was higher than it had been in decades.

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Species such as foxes, eagles and other animals that were once common in the area will once again have the opportunity to have a foothold on the Rock for the benefit of all to see and enjoy. A tagging programme and live cameras will also be introduced so that scientists and the wider public may follow the movements of some of the reintroduced species.

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Surveys of Yellow-legged Gulls were carried out during the breeding season of the year 2015-16. Although these surveys took place in the past on an ad hoc basis, the Government has now arranged for surveys be carried out on an annual basis. It is impossible, due to the Rock's topography, to ascertain accurately the number of breeding pairs of Yellow-legged Gulls in Gibraltar. Instead, these surveys provide relative estimates of abundance. The trend is clear: the data estimate an average decrease in numbers of breeding pairs of some 4% per annum, with an estimated 40% decrease in breeding Yellow-legged Gulls between 2002 and 2016. Although this represents a substantial decrease, the trend is not as marked as would be expected from a closed population. For example, approximately 16,000 Yellow-legged Gulls, mainly adults, have been removed between 2012 and mid-2016, and the expected decrease should be much greater if there were no input of gulls from elsewhere. Gibraltar has to contend with what appears to be a considerable repopulation of gulls from nearby Spain and possibly elsewhere in the western Mediterranean, and that makes the control programme more difficult. Even accounting for this, however, the breeding population of gulls in Gibraltar is definitely declining as a result of the culling programme.

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Mr Speaker, I now turn to the management of our macaques. Let me start off by highlighting the fact that the Macaque Management Team is now better resourced than ever before with over nine dedicated staff attending to their well-being and continuously responding to any issues that may arise within and outside the Upper Rock. This development has had an immense impact on the macaque contraception programme, which is increasingly effective in controlling population numbers. As always, the behaviour of the macaques will sporadically attract the public's attention, but the joint efforts of the GONHS, GibVet Clinic and the Department of the Environment have ensured that any incidents are tackled swiftly and effectively.

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Research into our macaques continues to play an important role in their management and the increased resources provided to the team will allow them to embark on a much needed genetic study of Gibraltar's Barbary Macaques this year. Other areas of research are also being investigated.

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Raising awareness on the importance of our macaques forms another element of the management strategy. The collaboration between the Department of the Environment and Monkey Talk Gibraltar is yielding excellent results, which we plan to continue well into the future. To date, there have been two Macaque Awareness Days and these have helped spread the message of seeing our macaques as one of Gibraltar's unique assets and not as nuisances. The awareness events have also allowed the collation of valuable data using a specially designed questionnaire. A Barbary Macaque educational app has also been created to help inform locals and tourists alike and is now available on both Android and iOS platforms.

395 Mr Speaker, the Environmental Protection and Research Unit continues to go from strength to strength. There are now six officers working on a shift basis. The section is making good use of the Department's maritime assets, the Storm Petrel, the Darwin and the Sea Eagle.

Environmental patrols are being carried out daily, both on land and at sea. The fact that our own environmental protection vessels are now regularly patrolling Gibraltar's marine protected areas is clearly sending the right signals, regionally and in the wider international area. Environmental protection officers, together with the departmental scientists, have responded to 41 out-of-hours callouts. Reasons have included illegal fishing from land and sea, wildlife rescues, fallen trees, air pollution and suspected oil spills. The section continues to work hand in hand with the Royal Gibraltar Police and with HM Customs as well as with GONHS, whose excellent Raptor Unit ensures rescued birds of prey are rehabilitated and released. I would like to thank both the RGP and HM Customs for their invaluable assistance in providing training to this section.

Mr Speaker, the Gibraltar Air Quality Monitoring Programme has continued to operate during this past year and has once again achieved levels of data capture above 90% thanks to the efforts of the Environmental Agency and our air quality consultants.

Despite the recent alarmist press coverage of the WHO's urban air quality database, Gibraltar's air quality in terms of particulate matter has actually been improving over the last three to four years. In addition, the monitoring equipment records our oxides of nitrogen at the lowest levels ever since recording was commenced and data to May give our levels as below the EU maximum of 40ug per cubic metre also for the first time. This is a tremendous achievement no doubt due to intelligent managing of power generation. Nevertheless, there is no room for complacency. Government continues to review its policies in relation to air quality and will be revising its Air Quality Action Plan. In conjunction with my colleague, the Minister for Traffic & Transport, the Department will be assisting in the rollout of the Sustainable Traffic, Transport and Parking Plan and will be participating in European Mobility Week and organising an In Town without My Car Day for September.

Mr Speaker, delivering homegrown environmental policies and legislation has always been a strong suit of this administration. We have updated and amended existing environmental legislation and brought new legislation into our statute books. This term will see further work on new environmental legislation in the fields of cemeteries, contaminated land, recycling, pets, caves and dog fouling. In relation to this, I must thank all those advisers, including the Gibraltar Veterinary Clinic, GONHS, the Heritage Trust, the Gibraltar Museum and the Responsible Pet Owners for their hard work and support.

Never before in Gibraltar's history than in the last 12 months has so much been said by a few about energy and energy production. In the run-up to last November, instant experts and prophets of doom sprang up, claiming to doubt the Government's diligence and honesty in respect of the new power station. I am not going to repeat it all now, Mr Speaker, because on 26th November last the people gave an overwhelming vote of confidence to the Government and to the new, clean technology we are introducing. A great deal of hot air expended by some was converted by the electorate into overwhelming support for a gas-powered energy plant. And so the new, clean and efficient gas power station and associated LNG plant, using best available technology and including stack monitoring, will come to be operational in a little over a year's time. I am pleased to say that work on the station is progressing extremely well, with the first of the new engines expected in just a few of months.

Significantly, Mr Speaker, I can report that the laying of much of the new infrastructure, including the construction of the new high-voltage distribution centres, has been contracted to Bouygues, the firm constructing the power station, within the total agreed contract sum, proving once again that the new plant will be much cheaper than the grimy, slimy, dirty diesel one planned by the previous administration.

445 I am pleased to confirm, Mr Speaker, that the ageing ex-OESCO engines have now been decommissioned and the ex-MOD station is now on standby mode only. These steps have greatly reduced pollution in the area.

Mr Speaker, the number of electricity consumers rose to 19,805, an increase of 394, but despite this, total emissions dropped for the second year running from 179,759 tonnes of carbon dioxide in 2014 to 161,543 tonnes in 2015. This shows the success of energy efficiency measures such as promotion of efficiency and conversion to low energy lighting, and the public have to be congratulated for supporting this.

The total amount collected from electricity bills was £24.97 million, with very little backlog in unpaid bills, and the total installed capacity at the end of the year stood at 79.18MW.

455 Training and development of technical staff of the GEA continues with an emphasis on the new power project. We will continue to work on the network, including the SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) system which is used for monitoring and aids response in case of problems. We will also continue to work on the replacement of substations.

Mr Speaker, the community will have noticed that once the specific issues were tackled about a year ago, power cuts due to generation problems ceased. While I do not want to tempt fate, as this is always a possibility until we fully renew the plant and network, I can report that the only significant outages have been the result of cables being cut during works by contractors away from the plant. I must here praise all the staff of the GEA for their incredible commitment to their work.

465 And I must thank and pay tribute to Manolo Alecio, who recently retired as CEO, for his professionalism, dedication and support. At the same time I would like to wish the new CEO, Michael Caetano, and the new Deputy CEO, Ian Payas, every success in their work over the coming year, which will be the most significant and exciting in the history of power generation in Gibraltar.

470 In relation to water production, this year also sees the retirement of AquaGib's CEO, Derek Cano, and I would like to thank him also for his commitment during his many years of public service.

During the past year AquaGib has maintained and improved on its levels of service and performance in respect of the provision of potable and seawater supply, and sewerage services in Gibraltar. In order to achieve this level of service AquaGib has undertaken an expenditure of £12,115,000. In addition, AquaGib has continued to invest over the period on capital projects as part of its asset replacement plan aimed at maintaining and improving the water infrastructure. During this period a total of £730,000 was spent on capital projects, which have included the replacement of potable and seawater mains, improvements to the Reverse Osmosis Desalination Plants, improvements to the Scada system and the replacement of the pumps at the Varyl Begg sewage pumping station.

485 The approved budget set by the company on capital projects for the coming year has been set at £638,000. This includes the following projects: continuing replacement of potable and seawater mains, replacement of RO plant membranes and continuing upgrading to the Scada system.

Mr Speaker, there is a lot more I could say about plans for the environment in the coming year, and omissions are not due to anything other than a desire to not extend the length of my contribution even more.

490 Mr Speaker, the events of recent weeks have left us all on uncertain ground. In relation to the environment and sustainability at large, I would like to close my piece by saying that this administration's environmental ethics have always been deep rooted and have never consisted of doing the bare minimum in order to comply with EU law, as was the case before our time. Our track record clearly proves this.

495 Mr Speaker, I will now turn my attention to the Ministry of Health and the Gibraltar Health Authority.

500 Nowhere is the vote of confidence given us by the community last November more appreciated than in the complex, testing, intense and sometimes heart-wrenching world of healthcare. Together with the excellent staff that we have across the GHA, I am looking forward to continuing this exciting journey in providing that outstanding quality of healthcare that our community deserves.

505 Mr Speaker, the challenge is to continue to deliver excellent healthcare while becoming more efficient and reducing the rate of increase in expenditure. This is a challenge indeed, for healthcare keeps developing, treatment and treatment opportunities keep progressing, and the expectations of the citizen keep growing. Healthcare is not about a culture of false entitlement, Mr Speaker. Healthcare is about the obligation to deliver the very best we possibly can to each and every member of our community, from before birth to the very last breath.

510 Expenditure in Health, as the Leader of the Opposition said yesterday in his contribution, has increased significantly over the past four years. Of course it has, Mr Speaker. Four years ago there was no Calpe Ward, no day surgery, one and not four operating theatres, fewer doctors and nurses, 10,000 fewer outpatient appointments in St Bernard's Hospital, and 34,000 not 39,000 entitled persons – a difference of 5,000 – under the Group Practice Medical Scheme. It was a different health service, Mr Speaker.

515 The main thrust of our work in the coming year will be to improve services but at the same time do what we do more efficiently and effectively and bring back to Gibraltar all that we are able to do here and to try and contain the need to travel abroad for treatment

Mr Speaker, the progress made in healthcare over the last four years is a reflection of our central focus on patient welfare and our overriding principle where the patient always comes first, changing the culture where system goals mattered more than the care of the individual.

520 Mr Speaker, since 2011, the number of nurses was increased by over 40 and the training of enrolled nurses recommenced, giving career prospects to nursing assistants for the first time ever. We also increased the number of GPs, non-consultant hospital doctors and consultants. We now have a consultant microbiologist and a haematologist, all part of a holistic strategy of implementing long-term improvements.

525 Mr Speaker, the decrepit, Victorian, KGV institution was finally closed and replaced with the outstanding Ocean Views Mental Health Unit. Health promotion and screening has progressed as never before, with the introduction of colorectal cancer screening and screening for abdominal aneurysms of the aorta, both of which have already diagnosed serious conditions and have saved lives.

530 Mr Speaker, cancellations of operations came down tremendously following the opening of the day surgery unit, with only three cancellations in 2014 and 21 in 2015, down from 118 in 2010 and 114 in 2011. Together with the Day Surgery Unit we have four functioning operating theatres there, compared to pre-2011 when there was only one functioning operating theatre being used regularly. This has resulted in the number of operations being done annually rocketing to nearly 4,000. We have more doctors and more visiting consultants, more patients being diagnosed and treated than ever before. All of this has also had a great impact in reducing waiting lists and waiting times in all specialities.

540 Mr Speaker, I have highlighted some of the successes of the last four years which have improved the service to the point of being unrecognisable with its central focus on patient welfare, but I am fully conscious that there are many challenges ahead and there will be things that we can do even better, and do them better we will.

Mr Speaker, to be able to do this we have a comprehensive and ambitious healthcare manifesto plan which together with the GHA's three-year strategic plan developed by the CEO and his senior management team, will drive change and improvement forward.

545 Our vision is one that sees a move from a narrow focus on access targets to a broader view of what high quality care entails. The change from disjointed episodic care to holistic integrated care, the move to prevention over cure with a much bigger focus on public health and more personal responsibility for our wellbeing. Running through all of these things is a fundamental

550 shift in power from a bureaucratic system where power sat in the hands of politicians and top senior managers, to a democratic system where the most powerful person is not the nurse, the doctor nor the manager but every single member of our community who uses the Health Service every single day.

555 Mr Speaker, October 2015 saw the completion and launch of the three-year strategy with the collaboration of staff across all specialities. The plan sets out the priorities, describes what will be done, individual responsibilities, desired outcomes and benefits, and is intertwined with the Government's current manifesto. The Strategy identifies risks and assurance processes to oversee these and protect patient care whilst delivering significant ongoing transformation. The document has 29 different work streams with over 280 specific objectives. This is a working document with additional work streams being developed at present, which will include dementia, diabetes and cancer services.

560 Mr Speaker, in my last Budget speech, I announced the second Health & Lifestyle Survey, which was to take place during 2015. This follows from the first ever Health & Lifestyle Survey of the Gibraltar people, which was published in 2012. The Health and Lifestyle Survey aims to find out the levels of perceived health in the population as well as gather information on lifestyle parameters like eating, drinking and physical activity. The Public Health department compiled the questionnaire for the survey, which consisted of 46 questions externally validated. The long process of analysis has been completed, with the publication of the survey due this summer.

565 Mr Speaker, as part of the childhood vaccination programme, the GHA introduced a new vaccine against Meningococcus B, which protects the baby against serious diseases like Meningitis B and Septicaemia. Meningococcus B is the leading infectious killer of babies and young children, causing infections that come on very quickly and can leave permanent damage. The Meningitis B vaccine is very safe and will be offered to all babies at the age of two months in line with the UK's vaccination programme.

575 Screening programmes save lives. In my last Budget speech I announced the launch of the Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening Programme. Since its launch a total of over 200 men have been screened. The programme has already detected aneurysms in persons who would otherwise seem perfectly healthy. One of these aneurysms was a large one with the patient being referred to a tertiary specialist vascular centre for treatment. His life was saved. All other persons with smaller aneurysms will be kept under close surveillance.

580 Mr Speaker, in line with the aim of screening programmes, the Colorectal Cancer Screening Programme has shown that it has achieved its key outcome target of 100% cancer detection, following the end of year one audit.

585 Mr Speaker, on health promotion and public education, the Department, now with its full complement of two health promotion officers, has held key health promotion events. These included Heart Health Awareness, the Well Child, Skin Cancer Screening, World Crohn's Disease Day, World Diabetes Day and World AIDS Day.

590 One of the more comprehensive campaigns was the European Antibiotic Awareness Week, which was celebrated by the GHA through several initiatives in order to raise public awareness about the importance of correct antibiotic use and antibiotic resistance. Part of this campaign included the launch of the GHA's comprehensive evidenced-based guidelines on antibiotic prescription now in use by the GHA's doctors and nurses.

595 Mr Speaker, I would like to turn my attention now to an area of healthcare which the Government and the GHA consider a priority: cancer services. Cancer is one of the highest causes of death and touches every single family in our community. A diagnosis of cancer will have a major impact on many areas of a person's life and that of their loved ones. They may be dealing with many medical, emotional and financial issues. The GHA will endeavour to make the patient's cancer journey as seamless as possible, offering advice, support and a range of options. To this end, the new Cancer Services department was established with the aim of improving the patient experience and improving cancer outcomes. The Cancer Services department was created in September last with the employment of a new Cancer Services Co-ordinator. The role

600 entails the co-ordination of services between the different cancer service providers such as
primary, secondary, tertiary care, palliative care and the local cancer charities to ensure best
practice in access to cancer services and active case management. By liaising with all service
605 providers, the co-ordinator identifies gaps in care and implements possible improvements to
GHA services such as new patient care pathways, policies and protocols. So far, communication
between service providers has improved and there is an established link between senior
clinicians both in and outside Gibraltar. Oncology multidisciplinary teams now are meeting on a
regular basis and the draft Cancer Strategy has already been developed.

Mr Speaker, this takes me to the development of the Chemotherapy Suite and the
repatriation of chemotherapy. The Government has listened to patients, their relatives and
610 charities and has understood the great hardship and difficulties encountered when travelling
abroad to have chemotherapy. No longer will patients be required to travel; they will be able to
receive their treatment locally in the company of their friends and relatives.

Mr Speaker, as previously mentioned in this House, the GHA is fully aware that Primary Care
is an area of our Health Service that needed to improve, especially with respect to access to
615 services and availability of GP appointments. The appointment system at the PCC has been
under constant review since 2012. First, the Government, on the advice of staff and patients,
shortened the period of open appointments from three months to one month, and introduced
the last prescription direct appointment system. This system did in fact work much better. This
new system, although better than the previous one, was not without its problems, which is why
620 it has been under constant review. After further consultation, a new system, which entailed
changing from the monthly appointment system to a 48 hour-appointment system, was
introduced in January 2016 with the aim of decongesting the PCC on the first of the month,
increasing the availability of appointments and giving users greater choice, together with
reducing the high number of DNAs (Did Not Attend).

Mr Speaker, this change has not been without its challenges, as is expected with any new
625 system. The first indication is that this system is far better than the previous one, with a marked
reduction in the DNA rate for advance appointments and greater availability and access to
appointments for service users. We have increased the number of routine slots from 1,361 in
January for advanced appointments to 1,905 in May, and from 1,630 for on-the-day
630 appointments in January to 2,805 in May. Now, on most days there are appointments left over,
so no patient needs to be left unseen. This is indeed progress, and rare in other jurisdictions. We
will continue to review this system in order to continue to improve the service.

Apart from the introduction of the new appointment system, the PCC has seen further
improvements during the last financial year. These have been on multiple levels and are now
635 bearing fruit and resulting in improved accessibility for service users. Some may not be obvious
to the public but they have resulted in a better standard of care for users of the centre. Some of
these improvements have included more training for staff, an increase in the number of GPs,
introduction of live video-linked British Sign Language (BSL) translation, introduction of the
electronic health record and additional of a dental clinic. All of these improvements would not
640 have been possible without the professionalism, commitment and hard work of all the staff at
the Primary Care Centre, especially the hardworking records and other counter staff who work
on the front line, under great pressure and subject to abuse from some members of the public,
but despite this never let us down. A very special thanks to you all. *(Banging on desk)*

Mr Speaker, this Government has a firm commitment to look after our elderly population,
645 especially those who have Alzheimer's and Dementia. Not only the patients but their relatives
and carers need our support even more. The Government will continue to improve and expand
facilities and care, as well as promoting awareness and establishing a long-term sustainable
policy that ensures support and dignity for generations to come. On this note I was pleased to
announce last autumn the publication of the draft Dementia Strategy.

650 Government has already improved facilities, such as the opening of Calpe Ward in St
Bernard's and the complete refurbishment of the John Mackintosh Home. We are now in the

process of opening the new Dementia Day Centre and Residential Home at the former RNH site. This facility is already complete and we are aiming to open in September. The day facility will offer day therapy for up to 90 patients on a daily basis. It will also house the memory clinic and other essential dementia services, including a dedicated GP service, offering a one-stop shop for dementia patients and their families. The Government and the GHA will continue to work with the Gibraltar Alzheimer's and Dementia Society, who have been instrumental in the development of the strategy and the development of the new facilities at the RNH site.

This is a good point to refer also to the work of Elderly Residential Services, who are also planning to open the residential unit in September and who work for our elderly in Mount Alvernia and John Mackintosh. Their work goes far beyond what is expected, and they are always providing activities for residents around Gibraltar. They are a great team. This year we will be investing in Mount Alvernia in improving facilities for residents and staff. I must here also thank the Friends of Mount Alvernia for their outstanding contribution to improving the lives of our residents.

Mr Speaker, in 2014 the GHA embarked on what may arguably be its most important quality improvement initiative, the electronic patient record programme. One of the aims was to deliver on this Government's manifesto commitment to computerise all patient notes, but the main aim and benefits go beyond this. An integrated electronic patient record system, the most advanced of its kind anywhere, will assist in improving the quality of the service provided, making it safer, more patient focused, effective, efficient and transparent.

The GHA went live with EMIS Web in the Primary Care Centre and Symphony in the accident and emergency department in June last year. Along with the implementation of eCamis in the registration department, this formed the core of phase 1 of the EPR programme. Prior to this, there was considerable testing of the new clinical systems by end users, GPs, hospital medical staff, nursing and allied healthcare professionals, and extensive training of staff. Access to records is instant at the point of delivery, with all clinicians being able to make use of the system regardless of location. Within weeks, GPs and other practitioners in the community will be able, for the first time ever, to access patients' primary care notes during house calls on mobile devices. Phase 2 will now see the programme rolled out into secondary care and mental health this year.

As with all changes these are demanding and difficult times while staff have to adapt to the transformation. However, GHA staff have been exceptional in the way they have managed the very complex transition in a very short timeframe. The GHA should be considered an example to any other organisation that embarks on a similar journey of transformation.

The Information Management and Technology team continue to manage the GHA's extensive computer network and infrastructure, which due to the opening of facilities such as Ocean Views and the new catering facility, together with the addition of hardware to accommodate the electronic patient programme, is expanding and increasing in complexity. Additionally, they have been involved in planning various development programmes in order to enhance the robustness and the vital security of the GHA's IT systems.

These are some of the many projects in which the team have been involved in: the completion of the deployment of the digital dictation system; the Chemotherapy Suite infrastructure; upgrade of the aging CCTV; in-house development and launch of a replacement bespoke sponsored patients system and human resources system; the in-house development of a hospital stores inventory and stock control system. The team have also completed the installation of the Wi-Fi network. Once fully implemented, it will make a huge improvement to the patient experience and also achieve full mobile device connectivity across the hospital, allowing clinicians to view patient details at the bedside and providing improved efficiency in the delivery of patient care.

Mr Speaker, the services provided by the Estates and Clinical Engineering team, now a combined GHA/GEA team, are crucial to the smooth and safe running of our Health Service. The

team supports health professionals, working in the background in an area which is of vital importance to patient care yet seldom in the public eye.

705 Apart from the work related to departmental requests and emergency callouts, which saw record figures for last year peaking at 3,105 requests, together with a comprehensive lifecycle programme which ensures that all GHA assets are fully operational and up to date, the department is also engaged in major capital projects.

710 Mr Speaker, the following list highlights some of the major initiatives carried out during the last financial year: the new escalators at the entrance to St Bernard's; installation and commissioning of the 128 slice CT scanner; new improved surgical lighting for general theatres; a new surgical microscope for the ophthalmic theatres; new emergency back-up generator for Primary Care; new Dental Clinic at Primary Care; new cardiovascular ultrasound for the Medical Investigation Unit; upgrade to St Bernard's Hospital fire alarm system; works to the new
715 Chemotherapy Unit; and design works for the expansion of the A&E department.

Mr Speaker, given that the GHA is a large consumer of energy, the directorate takes energy efficiency very seriously. The GHA's technical staff continue to be engaged with various initiatives to monitor and improve energy efficiency across the GHA. These have included: introduction of LED lighting in all new developments; smart metering; heat recovery from air
720 conditioning systems; and assisting with the design of the new solar thermal system.

Mr Speaker, it is very encouraging to report that the GHA's sustained commitments with respect to energy efficiency have been formally recognised following an exhaustive energy use audit carried out by an independent energy assessment team. In addition, both St Bernard's Hospital catering facility and Ocean Views were awarded an 'A' rating for energy efficiency and
725 for environmental impact.

In line with the Government's priority and commitment to training and development, the Government and GHA are exploring opportunities for training schemes as part of its workforce strategy for the clinical engineering team.

730 Mr Speaker, the Human Resources department has been working on a variety of policies with the aim of ensuring that all staff starting in the GHA undertake a structured and comprehensive induction programme that will enable them to work and provide a safe and efficient service within their areas. Through this policy the GHA will ensure that all members of staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve excellent customer care and the ability to meet the changing needs of patients, service users and the organisation.

735 Mr Speaker, the GHA's HR department continues to closely liaise with Department heads and the Department of Education with the aim of ensuring that there is a supply of qualified staff and, where necessary, appropriately experienced local applicants for clinical posts, with the aim of increasing employment opportunities for our recently qualified young people. HR staff, along with representatives from other areas across the organisation, continue to visit local schools
740 with the aim of promoting careers in healthcare and future employment opportunities. In this way, we are expecting to shortly recruit at least four Gibraltarians as designate consultants to take on work in Gibraltar when their training is complete. **(A Member: Hear, hear.)** *(Banging on desks)*

745 Mr Speaker, in the last Budget speech I announced that all the relevant legislation with respect to the General Medical Council registration of doctors practising in Gibraltar and the establishment of a Responsible Officer (RO)/Suitable Person for Gibraltar had been completed and was in place. Further work this year has included consolidating the medical appraisal process, a comprehensive CPD programme and getting our Responsible Officer recognised by the GMC as a Suitable Person. Thanks to our diligence, the GMC has made it possible to
750 revalidate GHA doctors by recognising the GHA's RO as a Suitable Person.

Mr Speaker, I am now glad to announce that all the pieces of the jigsaw are in place to ensure that GHA doctors are able to meet the requirements of the GMC to be able to revalidate and obtain a licence to practise. I am expecting similar progress very soon in the private sector. It is a huge step which will lead to significant improvements in standards of practice and good clinical

755 governance. I must here thank both the Medical Registration Board and the Nurses and
Midwives Registration Board for their thorough and often complex work in ensuring proper
regulation of our health professionals.

Mr Speaker, the School of Health Studies offers a wide range of educational activities. The
programmes are proactive, anticipating not only today's expectations but the demands of
760 tomorrow. The school offers academic excellence ranging from those taking their first steps in
healthcare to practitioners with many years' experience in their field.

We are continuing with the provision of an eighteen month enrolled nurse programme,
which upon successful completion leads to registration with the Gibraltar Nurses, Midwives and
Health Visitors Registration Board. The BSc Nursing (Adult) students also apply for registration
765 with the Registration Board and leave the programme with an honours degree. Currently there
are two cohorts of student nurses studying the degree programme. The SHS lecturers, with the
support of in-house clinical staff, teach and assess the programme, with external scrutiny of the
academic standard being undertaken by Kingston University of London and St George's
University. All external appraisals show that our courses, trainers and students have all achieved
770 the highest standards.

I am particularly proud of the fact that we have this year witnessed a total of 19 students
achieving degrees and one obtaining the diploma on a programme delivered here in Gibraltar.
November 2015 saw the graduation ceremony of the first ever totally locally run Degree in Adult
Nursing. These new graduates will become ambassadors of patient care and set the tone of a
775 contemporary and vibrant healthcare service now and, most significantly, in the future. Nursing
has in fact proven its worth once more in getting two nominations for the prestigious British
Journal of Nursing Awards this last year. This success also demonstrates the Government's
commitment to providing training for our youth in key professions.

Mr Speaker, in a complex, challenging and rapidly changing modern healthcare service, it is
780 important for staff to be able to access relevant and flexible Continuing Personal Professional
Development (CPPD). The GHA continues to invest in CPPD for all staff across the organisation,
and this element of the school's work continues to expand.

This year also saw the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the GHA and the
University of Gibraltar, making the GHA School of Health Studies an associate campus of the
785 University. This agreement will provide greater learning opportunities and an improved teaching
environment for all staff and students of the GHA.

Mr Speaker, it is evident that the Government has trained its healthcare staff like never
before, giving rise to greater standards of care for patients and service users.

I would like here to congratulate Prof. Ian Peate, who heads the school, for being awarded an
790 OBE in the UK Queen's Birthday Honours list. Not only has his leadership been fundamental, but
he has also encouraged the students academically, a number of whom have recently had papers
published in learned academic journals.

Mr Speaker, CPD is particularly important in medicine, and this last year the medical body
began a programme of formal professional CPD on a monthly basis, bringing together many of
795 the doctors.

The re-establishment of the Medical Advisory Committee remains successful and the
committee remains active and provides valuable input to the management and to me as
Minister and Chairman.

Agreement has now been reached on the new consultant contract and minor details are now
800 being finalised. Work is also progressing on a junior doctors' contract, and, if I may say, much
more cordially than in the UK.

I would like here to thanks to Dr Antonio Marin, the outgoing Medical Director, for his work,
and congratulate the new Medical Director, Dr Danny Cassaglia, with whom I look forward to
working in his new role.

805 Mr Speaker, as I said at this time last year, as from 1st July 2015 the weekly maximum
allowance for sponsored patients was increased from £427 to £504, with a corresponding

percentage increase in the allowances for those staying at Calpe House. Other improvements have included greater flexibility in arranging return dates and escort conditions for children and the elderly.

810 Mr Speaker, the number of referrals to tertiary centres outside Gibraltar continues to rise, with a total of 6,277 cases managed in 2015 compared to about 3,500 cases in 2014. The first quarter of 2016 has already seen a total of 1,673 cases referred, a trend which, if it continues on these lines, will surpass the record figure witnessed in 2015. This is not a record we seek to surpass, as it means that there are a lot of sick people we are looking after. As more patients
815 survive illness but need monitoring and review, the numbers grow cumulatively. This of course increases costs, which we are aiming to control with repatriation and other initiatives. But it is a financial challenge that is for a worthy cause. The saving of life is surely worthier than any other.

No doubt the new Calpe House, an initiative which I am pleased to support, just as I supported the original one all those years ago, will help not only in improving facilities for our
820 patients, but also in reducing cost.

Mr Speaker, new contracts have been developed with several hospital accommodation centres, which will facilitate the booking of accommodation for patients and relatives. This has been received positively by users since it removes the added pressure for patients and relatives in having to find their own accommodation at a very stressful time in their lives.

825 Finally, with respect to sponsored patients, new international transfer protocols for emergency transfer of patients to specialist hospitals in Spain and the UK have been developed which include retrieval teams for paediatrics and those who require high-dependency care. My thanks to the hardworking staff of the Department for constantly delivering under a great deal of pressure.

830 Mr Speaker, this year saw the commissioning of the new CT scanner. This 128-Slice Computed Tomography Scanner is the most advanced model in Europe and has replaced the 10-year-old 16-Slice Scanner. It is significantly higher in specification and enables greater flexibility in the range of investigations that the GHA can offer in Gibraltar. The new scanner has the capability to conduct brain perfusion, cardiac, colonography and dental scans. These patients
835 would have had to go away from Gibraltar in the past.

Another development has been the establishment of a tertiary reporting service via an electronic link which shares patient imaging. A direct link with the radiologists at St George's Hospital Foundation Trust means that the GHA is able to obtain tertiary expert opinion in complex cases via a prompt and formal process.

840 On similar lines, the GHA has also established connection of an image exchange portal. This network will secure digital exchange of radiology imaging information between the GHA and UK hospitals. It is a fast, efficient and secure method that eliminates the need to transfer patients' radiology images via CDs to the UK for tertiary referrals or second expert opinions.

845 The Radiology department has also been targeting the reduction of waiting lists for ultrasound scans. Routine scans have been reduced to five weeks, with more urgent ones being done within two weeks of the request. We are planning also to replace most of the equipment in Radiology in the coming year.

The department of Pathology last year introduced a range of new tests with the aim of providing an improved service to clinicians for diagnosis and patient care. These include: Brain Natriuretic Peptide tests, which assist in the diagnosis of heart failure; Haptoglobin, used
850 primarily to help detect and evaluate haemolytic anaemia; Beta 2 – macroglobulin (B2M) tests, used as a tumour marker for some blood cell cancers; and the Department has also introduced a Cabapenam – Resistant Enterobacteriaceae (CRE) screening programme to test patients who arrive from tertiary centres and so prevent spread of infection.

855 Mr Speaker, in order to meet European Quality Standards with respect to blood donation and transfusion services, the Pathology department commissioned an external audit review with the ultimate aim of obtaining ISO accreditation.

The Ambulance Service: the number of patient transfers continues to grow and the average local emergency ambulance deployments increased by 7% during the past year.

860 The four paramedics have completed their first year of practice, which has resulted in tangible benefits in prehospital care, particularly in the field of analgesia. Additionally, emergency medical technicians have completed their fourth year of being able to administer a range of safe and effective medications. The new paramedic clinical governance framework has been completed and the major incident response and training has been reviewed.

865 Mr Speaker, the Government has taken the decision to transfer the Gibraltar Fire and Rescue Service emergency ambulance over to the GHA. This will entail the purchase of a new emergency ambulance and the recruitment of the required ambulance staff will be completed this autumn.

870 Mr Speaker, the GHA's new catering facility at St Bernard's Hospital opened in October 2015, replacing the old kitchen at the North Mole. Food is no longer transported by van from the North Mole in trollies but is wheeled directly into the hospital corridors, ensuring much greater freshness. It no longer travels on plates covered with cling film or plastic lids but in bulk containers to be served hot in the wards. The new facility is purpose built to the highest standards of hygiene and efficiency. Flow of food is now a continuous process, reducing both the risk of cross contamination and the amount of food waste. The design, which can cater for the production of up to 2,000 meals a day, also means that the need for daily maintenance is greatly reduced. Staff facilities have been greatly improved. All equipment is energy and water saving, using less electricity than the old unit, and there is a full ventilation system with the building attaining an 'A' rating for energy performance. The new facility will ensure much better quality food, better prepared and served for the benefit of all patients. It has boosted the morale of staff who were working in substandard premises with old, inefficient equipment, and has greatly improved working conditions, which has allowed for training for all the staff.

885 Mr Speaker, we have over the past year, as in other years, welcomed visitors from hospitals and health establishments from the UK and elsewhere. One of the things they almost invariably point out is the cleanliness and tidiness of St Bernard's. Our team of domestics is exceptional in its skill, diligence and, most important, pride in their work, and I want to publicly thank these ladies, and one or two gentlemen, for this. They do us proud. I would also like to acknowledge the maintenance team for their contribution to keeping standards in GHA buildings.

890 Mr Speaker, at my last Budget session I apologised to patients, relatives and staff for the length of time it took to complete the new Mental Health facility, Ocean Views – for good reason – but reported on its opening in February. Since opening the new facility, further change to the services has been introduced in consultation with patients, relatives and staff. The most tangible improvement is the effect of change of setting, which now provides a modern, therapeutic and recovery focused ... with greater privacy in more relaxed and comfortable surroundings. It has even resulted in a decrease in the use of certain types of medication. All clinical areas have benefited from this change, but this has been more evident in the following three facilities: Sky Ward – the Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit; the Multi-Function Suite, which has been used constantly to facilitate the care needs of young adults, forensic cases, vulnerable adults and pregnant patients – cases which would have been unmanageable in the old KGV Hospital; the Rockside Rehabilitation Flats, where patients move into a more independent living environment.

900 Together with the work being done by the Activity and Rehabilitation Centre and the excellent work of the Community Mental Health team, patients develop existing skills or learn new ones in order to complete their rehabilitation programme and their eventual reintegration into the community.

905 Mr Speaker, critical to the overall Mental Health Service has been the need to review and update the current, the old, Mental Health Act. The new Mental Health Act will make provision with respect to the reception, care and treatment of those with mental illness, the management of personal welfare, property and affairs of persons who lack capacity and consent issues.

910 The Act is concerned with the circumstances in which a person with a mental disorder can be detained for treatment. It sets out the processes which must be followed and the safeguard for patients to ensure that they are not inappropriately detained or treated. The main purpose is to ensure that people with serious mental disorders which threaten their health or the safety of the public can be treated when it is necessary to prevent them from harming themselves or others.

915 Mr Speaker, the Act also covers other key areas such as consent to treatment, the treatment of patients in the community, Mental Health tribunals, and it sets up a Mental Health Board, whose main function will be that of an independent body to review the treatment of patients, similar to the Prison Board.

920 There will be a code of practice being developed locally and work will now commence on a Mental Capacity Act.

Mr Speaker, I am very pleased to report that the overall number of complaints in the last year is slightly up from previous years. This comment may surprise you, and I will explain.

925 On 1st April 2015 Government introduced the new complaints handling service as a 2011 manifesto commitment, passing the complaints process directly to the ombudsman's office. All complaints, even lesser ones that in the past would have been dealt with and would not have been logged as such, are now recorded. In addition, there is a policy to actively encourage complaints to come forward, as this helps in identifying problem areas and generating positive change.

930 Mr Speaker, in line with another of the Government's 2011 manifesto commitments, to make arrangements with a large tertiary centre in the UK for modernisation of services, the GHA signed a new clinical services contract with St George's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. This new contract will provide the GHA with a comprehensive visiting consultant programme and in-patient access to all their high quality specialist services, particularly neurology and neurosurgery, cardiology and cardiac surgery and endoscopy services in support of our bowel cancer screening programme. Already, for example, the St George's neurology team has hugely improved the service we provide. This has included a visit by a specialist multiple sclerosis nurse, who will now visit every six months, with a phone-in service direct to a specialist in UK for MS patients who need rapid advice. This is a type of service which, together with telemedicine, we are looking to emulate in other areas too.

940 Mr Speaker, we are completely reviewing our delivery of maternity services, including improved access to care for women with threatened miscarriage.

945 The GHA approved the policy to introduce the use of acupuncture as a treatment modality. The modality is research based and provides our chartered physiotherapists with an added tool with which to treat patients with a variety of musculoskeletal conditions. This has been possible through the professionalism and commitment of the GHA's Physiotherapy team who have completed the required training and learning portfolios leading to full accreditation in the use of acupuncture as a modality. The use of acupuncture under their expertise will greatly benefit those whom we care for.

950 Mr Speaker, due to difficulties being experienced by patients affected by HIV, the GHA has taken the decision to repatriate this service from Spain. The main problem being encountered included missed appointments, the need to be re-referred and the language barrier. A visiting consultant specialised in the treatment and management of HIV and hepatitis will be holding clinics twice a month in Gibraltar. These clinics will now be further expanded to incorporate the management of hepatitis C patients who were also being referred to Spain.

955 Following my announcement at last year's Budget speech on organ transplant for Gibraltar patients, I am pleased to say that further work on this field has consolidated the understanding with the NHS Blood and Transplant Service, which now makes Gibraltarians eligible to be included in the UK's official transplant list. This is already happening and it is a huge step forward for Gibraltar to be able to finally have the green light for organ transplant in co-operation with the NHS. Evidence of the progress made is that we have already had a Gibraltarian undergo a

960

successful liver transplant, with several other patients being assessed for kidney and heart transplants. We are currently also working on the logistics for Gibraltarians to be able to go on a donor list so they can donate their own organs.

965 Mr Speaker, once again I round up due to lack of time and not due to lack of enthusiasm nor, even less, lack of plans.

Very quickly, can I mention the work of allied health professionals in many areas such as developing stroke care plans, or the interdepartmental work we are doing to improve Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

970 This has been another extremely productive year for the Health Service. To finish, I would like to thank all at the GHA, without whom the achievements outlined would not have been possible. I am incredibly proud of all our staff for their professionalism, dedication and commitment.

Mr Speaker, before I finish, please allow me to thank you and the staff of Parliament for the professionalism and hard work throughout what has been an extremely busy year.

975 I also want to particularly thank my personal staff, both in Health and Environment, for going well beyond the call of duty in assisting and supporting me at all times. I want also to publicly thank my recently retired Principal Secretary in Health, Christine Crawford, who was with me nearly three decades ago when the GHA project started and who has contributed more to the development of healthcare in Gibraltar than most will ever know.

980 I must especially thank the whole team at the Gibraltar Law Offices, who provide exceptional legal advice and drafting support in such a wide range of areas that I cover, and always of supreme quality.

Thanks also to the staff at No. 6 for their support always, and most especially when I have had the privilege of acting as Chief Minister.

985 My thanks too to the staff of Elderly Residential Services, the GHA, GEA, the Department of Environment and Climate Change, Environmental Agency, Aquagib, GIC, Master Service, Gibraltar Veterinary Clinic, Botanic Gardens, Greenarc, Gibraltarflora and Eden, for their continued service to the community, each in their own niche.

990 Thanks too to both of the unions with whom I regularly work, Unite and GGCA, for being an example always of strong but responsible trade unionism.

And to all those health-related charities – too many to mention, but they know who they are – for their commitment to our shared cause of improving health and care in our community and for giving me a well-meant and most acceptable hard time!

995 Mr Speaker, if in finishing up I may return to where I started, climate change is a threat too to the health of many communities, including our own. Hotter weather, fiercer storms, more pollen leading to increases in the effects of allergies, shifting of populations of disease vectors such as mosquitos, can all impact directly on our lives. So, Mr Speaker, I have come full circle.

1000 When I retire from this world of politics I want to be able to look out over Gibraltar, perhaps from our new Skywalk at the very top of this Rock of Ages, while breathing fresh, clean air, with birds singing and eagles soaring, and I want to see below me a prosperous city of healthy and happy people surrounded by pristine shores bathed in crystal clear water, and with the satisfaction of our having become a healthy environmental example to the world.

Thank you, Mr Speaker. *(Banging on desks)*

1005 **Several Members:** Hear, hear.

Mr Speaker: The Hon. Paul Balban.

1010 **Minister for Transport, Traffic and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, last November the people of Gibraltar entrusted this Government with another term of office; a result that showed the resounding trust that the electorate have for a party that have had

Gibraltar's true interests at heart. It is an honour to stand here today to deliver my fifth Budget address.

1015 Mr Speaker, I will commence my address by turning to my ministerial responsibilities for Technical Services.

During the past financial year, the Technical Services Department has continued to work tirelessly to meet its defined responsibilities, maintaining public infrastructure and supporting and providing technical advice to other Government Ministries and Departments.

1020 The Technical Services Department has been involved with a number of projects covering a wide range of areas which have included coastal works, cliff stabilisation schemes, highways maintenance, sewer maintenance and demolition works.

1025 Mr Speaker, Technical Services has been directly responsible for the delivery of the North Mole Reclamation project that will make way for the LNG plant that will supply the new power station. This project has seen the existing Western Arm extended northwards by just under 120 m.

1030 In all, nine concrete caissons have been placed to create the perimeter of this new reclamation. Approximately 90,000 tonnes of rubble from the Eastside Reclamation site have been processed to create the landfill. This is an important use of existing waste material to create a valuable plot of land of approximately 10,000 m². The project posed various engineering challenges given its close proximity to the airfield and existing shipping routes to and from the marinas. The total cost of this project was £12 million and it was completed earlier this year.

For the coming year, Technical Services will continue to monitor and maintain all existing coastal defences and will offer technical support with the delivery of a new major reclamation project at Western Beach.

1035 Mr Speaker, turning now to cliff stabilisation and rock fall protection projects: during the financial year 2014-15, the Department has developed the design of additional rock catch fences along the northern end of the Eastside water catchments and will be replacing an 80 m stretch of fences during the current financial year. The Department will continue to monitor and develop cliff stabilisation schemes in line with Government's ongoing cliff stabilisation and rockfall prevention and protection programme.

1040 With regard to highway maintenance, the works programme has once again been successful over the past year with ongoing repairs to roads, footpaths and retaining walls.

1045 The replacement of pelican crossing lights and equipment has been undertaken in a number of locations throughout Gibraltar, working jointly with the Gibraltar Electricity Authority. The first countdown timer system was installed along Line Wall Road in the vicinity of the City Hall last financial year. This was an enormous success.

1050 This has led to the recently announced – in fact, just yesterday – introduction of two new countdown timer systems aimed at improving pedestrian safety and fluidity. The first countdown timer has been placed along North Mole Road at the crossing by Block 1 Watergardens. These timers will form part of a crossing system which incorporate signs which will encourage pedestrians wishing to access Main Street and the City Centre to do so at this controlled crossing, which will clearly define pedestrian crossing times and vehicle movement times.

1055 The intention is to alleviate the congestion created by visitors, especially those from cruise ships, when they cross at the uncontrolled crossing adjacent to the Waterport Fountain Roundabout. In doing so, large traffic tailbacks are created as a result of swarms of pedestrians crossing without a means of controlling their crossing times.

1060 A second countdown timer, as announced, was placed at the last pelican crossing leading from the fuel station to Market Place. These new measures are expected to provide better fluidity to traffic flow and safer pedestrian access to town.

Mr Speaker, last year saw the completion of pedestrian improvements to the Trafalgar and Ragged Staff areas with the introduction of a new puffin crossing, together with a new zebra crossing from Ragged Staff parking to the Trafalgar Cemetery. This falls in line with the policies

1065 and objectives of the Traffic Plan which aims to improve pedestrian access, cutting journey times
and make walking safer and more enjoyable – hence encouraging its take-up as, no doubt, the
best way of getting to and from places.

1070 The Department, as usual, continues to successfully manage road closures and diversions on
the Public Highway, both for its own in-house works and for all other utility companies and
contractors, in a manner that allows essential works to be undertaken whilst at the same time
allowing vehicles and pedestrians to circulate in a safe manner with the minimum amount of
disruption. The increased construction activity generated by new projects over the past few
years makes this task increasingly difficult. In order to reduce the impact as much as possible,
road closures are avoided during peak times wherever possible, and after hours and weekend
work is a condition that is normally imposed on contractors in order to minimise inconvenience
1075 to the public.

Mr Speaker, as stated in last year's Budget speech, the comprehensive resurfacing
programme will be continued this year by this Department. Last year, major resurfacing works
were undertaken along the southern section of Queensway from the Dockyard roundabout up
to the entrance to Commonwealth Park. This project also included the laying of new road
1080 channels on the sides of the road and remedial works to existing road gullies to improve
drainage in the area. Additionally, the roundabout leading to the supermarket on Europort
Avenue was also completely resurfaced.

During the current financial year the resurfacing programme will continue and the
Department is currently reviewing various areas for resurfacing which will include a section of
1085 Queensway by the new multi-storey car park at Midtown, the Sundial Roundabout and
Cumberland Road.

Mr Speaker, we are also pleased to announce that the first phase of works to repair the
paving joints on Main Street was completed last year. The works entailed the lifting up and
relaying of the stone blocks and the filling and stabilising of all joints using a special polymer.
1090 Last year a stretch of Main Street from the junction with Engineer Lane to its junction with
Cooperage Lane was completed. In line with our manifesto commitment we are pleased to
announce that Phase 2 of this project will continue this year and will see the repairs to the joints
extend southwards along Main Street.

During the past few years, major improvements have been carried out within Dudley Ward
1095 Tunnel with the installation of a fire-fighting main and emergency telephones along the full
length of Dudley Ward Tunnel. Last year mobile phone coverage was extended within the tunnel
and the Department has been working with specialist consultants to develop a ventilation
scheme which will improve the air quality as much as possible, whilst working within the
constraints imposed by this ex-military tunnel. In line with our manifesto commitment, funding
1100 has been earmarked for the installation of the ventilation system to be commenced during the
current financial year.

The draft Sustainable Traffic, Transport and Parking Plan was published during 2015 and was
open to public consultation to allow the public to comment on the various initiatives being
considered. Their various comments and suggestions have helped to form the final version of
1105 the plan that is earmarked for publication soon and will provide a footprint for all matters
relating to traffic, parking and modes of transport on our roads for the next ten years.

Mr Speaker, on traffic matters, the Department has continued to make good progress this
year and has seen a number of improvements and initiatives. Traffic speed indicator devices
were installed on several of our main arterial roads. These speed indicator devices are vehicle-
1110 activated signs which detect and display real time vehicle speeds as vehicles approach them, in
order to advise drivers of the speed they are travelling at. The aim of the devices is to provide
information that will allow drivers to change their behaviour towards speed and is one of several
measures which form part of the wider speed-management plan. In this respect the Department
has been carrying out a full review of the speed limits on all of Gibraltar's roads and is pleased to

1115 announce that, in the coming year, changes will be made to the current speed limits to a number of our roads, some of which have already started.

1120 During the past year, the Department has also been involved with the installation of speed cameras along Europa Advance Road, Rosia Road and Devil's Tower Road. These sites were chosen in consultation with the RGP who are the experts on the ground when it comes to 'hotspots' for speeding around Gibraltar. These roads have the highest accident rates statistically and it is hoped that the introduction of these speed cameras will reduce vehicle speeds and make our roads safer for all our users. The project is currently at a very advanced stage and it is hoped that the cameras will become operational within the next few months.

1125 Mr Speaker, in respect to parking, the construction of the new multi-storey car park at the site of the old Naval Grounds is now completed and this will provide parking for 1,000-plus cars directly in the heart of Gibraltar. This facility will provide 40 covered parking spaces for large coaches as well as additional spaces for smaller coaches and taxis. It will also provide around 700 public car parking spaces – this is double the number of spaces that were previously available where Commonwealth Park now stands, and 100 more than the combined total of that car park and that of the Naval Ground. Three hundred and twenty-six spaces have been sold and some
1130 let out on a monthly basis. This car park also has 19 parking spaces designated for the disabled drivers and 30 bays fitted with electric car charging points.

1135 Other parking initiatives have included the introduction of additional pay and display facilities at Landport Ditch and the introduction of pay and display parking at Romney Huts car park. A new parking scheme is currently in progress and being developed along Line Wall Road, Orange Bastion and Zoca Flank, including Fountain Ramp. There has been a redistribution of motorbike parking to Zoca Flank and Reclamation Road allowing a greater area for quick turnaround pay and display parking along Line Wall Road, and more loading bays for commercial and residential use in the area which will be segregated depending on user type.

1140 A new pay and display area is also being considered for Waterport Road. These initiatives are aimed at improving the availability of parking in busy areas at peak times by the introduction of a parking fee to encourage vehicle turnaround. The feedback has been very good as increased turnaround means a greater chance of finding parking in the most needed areas, close to commercial and business zones. This has been greatly welcomed by the many that use these
1145 already existing facilities.

During this current financial year the Department is expecting to construct a new pedestrian footpath along Governor's Street from the junction of Bishop Rapallo Ramp to Library Ramp. This area is extremely narrow and there are concerns for the safety of pedestrians entering and exiting the properties and businesses lining the western side of this road.

1150 Mr Speaker, moving now on to sewers: during the past year the Infrastructure section of the Department has been carrying out significant works to the existing sewer that runs along Devil's Tower Road. These have included repairs to a sewer collapse by the Sundial Roundabout as well as the rehabilitation and repair of several brick manholes along the sewer run. During the coming financial year extensive sewer relining works will be carried out along this length of
1155 sewer to deal with the additional flows that will result from developments in the area.

Apart from the works at Devil's Tower Road the Department has been working on a new foul sewer system at Europort Avenue and will shortly commence work to lay a new storm water system in the area. This new system will go a long way in dealing with the problems of flooding along Queensway which has been caused by the collapse of an existing brick culvert and which has required an over pumping regime to be put in place to deal with the problem.
1160

The condition and upkeep of Gibraltar's main sewer and storm water drainage networks continues to be a matter of great concern for the Government arising from a lack of sufficient investment and neglect in the past to what is, arguably, the most important part of our infrastructure. The Department will therefore this year continue to carry out desilting and
1165 cleansing works to the main sewer from the area of the Museum to the Trafalgar Roundabout.

Other works will include improvements to the storm water systems at both Road to the Lines and the southern end of Main Street where flooding has become an annual problem during periods of very heavy rainfall.

1170 Funding is once again being provided for the purchase of equipment to allow the Sewer Infrastructure section to continue to expand and provide an enhanced service in respect of inspections of the sewer network.

Funding is also being provided this financial year to the garage and workshop for new equipment. The garage and workshop will continue to provide its service to maintain the fleet of Government vehicles, including the refuse collection vehicles.

1175 Mr Speaker, the Technical Services Department is one of those Government Departments who are rarely in the limelight but who work tirelessly behind the scenes to deliver on their defined responsibilities, maintaining public infrastructure and supporting and providing technical advice to other Government Ministries and Departments. You will recall that the Department was heavily involved during the major landslide that affected Europa Road in October last year and is testament to the professional and technical ability of the Department to deal with all manner of challenges.

As can be seen, Technical Services will quietly, yet effectively and professionally, continue to carry out this coming year all manner of projects in order to deliver on the Government's extensive and comprehensive programmes.

1185 Mr Speaker, turning now to public transport: the new MAN buses are providing Gibraltar with a much-needed improved bus service and are playing a key role in part of the Government's Sustainable Traffic, Transport and Parking Plan. These buses are fully accessible to all and include wide-step entrances, space for wheelchairs or buggies, kneeling suspension and powerful and reliable air-conditioning. Additionally, the Ministry for Transport, Traffic and Technical Services announced in October of last year that Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar was working on a real-time bus tracking service that would cover all working routes offered by the Gibraltar Bus Company.

1190 The Gibraltar Bus Tracker WebApp, developed by the Information Technology & Logistics Department, was officially launched in April with Routes 2 and 3, with further routes to be announced in due course.

The Bus Tracker WebApp now offers users real-time bus information. Therefore, from any smartphone or desktop computer with internet access, any citizen will be able to access the website, select a bus route and see a transit map that will display where buses are located within the given route.

1200 Mr Speaker, this is yet another way in which our public transport experience has been enhanced. Why should we wait for the bus, when we can meet it at the bus stop? The Bus Tracker App will revolutionise bus travel in Gibraltar, helping to provide that modal change to more sustainable and shared and environmentally friendly transport. The Bus Tracker App is imperative to give the control to the user so that they have the confidence to leave their vehicle behind and choose the free and efficient service that is being provided. Further bus routes will be rolled out shortly as the routes are further reviewed.

1205 Bus routes are also being modified with consideration given to user feedback and comments. The hardest thing to do is to strike that happy balance that pleases all bus users, each with their own differing and indeed conflicting needs. The hardest compromise is providing a bus service that gives the maximum route coverage, especially to an increasingly ageing community, while providing a reasonably short journey time to satisfy the working population too – hence encouraging that step change of leaving vehicles behind and opting for public transport instead. Although a long and convoluted bus service favours people with a lot of time on their hands, it does little for those who need to get to work quickly. Some routes can take up to between 45 minutes and 1 hour from start to finish – and sometimes even longer if snared up in traffic.

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Mr Speaker, Government has made a significant investment in six new buses for the Upper Town in order to guarantee a better bus service all round and to try to encourage the use of public transport as a sustainable and an attractive alternative mode of transport.

1220 These modern buses have not only proved to be the best value for money, but also conform to the latest Euro 6 emission guidelines. They were carefully selected following a series of tests with different makes and models of vehicles carried out around our unique road network and topography. These trials were undertaken to ensure that the vehicles selected would meet the stringent requirements of the Upper Town.

1225 I am pleased to announce that the Ford Transits that were procured have proved to be powerful enough to deal with steep inclines while, at the same, time providing an adequately comfortable and cool environment within – that is, in terms of temperature – for its users. Furthermore, these buses are sufficiently small to be able to navigate our narrow roads while at the same time offer adequate passenger capacity.

1230 Their main specifications are: CCTV for passenger and driver safety; grab rails in order to accommodate standing passengers; and electric sliding doors. Moreover, three of these buses have also been fitted with fully accessible rear-entry wheelchair lifts. These lifts will not only allow access to wheelchair users, but can also enable those persons with severe walking disabilities to access the bus interior using these same means while in the standing position. Provisions are also in place should there be demand enough to fit wheelchair lifts in more buses.

1235 These new buses are now also serving the Mount Alvernia route with its wheelchair facilities. This was a much-needed and a much-sought-out service by the residents of this facility.

1240 Mr Speaker, in order to continue to improve the public transport service, Government will be training two more transport inspectors thereby bringing the complement to seven officers that will further ensure that our public transport meets the expectations of their users, and that they fully abide and conform to all the legal requirements under the Transport Act.

1245 In parallel, Government continues to work hand-in-hand with the Gibraltar Taxi Association in order to jointly identify strategies to continue to better the taxi service throughout Gibraltar. This year a new City Service pilot scheme has been put in place whereby more taxis are available to the public during the busy daytime hours. Although still under assessment, signs of customer service improvements are already starting to show. It is, in fact, the GTA who are the most self-critical of themselves, and taxi drivers generally agree and support these measures with a view of safeguarding an adequate service to the population from taxi ranks and the airport alike. I wish to thank the GTA and its members for their willingness to help improve what is already a very difficult service to provide, amidst daily traffic pressures especially around the Frontier and the Airport.

1250 Mr Speaker, I now turn to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Department. This Department is working closely with the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) in the UK for the introduction of the tachograph cards that will serve our drivers, operators and enforcement agencies. All the administrative procedures – application forms, information letters and databases – are now in place; a Memorandum of Understanding and a service level agreement

1255 has been drafted jointly by the Driving and Vehicle Licensing Department and Government Law Offices and is awaiting the DVSA's comments. The Department is actively working to try and find an apt solution in order to record speed, distance and the accurate activity of lorry and bus drivers in accordance with the regulations.

1260 Transport undertakings wishing to complete the new driver Certificate of Professional Competence – also known as the CPC – the initial qualification and periodic training, can obtain the training that is continually being provided by the DVLD. In the past year, 25 more drivers have successfully passed the Bus Certificate of Professional Competence and 16 more drivers have successfully passed the Lorry CPC initial qualification.

1265 The Government, in an effort to ensure that all directive requirements are met will continue to deliver the 35-hour periodic training for existing drivers during 2016-17. Presently, in total, 169 bus drivers and 85 lorry drivers have successfully attended the CPC periodic training. With

1270 this Government initiative, both transport undertakings and individual applicants are now taking advantage of completing the 35 hours of periodic training over a five-year period, necessary to be able to drive in a professional capacity. This structure is now assisting undertakings and individuals to spread the CPC training costs over the full five-year period.

1275 Mr Speaker, the carriage of dangerous goods by road carries the inherent risk of accidents. Taking into account the safety requirements of vehicles in Gibraltar that carry dangerous goods, and in accordance with the Transport (Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road) Regulations 2010, Government has already trained seven officers. It is envisaged that Government will continue to provide this training in order to qualify officers and allow them to issue an authorisation certificate to these types of vehicles. This year, further courses will be held by qualified persons from the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency from the UK in order to train the newly recruited vehicle testers. This course will be held locally.

1280 Mr Speaker, the introduction by this Government of the Motorcycle Compulsory Basic Training Course – also known as the CBT – for riders, continues to be a tremendous success. Feedback from parents and the public at large has been extremely positive, with 928 riders having been trained over the last year. I am very confident that this Government training incentive is contributing to continuously improve the road safety and reducing motorcycle accidents, especially in first-time motorcycle users.

1285 Mr Speaker, due to unexpected increase in demand of the photocard driving licence, Government has had to procure an extra 8,000 blank driving licence cards from the UK. Although similar to the previous cards, these cards differ inasmuch as the security feature at the back of card. Nonetheless, the public should not worry as the validity of our licences including our paper models is up to the year 2033.

1290 The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Department, as a means of improving customer service, has introduced a bespoke business counter that is assisting businesses and reducing their respective waiting times. Feedback from its users has been very positive. Furthermore, the Department continues to use information and communication technology as a tool to achieve better customer services. The general public is now actively accessing a number of online DVLD services and applications via the new e-Government portal – mainly roadworthiness certificate bookings (MOT) and driving test and theory test bookings. This is proving to be very popular and is allowing customers to access and pay for such facilities at any time from the comfort of their own homes. These measures come as new e-Government opportunities for the DVLD that will appropriately cater for market demands and service requirements.

1300 Mr Speaker, the Department together with the Government's Law Offices, is working closely in order to update all existing national traffic and transport legislation with a view to making both Acts more user friendly.

1305 The Traffic and Transport Commission continue to meet on a monthly basis. The Traffic Commission is constantly working to assist our citizens in all matters relating to traffic. The Commission is also heavily involved in recommending to Government the improvement of facilities and eco-friendly traffic advice regarding new project applications submitted to the Town Planning Commission. The Transport Commission works hand in hand with all the transport undertakings, the bus company and the Gibraltar Taxi Association in order to mutually find strategies to continue to better the public transport services in Gibraltar. To this effect, I am very satisfied that both these bodies have been able to adopt all traffic and transport regulations successfully. From here, again, I thank all the members of both commissions, many of which give up their personal time on a voluntary basis.

1310 Mr Speaker, the Prüm Convention was signed on 27th May 2005 by Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom in the town of Prüm in Germany. The Convention was adopted so as to enable the signatories to exchange data regarding DNA, fingerprints and vehicle registration of concerned persons and to co-operate against terrorism.

1320 The Prüm Convention will require that Gibraltar authorities – principally the RGP and the
DVLD – are able to exchange fingerprint, DNA profiles and vehicle registration data via the UK
with other member states. We are working on legislative requirements to provide for this co-
operation and analysis of this is in hand. For exchange of information about vehicle registration
data, the DVLD is pursuing advice from the UK Department for Transport and DVLA precisely on
how the Prüm obligations might be achieved in order to minimise the outlay and running costs.

1325 Mr Speaker, I now wish to turn my attention to my ministerial responsibilities within the Port.
I am delighted to confirm that the Gibraltar Port Authority has recently been granted Essential
Services status. This is a very positive step for the authority and its employees, and provides an
excellent platform from which to grow the port in the future.

1330 On the subject of finance, during the course of financial year 2015-2016 the Gibraltar Port
Authority spent a total of £5,432,663 – including capital expenditure – from a budget of
£5,442,000. The revenue was £4,418,047. The reduction in overall revenue has been as a result
of previously over-optimistic financial projections against the backdrop of actual global activity,
as well as the various discounts being applied to tariffs which, together with a concerted
proactive and targeted marketing campaign, have resulted in greater levels of activity across
1335 most areas. Capital expenditure included the refurbishment of port assets as part of the
Government's commitment to improve port infrastructure.

Mr Speaker, I am delighted to announce that the new Vessel Traffic Services System, the VTS,
tender process has been completed and the project is now expected to move forward with the
new system being housed in the purpose-built office complex at Lathbury Barracks. This building
1340 is well on track for completion later on this year. The delivery of the new system once again
highlights the Government's commitment to ensure functionality and resilience in the system
that underpins safety of navigation in our busy waters.

As for other developments, the Gibraltar Port Authority recently commissioned the complete
refit of the port launch, the General Elliott. The newly refitted port launch is now actively
1345 patrolling British Gibraltar territorial waters, providing all-important eyes at sea level to
complement the VTS, escorting vessels into and out of British Gibraltar territorial waters and
assisting, where necessary, distressed vessels. The provision of a reliable vessel is absolutely
essential, especially now with such a large influx of new pleasure craft, with some users
inexperienced, following the allocation of new berths at the new small boats marina. The refit
1350 does exactly this.

The port has also invested in updating the port fenders as well as also investing in its other
assets such as oil spill booms on the northern and southern harbour entrances. Work also
continues in evolving the Vessel Management System programme to further facilitate the
smooth running of the port.

1355 Mr Speaker, the Government is also in the process of reviewing expressions of interest
received in respect of land-based storage facilities in Gibraltar. There are a number of extremely
impressive and interesting proposals and the Government will be considering these with a view
to making sure that Gibraltar gets the best possible solution, whilst not impacting on other port
activities.

1360 Following the procurement process for a new oil spill radar protection system, which failed to
attract a solution to meet the GPA's requirements, the GPA now believes that the new VTS
system, which includes a more powerful thermal imaging capability in detecting oil spills, will
close this capability gap.

1365 In the important area of security, enhanced fencing will also be installed within the Port
Estate shortly. This improvement will go towards improving the first impressions of
disembarking passengers in the port. Other enhancements are also being considered as part of
the Government's commitment to developing the port for cruise passengers in general.

Mr Speaker, the Port Authority continues with its proactive marketing campaign in line with
Government policy, focusing on direct engagement with ship owners and key stakeholders; and
1370 the GPA once again recently took part in the Posidonia Exhibition in Athens, the world's most

prestigious maritime event. As always the Gibraltar stand, co-sponsored by a number of our key operators and partners, generated a lot of interest.

1375 The Minister for Shipping, my colleague the Hon. Albert Isola, the Captain of the Port and various port operators also undertook a marketing visit to the Far East in April and visited both Singapore and Hong Kong in order to promote Gibraltar to the Asian market; and they also took the opportunity to directly engage with ship owners and other key stakeholders.

1380 The Government held formal receptions in both territories which were extremely well attended. Further marketing visits are being considered and GPA personnel have also continued to attend various bunkering, security, cruise and environmental conferences including in Copenhagen, Rotterdam, Barcelona, Mexico, Sardinia and London, to name but a few.

The impact of these efforts is clearly shown in the stability of our port activity data when compared to other regional ports, given the unfavourable global conditions generally.

1385 Mr Speaker, the Port Authority, in conjunction with the RGP and the GMA, has also recently relaunched the Safety at Sea booklet, in time for all those new boat owners now taking up berths at the Mid-Harbour Marina to be reminded of their responsibilities at sea in order that all leisure boat owners enjoy our local waters in a safe manner.

1390 The allocation of berths at the Mid-Harbour Small Boats Marina has been extremely successful and nearly all allocations have been completed. These allocations have been carried out strictly by the berthing waiting lists and in accordance with the Small Vessels (Moorings Control) Rules 2016 – and to those applicants without Government arrears. The temporary Caretaker Committee will shortly call for a meeting to elect a formal Association Committee who will have responsibility for the running of the marina with the Gibraltar Port Authority maintaining responsibility for berth allocation and oversight of expenditure.

1395 I must thank the Gibraltar Port Authority staff involved in this project for their tremendous efforts in making sure that the process has been quick and efficient. I must also convey my sincere thanks to the temporary caretaker committee who have taken on their role with much enthusiasm and professionalism. The new marina is no doubt the jewel in the crown of berthing facilities in Gibraltar and its western superyacht berthing facilities have already been of interest to yacht owners and yacht masters alike. Indeed, we have already seen some well-known
1400 superyachts making use of this new berthing area. No doubt this facility will serve us well in the future.

The marina itself has also brought back an important recreational area lost when the North Mole was lost to vehicle traffic. Now the area is a magnificent walkway, leisure and fishing area as well as a scenic waterfront drive.

1405 The GPA has almost completed its review of the Port Contingency Plan as part of its responsibilities to continue aligning itself to the Port Marine Safety Code. In addition, a full review of port legislation is also underway, with the delivery of the new Pilotage Act already completed and the modernisation of port licensing currently in hand.

1410 Mr Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our port operators and service providers who work very closely with the GPA and Government – their support in our efforts to maintain our reputation as a centre of maritime excellence is essential.

1415 I now turn my attention to my responsibilities for Town Planning and Building Control. Mr Speaker, the Department continues to deal with large numbers of applications. In 2015 there were: 451 planning and building applications; 17 demolition applications; 55 advertisement applications; and 21 tree applications.

Some of these were large, complex applications involving assessment of environmental impacts through the EIA process, and extensive discussions with applicants to try and achieve high standards of design.

1420 Government and MOD projects continue to be submitted to the Development and Planning Commission for guidance and advice. In 2015 Government and MOD applications totalled 52 planning and building, and demolition applications. The DPC provides its advice and guidance on

such applications, which are then taken into account by the Government or MOD in finalising its plans.

1425 Mr Speaker, the DPC meetings continue to be held in public with a total of 12 meetings held in 2015. In addition, the DPC's sub-committee meets regularly to determine minor applications. In 2015 there were 40 meetings of the sub-committee. This greatly helps in speeding up the decision-making process.

All agendas and minutes continue to be made available online ensuring that the planning process remains open and transparent.

1430 In October 2015 the first stage of the e-Planning service was launched. This represents a step change in the way that the public is able to access information about applications. E-Planning allows anyone to search and view the details of any application submitted after the launch of the service, including all the plans and other documents submitted with the application. This makes it much easier for the public to be able to see what is being proposed and members of the public
1435 can even submit their comments on an application through this service.

Mr Speaker, e-Planning also makes it much easier for applicants to submit their own applications. These can be done entirely online without the need for applicants to have to post their applications or deliver them by hand. In the first six months of the service going live just over 60% of planning and building applications were submitted online. This level of usage has
1440 exceeded our expectations and indicates that this new service for applicants has been well received.

The Town Planning staff are continuing to develop and improve on the first stage and the intention is to roll out further improvements during the course of the year, including the ability to pay fees online and to provide the public with the facility to carry out map-based searches for applications that may be of interest to them.
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The Department also continues to develop its Geographical Information System – the GIS – to enable it to record and analyse data geographically. It has recently completed development work that allows it to identify relevant consultation bodies that need to be consulted on applications based on spatially defined zones. This helps ensure that the appropriate
1450 consultation bodies are consulted on applications that are of relevance to their specific expertise.

In July 2015 we published a Command Paper for the new Town Planning Act with a public consultation period up to the end of September. All the comments received were reviewed and a final draft is now almost complete. We have also been drafting new regulations in preparation
1455 for the new Act. The Gibraltar Development Plan of 2009 is in need of review and work on this will continue this financial year.

The Town Planning Department continues to encourage property owners to improve the appearance of their buildings through the Tax Relief on Façade Improvements scheme. During 2015 there were 26 applications under this scheme. A similar tax relief scheme has been
1460 introduced to encourage the use of solar water heating and photovoltaic cells as a way of contributing towards sustainable energy generation, and my staff encourage homeowners and developers to make use of this scheme whenever it is applicable.

Mr Speaker, 2015 saw the incorporation of the post of Urban Renewal Officer into the Town Planning Department to further strengthen the Department's expertise and capabilities. In this
1465 respect the Department works closely with my colleague, the Hon. Joseph Garcia, who leads on Urban Renewal. Work is currently focused on identifying specific buildings in need of refurbishment and encouraging owners to undertake improvement works and to maximise the use of these properties thereby bringing new life back into these urban areas.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I now turn to Building Control. The Building Control Department's main
1470 duties are the administration and enforcement of the building regulations made under the Public Health Act by inspection of deposited plans. This is followed up with the necessary site inspections in order to determine that the works have been carried out to the approved plans and specifications.

1475 From 1st January to 31st May 2016 the Department has received a total of 391 applications, of which 150 are still pending a decision – a possible record for 2016. It has also received seven demolition applications of which four are Government projects and five are pending a decision. Finally, Mr Speaker, a total of 75 certificates of fitness have been issued this year to date.

1480 Mr Speaker, I would like to conclude my contribution to my Budget address by thanking all my staff who work so hard to see our commitments become a reality. Thanks goes not only to those who ensure the rolling out of our commitments, my senior members of staff, but also to all those who do not go by unnoticed, who perform all the valuable functions within the service throughout all the various Departments and offices.

1485 I also wish to thank all the staff here at Parliament who work tirelessly to ensure that proceedings run as smoothly and efficiently as they do, and for the exemplary organisation of both the general elections and the EU Referendum.

In particular, Mr Speaker, I would finally also like to thank my personal ministerial staff for all of their help, support, hard work and long hours during the past year.

Thank you. (*Banging on desks*)

1490 **Mr Speaker:** The Hon. Trevor Hammond.

1495 **Hon. T N Hammond:** Mr Speaker, it is a cliché to say so, but it is both an honour and a privilege to stand here and deliver my first Budget speech here alongside my colleagues, both as a Member of this Parliament and of Her Majesty's Opposition with a duty to the people of Gibraltar to make enquiry of Government on their behalf.

Mr Speaker, if I may first turn to European affairs as it has featured so prominently in the affairs of Gibraltar over the past few months and crucially in the last fortnight with the results of the EU referendum, and will doubtless be of great import in the months to come if not indeed for the remainder of this Parliament.

1500 I believe that the Members of this House can be proud at the way in which we have come together and worked towards a singular objective of galvanising the people of Gibraltar, to make them understand the importance of the recent referendum and ultimately to have them vote overwhelmingly for the outcome which we all here, and most of Gibraltar, believed would be the best for our community. That we were unable to influence the overall result, that the result was certainly not that which any of us here desired, detracts not one iota from the efforts of Members of this House, both in Government and Opposition, in coming together and working to a common cause.

1510 I agree with the Chief Minister when he said in his speech yesterday that the British people have made a gross error of judgement and I echo his hope that the shock result can be turned into a success.

1515 There is no escaping the fact that the result of the referendum and the exit of Britain from the EU will present challenges for our community. While it is well and good to use platitudes such as 'business as usual' to try and allay fears of an uncertain future, we must recognise that much work will have to be done to ensure that it is actually 'business as usual'. I know, as with the referendum campaign, that those on this side of the House representing Her Majesty's Opposition stand ready to assist and support Government in those areas most critically affected by the referendum result. Our community wishes to see its politicians working together for the common good. They have seen how effectively we can work together already and they shall not find us wanting. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

1520 However, there is another important aspect of 'business as usual' which it is important to respect and that is the fact that we are a Parliamentary democracy and, as I have already said, we on this side of the House have a responsibility to the community to make enquiry on their behalf and hold Government to account. So, with this in mind, I turn to matters of transport.

1525 Mr Speaker, it would be true to say that the Government's still-draft Sustainable Traffic, Transport and Parking Plan (STTPP) has been in this draft phase for an extraordinarily long

period of time. We have had public consultations; we have employed expert consultants; we have even had a go at implementing a few of the draft recommendations, all without publishing the final report. Never has a Minister derived so much mileage – no pun intended – from a single document. There are many useful and important measures recommended by the Plan. The Government must stop prevaricating, publish and commit to delivering those recommendations.

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The Plan states in its introduction that it is:

The Government's priority is to provide a high-quality transport system that people choose as an alternative to the car.

and

A new network of bus routes that will provide fast, frequent services to destinations throughout Gibraltar.

I very much support both of those laudable objectives. However, what I see and what I hear from those who most frequently use the bus service is a failure to execute those objectives: a replacement bus fleet that users continue to struggle to access; route changes that have resulted in the elderly, in particular, having to change buses to access areas where previously they had a hop on/hop off option.

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The Minister will surely appreciate that not only are the elderly some of the most frequent users of the bus service, but that they are also most likely to be those who are struggling with the challenges of boarding the new buses. Asking them to have to change at Market Place to continue their journey is simply to discourage them from using the service at all or worse still, where they have no option but to use the service – which is frequently the case – to put them through unnecessary difficulty. I call on the Minister to once more review the bus routes, consult and listen to the user groups and ensure that a service is provided that will best suit the needs of those users.

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While on the subject of buses, I cannot avoid mentioning the other remarkable news from earlier this year: that Government had sold 14 units of the previous bus fleet for the lowly sum of £15,000 without any announcement or tendering process. It is quite astounding how fast and loose this Government can be with public money.

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Parking controls and regulations are, according to the plan, at its core, yet what we have seen is the disbandment of the very agency designed to enforce parking regulations: the Highways Enforcement Officers – the Minister claiming that they were too expensive.

Most of the officers were transferred to the Borders and Coastguard Agency who rightly needed to be brought up to strength, but this means that there was no real saving in the disbandment of the HEO's and frankly, with the amount of illegal parking I see around Gibraltar, I would have thought that continued and proper enforcement would have largely covered the costs of the HEO's.

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Regardless, the upshot is that rather than pursue the enforcement of parking controls and regulations – a core element of the STTPP – the Government has removed resources from this area and suggests that the service might be outsourced, albeit no commitment has been given to do so. Meanwhile, and I repeat, despite parking controls and regulations being a core element of the STTPP, enforcement is entirely left at the discretion of the RGP without guidance or the provision of additional resource by Government. I fail to see how this constitutes a successful execution of the recommendation.

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Meanwhile, resident parking zones are not being properly explored, meaning a free-for-all exists between residents and visitors to areas, and this often includes competing with foreign registered cars in some areas. The availability of parking has never really recovered from the loss of the Commonwealth Parade. The Park is wonderful but it never included the parking that was a manifesto commitment in that '100% delivered' 2011 manifesto.

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Since then, we have robbed Peter to pay Paul over parking and spent vast sums: differing figures have been offered but at least £15 million to build a pharaonic monument to ugliness in

the middle of town. The net result is about the same number of spaces as we had before: poor project execution and wasteful use of public money.

1575 Perhaps Government might consider taking serious measures to encourage the use of the car parks on Devil's Tower Road for their original purpose, and establishing a park-and-ride service which might go some way to alleviating the stresses on parking while at the same time making a serious contribution to the air quality in the town area by reducing congestion.

1580 Moving on to matters which I would have expected to be closed by now – based on previous Government rhetoric, at least – I find myself asking, 'Where are the Redibikes?' It appears they were far from ready when, on 9th of November last year, the Government announced the imminent arrival of this scheme to encourage commuters out of their cars and onto bikes. Of course, that announcement had to come with the expected condemnation of the previous scheme which this Government removed from service but, as also seems usual, execution of the project has not worked as anticipated.

1585 The press release at the beginning of last November, I remind you, announced the 'imminent' launch of a new bicycle hire scheme with the Minister saying that Government had received the bikes and associated infrastructure in early August. 'Imminent' means that something is about to happen and, whereas Government was keen to point out that the previous scheme was 'fraught with problems', one can only imagine how fraught with problems this scheme must be to cause a nine-month delay to the project. One hopes the bikes are rather more carefully stored than the lifts for Laguna Estate or they may not be of much use by the time Government actually delivers the scheme.

1590 Speed Cameras: another project where promises of implementation have proven to be optimistic. Coincidentally, the press release announcing the speed cameras was also issued on 9th of November of last year: an auspicious day indeed for the Minister. (*Interjections*)

We were told that the:

... infrastructure works ... have been completed and fixed speed cameras will soon be sited at different locations.

Indeed, they were, and there they forlornly remain, still wrapped in their somewhat tattered plastic packaging. Back in November of last year, the Minister was saying that:

... this will go a long way in reducing the incidence of indiscriminate speeding which no doubt make our roads safer for all.

1600 It should be recalled also that these cameras were publicly lobbied for after certain tragic events.

1605 So here we are, nine months later with no progress having been made on this project, which was designed to make our roads safer. Is there so little regard for public safety that Government is not even able to see such projects through in a timely manner, even when they are so quick to make announcements of their implementation as if completion is truly imminent? Time and again, we see that their priorities are all wrong.

1610 Remaining on the subject of public safety, I must turn to the condition of our roads. Government, occasionally, makes attempts to persuade us – as the Hon. the Minister has done today – that it is conducting a major programme of resurfacing of our roads. What we actually see is piecemeal activity over small areas where no sooner is the new surface laid than a utility company arrives to dig it up again, soon returning the road to its lumpy and potholed state.

1615 The condition of our roads is a hazard to those on two wheels, whether that be motorbike or bicycle, onto which the Government is keen to claim it is attempting to encourage us. I then look at the budget estimate and it becomes clear why this is so, despite the claims – and I shall quote the Minister here from his press release of 20th October last year where he says he is:

... happy to see the ... continued investment throughout our road infrastructure through the road resurfacing programme ...

That investment last year amounted to £280,000 with £300,000 more for the next year.

Does the Minister really believe that he can accomplish his commitment on such a paltry budget? Let me just put that in context: £40,000 has been set aside to replace the mace here before us, yet the entirety of the road resurfacing budget for next year is £300,000 – again, misplaced priorities. Frankly, it is no wonder that so many people in Gibraltar prefer to buy 4x4 off-road vehicles.

I will finish this part of my address on a positive, however, and that is to both note and welcome the imminent recommencement of the tunnel under the runway. Though this has not quite happened according to the timeline suggested by the Chief Minister after Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar won the litigation against OHL, his enthusiasm at that time and after that victory was understandable. It does appear that we are now in a position to commence this very important infrastructure project which will remove the delays to traffic caused by increasing numbers of flights at the airport, go far to alleviating the congestion caused by this in town and will also help in improving air quality around town and residential areas to the north of town – more on this later.

Mr Speaker, moving swiftly on – no idling here: from a Ministry which has been sustained by the creation and recommendations of a single draft report for over four years, to a Ministry which has produced so many reports that it is difficult to track them, let alone find the Parliamentary time to make proper enquiry as to the progress of the many recommendations contained within them.

Mr Speaker, on the Environment, the Government has produced the Environmental Action and Management Plan; the Southern Waters of Gibraltar Management Scheme; the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan; the Management of Marine Resources in the Waters Around Gibraltar document, otherwise known as 'the fishing report'; and the Gibraltar Waste Management Plan – to name but a few. We await with eager anticipation the significantly overdue Rock of Gibraltar Management Plan and Upper Rock Management Plan. Of course, it is important to reference two comprehensive documents which were not produced by Government but by GOHNS: the Biodiversity Action Plan; Gibraltar, Planning for Nature; and the Upper Rock Nature Reserve, a Management and Action Plan – now a few years old but both of which provide spectacular detail and are to be commended.

The point I am making is that there is a wealth of valuable environmental information at our fingertips, a wealth of recommendations which Government must decide how to prioritise and decide which to act on and which are perhaps either unachievable or insufficiently cost-effective to proceed with. This is where it is vital that the Minister provides leadership to his very competent team in the Ministry. I do not believe that the Minister is achieving this, not because he lacks the conviction to promote environmental issues – no one could possibly accuse the Minister of that in matters of the environment – but instead, rather like a child in a sweet shop, there are too many goodies and he is not sure where to turn. (*Interjection*)

This has resulted in the single biggest failure by the Minister to deliver on a commitment which should have been his top environmental priority, but which has still not commenced over four years into his stewardship. I am of course referring to the waste treatment and sewage plant which was promised in the GSLP/Liberal manifesto of 2011. Yes, the manifesto claimed to have been entirely delivered – well, not in this case.

I feel ashamed at what I see whenever I visit Europa Point and look out over the Straight to admire the stunning view or, indeed, in search of migrating birds, only to have my eyes drawn towards the slick of brown sludge emanating from beneath the lighthouse. I do not for one moment excuse the previous administration for not having resolved this shameful practice during its tenure, but neither can the Minister seek refuge in this failure to excuse his own abject failure in this regard.

It is not good enough to say that it is a complex project and time is needed to get it right. Given the proper priority, four years should be ample time. The LNG Power Station project must surely be at least as complex, yet it has been commenced. The failure with the waste treatment

plant has been a failure to prioritise while spending on other more publicly attractive projects like Sandy Bay or the small boat marina, or vanity projects such as the refurbishment to palatial standards of No. 6 Convent Place.

1670 I appeal to the hon. Gentleman, the Minister for the Environment – though I recognise the need for great prudence in the coming year as we navigate the effects of a Brexit – please, I ask that you make *this* your top environmental priority; if necessary your *only* priority. Remove this blight from our seascape: this terrible and stinking stain which overwhelms all the other good we might seek to do for the environment.

1675 Mr Speaker, I will turn for a moment, if I may, and look at the draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure and, in particular, the Improvement and Development Fund Expenditure on Projects. I find, there, many items with a holding figure of £1,000, which immediately leads me to think that the overall estimate for the coming financial year of £40 million is a low one: worrying in itself as Government continues with its lavish spending plans without any thought to

1680 prioritisation and prudence, in reality, in this post-referendum, imminent Brexit world.

What worries me more is that two of the most significant projects: the power station – construction of which has commenced – and the waste treatment plant, are not to be found amongst these Government projects – or at least their anticipated costs are not – leaving a huge question mark over the financial arrangements in place – more off-book spending by

1685 Government? These are essential projects, but they are also very expensive projects. We must know precisely how they are being financed and the fact is that the true expenditure on projects for the coming year will be higher than estimated.

Mr Speaker, returning directly to matters of the environment, I ask the Minister in future to show firm leadership and conviction on issues which might court controversy but are nonetheless of clear import to the environment. While both the Environmental Safety Group and GOHNS were calling for a stop to the launch of balloons on National Day because of the known damage that the practice causes to the environment – calls I might add, on this side of

1690 the House, were given unequivocal public support – we found Government prevaricating, leaving the decision to the SDGG and, as it does so often, avoiding making a decision on a matter

1695 which it perceives might be unpopular.

Of course, we have become very used to the populist nature of this Government, but I ask that, just occasionally, a little backbone is shown (*Laughter*) and support is given because an issue merits support not because it is necessarily the popular thing to do. (*Interjection*) I, incidentally, must applaud the leadership shown by the environmental groups on this issue.

1700 Air Quality has been the subject of recent exchanges between Government and Opposition in the press. Despite the insistence by Government that things are improving; that there is nothing to see here, the reality is that 2013 and 2014 were the worst years on record when it comes to air quality. The World Health Organisation did rank us below every other city in the United Kingdom in terms of the quality of the air we breathe.

1705 It would appear that we might have turned a corner and things might be getting better. I am accused of being a pessimist by the Minister. I can assure him I am not; I am very much a glass is half full kind of person, but the numbers being offered still require considerable scrutiny in order to determine their veracity, because in this period some of the major contributors to air pollution have risen rather than fallen: there are more cars on our streets now than there were

1710 in 2012; air traffic has been rising by between 5% and 10% each year since the opening of the new airport – a tribute to the foresight of the previous administration. (*Interjections*) These are positive economic metrics which are to be welcomed on the one hand, but which raise environmental concerns and which appropriate countermeasures – sometimes simple expedients – must be deployed. For instance, the Environmental Action and Management Plan

1715 recommended the placement of ‘No idling’ signs at appropriate locations where traffic congestion tends to be at its worse. Not only have we not seen this recommendation carried out, but there seems to have been no communication between Ministries, as the Minister for

Transport, when asked in this House whether this recommendation had been completed, was unaware that it even existed or what 'No idling' signs were.

1720 Stringent emission control at the MoT test centre, to ensure that the vehicles being permitted on our streets are fit to be there and not contributing excessively to the pollution of the air we breathe: simple, inexpensive measures, Mr Speaker, yet crucial to improving air quality and requiring a push to ensure they are enacted.

1725 On to matters of fishing: in recent exchanges between the Hon. the Minister and myself, both in this House and in the media, the Minister seems proud to boast of the fact that there were only 192 illegal incursions by Spanish fishing vessels last year – only! This might be down on previous years, but it is a far cry from his 2011 manifesto commitment that said:

We do not believe it is right to allow illegal fishing in our waters and we will stop this immediately.

1730 That manifesto which Government claims it delivered on 100% is another example where the reality of the situation belies the propaganda. The Government has pumped millions of pounds into the Royal Gibraltar Police Marine Section in order to enhance its capability. The Government has stated that it will enforce the laws contained in the Nature Protection Act. In a Government commissioned report 'The Management of Marine Living Resources in the Waters Around Gibraltar', colloquially known as the 'Fishing Report', published way back in 2012, a recommendation – indeed, the very first recommendation – is:

That given the remaining uncertainties on fish stocks and catches, and the purpose of legislating under the Nature Protection Act 1991, there should be no commercial fishing within BGTW until such uncertainties have been resolved and a suitable management plan is in place if clarification provides sufficient evidence that a fishery is sustainable as part of a wider regional process.

1735 A recommendation conveniently ignored.

As recently as May of this year, GONHS were raising their concerns over illegal raking taking place in BGTW. They said, unfortunately:

Conch rake fishing has recently taken place in our waters, mainly sighted on the Eastern side close to the shoreline, without any apparent action by the authorities, despite the considerable maritime assets available to the RGP and the Department of the Environment ... GONHS wishes to see the law to be upheld robustly and not flouted with impunity as is currently the case.

Indeed, GONHS is basically echoing the view of their previous chairman prior to 2011.

1740 I am not a lone voice in expressing concerns over the upholding of our laws in BGTW. A Government-commissioned report agreed it was necessary. GONHS are dissatisfied and voices on social media criticising Government's failure have been legion. The Minister cannot set these concerns aside and attempt to turn abject failure into success. I acknowledge he has a difficult task, but that does not mean he can be excused failure. He made this issue his *cause célèbre* and he must now deliver on his promises.

1745 Mr Speaker, when we look at the progress on increasing the proportion of energy production by renewables and reduction in overall energy consumption per capita, I find the Minister's answers in interviews with the press both interesting and revealing. His language is always cautious, while trying to play up the success his administration has had.

1750 He knows that in nearly five years in office we have barely moved forward at all. The will is there but, again, there has been abject failure in execution: no real progress in smart metring; little capability for sale of power back to the grid; heavily subsidised power consumption to the tune of over £20 million a year, so that the general public have little real knowledge of the financial cost, let alone the environmental cost of energy usage. These things should have been done by now but, again, Government priorities have been elsewhere and the environment *has* suffered.

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Mr Speaker, the recent announcement of the commissioning of a wave power generator on the eastside did, I must confess, pique my interest. I did think that we were really making progress; alas, only to find that this project – announced with much fanfare, as if it were the panacea to all global warming woes – turns out to be producing about enough energy to power
1760 a dozen light bulbs or, to quote the Minister, a few kettles. Granted this is a baby step in the right direction, but apart from this and a few solar panels here and there, this represents the sum total of our nation's achievements in switching to renewables. That 20% target by 2020 seems very far away at present and I am yet to be persuaded that wave energy is not just an expensive gimmick, too demanding to be a real solution.

1765 Solar on the other hand – and in our climate – would appear to be a far more viable alternative with technology becoming very affordable. Either way, let's be sure to prioritise our efforts when it comes to using renewable resources and do our utmost to achieve that 20% target.

I will finish with the environment by talking a little about the management of invasive species
1770 of plants in Gibraltar. A remarkable transformation has taken place in this regard and in one particular location. That transformation should shine like a beacon for what can be achieved through real effort and application. It is a true demonstration of substance over style as opposed to the Government's more usual style over substance.

The Minister will know immediately that I am referring to the Europa Foreshore, where a
1775 scorched earth policy has been conducted against all plants not native to Gibraltar, to the point that such are now barely detectable. Native species have moved in very quickly – some have been planted to accelerate the progress – and an Edenesque transformation has been accomplished. All this through the efforts of one man – and not even a Gibraltarian at that – a volunteer giving of his own time. I, for one, am grateful to Bart van Thienen for his supreme
1780 effort. I hope that Bart continues to receive the full support of the Ministry and that his work inspires the Ministry itself towards greater efforts in dealing with invasive species, giving our native species of flora, and by extension, fauna the best opportunity in which to flourish.

Mr Speaker, I shall now turn to planning. This GSLP/Liberal Government is doing precisely
1785 what it accused the previous GSD Government of doing, but seemingly on an even larger scale over a shorter period. Gibraltar is being turned into that proverbial 'concrete jungle' with buildings of heights not previously considered being approved by the DPC; not necessarily in the interest of the wider community and certainly not in the interest of the neighbours of these new constructions, which are often schools. There have been numerous instances over the past four years where the schooling of children has been directly affected by activity on an adjacent
1790 building site.

More and more, the people of Gibraltar are finding themselves hemmed in by buildings
planned to reach unprecedented heights, such as the plans approved recently for Eurocity where blocks will reach heights of over 69 metres – and not only this but they then have to contend with construction project after construction project, causing them to suffer year after
1795 year of noise, dust and light pollution being generated by those developments.

If we take the example of Queensway and its environs, we see a concentration of current or
imminent development that is unprecedented. Kingswharf, Mid-Town, Eurocity, West One, the Marriott and Rooke: years and years of building with vistas vanishing and nearby residents
despairing. I am approached frequently by people with young families – in some cases extremely
1800 young – often in tears at the decisions that the DPC is making which will have a direct and immediate impact on the quality of theirs' and their children's lives.

I hope that, as for the environmental and heritage considerations, both of which are rightly
given tremendous prominence in the decisions taken by the DPC, proper weight will be given to the arguments of residents and proper consideration be given to their concerns when these
1805 enormous and irreversible projects are brought before the DPC in order that the commercial rewards do not always inevitably trump those arguments and concerns, as those on the receiving end often feel is the case.

1810 Mr Speaker, it may be the case that the DPC now sits in public – as the Minister for the Environment is always at pains to point out whenever I attend and possibly on other occasions – but the processes by which it makes its decisions have not changed and it retains enormous discretionary powers.

1815 It is also understood that certain areas must be set aside for development and that, due to the confines of space in Gibraltar, we must often build high-rise, but I would ask that the two Ministers who routinely sit on the DPC and who can influence the decision-making just occasionally listen and accept the views of those who must live as neighbours of projected developments – and not only when it is politically expedient to do so, as was the case for the Europa Stadium proposal, but also when it is simply a case of showing some compassion.

1820 Let us leave some areas aside for future development. I ask Government to reconsider, for instance, its plans to sell the site of Rooke – the largest single site likely to ever come into Government hands – to a developer who will inevitably wish to build high. I ask that Government, and by extension therefore the people of Gibraltar, retain ownership of the site or at least a significant proportion of it in order that it be put to community use, but further that future generations be handed over an area of land – one of the few remaining areas of any significant dimensions – to determine for themselves how they might wish to use it.

1825 I ask Government to stop selling off the family silver at this extraordinary rate: £50 million in the years 2014-15 became £90 million worth of sales of Government property and premia in the last financial year. I see a sharp fall in this revenue for the next financial year and hope that it is not simply because we have sold everything already; that it represents a welcome pause for thought.

1830 Mr Speaker, this Government has made many commitments to the people of Gibraltar and I will not deny that it has delivered, or is in the process of delivering, a number of those commitments, albeit perhaps not in the timelines that might have been anticipated, but scratch the surface and we find many promises that have not been delivered, often in areas of high importance, as I have illustrated.

1835 Within the portfolios of Environment and Transport, in particular, the scattergun approach to delivery of projects has left some of the most important unfinished, or worse still unstarted, while Ministers nibble at the edges of progress, congratulating themselves for minor accomplishments, while not delivering real and necessary progress.

1840 I can assure the people of Gibraltar that, while I sit on these benches, I will work ceaselessly to penetrate the smokescreen of press releases and propaganda put out in a never-ending stream by this Government and ensure that Ministers are held accountable for their promises, their commitments and their actions; pointing out the good, but creating awareness of the bad.

1845 Finally, Mr Speaker, my thanks to you for the guiding hand and patience you have shown as I learn the ropes in this Parliament and my thanks to the Parliamentary team for their continued help and advice. *(Banging on desks)*

A Member: Hear, hear.

Mr Speaker: The Hon. Gilbert Licudi.

1850 **Minister for Education and Justice & International Exchange of Information (Hon. G H Licudi):** Mr Speaker, following our election victory in November 2016, I continued to have responsibility for Education, Justice and International Exchange of Information. Indeed, I have had responsibility for Education and Justice since we were first elected in December 2011.

1855 Mr Speaker, education is, of course, one of the cornerstones or pillars of any society. We have always believed that investment in education is investment in Gibraltar and its future. It is what allows our youth to develop as citizens, ready to make an important contribution to Gibraltar. It is ultimately what allows Gibraltar to thrive.

1860 We have always been a party that has demonstrated the importance we attach to investment in education and the priority we give to this. It is to be recalled that we introduced, in 1988, the concept of mandatory scholarships for all who had a place to study at an approved tertiary education institution. I was one of the first, in fact, to benefit from that system when I went off to study law in September 1988. Thousands of students have done likewise.

1865 So important and successful was this initiative that we decided to extend this to post-graduate studies following our victory in 2011. Again, we have seen the number of students taking this up increase, with almost 1,000 students funded by the Gibraltar Government at university this year alone.

1870 The Department of Education's budget for 2015-16 is £44,767,000. This compares with actual expenditure in 2011-12 of £28,407,000. This represents an increase over four years of almost 60%. It is an extraordinary increase which, Mr Speaker, as you will see, speaks for itself. It encapsulates the level of commitment and investment that the Government has been prepared to make in Gibraltar's youth and in Gibraltar's future.

1875 Our youth of today will be the driving force of Gibraltar's economy and will be responsible for our general wellbeing in years to come. That is why this investment has been necessary. Over the same period, the complement in education has increased from 607 in 2011-12 to 712 this year: again, an important increase in the level of human resources available to meet our children's needs.

1880 A similar commitment has been made in Justice, particularly with regard to the Royal Gibraltar Police. The estimate for this coming year for policing is £15,127,000. In the year 2011-12, the actual expenditure was £11,244,000. The increase has been around 35% over these four years and, again, the complement has increased from 258 to 280 during this period.

Mr Speaker, I have been very fortunate to have led on three landmark projects which have been concluded during this past financial year. Each of these represents a particular milestone for our community.

1885 St Bernard's First and Middle schools were handed over in time for a September 2015 start, as per the Government's 2011 manifesto commitment. The school is fully functioning and staff, children and their parents have all voiced their delight at this brand new facility in the upper town area. The project also included sporting facilities for community use.

1890 The schools replaced the old St Bernard's First and Sacred Heart Middle schools. Both of these schools had reached their sell-by date and it was clear to us that they no longer represented adequate educational facilities.

1895 The second project was the University of Gibraltar. The establishment of a university is something that had been talked about for many years in Gibraltar in political and academic circles and, yet, until we came into office in 2011, no one had given a categorical commitment to work towards the establishment of our University. For us, this had to be a clear priority. It was no longer good enough to talk about a university; it was something that had to be done.

1900 It took much work and many visits to universities in other countries. I was ably assisted by an excellent team, in particular the Director of Education, Joey Britto, and Dr Darren Fa, who subsequently became the University's Director of Academic Studies and Research. (*Banging on desks*)

1905 Mr Speaker, the 21st September 2015 was a proud day for the Government and an important day for Gibraltar as a whole as we inaugurated the University. On that day, Gibraltar became a university city, joining the ranks of those cities that are able to offer its citizens undergraduate and postgraduate education in their own land; professional development; and able to attract students to carry on their studies in Gibraltar or to undertake research.

1910 It was with a huge sense of pride and satisfaction that we were able to welcome over 2,300 visitors to the University over the weekend prior to inauguration. Not only were they able to see the campus, they were also able to enjoy a series of talks on historical and scientific themes as well as on the making of the University. What was an idea not so long ago, has become a living, breathing and functioning institution.

As all who have visited or attended courses at the University will have seen, the design blends in perfectly the old with the new and does so in a way that not only preserves but enhances the architectural features and heritage value of those buildings. At the same time, it creates a marvellous use of space in a modern educational establishment.

1915 Mr Speaker, we have also recently inaugurated the Mid-Harbour Small Boats' Marina together with the wharf, public promenade and super yacht facility. This is now fully up and running.

1920 The marina was completed in one phase to a tight timeframe. The result is a magnificent 700-berth marina with six-metre and eight-metre berths. The marina is protected by a fixed breakwater, which also serves as berthing for super and mega yachts. There is a public promenade which can be enjoyed by people wishing to take a walk right next to the sea or wanting to fish. It is great to see the facilities already being used and enjoyed by so many people. There can be no doubt that this has been a huge success.

1925 Mr Speaker, I now have the honour to report to the House in more detail on the areas that form part of my ministerial portfolio, starting with Education.

1930 Records confirm that 2015-16 saw 411 mandatory scholarships, ranging from first degrees to advanced doctoral studies, and 15 discretionary awards. This amounts to a total of 426 new scholarships: a year-on increase of 40 awards. The number of students who have benefitted from higher education during 2015-16 numbered 948. In addition, we have financed 57 applications for distance learning courses and continue to fund the Washington Internship Programme, which grows from strength to strength and offers unparalleled opportunities for our young people in Washington DC. The Internship Programme, as has been announced, will run for a further three years and 60 graduates will be able to avail themselves of this initiative over this period.

1935 Mr Speaker, the minor works programme for financial year 2015-16 encompassed both external and internal refurbishment works to a number of educational establishments. This included a significant investment in the design and technology workshops at Bayside School. The overhaul will be completed during two financial years. Stage one of the refurbishment saw the internal refurbishment of two workshops combined with the installation of new windows and modern plant and equipment. The overhaul is due to be completed during financial year 2016-17.

1940 Further investment has been required in the replacement of the floor surface of the 'Hexagon' assembly hall at Notre Dame School, plus the installation of a 'soft room' for children with special educational needs.

1945 The gymnasium at St Mary's First School was reinforced with a solid concrete floor after the original wooden floor rotted due to water ingress from outside the building. New flooring and shading canopies were erected to protect pupils from sun exposure in the playground at St Mary's.

Varyl Begg Nursery has been refurbished and new windows installed to improve ventilation.

1950 Westside School saw a number of projects, including the decommissioning of unserviceable overhead water tanks, re-routing and renewing of fresh water supply and the refurbishment of two standard toilet facilities plus the conversion of a spacious disabled toilet and wet room facility.

1955 St Martin's School saw the reconfiguration of several rooms, due to increasing numbers of pupils attending the school, to provide a new classroom and Snoezelen multi-sensory room. Similarly, the old assembly hall at St Anne's Middle School was redesigned to create extra classroom facilities, again due to increased pupil numbers. Various toilet facilities at St Paul's School were also refurbished. Arrangements for the replacement of the old bus used for the transport of children at St Martin's are currently underway.

1960 The second stage of the window renewal programme at Bleak House was completed and the refurbishment of the west-facing external façade at St Joseph's First School was also completed.

1965 Major works to improve disability access at Westside School, consisting of: the building of an extension to create extra classroom space for the Learning Support Unit; the installation of a lift to access first floor specialist rooms; the refurbishment of the student PE shower and changing rooms; as well as a complete render of the external façade to address corroded structural brickwork. This will also provide a much needed facelift for the school.

The Gibraltar College will also benefit this year with an extra ICT suite. It will also see its windows being replaced to improve ventilation. The flooring replacement programme will also continue.

1970 Works to the external and internal façade of St Joseph's First and Middle schools will continue to eliminate perennial water ingress and damp issues affecting both sides of the building. The flooring replacement programme will be continued. The reception lobby, shared by both schools, will also be re-designed to improve access and security.

1975 Given that the school has outgrown its current lunch hall facilities, the much needed construction of new facilities to cater for the needs of the children at St Mary's First School will commence.

Works at St Paul's First School will also include repairs to the external façade; the refurbishment of the student library and the replacement of skylights.

1980 Structural and repair works will be undertaken at St Bernard's Nursery to address water ingress problems and the replacement of windows.

The final stage of the window replacement programme at Bleak House will be completed, with the now obsolete air conditioning units being replaced with more modern and environmentally friendly units.

1985 Mr Speaker, September will see a more formal curricular offering for Year 3 – which is the last year of First School – and Year 4 – which is the first Year of Middle School – for Gibraltar studies. The Department of Education is currently working on a programme of study for both these years to ensure that our children are well versed in Gibraltar, its history, environment and context. Further programmes of study will follow during the course of the academic year and a full curriculum will be developed for our schools. Apart from school-based lessons and talks in schools by local experts, the programme of study is also designed to take education out of the classroom and will involve visits to sites like the Gibraltar Museum, the Botanical Gardens, the Upper Rock Nature Reserve and our shorelines.

1995 A new Language Academy is being set up by the Department of Education in conjunction with the Gibraltar College. This will see a range of languages being made available to children and the community in general, as part of the College's current continuing education programme. An exciting innovation will be that, for the first time, foreign language sessions, including Spanish, will be specifically designed to cater for children of school age after hours. This will follow the current evening class model delivered by the Gibraltar College except that sessions for children will start at an earlier time.

2000 Mr Speaker, as I mentioned in answer to questions from the Opposition during this session, the Department of Education is also working with the Gibraltar College to provide training for those teachers wishing to obtain a qualification in the teaching of English either as a foreign or additional language. The aim is to build capacity amongst staff to teach both local residents in need of language reinforcement as well as creating a professional cadre that our College can access to meet a growing international demand for English language classes and tuition.

2005 The Advisory Service continues to work with schools in order to raise standards and assure the quality of the education we offer to our children. The Department of Education has supported the work of teachers by continuing to fund both locally and UK-based courses for practitioners on assessment and tracking pupil progress. Of primary importance have been the workshops organised by the Department of Education on the current changes to the curriculum in schools in England and their possible impact in the local context. Apart from these workshops, UK curriculum experts have delivered sessions on the future of A-Level and GCSE examinations, as well as the on-going developments in the primary and secondary curricula for schools.

2015 The Advisory Service also led on curriculum working groups from the secondary and middle school sectors on the establishment of common content for science across all middle schools, particularly in Year 7. The aim of this exercise is to ensure a better transition from primary science to secondary science after children transition to the comprehensive schools. This will allow the children to meet the demands of the revised secondary science specifications for GCSE.

2020 Changes to the National Curriculum – that is to say, the removal of ‘levels’ with a modification of content and timing – has provided the Department of Education and schools with the opportunity to examine emerging best practice, both in our schools and abroad. An expert on assessment from the National Association of Head Teachers delivered a two-day workshop on Assessment without Levels to heads, deputies, English and mathematics co-ordinators within the primary sector. These workshops successfully informed the work of the Department of Education on assessment and it will therefore continue to work on producing a framework based on emerging best practice whilst at the same time allowing for local adaptations and implementation strategies.

2030 Mr Speaker, another important development this year has been the availability of subject choices at A-Level. Boys and girls now have equal access to subjects such as economics, sociology and further mathematics at A-Level, as long as the combination is viable and can be timetabled.

2035 This year a repeat facility for science GCSE was started at the Gibraltar College. This should enable students who have not achieved a pass to follow subjects at university where science at GCSE is a requirement. This builds on the already established GCSE repeat package at Bayside – which we introduced – and at Westside, and on the success of the homework club run by the Gibraltar College at the John Mackintosh Hall.

2040 Another crucial development this year has been the launching of a new Code of Conduct for Teachers. This has been delivered to 12 of our schools and the process should be complete by the close of the academic year. The guidance will help practitioners better understand expectations and responsibilities in an evolving profession: a guiding compass to help steer a course through their career in teaching and public service.

2045 Mr Speaker, I am proud to report that, true to form, schools have, this academic year, collectively raised in excess of £56,000 through their charitable endeavour and serviced over 30 local and international charities. I should wish to point out that there is clearly a considerable value in the educational journey for a child giving up his or her time in order to help those that are less fortunate, and this is to be commended.

2050 Schools continue to give up their time to participate in numerous events, opportunities and competitions in conjunction with other agencies and Government Ministries. These include: World Social Workers Day; World Cancer Day; World Mental Health Day; Autism Awareness Day; World Down Syndrome Day; Ministry of Culture Art Competition for Young Artists; Children’s Academy Football Day, held in conjunction also with the Ministry of Culture and Premier Legends International; The Postal Union’s Letter Writing Competition, in conjunction with the Royal Gibraltar Post Office; ChildLine; Blue Week Competition and ChildLine Anti-Bullying Month Exhibition and Presentation.

2060 I am also proud, Mr Speaker, to report, as we have seen in the news already, that a team of Bayside students won the grand final of the 2016 Cyber Centurion Competition hosted at Bletchley Park in the United Kingdom. The competition focused entirely on security aspects of computing systems and how to stop hacking and other malicious IT intrusions. Our students were up against considerable opposition from schools throughout the United Kingdom and still managed a resounding win – congratulations, again, to all of them. *(Banging on desks)*

2065 Mr Speaker, Department of Education initiatives, in partnership with the Kusuma Trust, have also included work in the following areas: the very popular Science Week, in conjunction with the Science Museum, London, was held in schools and at the Ince’s Hall Theatre; Shakespeare in Schools workshops; a representative from Cambridge University advised on interview

techniques for our Year 13 students; the very popular Maths Week and talks on the Enigma Machine were hosted in Secondary Schools; the piloting of coding and robotics for First School and Middle School children.

2070 Once again, children and the schools participated in the Gibunco Group Gibraltar International Literary Festival with top authors addressing pupils both in schools and at the John Mackintosh Hall. This continues to grow in popularity.

2075 Our schoolchildren continue to benefit from the visits that our schools arrange for them involving a wide range of educational events; for example, an exhibition on Jacobo Azagury; Joshua Benoliel; the Gibraltar Botanic Gardens; the Convent and gardens; the Gibraltar Museum; the Nature Reserve and a host of other activities relating to our history, environment and heritage. The latest event being schools' participation in the workshops hosted by musicians and artists from the Gibraltar World Music Festival, as it was called, 'Come to my school', and this happened at the end of June.

2080 Mr Speaker, using technology to increase the level of interactivity in a classroom is an aspect of teaching and learning that has been of particular interest at the Department of Education for some years now. Primarily, teachers are looking to improve the level of engagement with and between pupils through the use of technology and to provide a vehicle for collaborative learning, thus enriching the teaching and learning experience.

2085 Whilst teachers across all sectors have been exploring how tablets can have an impact on pupil engagement for some time now, an exciting trial project involving the use of tablets in lessons is currently being pioneered at St Bernard's Middle School. It is envisaged that this will be extended to a first school and to St Martin's Special School. Although the project is still in its infancy, children and teachers have already reaped the benefits of this simple yet effective way of supporting classroom practice. Staff are supported by an experienced UK-based consultant in all aspects of the use of tablet technology and to enhance and support teaching and learning.

2090 The Department of Education, in partnership with the Kusuma Trust, have linked up with University College London to gain benefit from their experts in the field of computer science. This was initiated as a result of the change from the current ICT curriculum for schools in England to a more computer science-based model for schools.

2095 Staff from University College will be delivering a bespoke computer science course up to Masters level for teachers. This should run for two years and clearly help to build capacity in the skills available to schools in this respect. Training courses in coding and programming will also be made available for teachers wishing to pursue this field. This is a completely new endeavour for our primary schools in general. Having said this, the fastest growing strand in the technology curriculum is that of coding and programming in computer science. The continued use of web-based coding programmes by a handful of pioneering teachers in the primary sector has contributed significantly in informing the type of training the Department of Education will provide and facilitate for practitioners involved in this exciting development.

2100 In relation to computer science and coding, the Department of Education will be working with UCL and the Kusuma Trust as from the first term of the academic year 2016-17 to deliver an introductory training programme for teachers over three days. This first stage will be followed up with a one-year certificate course from the British Computer Society, which will run alongside the training provided by UCL.

2110 As I have indicated, a Masters course levelled at those who require a greater level of expertise is under review and it is hoped that this will attract teachers from the secondary sector, and invite them to provide teaching within an area so young and new that it is currently difficult to recruit teachers who are specialist in this field.

2115 Mr Speaker, we naturally continue to provide much needed support for children with special educational needs through the deployment of additional special needs learning support assistants – or SNLSAs – wherever there is a need.

Although these assistants are currently afforded the opportunity of attending in-house services within their schools, there is a further need to enhance the SNLSA's knowledge and

skills. More and more children with special needs are being taught in mainstream schools and this, at times, will require more specialist support. With this in mind, the new academic year will see more opportunities for professional development through a series of sessions aimed at enhancing even further the quality and level of support that our children obtain in schools.

Mr Speaker, last July, 11 teachers from across the sectors were selected to embark upon an on-line Dyslexia Action Level 4 International Programme, designed to build on existing expertise to further support learners with dyslexia in our schools. In October 2015, the Dyslexia Support Group invited Dr Gavin Reid, psychologist, author, and conference speaker, to give a full day presentation on the identification of dyslexia and removing barriers to learning. Over 30 teachers and SNLSAs attended that course.

In September, six of our SENCOs enrolled on an on-line National SENCO Award course, which is intended to build on practitioners' existing expertise and experience to help further their development. The SENCO has a vital role within our school system and the aim of the award is to maintain a consistent, high-level of quality training. The modules are designed to give an understanding of the skills that can be used to make a positive difference for learners as well as providing opportunities to practice those skills in the workplace. It is envisaged that any subsequent new SENCO post-holders will also be afforded the opportunity to study for this qualification.

This year, nine teachers successfully completed the Dignified Care and Responsibility Training (DCRT) 'Train the Trainer' course. The aim of this course is to make staff aware that most incidents can be defused without the need for physical intervention. It is these skills and techniques of preventative crisis management that DCRT teaches. On completion of the course the staff are then able to deliver the training themselves to other colleagues in their own schools.

Mr Speaker, I now highlight some of the legislative issues we have dealt with, or are dealing with, since my last Budget speech, and this is, of course, in the area of my responsibility for Justice.

In March of this year, we enacted and commenced the Judicial Service (Amendment) Act 2016, which fulfilled an outstanding 2011 manifesto commitment in that it made provision via the amendment of the Judicial Service Act 2007 to make the Chief Justice the Head of the Judiciary in Gibraltar. It had always been the view of this Government

... that the head of the judiciary in Gibraltar should be the Chief Justice, as had always been the case, irrespective of who the post-holder may be.

Furthermore, earlier this year, the Government commenced the Proceeds of Crime Act 2015 in its entirety. This Act consolidated legislation on money laundering in Gibraltar and creates a single regime dealing with the recovery of money from drug offences in the same manner as the recovery of money from other criminal conduct. It also introduced a new procedure enabling the seizure and confiscation of assets arising from any criminal conduct – even where no criminal proceedings are brought against anyone – in a manner similar to those regimes that exist in other jurisdictions such as the United Kingdom. Additionally, the Act provides for the civil recovery of the proceeds of unlawful conduct by way of civil proceedings which are not preceded by criminal proceedings. The Act and its powers are extremely important when considering the global efforts to prevent money laundering and terrorist financing and form a good grounding for the forthcoming Moneyval inspection in 2018. Moneyval is a permanent monitoring body of the Council of Europe, entrusted to improve the capacities of national authorities to fight money laundering and the financing of terrorism more effectively. To this end, the RGP has created a specialist unit to deal with the various aspects of the new legislation and the Office of Criminal Prosecutions and Litigation fully support this new regime.

Mr Speaker, the Supreme Court (Amendment) Act 2015 amended the Supreme Court Act so as to set new training requirements for barristers and solicitors who intend to practice law in

Gibraltar. The first academic course in Gibraltar Law, which is part of these new requirements, has already been successfully run by the University of Gibraltar. This Government is now continuing its work alongside the Bar Council of Gibraltar to look at ways of modernising the current system of regulation of legal services in Gibraltar and it is hoped – in fact expected – that
2170 a consultation paper on this very matter will be published jointly by the Government and the Bar Council very soon.

Mr Speaker, I turn to matters related to the Gibraltar Law Courts. In October 2015, the President of the Court of Appeal and President of the Courts of Gibraltar, the Rt Hon Sir Paul Kennedy, retired, after having served as Justice of Appeal since September 2006 and as
2175 President since November 2011. HM Government of Gibraltar would like to thank Sir Paul for the excellent and important work he has done over the years.

At the Ceremonial Opening of the Legal Year, court staff were praised by all for all the good work they do. The Gibraltar Courts Service has continued to maintain a high standard of performance in the services provided. It continues to find ways in which to modernise and to
2180 improve the services provided to court users. Their website continues to be updated and developed. Judgments have been uploaded and are now available for the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal since 1997 to date. Further work is in progress and all available judgments for the preceding years up to and including 1991 will also be uploaded. Additionally, since January this year, sentencing pronouncements for criminal trials at the Supreme Court are now also
2185 available for download in pdf format from the website, thus enabling the general public and service users to be up-to-date with court decisions.

The Laws of Gibraltar Judgments website – not to be confused with the Gibraltar Courts Service website – contains all judgments published and contained in the hard copy volumes of The Gibraltar Law Reports commencing in 1812. This website is also fully up-to-date with all
2190 reported judgments for the period 1812 to 2015, inclusive, and they are all available for download.

I am happy to report, Mr Speaker, that there continues to be no backlog in the Magistrates or Supreme Courts in respect of dates being provided for criminal trials and of civil and family applications waiting for first hearing dates.

2195 On the whole, court users today enjoy a modern, open and approachable court service that endeavours to work together with stakeholders, to ensure the needs of the court and their users are met.

During 2015, the Gibraltar Courts Service and the Judiciary provided pupils from local middle schools, as well as law students from overseas colleges and universities, including the United
2200 States, Sweden and Spain, with organised visits to the Gibraltar Law Courts complex. The visits were intended to be both informative and educational. Visitors and students alike were able to view the courtrooms and facilities and, more importantly, meet a Puisne Judge, who provides them with an overview of the criminal justice system and answered questions on how the system works in Gibraltar. Not only are these visits enjoyable, but in respect of external visitors they serve to enhance the reputation of our legal system.
2205

Mr Speaker, turning to Prison matters, I am glad to say that officer morale is high and prisoner indiscipline cases are low, with most cases being of a minor nature.

This year, improvements to educational programmes on offer include the availability of a full-time teacher for juvenile prisoners. When required, taught classes are provided every day, five
2210 days a week.

A new counselling programme will also be on offer entitled, 'Cycle of Change'. The programme is broad in scope, covering a variety of topics including: social and/or family history; one-to-one counselling; building self-esteem; grieving – sense of loss; relationship with self/suppressed feelings; anger issues; consequences – positive and negative; safe boundaries –
2215 communication skills; drug misuse – dependency; relapse prevention; motivation for change.

Narcotics Anonymous will be upgrading their weekly prison meetings under a new Hospitals and Institutions subcommittee. This will allow the organisation to offer a more tailor-made service, particularly suited to those in custody.

2220 These additions continue to supplement and improve the array of services on offer at HM Prison and aid in the rehabilitation of offenders. Prison management remains very committed to the ongoing rehabilitation of offenders and enhancing educational and vocational opportunities to all those in custody, with a view to breaking the reoffending cycle and successfully reintegrating offenders back into society.

2225 In May this year, Mr Coom, Chief Officer at HM Prison, attended the FCO Overseas Territories Prison Superintendent's Conference in London. The conference is hosted by the FCO Overseas Territories Directorate. Mr Coom was able to network with senior professionals in the field and secure training opportunities for middle and senior management in areas such as prison management and national offender management services.

2230 This programme of activity is being expanded to cover wider multi-agencies working across the justice sector, co-ordinated by territory criminal justice boards where probation and other staff will also have access to training courses and secondments in the UK to build on their expertise.

2235 Turning to policing, Mr Speaker: the 26th September 2015 saw the RGP mark the granting of the Freedom of the City of Gibraltar with a parade involving serving and retired officers, led by Commissioner Yome. This much deserved honour is appropriate recognition for the work they do.

In January 2016, the RGP were awarded the prestigious Investors in People Gold Standard, the latest milestone in their journey of continuous improvement.

2240 A significant number of RGP constables, sergeants and inspectors, as well as Civil Service support staff, completed leadership and management training during the course of the last financial year. Officers of various ranks have partaken in various forms of training, both locally and overseas, in both generic and policing disciplines, as well as in more specialist areas such as intelligence analysis and financial investigation, all aimed at improving professionalism and overall service delivery at the RGP.

2245 Of note, superintendents Cathal Yeats and Richard Ullger completed senior leadership training and strategic command programmes at the renowned FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia and the United Kingdom's College of Policing respectively.

On the international front, the RGP has represented Gibraltar at various fora during the past year at strategic, tactical and operational level. These include:

2250 (1) Executive meetings and annual conference of the European Association of Airport & Seaport Police, chaired by Commissioner Yome in his capacity as President of said body. In 2017, HMGoG are supporting the hosting of this body's annual conference in Gibraltar.

2255 (2) The launch of the Small Island Nations Centre of Excellence for Cybercrime, an EU funded programme involving the RGP and counterparts from other jurisdictions collectively fighting cybercrime. The RGP were invited to deliver a presentation on local cyber threats.

(3) Various Interpol meetings and conferences.

(4) UK Overseas Territories conference on Child Safeguarding where the RGP were invited to present on the model of Safeguarding Children and Sex Offender Management already in place in Gibraltar.

2260 (5) Operational meetings and actions with counterparts in the United Kingdom, Spain and Morocco in counterterrorism, as well as serious and organised crime meetings.

2265 Mr Speaker, the RGP, in partnership with the renowned international watchdog, Internet Watch Foundation, recently launched a new online reporting portal that will allow the public to report any online child sexual abuse imagery found. The system will allow reported material to be analysed by experts, who will, amongst other things, ensure any child sexual abuse content hosted anywhere in the world is removed from the internet and its origin investigated.

On the educational and awareness front, the RGP continue to conduct seasonal campaigns advising the public on areas of concern and issuing warnings of particular crime threats using their social media outlets under the banner of Operation GibWatch.

2270 School Liaison officers continue to perform sterling work in the form of regular talks and presentations to all schools on matters such as road safety, Internet safety, binge drinking and drugs misuse, amongst other topics. This work has been complemented by the RGP's annual summer and mid-term camps for children, as well as the 'Mini Olympiad' held every October under the banner of 'Live Life, Love Sport.'

2275 The RGP Charity Committee and annual recruit intakes are also extremely active all year round, raising substantial amounts of money through various events for local charities. The most recent of which was a Family Fun Day that raised approximately £5,800 for the drugs awareness and support charity, 'Stay Clean.'

2280 As part of an on-going process of developing and strengthening partnerships, September 2015 saw the RGP and Youth Service formalise their existing close relation with a Memorandum of Understanding. The MoU enables the exchange of information on the safeguarding of young persons and creates new areas of work for the promotion of young persons' interests and development.

2285 As I said in the recent passing out parade for new recruits to the RGP, we have a modern, intelligence-led, neighbourhood policing style with a strong emphasis on citizen-focus and problem solving. We have a force that adopts a multi-agency approach to address the needs of our community.

2290 Mr Speaker, we all know that we live in a tough world. Gibraltar needs to be constantly alert and alive to any issue which threatens the peace and safety of our community. There are new threats that we have to deal with, including threats involving cybersecurity and the use of the Internet to commit criminal offences.

2295 We all want to sleep well and soundly at night, and we want to do so in the knowledge that we have a highly professional team of individuals dedicated to law enforcement at all levels. The safety and security of our community is entrusted to these individuals and we must justly feel proud of all our law enforcement officers.

2300 Mr Speaker, this year will see the phased introduction of the Integrated Criminal Justice System. This is a software system, known as Cyclops, which will link up all of the main organisations that form part of the justice system into one information management system. This is a significant investment made by the Gibraltar Government. Once the IT platform is completed and is fully operational, it will positively transform the way departments and organisations in the criminal justice system interact with each other. It will enrich and enhance communication and the processing power of everyday deliverables. This will include custody arrangements, case management and intelligence processes.

2305 The project is being steered by my Ministry and implemented by the various Departments involved in the scheme. This involves the RGP, Courts, Customs, Government Law Officers, Prison and the Probation Service. The first phase of the project is nearing completion and is expected to go live in the next few months.

2310 Not all convicted offenders receive a custodial sentence. Community Sentence Orders may be imposed on convicted offenders and, on this front, again, the Community Services Officer has seen his busiest year yet. A total of 45 offenders were made subject to Unpaid Work Requirement Orders. In real terms, this represents an over 100% increase to the previous year's figure of 22. Unpaid work requirements enable offenders to give back to society, with offenders engaged in positive activities that are of benefit to the community. During the past year, work under this type of order have been carried out in community and church groups, civic buildings, 2315 tourist sites and other associations. Only three offenders have been returned to Court for not complying with an Order. Furthermore, the courts have issued four Youth Rehabilitation Orders requiring some of our young offenders to undertake similar work.

2320 This year, all members of the Probation Service, together with members of the Royal Gibraltar Police, Prison Service and Social Services, undertook an intensive one-week course on the identification, assessment and management of sex offenders. The management of these types of offenders works well in Gibraltar under a trained and committed core group of professionals that are fully qualified and accredited to deal with these matters.

2325 The Probation Service continues to work with the Prison Service as an integral part of the offender management system in Gibraltar. Much of its work in this respect focusses around assessments for inmates eligible to be considered for parole. During 2015, the service provided 35 such reports to the Parole Board, which resulted in 22 inmates being released under the supervision of the Probation Service.

2330 Mr Speaker, in respect of Civil Contingency, the Department facilitates, through training, communication and co-ordination between front line emergency services, supporting agencies and the Ministry of Defence. This has included organising interoperability training courses, which have been delivered by visiting lecturers from the UK Emergency Planning College. This training has been based on the UK Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP), which encourages operational response under a single co-ordinated command and control system of management. Two courses were delivered under JESIP, and 34 officers from the blue light services have benefited from these courses.

2340 Earlier this year, a simulated plane crash into the sea was tested through a table top exercise. Lessons learnt have already been incorporated into the Airport Emergency Orders which is, of course, a live document which is updated as required. HM Government of Gibraltar funded, via the Civil Contingency Department, emergency equipment that will enable maritime responding agencies easier access for the handling of casualties in the unlikely case of an air disaster at sea. This equipment and its deployment mechanism is currently being tested.

2345 A full day counterterrorism exercise was also held, during which different challenging scenarios were tested. Training and planning in this field and the challenges they present forms part of the Civil Contingency Training Programme.

2350 The Major Incident Response Plan has been substantially updated and issued this year to all departments and agencies that have a responsibility under the plan. The document provides information and responses to known threats and risks and is the basis upon which the Civil Contingency Training Programme is prepared. Central to the plan is the corresponding command and management structure to be applied at all levels in the case of a major incident.

2355 A major asset in the form of a command/management structure is the Crisis Communications Centre at No. 6, which is also known as 'the Bunker'. This facility was recently commissioned and provides a modern and well-equipped centre from where Government Ministers and senior officials can adequately manage a major incident in an efficient and co-ordinated manner. Government departments, agencies and other stakeholders are currently familiarising themselves with the equipment and technology in the centre, mainly through training and joint operations.

2360 Mr Speaker, 2015 was a year of transition and significant change for the Gibraltar Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS). With a newly appointed senior management team, together with promotions across all ranks and the culmination of 150 years of exemplary service to the community, it has been a time for reflection, self-assessment, adaptation and, indeed, for forward planning.

2365 As part of the 150th anniversary celebrations, the GFRS organised a number of events during the year. This included the launching of a set of stamps depicting the various specialist responsibilities of the GFRS and the publication of a book entitled 'A Tradition of Service' written by Richard Garcia. In addition, and in an attempt to encourage community participation in the celebrations, the GFRS organised an open day which served to highlight some of the specialist skills required of a modern fire fighter. The activities included ladder climbing, abseiling, fire-fighting. The celebrations culminated on 20th of November with a gala dinner attended by over

2370 120 fire service personnel, past and present, together with distinguished guests – a truly memorable year in fact for the GFRS.

During the financial year 2015-16, various officers attended a number of courses in the UK, mainly at the Fire Service College and other UK institutions and in Gibraltar at various institutions and venues, as required by the courses in question, ranging from management to coxswain courses.

2375 The Fire Safety Department is involved in many processes focusing on fire safety at home, work and in the community. Community fire safety talks have been given to a number of entities including schools, Government and private nurseries, private companies, clubs and Government facilities. The GFRS is also involved in many statutory processes that require the issue of licences, such as building applications, certificate of fitness and petroleum licences. A total of 729 licences
2380 were processed in 2015-16.

In April this year, we saw the launch of the GFRS Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). This document serves as a blueprint of how resources are and will be applied by the GFRS in the fulfilment of their duties. It highlights how the GFRS, in partnership with HMGoG, works to make Gibraltar a safer community in matters associated with fire prevention, protection and being an
2385 effective responder to a wide range of operational incidents. This document demonstrates that the GFRS has a sense of direction and a set of challenging but achievable targets that can be achieved with an agreed level of commitment, focus and resilience. The ultimate beneficiary of the IRMP is the community, and it is with this in mind that the GFRS strives to perform their responsibilities in a professional and efficient manner.

2390 April 2016 also saw the launch of the revised Fire Safety Regulations, specifically Part E of the Building Regulations. The Regulations have been simplified to allow more flexibility to developers and contractors requiring alternatives in fire safety design mechanisms. They also require developers to provide access and facilities to assist the GFRS in the fulfilment of their duties, something that previously was limited to a recommendation as opposed to a
2395 requirement.

As from late last year, retired fire service personnel, who are eligible for community service, have been given the opportunity to come to the GFRS and give back to the community some of their vast knowledge and experience. The opportunity has been well received by interested parties who still feel that they have plenty to contribute.

2400 Mr Speaker, to end my contribution, I will deal with matters in connection with the international exchange of information.

Mr Speaker, Gibraltar Finance is tasked with responsibilities in the area of international exchange of information and co-operation. The Department has been busy lobbying countries that still have Gibraltar on their 'tax haven' blacklists. Recent successes that have directly
2405 resulted in the removal of Gibraltar from these lists include Bulgaria, Canada, Latvia, Estonia and Italy. No doubt we will continue to lobby the few remaining countries that perversely maintain Gibraltar on their lists in an attempt to persuade them to rightly delist our jurisdiction.

In 2014, Gibraltar was rated 'Largely Compliant' in the OECD Global Forum Phase 2 Review. The UK, Germany and USA received the same rating. In 2015, we achieved another positive rating by the OECD in Gibraltar's confidentiality and data safeguards assessment. In the first half
2410 of 2019, the OECD has announced a Phase 3 Review of Gibraltar's Legal and Regulatory Framework and Implementation of the Standard in Practice. Preparations are well on their way for this and I am confident that Gibraltar is set to achieve another positive result in this regard.

2415 Other forthcoming reviews include an FSC statutory review later this year, Moneyval in 2018 and Automatic Exchange of Information monitoring by the OECD leading to a comprehensive review of Gibraltar's adherence to the Automatic Exchange of Information Standard from 2019 onwards. Prior to 2019, the OECD is adopting a so-called 'staged approach' which, although not designed to result in specific ratings, may result in recommendations being made on each module of the staged approach.

2420 Mr Speaker, we continue to handle Exchange of Information on Request applications
received from partner countries on a day-to-day basis together with the various strands of
Automatic Exchange of Information. This includes USA FATCA and the Crown Dependency and
2425 Overseas Territories Intergovernmental Agreement, commonly known as 'UK FATCA' and the
Common Reporting Standard (CRS). The UK FATCA portal, which can be accessed via the
website, has recently been launched with the deadline for submission amended to
1st September 2016. This year's USA FATCA returns are required to be submitted by 30th June
2016. Gibraltar Finance is dealing with the processes and notifications required by the OECD in
preparation for the implementation of the Common Reporting Standard. The Regulations are
expected to be published later this year. Work will also commence on the implementation of the
2430 OECD's Common Transmission Standard, in collaboration with the ITLD and the Government's
legal officers.

On 22nd April 2016, Gibraltar was among the group of 33 Early Adopters of the Automatic
Exchange of Beneficial Ownership Information. This initiative was launched by the so-called 'EU
G5' economies, that is UK, France, Germany, Italy and Spain. The intention is that this initiative
2435 will:

... mirror the ground-breaking steps ... taken on tax evasion under the Common Reporting Standard.'

The Early Adopters are also committed to developing:

... a system of interlinked registries containing full beneficial ownership information as well as for common
international standards for these registries and their interlinking.

In the interim, we executed an Exchange of Notes on 8th April 2016 which was signed in the UK
by the Minister for Europe, David Lidington, on 11th April 2016, affording the law-enforcement
authorities of Gibraltar and the United Kingdom:

.. the automatic right to the provision of unrestricted and timely (where urgently required, within one hour)
beneficial ownership information held in the other jurisdiction ...

2440 All in all, Mr Speaker, it has been a very busy year for all the Departments that come under
my Ministry. We have made great strides during this year across all areas and have positioned
ourselves positively to be able to face the challenges that we are going to face in the next few
years.

2445 Finally, Mr Speaker, let me thank my staff and all those who work in the various Departments
and organisations which form part of my ministerial responsibilities. I am truly grateful to all of
them for their continued support and dedication.

Thank you, Mr Speaker. *(Banging on desks)*

Mr Speaker: The House will now recess until 3.15 p.m.

2450

The House recessed at 1.13 p.m. and resumed its sitting at 3.15 p.m.