



# PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

**AFTERNOON SESSION: 3.05 p.m. – 5.16 p.m.**

**Gibraltar, Tuesday, 14th July 2020**

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# The Gibraltar Parliament

*The Parliament met at 3.05 p.m.*

[MR SPEAKER: Hon. M L Farrell BEM GMD RD JP *in the Chair*]

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

## Questions for Oral Answer

### BUSINESS, TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

**Q406-408/2020**

**Cycling safety and promotion –  
Courses available; investment in infrastructure;  
Cycling Promotion Association and Ride to Work scheme**

**Clerk:** Meeting of Parliament, Tuesday, 14th July 2020.

(viii) We continue with Answers to Oral Questions. We commence with Question 406. The  
5 questioner is the Hon. E J Phillips.

**Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, can the Government set out what cycling safety courses are  
available for adults and children?

10 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport.

**Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport (Hon. V Daryanani):** Mr Speaker, I will answer  
this question together with Questions 407 and 408.

**Clerk:** Question 407, the Hon. E J Phillips.

**Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, can the Government state how it intends to roll out its £10 per  
capita investment into cycling infrastructure, awareness and safety programmes?

**Clerk:** Question 408, the Hon. E J Phillips.

**Hon. E J Phillips:** Can the Government confirm what steps it has taken to establish a Cycling  
Promotion Association and Ride to Work scheme?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport.

**Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport (Hon. V Daryanani):** Mr Speaker, the  
Government is committed to promoting cycling and walking as alternative forms of transport in  
Gibraltar, in addition to providing an ever-improving bus service and the promotion of electric or  
hybrid alternatives for personal transport where the use of cars can be avoided. To this end, the

GSLP Liberals' manifesto for the General Election of 2019 contained a series of specific commitments designed to provide substance to our general commitment to the improvement of our urban environment.

The commitment on establishing a Cycling Promotion Association and a Ride to Work scheme are two distinct matters which I will address separately. It is the Government's view that the promotion of cycling in Gibraltar, along with the improvement of cycling infrastructure awareness in the community, can only be improved by taking on board the views and ideas of those who are advocates of cycling as an alternative for transport in Gibraltar and those who, day to day, make the choice to ride to work on their bicycles and, more widely, use their bicycles for practical purposes.

It is also the case that the aspirations and vision of cyclists and cycling advocates alike need to be balanced with the developing needs of our community. To that end, Mr Speaker, the Government has already brought together, within months of our re-election in October, a Transport Advisory Committee to discuss how best we can deliver on the Government's policy objectives in tandem with ensuring the viability of our road traffic network. The Transport Committee met for the first time on 5th March 2020 and discussed issues as diverse as traffic, transport and parking in Gibraltar. Part of that discussion centred around the role of bicycles in the community and how best we can help to attract more and more cyclists to the idea of using their bicycles for daily transport and not just for exercise. Mr Speaker, it is true that we might not be able to agree with every point or every idea suggested in this context by members of the Transport Committee or indeed by a wider cross-section of the community, but our commitment to making this work is guaranteed. COVID-19 regrettably has made meeting more than two times to date impossible, but I am looking forward to hosting further, socially distant, meetings in the not-too-distant future.

In relation to the part of Question 408 dealing with the Cycling Promotion Association, then I can confirm that Government is shortly to invite members of the cycling community to make representations to Government about its view of the make-up and objectives of a Cycling Promotion Association. It is the view of the Government that promoting cycling must be a comprehensive exercise of investment in infrastructure, education and awareness, and of making it easier for our people to take to the bicycle. It is not the view of the Government that dedicated and segregated cycle lanes are a panacea in the context of wider adoption of cycling. Notwithstanding that view, we have exciting plans to deliver cycle lanes which will, in effect, offer protection to our cyclists through key routes in Gibraltar over the coming months as part of plans for Line Wall Road, Chatham Counterguard, Europort Avenue and other roads in Gibraltar. The point to bear in mind Mr Speaker, is that we are planning to form this Cycling Promotion Association to assist us with promoting cycling in Gibraltar and to help us calibrate plans we already have for investment in cycling going forward.

It is in this regard that, in relation to Question 407, I can say that I am confident that the GSLP Liberals' commitment of investing £10 per capita on cycling every year will easily be met. In fact, I am confident that the investment in cycling over the next few years is likely to be significantly more than £10 per capita per annum. The investment in this regard will, as I have highlighted earlier in my answer, be in the full range of initiatives needed to make cycling a natural choice for transport in Gibraltar. This will include investment in infrastructure such as lanes and cycle parking, education and awareness.

In the education or re-education context, and in answer to Question 406, Government is examining options for the introduction of a programme of adult cycling proficiency courses, possibly via the Pedal Ready initiative announced by my predecessor, the Hon. Paul Balban, which would see the Government subsidise the delivery of courses in the community to those taking up cycling once again.

In the awareness context, the Government will, with the Cycling Promotion Association, seek to create a local campaign of TV and social media advertising relating to cycle safety and sharing

the road, something the Government considers an important component of pushing the cycling agenda.

From an incentivisation perspective, one option the Government is currently considering, and which is the subject of the second part of Question 408, is the introduction of a Ride to Work scheme along the lines of the initiative available in the UK for a number of years whereby employers would assist employees in the purchase of bicycles for commuting to work, in exchange for a series of tax advantages. I say that this is only one option because the Government is also keen to encourage employers and landlords in commercial premises to install quality cycle parking infrastructure to improve on facilities already available and actively being expanded by Government. With the use of e-bikes on the up, we are keen to encourage the deployment of covered, protected and secure bicycle parking to remove yet another potential barrier to adoption.

The £10 per capita commitment marks a watershed moment in the story of cycling in Gibraltar. It marks the first time a Gibraltar Government has made a cast-iron commitment to promoting this healthy, safe and practical form of transport. This investment allows us to measure and calibrate our commitment locally as we move to make Gibraltar a bike-friendly city. It also allows us to measure ourselves against other cities around the world looking to become bike friendly, helping us to benchmark our efforts and tweak what we do by reference to it; and, importantly, it is a starting point, a commitment on which I am sure we will continue to build, increasing the level of funding per capita as required and, as is likely to be the case in response to what I am sure will be investment of a far higher level than the notional level of £10 ...

Mr Speaker, we are building on a vision of making Gibraltar a cleaner, greener place to live. The lockdown gave us a glimpse of a Gibraltar we did not know we needed so much, missed so much. We are building a better Gibraltar. We are building a bike-friendly city. Mr Speaker, just as we were elected to do, we are building the Child Friendly City. *(Banging on desks)*

**Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the answer to the questions that we put in relation to cycling.

Of course everyone in our community wants a bike-friendly city, so long as it is planned properly and deployed properly and efficiently within our community. **(A Member:** Hear, hear.)

What I would ask first of all ... There are only about three questions I would like to ask. The first one is in relation to the Transport Advisory Committee. Does the Minister have to hand the members of that committee?

**Hon. V Daryanani:** No, Mr Speaker, I do not have that information. Obviously I know the members, but I cannot give you the full list at the moment.

**Hon. E J Phillips:** I am grateful for that answer and I appreciate he does not have it before him, but does the committee comprise members of the cycling fraternity?

**Hon. V Daryanani:** Yes, Mr Speaker.

**Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, we agree that clearly the views of cyclists need to be taken into account and obviously cycle lanes are not a panacea, but I would be grateful to understand how the Minister has taken a view in respect of Line Wall Road and the quite colourful pictures and video presented by his Ministry insofar as that project is concerned, when in fact not establishing the Association in the first place in order to provide a conduit for that information and data and views back to the Government so that they can properly plan this. Has the Government proceeded on the basis of very limited involvement of a number of people from the cycling fraternity in our community on that committee?

**Hon. V Daryanani:** Mr Speaker, what you see on Line Wall Road is a concept. We will have a cycle lane there. We are seeking information. We are working with members of the cycling fraternity. Obviously we are working with our own officials.

40 These are early days. The Member opposite says that we have not planned properly. Let me say that that is totally incorrect. We are taking our time. What he cannot do is one day tell us that we are rushing into announcing plans and the next day tell us that we should be telling him more about how we are doing this. This project will take approximately two years, to deliver Line Wall Road. In the meantime we will continue planning. There are lots of possibilities. The only  
45 thing that we are telling you for sure at this moment is that there will be a cycle lane in Line Wall Road.

**Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, I think the Minister will agree that Line Wall Road, insofar as cycling is concerned, is a limited stretch of road compared to significant roads that we have in  
50 our community. Does the Minister have any further plans on how there can be – and we have discussed this, of course, in meetings that he has organised – a continuous cycle lane in Gibraltar that will provide for that thoroughfare of traffic from the border right to the end of the Rock? If the Minister can clarify the basis upon which he is moving forward, because the Minister has set out very clearly that this is the vision and that vision may well change and may well adapt over  
55 time – he is taking soundings from the cycling fraternity and other members of the community, presumably, and therefore we would like a bit more information as to how this will extend further around our city.

**Hon. V Daryanani:** Mr Speaker, we are looking at a whole route around the Rock for cycling, so, like I say, there is a lot of consultation that needs to be done at the moment and we will do that and get back to him when we are ready. This is not something that we can just give you within two or three weeks.

**Hon. E J Phillips:** The Minister will appreciate the concern of many members of the community about this particular project, and although some support it many do not support the idea of the closure, the restriction and now the pilot study of whatever now the Government is describing this project as.

What I would say to him, therefore, is if these are early days, as he says, and he is taking his time and he will communicate the decision back to us, is it now foreseeable that this project will change in substance and form?  
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**Hon. V Daryanani:** The project will be shaped by the consultation which is taking place at the moment.

75 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Mr Speaker, may I ask the Minister, in terms of transport, any cycle lanes ...? I think unless there is something I do not know about cycling, would he agree that cycle lanes are impractical in the Upper Town, and therefore what provision does he envisage making to improve access to the Upper Town for those residents there – for example, extending the bus service?

80 **Hon. V Daryanani:** Is it the bus service that you want to know about or the cycle lane?

**Hon. R M Clinton:** Both.

85 **Hon. V Daryanani:** Well, we have not considered the idea of a cycle lane in the Upper Town for the moment but the Government will be making an announcement very soon on the bus service regarding the Upper Town.

**Hon. V Daryanani:** Mr Speaker, just one final question, because obviously the Minister has raised the fact that awareness of cycling is important to the Government ... it is important for all members of our community that people get on bikes – eventually when, we say, it is planned properly, but there is opinion in relation to that.

Just from personal experience, and I know that other Members may share this, the cheapest bicycle you can buy nowadays is between £300 and £400, and the most expensive, of course, are these amazing electric bikes that go up to about £4,000. So, I wonder, if the Government is trying to encourage cycling in Gibraltar, how is the Government going to deliver that message to the people insofar as that investment that people should make in bicycling for the future? I think it is an important message because not many people on low incomes, families, will not be able to afford those types of expensive bicycles to ride on our lanes, and so I am just asking the Government how it is that that message will be delivered to the community to persuade them to make that investment into our community.

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, I do not agree that the cheapest bicycle would cost £300 and upwards ... if the hon. Gentleman says he has got one of the expensive ones ... because there are bicycles available for a lot less than £300, which I can point him to if he wishes, and indeed there are electric bicycles available for a few hundred pounds and there are a number of kits available that convert a normal bike to an e-bike, which one can get for a few hundred pounds.

Be that as it may, the Government will be rolling out different incentives for people, not just to cycle but also to walk. Indeed, we have started to roll out those incentives already, and disincentives to use vehicles, and we will be rolling out other incentives which will increase some of the incentives we have already offered in respect of hybrid and electric vehicles in the context of our wider plans. Those are usually rolled out at Budget time. There is not going to be a Budget in the usual way this month as there usually would be. We have to look at when there will be a next Budget and perhaps even introduce these measures before then.

Mr Speaker, these are all measures which are part of ensuring that we do what future generations need us to do. These are difficult decisions that have to be made to change behaviour. I hope that we will all be as one when it comes to ensuring that we look after the little bit of the planet that we are responsible for and ensuring that we live up to the commitments that we acquired in this House when we declared a climate emergency, and that we do not go off seeking to jump on bandwagons that call for the disincentives to the use of combustion vehicles to be undone and the like.

Mr Speaker, I know that all Members on this side of the House are committed. I will watch this space in relation to the Members on the other side of the House.

**Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, I do not think many people would disagree that we should not create a cycling-friendly, greener Gibraltar – of course, and I think it is in the interest of everyone in our community to create that and develop that vision. Of course, the difference between the Government and the Opposition is how the Government goes about doing that and the planning that they deploy in order to achieve that objective. That is where the political debate is between the Government and the Opposition on that question.

Would the Chief Minister or the Minister for Transport be prepared to give an insight as to those types of incentives, so that normal working families can access or indeed be encouraged to buy bicycles? The Chief Minister refers to a few hundred, but when the pandemic hit and my bike was stored away from Gibraltar we had to buy a new bike and one for my son and it cost quite a few hundred pounds. I think it is important to realise that not everyone can make that expense to have that transition to cycling, and therefore if the Chief Minister could give an insight as to what types of incentives the Government would be looking at in that regard, it would be helpful.

Thank you.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, the thing that is foremost in the mind of the Government are ordinary working families because they are the people we represent.

145 The hon. Gentleman needs to know who it is he is dealing with. My prized possession when I was a child was my bicycle. It was the biggest thing my parents were able to afford to buy me. It was the thing that gave me the most joy. That may be true of many people sitting round this House today. Mr Speaker, just because some of us have done well in life does not mean we forget where we come from, even though others might like to pretend that that is the case.

150 Well, look Mr Speaker, the price of bicycles that the hon. Gentleman is referring to is not one that I recognise. Is the hon. Gentleman saying that ordinary working people cannot buy a bicycle for themselves or their children? I come from an ordinary working-class family and my parents were able to buy a bicycle for me, and I know many ordinary working-class people and they buy bicycles for themselves and for their children, so I do not recognise the thing that the hon. Gentleman is saying. Of course it is possible to buy a carbon-fibre bike which is not electric, which will cost many thousands of pounds, it is possible to buy a new-fangled bicycle which is not carbon fibre and which will cost many hundreds of pounds and it is possible to buy a bike which costs £100-plus or £200. I can send him the links if he likes, Mr Speaker.

160 The issue he is asking about he prefaces by saying that the only difference between us is how we go about planning things. Mr Speaker, I do not accept that, because I have seen Members of the Opposition, those who are in the habit of being seen as professional protesters, protesting behind those who argue for free parking at Midtown. That is all very well and I know that one particular Member of the Opposition has expressed quite publicly to the television cameras that the reason he is against all this – forgetting the climate emergency, forgetting the need to green Gibraltar – is because it cost him a few hundred quid to park his very large-engine car in the centre of our city and it is affecting his working-class pocket.

165 Well, Mr Speaker, the fact is that this is about changing behaviour. We think that we are planning this in the right way. We think we are doing it in the right way. We think we have a mandate to do it. We think this is not just in the interest of today's common working families; we think this is in the interest of common working families today, tomorrow and in the future. We think it is in the interest of the future generations of Gibraltarians who have demonstrated with greater passion, vigour and vehemence to No. 6 Convent Place to ask us to do something about pollution and climate change, and they and their future and we are planning for them.

**Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, the Hon. Chief Minister hurled me into nostalgia when he spoke about his prize possession, his bicycle. He hurled me into the nostalgia of my red Chopper bicycle in the 1970s as we, a bunch of friends, cycled around Gibraltar on our choppers. So, yes, I share that and I also think that we must share the view that we also all represent ordinary working families and indeed those more affluent members of our community as well.

180 Can I just ask if, as part of the scheme that the Hon. Minister was setting out earlier, there are plans to return that set of rental bicycles that disappeared at the time of COVID because of course there were issues about perhaps the cleansing of those bicycles at the time of COVID? Is it part of the plan, as part of all this to promote cycling, that there will be a set of bicycles for rental for people who want to use them, members of our community or indeed tourists who may come in and want to cycle around Gibraltar?

185 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, there you are, he and I have another thing in common: I too owned a red Chopper. The only chagrin that that used to bring to my mind was that the red chopper featured the word 'Chopper' in yellow, making it red and yellow, which to those of us who have spent our lives fighting against osmosis was immediately an issue of concern, all of which was allayed when my parents decided that I was too long for the Chopper and I got a Grifter, which was blue with a big Union Jack on the front of the liver bird for Raleigh, the producer.



Mr Speaker, it is absolutely, in the view of the Government, essential that we should have the ability for people to rent bicycles in our city in order to aid mobility. We, for reasons that have been documented, believed that the plan that we inherited was not a good one. We implemented a different plan. That plan has had to be suspended for the reasons that the hon. Gentleman knows. Given the advice that we have at the moment, it is not possible to say that those bikes will be back in September or that they will be back in the spring, but we certainly hope that the bike rental scheme, which aids mobility by providing bikes in different areas of our city, will soon be available.

And he can rest assured that however much of the Chopper lives in our collective memory and brings a smile to each of us as we remember those heady days of Gibraltar with less traffic in the 1970s, the bikes we bring to Gibraltar will not be red and yellow.

**Mr Speaker:** Next question.

**Q409/2020**

**Devil's Tower Road, Laguna, Calpe Arengo's and Old Queensway Club car parks –  
Parking charges**

**Clerk:** Question 409, the Hon. E J Phillips.

**Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, further to Question 274/2020, can the Government update the House on whether it will apply parking charges at Devil's Tower Road, Laguna, Calpe, Arengo's and the Old Queensway Club car parks?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport.

**Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport (Hon. V Daryanani):** Mr Speaker, Devil's Tower Road has a total of 953 spaces, out of which only 180 do not charge a fee and are available for North District permit holders.

Laguna car park does not charge a fee and is available for North District permit holders. Calpe, Arengo's and Old Queensway club car parks already charge a rental monthly fee.

**Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, I am slightly confused by the answer because on the last occasion I asked the Minister exactly the same question he had not formed a view at that stage as to whether charges would be imposed – parking charges in respect of those particular areas. I am at a bit of a loss to understand the answer because it appeared at the time that the Government had not formed a view as to that. If the Minister could clarify, it would be helpful.

**Hon. V Daryanani:** Mr Speaker, if I remember correctly, the Member opposite, last time, asked me whether there was going to be an increase in these car parks, and what I am telling him is that nothing has changed. We charge what we charge, but nothing has changed from what you asked me last time.

**Hon. E J Phillips:** I am grateful for the clarification and the response. There is, of course – if I can just ask him a supplementary – no intention to make any further changes in line with the Government's current policy in relation to other parking?

**Hon. V Daryanani:** I remember, Mr Speaker, that last time he asked me this question I said that we were looking into it and that there were repairs involved and we were going through that.

**Hon. K Azopardi:** So, when signs appeared at the top of the Laguna car park which said ‘The top floor of this car park will solely be used for private and business rentals as from 8 a.m. on Thursday, 11th June 2020’, that does not constitute a change of policy at all?

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**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** No, Mr Speaker, it does not, because those private rentals include the rentals that we make available to residents of the North District in the context of that car park changing to what it was originally intended to be, which was a park and ride for visitors to Gibraltar.

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**Hon. K Azopardi:** I am not sure I understood that answer, because there were signs that were erected in early June which indicated to people that it could only be used for business or private rentals as from a certain date. The Hon. Minister has answered to my colleague that there have been no changes. Now does that reconcile with the answer the Hon. Chief Minister has just given that from a certain date in June when signs were erected, the public were told that it was only reserved for private or business rentals? I do not understand.

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**Hon. Chief Minister:** Because he does not seem to want to understand that members of the North District who hold a permit who park there are not members of the public for the purposes of that car park. For that car park you will be a member of the public if you come to it without a North District permit or a business parking permit for that area when that car park becomes a public car park for all those who wish to park there instead of coming into Gibraltar.

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**Hon. K Azopardi:** So why was there a need to erect these signs, then?

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**Hon. Chief Minister:** Because the car park is changing. It is going from a car park that has been used only for those from the North District for a large number of vehicles from a business entity that has needed storage for its vehicles in different areas, and only one – I think the lower – floor for public car parking, to the whole of the area becoming available to public parking except for those areas which are reserved to those North District parking permit holders and other business permit holders. So you would need to change the signage in the car park for that reason; I would have thought that is easy to understand.

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**Hon. K Azopardi:** So North District permit holders are deemed to fall within the concept of private rentals – is that what the Chief Minister is indicating?

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**Hon. Chief Minister:** Yes, Mr Speaker, that is the position that has been the case for some time, that when you are in an estate and you have a parking permit you have a right either to a parking space or to a parking area, and that is the area reserved for those who hold the permits.

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**Mr Speaker:** Next question.

#### Q410/2020

#### Both Worlds and Media Luna – Residents’ parking

**Clerk:** Question 410, the Hon. E J Phillips.

**Hon. E J Phillips:** Can the Government state how it intends to resolve the issue of residents’ parking at Both Worlds and Media Luna?

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**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport.

285 **Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport (Hon. V Daryanani):** Mr Speaker, the Government is not aware of what the hon. member is referring to when he says ‘resolve the issue of residents’ parking’.

290 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, I have been approached by a number of residents at Both Worlds, particularly those of an elderly disposition and young families, who find it very difficult to park their vehicles at Both Worlds. It is particularly acute, of course, during the summer periods, and I was wondering what long-term plan the Government has for those 150 residents – who clearly have cars, no doubt – to park these vehicles within a reasonable distance of their homes and whether there is any intention of the Government to make provision for parking in that specific area and perhaps amplify that to avoid problems encountered by residents vis-à-vis beachgoers, because clearly there are issues regarding that.

300 **Hon. V Daryanani:** Mr Speaker, the Member opposite says that he has had a number of complaints. I must say that my office has not had a number of complaints. There is one specific person who has brought this to my attention and we have helped that person out. We have been to see her and the area to see how we can help out.

Insofar as parking is concerned in the Black Strap Cove area, which is known as the Media Luna, that is reserved specifically for people who live in Both Worlds. People who live in Both Worlds can also park on the fifth floor of the Devil’s Tower Road car park, which is for North District permit holders. The free parking includes Both Worlds. And then, during the beach season, they can actually park outside Both Worlds because that converts into one way during the summer season, so they can park on the wall right outside their premises.

I think we have done enough for parking in that area, but I understand that maybe there are not 180-odd spaces that he mentioned specifically for each and every resident of Both Worlds.

310 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, again this is a question of planning and provision, and although the Government wish to make Gibraltar a greener place we know that the reality on the ground, of course, is there are 150 residents. Many of them will have cars, hopefully just one vehicle, and for the Minister to suggest that these people should park in Devil’s Tower Road and walk – many of an elderly disposition – all the way to Both Worlds ... I am not too sure how the Government can rationalise that proposition to the residents of Sandy Bay and Both Worlds. I think it is important that some provision be made, or at least a long-term strategy to resolve the issue.

315 I think it is beyond one person, who may well have been a representative of the residents there. Can the Government not at least give assurances to residents of Both Worlds, and in fact the general population who enjoy the beach at Sandy Bay, that there will be a long-term strategy to avoid issues of traffic and congestion and the inherent parking problems in that area given the stretch of road? It would be wonderful if the Minister could at least give a sensible answer to the question I put forward in relation to the parking provision of the area.

325 **Hon. V Daryanani:** Mr Speaker, there is also the Catalan Bay reclamation car park which can be used when the beach season is not there, so that is another area where people in Both Worlds can park.

330 Insofar as people using the beaches, we have just introduced six new buses and a new bus route, so every 10 minutes there is a bus that goes to Both Worlds. We are providing alternate forms of transport, so it is not only a question of not using your car but you can use the bus now, a special bus route, and if you include the two other services on that route we have got eight routes in an hour. I think that is very good.

**Q411/2020**  
**Pay and display**  
**Plans for further rollout**

**Clerk:** Question 411, the Hon. E J Phillips.

**Hon. E J Phillips:** Can the Government confirm what plans the Government have for further  
335 rollout of pay and display beyond the recently announced Coaling Island pay and display?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport.

**Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport (Hon. V Daryanani):** Mr Speaker, the  
340 Government is continuously reviewing the parking situation and will assign areas as pay and  
display to support residents of areas blighted by the parking of derelict or abandoned vehicles  
and to complement a green Gibraltar and child-friendly city.

**Hon. E J Phillips:** So, at this present moment in time, although the Government is constantly  
345 reviewing the position, there is no intention to allocate certain areas as pay and display? The  
Government does not have anything on the radar is what I am asking in the question.

**Hon. V Daryanani:** We are constantly reviewing the situation, Mr Speaker.

**Q412/2020**  
**St Bernard's Hospital pay and display –**  
**Free parking for GHA essential workers with foreign-registered vehicles**

**Clerk:** Question number 412, the Hon. E J Phillips.  
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**Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, can the Government explain the rationale for permitting  
foreign-registered vehicles belonging to essential workers parking for free in the pay and display  
area until 1st August 2020 in the area in front of St Bernard's Hospital?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport.  
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**Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport (Hon. V Daryanani):** Mr Speaker, the rationale  
is very simple. The Government has taken a view, as per our press release of June 2020, to  
extend the concession of free parking for GHA staff in the pay and display area at Harbour Views  
360 Road opposite the entrance to St Bernard's to 1st August 2020 to coincide with Rock Unlocked.  
The provision of this concession is for GHA essential workers who can display on the car the  
necessary GHA credentials and does not discriminate on nationality or with regard to country of  
vehicle registration.

**Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, the information I have received is that a number of foreign-  
365 registered vehicles belonging to essential workers continue to park in those areas that the  
Government has designated free until 1st August 2020, in line with its policy to strictly enforce  
against those cars parked in other areas of Gibraltar and to restart the enforcement process in  
June 2020 as per the press release.

370 The issue, of course, is that the complaint that I have received is why should cars now being  
parked ...? Essential workers, effectively, working in our Health Service continue to have this  
made available to them. That is why I wanted to understand the rationale regarding that,

because it cannot purely be simply COVID related, given that the Chief Minister has recently stated that we are well on our way to a full Unlock the Rock, thank goodness. I am just trying to understand the rationale for not enforcing normal traffic laws.

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, because we are *on the way* to Rock Unlocked, he said it himself, and there is a confluence of the decision to enforce and the end of the period of de-escalation, which is 1st August.

I would have thought he would have wanted to get up in this House to align himself with the Government in having made available this facility for those of our essential workers, those of our health workers who have done such a magnificent job in this period of the pandemic and who would need, because of the restrictions there have been until very recently etc. and because the GHA is not yet back to normal, to have this facility for this period. I am surprised that he has not aligned himself with us.

We are perfectly relaxed about the policy decision that we have taken. We think it is the right policy decision. We think it focuses a benefit in the hands of those who need it in this period and we will not hesitate to make a similar decision if we once again have to ramp up the response of the GHA and if we find ourselves again in a situation where public transport is limited in some way or regard. The Government stands by its decision. We think it is the right decision for the right people and I am surprised the hon. Gentleman does not in fact want to get up and associate himself with the decision that the Government has made.

**Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, it is not as though we do not want to associate. Of course, we commend the marvellous work done by our healthcare workers in the challenge that COVID has presented and we do not resile from that position, (*Banging on desks*) but Mr Speaker insofar as focusing the benefits, as he describes, in relation to parking, we do not see any reason why now full enforcement of our laws in relation to parking should not take place. We do not understand why there appears on the ground to be a discrimination, that foreign-registered vehicles are coming into Gibraltar, parking in specific bays free of charge until 1st August, when ultimately Gibraltar has been unlocked in respect of parking save for these specific places where GHA workers with foreign-registered vehicles continue to park for free. It is about fairness, not about focusing benefits; it is about focusing entirely on fairness.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, this is not about foreign-registered vehicles. This is about vehicles with GHA permits regardless of the place of registration.

I have never seen a clearer example, for which I thank the hon. Gentleman, of wanting to run with the hares and hunt with the hounds, but it is so transparent that even the shallowest political analyst who might be persuaded that somehow this xenophobic approach that the hon. Gentleman is taking to try and stoke the fire of dissent on the basis that we are enforcing against Gibraltar-registered vehicles whilst not enforcing against foreign-registered vehicles – never mind the fact that we are not doing any of that, we are just permitting those with a GHA permit to park – that somehow might enable him to curry favour with some who might decide that the terrible Government that has permitted our fantastic GHA workers, whom they bang the table for, to park without enforcement might somehow therefore need to be removed in favour of the magnificent Opposition that he and his colleagues represent.

Mr Speaker, the success of populist movements around the world is a matter of regret to those of us who actually represent a real ideology, (*Interjection and laughter*) but if in Gibraltar ... I am conscious Mr Speaker that the Hon. Mr Feetham has already got up in this House, less than four months ago, and declared that he is not a socialist, words which I will remind him of repeatedly. It does not mean that, just because he is not, the rest of us are not.

But Mr Speaker the fact that the hon. Gentleman tries to say that we should support the work done by our healthcare workers but then tries to say that we must enforce parking restrictions against them even before we have got to Rock Unlocked ... I am sure that there are

425 people shallow enough to swallow it. I have great confidence in the perception, wit and  
understanding of the Gibraltarian electorate, enough to see straight through it.

**Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, a supplementary question. Every single member of our  
community is participating in trying to get back to normal in our community, not only GHA  
430 workers but every worker in our community is trying their best to recover our position and to  
recover from the public health emergency. So, this inconsistent approach insofar as parking is,  
quite frankly, nonsensical and I do not understand the rationale.

We are getting back to normal, thankfully, and the Rock will be unlocked, as the Chief  
Minister has alluded to, and there is no reason, in our view, to retain our focus on these  
435 benefits, which would seem on the face of it to be unfair. Does the Chief Minister agree with  
that analysis? Probably not.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, I obviously do not for all the reasons I have already given. It  
does not seem like a question which is fair in the context of a supplementary; it just seems like  
440 an opportunity to respond and try and have another bite at the cherry. But given that he wants  
to ask me the question again, I will give him the answer again.

Because we have not yet reached Rock Unlock, which is on 1st August, because the GHA is  
still not in a state of normality, which it will not achieve until 1st August – although it will still  
have to deal with all of the backlog then – the Government made the decision to allow members  
445 of our essential services who work in the GHA, whatever their nationality with whatever their  
registration, to have a permit which gave them the benefit of parking in that particular area until  
Rock Unlocked. That day is now, I think, from a basic calculation, in the region of 16 days away.

It is remarkable that, given what we have been through and what we are going through, we  
are spending time in this House having an argument about GHA workers being able to park for  
450 another 16 days without having the full force of parking laws enforced against them.

The Government is perfectly relaxed, comfortable and convinced that what we are doing is  
right, it is proper and it is designed to benefit those who have worked the hardest in the context  
of the success that Gibraltar has displayed in respect with this pandemic and who are still  
dealing with the consequences and are now preparing for when it may come again.

455 Mr Speaker, frankly, I have given my views as to what the hon. Gentleman is trying to do. I do  
not think there is a political observer shallow enough to swallow it.

**Mr Speaker:** I think we need to move on now, please. Next question.

**Q413/2020**  
**Low Emission Zone Permit –**  
**Intention to charge a fee**

**Clerk:** Question 413, the Hon. E J Phillips.  
460

**Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, can the Government confirm whether or not it intends to  
charge a fee for those persons issued with a Low Carbon Pass?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport.  
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**Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport (Hon. V Daryanani):** Mr Speaker, Government  
has to this point issued no Low Carbon Pass.

**Hon. E J Phillips:** There is no charge to the issue of the permit, or there is no permit?

470 **Hon V Daryanani:** Mr Speaker, the Member opposite asks the question ‘Can the Government confirm whether or not it intends to charge a fee for those persons issued with a Low Carbon Pass?’ and my answer is ‘The Government has to this point issued no Low Carbon Pass.’

475 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the answer but I have been shown a Low Carbon Pass issued by the Government, so unless it is completely fabricated, what was shown to me, then I am not too sure what that is.

Is it described as something else, Mr Speaker? Low Emissions Pass?

480 **Hon. V Daryanani:** Mr Speaker, he needs to make up his mind. Either he has been shown a Low Carbon Pass or he has been shown something else, and if he has been shown a Low Carbon Pass, like he says he has been, maybe he could send it to me so I can look into it for him.

485 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, I am trying to be helpful and if the Minister would kindly just explain whether insofar as the access ... We all know which road we are talking about, of course, in the issuing of these particular passes. He is pointing out that I may have used the wrong words – ‘Low Carbon Pass’ – and if so, then I apologise for that, but I was shown this a while ago and if it is a Low Emission Pass I would be grateful if the Minister could clarify whether indeed the Government issues these passes and whether indeed it intends to charge for these passes.

490 **Hon. V Daryanani:** Mr Speaker, what the Government has issued is a Low Emission Zone Permit, and the Government is not charging for it.

#### Q414-417/2020

#### Traffic and pollution monitoring –

#### Line Wall Road pilot scheme; traffic volume monitoring survey publication date

**Clerk:** Question 414, (*Interjections*) the Hon. E J Phillips.

495 **Hon. E J Phillips:** I will refrain from commenting on that aside by the Chief Minister. Can the Government set out any results from the traffic and pollution monitoring in respect of the Line Wall pilot scheme?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport.

500 **Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport (Hon. V Daryanani):** Mr Speaker, I will answer the question together Questions 415 to 417.

**Clerk:** Question 415, the Hon. E J Phillips.

505 **Hon. E J Phillips:** When will the traffic volume monitoring survey be published?

**Clerk:** Question 416, the Hon. E J Phillips.

510 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Can the Government state traffic volumes from the Upper Town via Governor’s Street/Town Range into town?

**Clerk:** Question 417, the Hon. E J Phillips.

515 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Can the Government state how it monitors the restriction of traffic on Line Wall Road?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport.

520 **Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport (Hon. V Daryanani):** Mr Speaker, the pollution is being monitored by a live AQ mesh pod placed by the Environmental Agency on Line Wall Road on 22nd May. Because of technical difficulties, the data did not start to get captured until 10th June. The data captured is live and can be viewed on the Gibraltar air quality website with monthly summaries being reviewed by the relevant Departments.

525 Traffic counters were placed at a number of locations on Line Wall Road, along with Queensway and Smith Dorrien Avenue on 8th June. The first batch of data will be collected after a full month. As previously mentioned, these traffic counters are placed in the various areas to capture the changes in traffic patterns. Two of these locations are Lover's Lane and Secretary's Lane. This will monitor the traffic that does not pass directly through the restricted area and turns back at Duke of Kent House. We intend to monitor the scheme by reviewing the data and  
530 comparing Tuesday to Friday when there are no restrictions, and Saturday to Monday when controls are put in place.

**Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, insofar as Question 414 is concerned, can the Government clarify what technical difficulties were experienced in relation to the AQ mesh monitors between  
535 22nd May and 10th June?

**Hon. V Daryanani:** Mr Speaker, unfortunately I cannot give him information on that, but if he writes to me some time after the session I will get back to him with more information.

540 **Hon. E J Phillips:** The Minister alluded to data that could be collected over a period of a month, so I take it that data has now been collected from 10th June to 10th July and I wonder whether the Minister has to hand the results of that data and he can provide a helpful answer to the question.

545 **Hon. V Daryanani:** Mr Speaker, we would need notice for that. This is data for over a month of cars passing by all different areas of Gibraltar, so he will have to give notice to us.

**Hon. E J Phillips:** The reason why I ask this question, of course, is because Question 414 asks the Government to set out any results from traffic pollution monitoring in respect of the Line Wall pilot scheme. The Government has already said that on 22nd May it experienced technical  
550 difficulties which meant that those monitors did not start collecting data as from 10th June, and therefore I do not think it is right that I provide notice of the question. The question is the same as that; it is just that I was asking whether the data from 10th June, when the Government discovered that there was a technical difficulty in the collection of that information, to 10th July  
555 now ... and whether the Government had already had the data in order to analyse it to ascertain the traffic and pollution monitoring along Line Wall Road and the pilot scheme.

I would suggest, of course, that given Government are running with this pilot scheme, presumably to demonstrate to the community that things are better now under the pilot scheme, the Government would have at least an element of data to reinforce its argument or at  
560 least demonstrate that its pilot scheme is working.

**Hon. V Daryanani:** Mr Speaker, this question was asked three weeks ago and the preparation of this question was perhaps 10 days ago, so the month has not elapsed yet. And anyway, this data is an internal technical document and at the moment I do not feel that the Government  
565 needs to publish this.



**Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, I am not sure I understand why the hon. Member says he has got difficulty in explaining what the technical issue is behind the answer he gave that there was a problem between 22nd May and 10th June, or indeed why he requires notice for the question given that it was in his original answer. If his original answer points to the technical difficulty, presumably he asked his officials who prepared that answer what the problem was.

**Minister for the Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, if I may assist, the technical difficulty could be various. It could be a problem with the recording of the data or accessing the data; it could be various. I do not think the Hon. Minister needed to know exactly what that technical difficulty was. He has explained there was a technical difficulty. If the hon. Member wants to know the detail, then clearly that can be answered but it is not information that he or I would necessarily have here and now.

**Hon. K Azopardi:** I am sure the Hon. Minister is grateful for the hurling of lifejackets into the sea, but with all due respect, in his answer he is speculating: it could be this, it could be that. *(Interjection)* I have not finished my questioning.

What I am saying is it was in the Minister's original answer that there were difficulties, and one would have thought that he would have probed his officials. Presumably he did not prepare the answer but his officials did and he would have probed his officials as to what the problem was because it is an obvious supplementary. But if he has not got that information, so be it.

Can I ask the Minister: I assume that the purpose of the pollution monitoring mechanisms is to understand the pollution effects one way or the other of the Line Wall Road scheme. Can the Minister confirm that that is the purpose of those measures? And if so, can he perhaps indicate to us what pollution monitoring mechanisms there are on Queensway?

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman needs to understand what it was that the Minister said before saying that he should have quizzed his officials. The Hon. Minister said, in the context of his first answer, 'pollution is being monitored by a live AQ mesh pod placed by the Environmental Agency on Line Wall Road ... Because of technical difficulties, the data did not start to get captured until 10th June'. His officials, referring to the Minister for Transport, are not officials of the Environmental Agency or the Environmental Department. They are the officials of the Minister for the Environment, who therefore got caught up, not to hurl lifejackets but to assist the House, because it was his officials that would have been relevant and indeed the officers of an independent entity set up who would have had the technical difficulties at their fingertips.

But this is all about the quality of air in different places. It is about also ensuring that pollution is dealt with appropriately. If the hon. Gentleman wants to know what mechanisms are in place for Queensway, which is not the subject matter of these questions, I invite him to put a question for the next meeting.

**Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, I think it is within the scope, I have to say. First of all, the Hon. Chief Minister's answers just simply confirmed that if the original drafting did not come from the Minister for Transport's Department and came from a colleague Minister who then got up to clarify, his colleague Minister does not know either what are the technical difficulties behind it, even though it was officials answerable to him who prepared the answer. That is fine, but the question that my hon. colleague puts is directed to traffic and pollution monitoring in respect of the Line Wall pilot scheme.

The scheme as a whole does several things. One of the things it does is it pushes traffic to Queensway because you cannot access Line Wall on certain days of the week. It would have been an obvious step to take to monitor pollution in Queensway as part of the effect on pollution monitoring, which is the direct consequence of the Line Wall pilot scheme. So, as the Government always says it is so interested in Green Gibraltar, why not monitor the pollution of

that part of Gibraltar that is 75 m away from Line Wall Road, which is a direct consequence of the Line Wall Road pilot scheme?

615 **Hon. Chief Minister:** There is a problem, Mr Speaker, when people believe their own publicity. The Government is monitoring the air quality on Queensway. The hon. Gentleman does not ask us whether we are monitoring it. The hon. Gentleman, in an exercise of moving the goalposts, asks us where are the air monitoring stations on Queensway, and then, when I tell him if he wants to know where they are he should ask us at the next House, he then says 'Why  
620 are you not monitoring the air quality at Queensway?' – Two completely different things.

Mr Speaker, this is Question Time in a Parliament, this is not cross-examination in an attempt to catch out a witness, and the hon. Gentleman needs to realise that. It is also wrong to assume that pollution is being displaced from Line Wall Road to Queensway, although I know that some with a shallower understanding of these issues have suggested that. In fact, there is very likely  
625 much less pollution because people are not using their cars, which would actually be a success in the context of trying to bring about less use of the internal combustion engine, the climate change emergency and Green Gibraltar, whilst what we do is displace cars to Queensway that would not be success. And yet, as hon. Members have pointed out, there are areas for pay parking both in the Midtown car park and outside the Midtown car park, which are not being  
630 used despite those areas having been full before on days when Line Wall was open and when Line Wall was closed. So, the strategy has been not to displace traffic to Queensway; the strategy has been to ask people not to get into their vehicles.

So, we are monitoring Queensway 75 m away, which was not the question that he asked in his earlier supplementary. If he wants to know where those air-quality monitoring stations are, I  
635 put it to him that is not in the nature of a supplementary, because otherwise when you come here on a question on air-quality monitoring on one road you need to come with the supplementary information in respect of air-quality monitoring in respect of every other road in Gibraltar, which would be, in my view, nonsensical.

And second, we are convinced that what we are doing is not displacing pollution but reducing  
640 pollution and we will soon have the evidence to show that. As the Hon. the Minister for the Environment I think has said on a number of occasions in this House, this data is live. Hon. Members can log on to see the AQ mesh monitoring data, so if they are genuinely interested in trying to understand pollution, not its displacement but the process towards its eradication, then I urge them to jump off the bandwagon they seem to be wanting to jump on and jump on  
645 our Green Gibraltar agenda, the Green Gibraltar agenda that I commend to everyone in this House and to everyone who is watching. It is the agenda that deals with the climate change emergency.

Mr Speaker, this is not something to laugh about, this is not something to joke about – this is not even just our future. This is the future of our children and our children's children, and unless  
650 we start to take it seriously and unless we start to look at the faces of those who protested in front of No. 6 Convent Place, who are the young generation, the future generation, and take them seriously, we will fail to learn from history and we will fail to plan for the future. (*Banging on desk*)

655 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, just in relation to the answer to Question 416, I apologise if I have missed the answer to that question but I do not believe that I have the traffic volumes from Upper Town via Governor's Street/Town Range – perhaps more in the form of a schedule?

**Hon. V Daryanani:** Mr Speaker, it seems that this information has not been provided for the  
660 Upper Town – in Question 416, did you say? We do not have the data on that yet. I will look into it and get it to the Member opposite in the next few days.

665 **Hon. E J Phillips:** I am grateful. That should assist, and of course if you want to formally convert that into a written response ... I am not sure it is within the rules now, given the fact that there is an answer on the record, but either way if we can get it in two days that would be great.

**Q418/2020**  
**STTPP –**  
**Total cost to taxpayer**

**Clerk:** Question 418, the Hon. E J Phillips.

**Hon. E J Phillips:** Can the Government confirm the total cost to the taxpayer of the STTPP?

670 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport.

**Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport (Hon. V Daryanani):** Mr Speaker, the total payment to Mott MacDonald for the preparation of the STTPP was £475,758.

675 **Hon. E J Phillips:** I am grateful for the answer. Have there been any further costs incurred in relation to that report? For example, have the Government links to this commissioned the company or the individual concerned to conduct further analysis of the STTPP in light of the Government's commitment to a greener Gibraltar and the transport policies that it is now announcing? I wonder whether the Government have engaged them further on this subject and  
680 whether costs have been incurred as a result of that process.

**Hon. V Daryanani:** Mr Speaker, this is the total cost up to today.

**Q419/2020**  
**Business licensing regime –**  
**Date for revision**

**Clerk:** Question 419, the Hon. R M Clinton.

685 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Mr Speaker, can the Government advise when it intends to revise the business licensing regime?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport.

690 **Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport (Hon. V Daryanani):** Mr Speaker, Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar is already in the final stages of the drafting process of the new Fair Trading Act 2020, which will establish the new business licensing regime. It is expected that this will be duly presented to Parliament within the next quarter, having been delayed due to COVID-19.

695 In the meantime, the Office of Fair Trading has already been working to implement systems and procedures, to allow for the administration of the new regime, for some time. This includes the upgrading of its website to allow service users to engage electronically with the office and the implementation of a bespoke new database.

700 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Mr Speaker, I am grateful to the Minister for his answer. He will appreciate that this Bill has been at an advanced stage for some time now, and that as far as I am aware ... or at least I am beginning to understand that the Chamber and the Federation certainly, perhaps towards the end of last year, had already come to some kind of working document with the Government or the Minister, with which they were happy.

705 Given the COVID emergency and the need to get our businesses in a fitter state post COVID, would he not agree with me that the time to implement these measures is now, as soon as possible, and unless there is any particular reason for delay they should publish the Bill immediately?

710 **Hon. V Daryanani:** Mr Speaker, I never thought I would say that I agree with the Member opposite – but yes, I agree we should have this sooner. I have said quarter three, but I think we will have it probably at the beginning.

715 The Chamber and the Federation of Small Businesses are on board; they are aware of the few bits and pieces that we needed to tidy up. There is no big story behind it and we will be doing it extremely soon.

#### Q420/2020

#### Individuals and entities resident or domiciled in Gibraltar – Spanish requests for information re tax and road traffic offences committed in Spain

**Clerk:** Question 420, the Hon. D A Feetham.

720 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, by Question WQ73/2020, I asked how many requests for information had been received by our authorities from the Spanish government or emanations of that state in relation to individuals or entities resident or domiciled in Gibraltar in respect of (a) tax and (b) road traffic offences committed in Spain. The Minister answered (a) but not (b). Can we now have an answer to (b)?

725 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport.

**Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport (Hon. V Daryanani):** Mr Speaker, the information requested by the hon. Member is set out in the schedule I will now hand over.

#### Answer to Q420/2020

Year	No of Queries
2017	338
2018	4,447
2019	3,818
2020	24

*The Cross Border Exchange service pursuant to EU rules went live on 01-06-17.*

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, if it meets with your approval, I can continue with the rest of the questions whilst I analyse the schedule and perhaps return to it for supplementaries.

**Q421/2020**

**Plans to support hotel industry –  
Details re immediate to short term**

730 **Clerk:** Question 421, the Hon. D J Bossino.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Further to his reply to Question 281/2020, can the Minister for Tourism advise this House whether the Government has made any progress in formulating plans to support the hotel industry and, if so, detail what these are in the immediate to short term?

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**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport.

**Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport (Hon. V Daryanani):** Mr Speaker, the Government will be announcing plans on how to help businesses in the third quarter. But I would like to add that the Government has announced plans, which is the BEAT 2.0 measure, so this will cover further hotels too. Apart from that, the Government is looking at a possible Hotel Assistance Scheme.

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** Is there any reason, could I ask the Minister, for ...? If I can put it in these terms ... I am not being critical of him or anything of the sort. (*Interjection*) It is simply: why the apparent delay?

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The potential package for the hotel industry I think was mentioned by the Hon. the Chief Minister back in March when he announced the initial measures, and the way he pronounced himself in relation to this issue gave the impression that it was going to be more imminent. But now we are seeing that it will not be available until the third quarter. Is there any reason? Is it as a result of consultation which the hon. Member has been undergoing with the hotel industry?

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**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman I think has got the wrong end of the stick. I am not implying a criticism or in any way suggesting anything which might be imputed in the negative in that respect. When the Hon. the Minister has told him that these things will be available in the third quarter the hon. Gentleman needs to know that we are in the third quarter – in other words, now but for the third quarter.

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We have been in very close negotiations with the hotel industry. It is not like the retail industry where you might have many hundreds of people. This is a finite number. It is a handful almost. We are in very close contact with them. There are different hotels with different needs. What we need to do is design a scheme that works and that works in a way that will not fall foul of state aid rules or which falls within the existing notified schemes. In fact, I think I have recently texted the Leader of the Opposition and the Shadow Minister for Public Finance trying to fix a date to discuss with them also the measures because we have tried to have discussions about these measures, before they were announced, with hon. Members, whether we can agree them or not, but at least to have their views.

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This is a very current discussion and of course the discussion is on the basis of what is happening on the ground. How are the hotels seeing the return of guests now that the air bridges are in place, now that there is a slight loosening of arrivals in Gibraltar? Is July going to be as bad as June was? Will August be better than July or will it all be a wasted season? All of that is something that we are discussing very closely with the hotels. They are being very open with the data that they are providing to us, obviously in confidence and obviously on a siloed basis – what one hotel tells you, you cannot share with the other hotel – but you then have to make a decision to propose something which the taxpayer can back.

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What the hon. Gentleman is also being told by the Minister is that BEAT 2.0 applies to hotels also, and so there is an element of support already built into what the hon. Gentleman has been told, which is the new incarnation of the BEAT payment, which goes to the business, and

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780 therefore there is already a lot being done which benefits hotels, and if necessary more would be done. That is what our discussions may lead us to, but the fact that we have not reached a conclusion yet does not mean that we are not very closely working with this particular sectoral interest group.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, I thank the hon. Member for that reply.

785 In relation to the imminence of the package which was being devised, as announced by the Hon. Chief Minister back in March specifically for the hotels, I have got a section here from *Hansard* where he talks about 'to continue to fund costs' and the main concern there was to ensure that the hotels were not shut.

790 I am sure he will join me and the Members on this side of the House in congratulating the hotel industry for remaining faithful to Gibraltar. They have been here for many years and they have, through thick and thin, through the closed-frontier period ... My father was the General Manager of the Rock Hotel, as many people know. It was a very tough period and they have proven their mettle once again.

795 In relation to the timing of it, if I can just quote this to him, he says 'We will finalise a package specifically for our hotels to remain open in the coming hours'. This is why I insist on whether there is any reason for that delay. And then I have got another supplementary, but perhaps you could address that point first.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, I am very pleased that the hon. Gentleman has joined us on this side of the House in supporting the hotel industry in Gibraltar.

800 Before I carry on, I will make the small nuance of just reminding the House of the job that his father did at the time that he was the General Manager of the Rock Hotel when that hotel was a go-to place which we all enjoyed in our youth, which he ran with elan and panache and which we all remember with great joy.

805 But I must also tell him that the Rock Hotel is not the only hotel in town and all of the hotels have done remarkably well. The Caleta Hotel was opened not at the turn of the last century, as the Rock Hotel was; the Caleta Hotel was opened in the years running up to the closure of the Frontier, and the family that ran the hotel stuck with Gibraltar and stuck with the hotel through the thin years as well as the good years. The *Sunborn* Hotel was one that they universally reviled when it first arrived, and I am pleased to see them now included in their praise. The Elliott Hotel is an important offer to the corporate businesses that have their headquarters in Gibraltar. The Holiday Inn Express is an important part of what it is that Gibraltar offers today to a different segment of the market and the Bristol Hotel, in the centre of our city, is also an important part of what we do. It is likely that we may want to see more hotels in Gibraltar in the future. All of them are committed to Gibraltar and Gibraltar is committed to the employment they create and the wealth that they create to the businesses that they bring.

815 What we did within hours of my statement was to continue those discussions and to try and agree with the hotel industry what it was that we were going to do, and I do not want to socialise that with the community until I have had the meeting that I have referred the hon. Gentleman to, which is the meeting with his current leader and the Shadow Minister for Public Finance, so that we can socialise it with them, which is what we have tried to do in the past. So he will permit me to deal with the leadership of his party in this respect before I make a public announcement about that, because that is how we have dealt with this in the past with respect to the BEAT measures.

825 **Hon. D J Bossino:** If he could just clarify: is it correct that the *Sunborn* has in fact shut? That is what I heard, so maybe it should not be attributed with so much praise.

Mr Speaker, this question was asked on the back of the reply to the question I asked at the last meeting and in that answer the hon. Member said:

I had been in constant contact with the hotels during the COVID emergency, providing them reassurance and seeking their feedback on how they felt they could be assisted by HM Government of Gibraltar.

830 Can he give this House any detail at this stage, even if by way of high-level analysis or report, on what type of feedback he has been receiving from the hotels as to what type of assistance they require?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** No, Mr Speaker, not without actually socialising the package, which I am not ready yet to do.

835 As for his comments in relation to the *Sunborn*, as far as I understood, the *Sunborn* remained available but with no one booking. Like the other hotels, they were waiting to take guests if they needed to. We were in touch with them, as we were with all the others.

I am pleased to see that they are leopards that do not change their spots and they still take the same attitude to the *Sunborn* that they have consistently taken.

### Q420/2020

#### Supplementary questions

840 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, may I return to the question on traffic?

I am taken aback by the sheer numbers of requests from the Spanish state in relation to traffic offences that were committed in Spain by residents of Gibraltar and requests that have been made of the Gibraltar authorities, which, if I may, I will read out so that members of the public can follow the debate: 2017, 338; 2018, 4,447; 2019, 3,818; and 2020, 24 – because of course we have had COVID.

845

In relation to these requests, have these requests been made by the Spanish state or emanations of the Spanish state directly to Gibraltar authorities?

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman uses the word ‘directly’, and given that they, whilst they were in Government, agreed the concept of the post box, I am unable, without notice of the question, to tell him whether the requests came or were handled electronically through an information system or whether they came through the post box that they agreed. So, I cannot answer whether that is information that was sought directly or not, for that reason; I would need notice of that question.

855

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, I think it is the obvious supplementary, but of course I cannot take it further if they do not have the information.

Perhaps he can assist me with this supplementary: does the Hon. the Chief Minister or the Minister for Transport think it is fair that there have been all these requests from the Spanish state to Gibraltar authorities, either via post box or directly, which have been complied with by the Gibraltar authorities, but there have been no requests from Gibraltar authorities to the Spanish state or emanations of the Spanish state in relation to offences committed by Spanish drivers in Gibraltar?

865 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman is wrong to say that his question, his supplementary, is the direct obvious supplementary to arise, because his question asked for statistics, not for mechanism in respect of which information is sought. If his question were about mechanism then his supplementary might be obvious and foreseeable. Given that it was not, he is wrong to suggest that it is.

870 Secondly, he now asks a question about fairness. I think the hon. Gentleman is wrong about that as well because the reason that he will find we do not make the requests of Spain that Spain

875 makes of us is because we are far more draconian in our approach. We will impound a vehicle that is involved in an accident or we will clamp a vehicle that is improperly parked if it is not a locally registered vehicle and not one of those enjoying the benefit of having a GHA pass, as we discussed earlier, and therefore we have much less need for those requests for information.

We do not have instances yet recorded, because we introduced the speed cameras recently, of offences against speed cameras which have required information from the Spanish authorities; otherwise we would have had it. So, it is not a question of fairness, it is a question of different enforcement mechanisms in place in different jurisdictions.

880 I know that he is keen to show himself to be the anti-osmosis champion and he does not know what to do in order to try and garner that element of nationalistic support in the way that he sees it. This is not how to do it, Mr Speaker. This is about compliance with a European Union instrument that requires exchange of information; that same European Union that we all voted to stay within when these were the mechanisms that were in play.

885 What he might want to do is convince the Government to take the same approach to road traffic that the Spanish take – in other words, not to clamp and then to seek information from the Spanish as to the number plates and who they belong to and send the fines later. We think that the way we do it, which is the way that successive Governments have done it, has a more direct and immediate result for the taxpayer and we think it is the right approach to take. But it does not go to fairness because some might think that we are being unfair rather than the other way round.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, the answer really does not stack up on a number of levels, not least because in answer to WQ73/2020 the answer that was provided by the Government to me when I asked how many requests had be made from Gibraltar to Spain ... The answer came and I will quote, so that I am not misrepresenting the position. It said:

The RGP understands from Gibraltar Licensing Department that the DVLA UK would not make requests to the Spanish state to seek out information on individuals resident in Spain in respect of traffic offences committed in Gibraltar, hence no requests have been made.

900 That is the answer that I was given, that the DVLA in the UK, presumably because it has got to be channelled via the DVLA in Spain, does not make requests on behalf of Gibraltar, hence no requests have been made. That is the answer that was given to me when I asked the question last time around and therefore that begs the question in this supplementary: what efforts have been made by the Gibraltar Government, bearing in mind that it has been sitting with Spain and discussing issues of mutual co-operation and the like, in order to allow for the Gibraltar authorities, in appropriate circumstances, to be able to obtain information from Spanish drivers in Gibraltar who break the law in Gibraltar and are not dealt with in the way that the Hon. the Chief Minister has indicated in answer, by clamping etc? There must be drivers who are not dealt with in that way and the Gibraltar Government would, I presume, want to be able to enforce the criminal law against Spanish drivers in Gibraltar.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, I do not recognise that we are in a situation where the information cannot be provided to Gibraltar, but he is right to point us in this direction. This is an issue that we have taken up on a number of occasions, and that is to undo that which we did not support when we were in opposition, which they did when they were in power, which is the post box, which was making sacrosanct the non-recognition of Gibraltar by Spanish authorities, which he sat in the Government that agreed and supported and which we are seeking to undo.

915 We do not accept that information should come to Gibraltar from Spain via a post box. We do not accept that Gibraltar should seek information from Spain via a post box. We think it was wrong for the GSD to agree that, we think it is retrograde to do that – in particular, in the digital age it does not work – and, Mr Speaker, I think he will now take the view that they were wrong to agree it.



920 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, let's come back to what I am asking and the information that  
I am attempting to obtain from the Government. Does he accept that there are going to be  
Spanish drivers committing offences in Gibraltar that cannot be dealt with in the manner the  
Hon. the Chief Minister described a few months ago when he answered a supplementary, when  
925 he said we deal with it by way of clamping or on-the-spot fines? There will be a number of  
Spanish drivers who will commit offences here and there will be a need, if you are serious about  
essentially enforcing our laws against Spanish drivers, to obtain information about where those  
people reside, so that the Gibraltar authorities can do, in relation to those Spanish drivers,  
what the Spanish authorities habitually in their thousands are doing in relation to our residents  
in Gibraltar.

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**Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman needs to understand that there is a  
hook that has caught him, which he will not be able to wriggle off, and that is that the  
mechanism that he has identified as the problem is the mechanism that *they* agreed whilst they  
were in power. In other words, the hurdle that he is now alighting upon is of their making.

935

I do recognise that he will do anything possible to pretend that he can put distance between  
himself and that which was agreed in the time that his party was in power, and that he can now  
pretend that this is a problem of our making, not of theirs. Let's be very clear. If the issue he is  
identifying is an issue which gets caught up, as he says it is, on the basis of the DVLA being used  
as a post box, it is a post box they bought and swallowed hook, line and sinker.

940

**Hon. D A Feetham:** No, Mr Speaker, we may have agreed at the time the post box  
arrangements, but in fact this may be a completely different situation in the sense that the DVLA  
may essentially be saying 'We do not accept jurisdiction for Gibraltar because Gibraltar is not  
part of the United Kingdom,' or alternatively it may be that the Gibraltar authorities would in  
945 fact not wish to have a situation where the DVLA is accepting jurisdiction for Gibraltar. The post  
box arrangements could in fact work outside the DVLA. The DVLA do not have to be involved in  
the seeking of information from Spanish authorities as to criminal offences that are committed  
here in Gibraltar.

950

But look Mr Speaker, he has been in power now for the last 10 years. What we have at the  
moment is a situation where there are requests from Spanish authorities. We do not know  
whether they are requests directly to the Gibraltar authorities and whether the Gibraltar  
authorities are answering directly to the Spanish authorities outside the post box arrangements  
– and I will ask another question next time round – but doesn't he feel at least some concern  
that there are thousands of requests to the Gibraltar authorities about Gibraltarans committing  
955 traffic offences in Spain, that information is being provided by our authorities but there is not  
one request – not one, Mr Speaker – from our authorities to the Spanish authorities in relation  
to offences committed by Spanish drivers here in Gibraltar? And it is on his watch, not ours.

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**Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, despite the rhetoric and the obvious unassailable passion  
that he has for this and any other subject that he believes is going to garner him some electoral  
support, I have to once again point out that unfortunately we have not yet been in power for  
10 years, we have been in power for eight and a half years, and somebody who gets that simple  
maths so wrong can be expected to have got a lot of the other steps in the questioning that he  
sought to deploy wrong also.

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Each part of the earlier part of his supplementary was assumption and, as the hon.  
Gentleman knows, to assume makes an ass of you and me and therefore we must not fall into  
the trap of questions based on assumption, however much passion we want to inject into the  
way in which we ask them.

970

Even in eight and a half years we have not been able to undo some of the lasting damage, in  
some respects, of some areas of policy that hon. Members did when they were in Government.  
In some respects we build on good work that they did; in some respects we have just not been

975 able to undo damage that they did. The post box, in my opinion and in the opinion of those of us who are in Government today, was one of those elements of lasting damage which made sacrosanct the Spanish approach to non-recognition of Gibraltar which could lead to the sort of situation that he is postulating may – therein the assumption – have arisen, but if it has, Mr Speaker, he was the most enthusiastic cheerleader, pom-poms and all, of everything done in that respect.

980 I have to tell him he is fixed with the honours that he bestowed on the man who did this, whom he habitually describes as the greatest Gibraltarian of all time, however uncomfortable that may be, given the alliances he is trying to make for the future.

**Mr Speaker:** Final one, please.

985 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, what efforts has the Government made in order to ensure that it is in a position, either directly or through the post box arrangements, to be able to prosecute or indeed fine Spanish drivers who commit offences in this jurisdiction that are not dealt with by way of clamping or on-the-spot fines?

990 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Really, Mr Speaker, that question cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, arise from the question that we are dealing with. It can arise from the supplementaries to the supplementaries to the supplementary, but it cannot arise from the question that we are dealing with. That is a question also for the law enforcement authorities where we, when asked the question, would be able to obtain the information for him if he wants to put it at the next House.

995 But look let's be very clear. The Government of Gibraltar which I lead believes that the laws of Gibraltar should be enforced in Gibraltar in respect of everyone in the same way, and 'in Gibraltar' means every grain of our land, every drop of our water and every breath of our air and everyone understands that to be the case.

1000 **Hon. D A Feetham:** I am afraid, Mr Speaker, that I certainly do not understand that to be the case and that has been reinforced by the answers that the Hon. the Chief Minister has provided to my supplementaries.

1005 This question that I have asked, the last question, arises from the fact that it is the Government itself that has made an issue (*Interjection*) out of the post box arrangement – bearing in mind that we do not even know in fact whether the Spanish authorities are deploying the post box arrangements in order to make these thousands of requests in Gibraltar, because they could be made directly to the Gibraltar authorities. I merely point out, Mr Speaker, that I have asked this supplementary arising out of information of the fact that it is the Government that has made it about this.

1010 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, I would merely point out – given that merely pointing out now appears to be something that one can do under the Rules of the House – that the hon. Gentleman is wrong to make the assumption that we do not believe in the fair and equitable enforcement of the laws of Gibraltar in Gibraltar in respect of anyone in Gibraltar, whoever they may be, because by coming to Gibraltar they subject themselves to our laws in our land, in our sea and in our air.

1015 The hon. Gentleman is trying simply to create some xenophobic support for his position in a way that he knows will garner support from certain sectors of the social media glitterati. So be it. He has tried this tactic from 2011 onwards and it has led him to take his party to the greatest defeat since 1991. Indeed no doubt, although it did for his career for a while, he hopes to come back and give it another bash. Well, I suspect he will get another bashing.

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

1025 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, can I ask the Hon. the Chief Minister, the 'current' leader of  
the GSLP (*Interjection*) – as he has described me, the 'current' leader ... I heard what he said,  
that making assumptions is a mistake in some ways, but of course making assumptions in  
questions is more understandable than making assumptions in answers, which is less  
understandable because you are in possession of the facts. So, hopefully the answers that we  
are given on this side of the House are not assumptions but they are actually based on facts and  
1030 not speculation.

I have to say as well that hearing the Hon. the Chief Minister ... and I know why he says it in  
this way and he puts it in this way, but for him to have said that the post-boxing arrangements  
made sacrosanct the non-recognition of competent authorities I think is rather to understand  
the post-boxing arrangement on its head. It did the reverse. What it did was deliver final  
1035 recognition of the competent authorities, albeit through a conduit – the post box – a mere  
channel of communication which secured the recognition of Gibraltar authorities.

Or has he forgotten that just before the post-boxing arrangements were entered into we all  
had the big demonstration to the Frontier, where we waved our passports because our  
passports and ID cards were not being recognised and it was only as a result of the post-boxing  
1040 arrangements that in fact our authorities were recognised, albeit through this channel of  
communication?

What my hon. colleague has asked, and which he has sought to deflect with this erection of  
the post-boxing arrangement as if it were some kind of terrible institution that is the answer to  
the question, where he is speculating with the same ill that he has pointed out to my hon.  
1045 colleague, making the assumption that it is the post-boxing arrangement, it seems, that is the  
problem ... It seems to me that that does not stack up, for this very basic reason: because, as my  
hon. colleague has pointed out, there have been either four and a half thousand requests  
coming in, in 2018, from Spain, or 3,800 last year coming in from Spain, and none in the other  
direction. The requests coming in from Spain can only have come in one of two ways. Either they  
1050 came in directly, in which case they could also go out directly and the post-boxing arrangement  
is not an impediment; or they have come in through the post box, in which case they could also  
go out through the post box and the post-boxing arrangement is not an impediment. So, what is  
the reason that there are no requests in the other direction, because the post box is not the  
impediment whether they go in directly or indirectly?

1055 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, as the current Leader of this House and having no  
expectation of being immortal or eternal, as others who have held this post have pretended to  
be, it is in my temporal right and obligation to answer questions in this House in the way that  
enables hon. Members to have the data that they require. The supplementary that the hon.  
1060 Gentleman asked was based, as I indicated, on assumption and I therefore told him that I could  
only answer on the basis of assumption.

I could simply have said, 'We do not have the information and in order not to fall into  
assumption you can ask the question next time,' but in order to try to assist the House and the  
hon. Gentleman, who does not often deserve assistance, I attempted to provide an answer that  
1065 the hon. Gentleman, the current leader of the GSD, seems to take objection to.

Because of course, I recall that he too was a Member of the Government that agreed the  
post-boxing arrangements, a Member who then left the party because of the joining of the hon.  
Gentleman now to his right, and he made no bones of saying that that is why he was going – to  
his left, sorry. He made no bones of saying that that is why he was going.

1070 But Mr Speaker look, I will not resile from the fact that I think the post-boxing arrangements  
were a bad thing, not a good thing. We took that position at the time and we maintain that  
position. The hon. Gentleman reminds us that we marched at the Frontier waving our passports  
and our identity cards, only to have been marched up the hill by hon. Members when they were  
in Government and then marched down again to be told that our ID cards would change and

1075 instead of featuring the word 'Gibraltar' would feature the word 'UK' on them. That is how they  
got us to be recognised: by not being Gibraltar, by being UK on the card.

1080 Indeed, Mr Speaker, let's understand what the post-boxing arrangement is. Instead of  
someone in authority in La Linea seeking information from someone in authority in Gibraltar,  
which information the European Union requires should flow between the respective competent  
authorities, the fellow in La Linea, under the arrangements that *they* did, sends his request to  
King Charles Street in London. That is what he has to understand. In our view, and we expressed  
this at the time, there could be no more genuflection to the colonialism of Gibraltar that a  
request to our competent authorities should be addressed to King Charles Street in London –  
and that is what they agreed.

1085 The hon. Gentleman was part of that Government, so I understand he has to defend this, but  
then, when he was not part of that Government and he was leading the PDP, he was the whip  
hand against the former Leader of this House when the Cordoba arrangements were done, and  
the man sitting to his left was the supreme defender of those arrangements. Indeed, the  
*Chronicle* was full of exchanges between them as to how the Cordoba arrangements were a  
1090 concession to Spain and how in fact the Hon. the current Leader of the GSD was wrong in his  
analysis of what the then leader of the GSD and his cheerleaders in the GSD had agreed with  
Spain. This makes for fascinating reading – and I have got it always to hand because there are  
some choice phrases that they used about each other at the time that one will no doubt wish to  
remind them of at some time.

1095 I think that the hon. Gentleman is wrong in the analysis that he does. I think his history is  
failing him in this respect and I think it is better that if the hon. Gentleman wants to ask further  
questions about this instead of trying to highlight numbers in order to try and prove points –  
which we will now gleefully tweet over and will give them his own inflection to the data in the  
way that his staunchest supporters, all those who used to support him in the time of the  
1100 disgraceful behaviour in respect of the LNG facility, the cutting off of the electricity etc., all of  
those who still support him with great vigour and great gusto – so be it. But I think the people of  
Gibraltar would rather have the facts. They would rather understand why it is that the post box  
still haunts us today and why it is that these things cannot just be fixed from one Government to  
another. Sometimes Governments fix us with problems for good.

1105 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, I know that the Chief Minister, the current leader of the GSLP,  
likes to hold the stage for quite a long time, (*Interjection*) but he has not answered the question.

1110 The question that I asked was very simple. I have shown him that the post box cannot be the  
impediment because either the 4,000 requests that were made by Spain have gone through the  
post box and trickled down to Gibraltar or they have come directly. Either route appears to  
work, from Spain to Gibraltar, direct or indirect. My question simply is: why cannot it work the  
other way, either directly or through the post box? His insistence on giving the House some kind  
of warped, may I say, historical analysis of the effect of the post box agreement is simply  
because he has no answer to the fact that there are 4,000 or 3,000 requests being made from  
1115 Spain to Gibraltar directly or through the post box, but none are going in the other direction. Is  
that not right?

1120 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Well Mr Speaker, as the current Chief Minister, the current Leader of  
this House and the current leader of the GSLP, all of which I hold in great honour as a privilege  
and temporarily, because I do not believe that I will hold them forever and I am sufficiently  
versed in physics to know that I am likely to hold them for less now than I have held them since I  
took this office ... He does not need to worry about calling me 'current'. It is different in his case  
because of course, as we know, he put his leadership up for grabs then nobody decided to take  
the step, but there was plenty of talk about what may happen, and indeed the talk continues.  
1125 But never mind. He does not need to worry about my seeing myself as not holding this post

forever. It is something that I reconciled myself to the very night that I took office, as hon. Members who remember my acceptance speech at the Mackintosh Hall will no doubt recall.

1130 Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman believes that anyone who does not agree with him is warped, and that is a very dangerous way to see history. Because we see things in a different way does not mean that we are warped, it means that we believe things to be different. And we do not describe their view as warped. We could describe it as mistaken because it is different to our view.

1135 The Hon. the Deputy Chief Minister remembers the demonstration, remembers the issue with the ID cards and the passports, and it is a good reminder of the mistakes that hon. Members made when they were in office. I will concede one thing to him: they made bigger mistakes once he had left than they had made whilst he was there – and we can get on to those, if the hon. Gentleman likes, a little later or during the course of a debate – because of course the arrival of the man to his left did something to that party from which they will never recover.

1140 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker –

**Mr Speaker:** Just –

1145 **Hon. K Azopardi:** This is my final –

**Mr Speaker:** Can I ask you to resume your seat, just for a second?

1150 Just as a reminder, and I made a note of this, I know that Members are pretty eager to say their spiel and get on with it and question the Government, but let me remind Members that supplementary questions are allowed at the Speaker's discretion. This will be the last question.

**Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, I am grateful. From a sedentary position the Chief Minister complains ... Let me say that I was calling him the 'current' leader only in jest because he first called me the 'current' leader. He understands that. He knows that we get on, so it is not an issue; I do it in jest.

1155 He said from a sedentary position that we are never going to finish. Let me say this: we are never going to finish because his answers are so long and take us not just as a meandering through every single highway and byway but through little paths and up the Rock and down the streams. It is impossible for him to actually give a straight answer to a straight question.

1160 My straight question simply was: there are three or four thousand requests going to Gibraltar that are received in Gibraltar directly or through the post box – why don't they go the other way? It is not about the history lesson; it is about answering the fact as to the reason they do not go the other way. Does he have that reason?

1165 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, I really genuinely do not believe that the hon. Gentleman was paying attention whilst the debate was ongoing, and I put it no higher or lower than the word 'debate' because I think the Hon. Mr Feetham and I were erring into debate, which you – I am grateful – allowed. A lot of that he needs to read the *Hansard* for, but what I will tell him is that I do not take it in jest when he calls me the 'current' leader. If it is in jest it is because he wants me to be permanent. I do not want to be permanent and therefore I think we both understand that the roles we play today are the roles that we are required to play by dint of where our party members and our respective electorates have put us, and we must do our best whilst we hold these posts for whatever period we may hold them.

1175 It is in the nature of the beast – and I say that generically, not to the hon. Gentleman, with whom I get on very well, but is in the nature of the political beast that we have in front of us, in the political party that is the Official Opposition, that they will accuse us of giving long answers without the most minimal regard for how long their questions are. Very often our long answers are half the length of their very long questions. Far too often hon. Members do not like to hear

it, but the facts are the facts. Let's take our measuring tape out and let's look at this particular version of *Hansard*.

1180

**Hon. D A Feetham:** So, no answer.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** I have given you the answer and we had a discussion in the early part of what he said. If you look at what he read, it is in there; but you were not listening then – it was not exciting.

1185

**Q422/2020**  
**BID proposal –**  
**Status**

**Clerk:** Question 422, the Hon. D J Bossino.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Minister for Business state whether the BID proposal is still going ahead as planned?

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**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport.

**Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport (Hon. V Daryanani):** Mr Speaker, yes, sir.

1195

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, can he indicate when it is expected to be formally launched?

**Hon. V Daryanani:** Mr Speaker, the last I heard from the BID task working group was that they are looking to have their business plan ready for August this year and then the ballot will take place in October of this year.

1200

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, can the Hon. Member confirm that the Government is still committed to provide the pound for pound assistance by way of financial assistance?

**Hon. V Daryanani:** We are 100% committed, Mr Speaker.

**Q423-24/2020**  
**Tourism –**  
**Visitor face of Gibraltar; assessment of loss of business**

1205

**Clerk:** Question 423, the Hon. D J Bossino.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Minister for Tourism provide further details of what he means when he refers to what the visitor face of Gibraltar should look like and how he proposes to change that?

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**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport.

**Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport (Hon. V Daryanani):** Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 424.

1215 **Clerk:** Question 242, the Hon. D J Bossino.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Minister for Tourism provide the results of the assessment as to loss of business between 1st March and 31st December 2020 which he said he carried out as part of the engagement with operators?

1220

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport.

**Hon. V Daryanani:** Mr Speaker, along with most of my other questions on tourism in this session, these are obviously all prompted by my reply to Question 26/2020. Much of my reply to that question was a set of thoughts and analysis of the current situation and what may happen to destinations, including Gibraltar, as the worldwide tourism industry evolves in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

1225

So, the hon. Gentleman opposite must give this some thought when we talk about the possible changing face of tourism in Gibraltar. This is not something that can be answered factually or with a clear vision at present, as this situation continues to change. In fact, it may evolve even when a clearer picture begins to emerge.

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What I meant by that reference to the changing face is that the traditional demographic of Gibraltar's visitor may change in the face of what COVID-19 has done to the tourism industry. It remains to be seen whether or not our visitor profile changes because of the pandemic. If it does, then this means that target marketing may change.

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Throughout lockdown, gathering the medical knowledge issued surrounding the nature of COVID-19 and those exposed as higher risk has revealed increased danger to the older segment of populations. Gibraltar's traditional customer base has historically been aged 55-plus. This is also representative in the cruise passenger profile. It is widely reported that this segment of travellers will likely find travel insurance requirements harder to satisfy, in addition to being the least likely to initiate booking overseas travel in the first wave once restrictions are removed. Therefore, in the period of operational business before a workable vaccine and/or treatment for this disease is available, it is likely that Gibraltar's mainstay audience will need to alter in line with the pool of travellers in the initial wave of travel.

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Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman opposite likes to put words into my mouth which are simply not true. I did not say that I had carried out an assessment as to the loss business operators may have had from 1st March and going forward to the end of the year as a forecast. I said that we had engaged with operators to assess the loss of business. This is a question that was posed to the industry. I cannot force members of the industry to reply on this matter and indeed I have received no replies to this.

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However, it is clear that this pandemic has had a very detrimental effect on the local tourism, hospitality, leisure and retail industries. It is also clear that once the FCO issued advice against all but essential travel the majority of bookings across the period of the guidance would have been eligible for cancellation. What is unclear is what percentage of these would rebook for 2021.

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, to answer the last point the hon. Member makes, I really have no intention of putting words in his mouth. I was simply putting the point, asking the question on the back of the reply, which says: 'We have already engaged with operators as to (a)' and he lists five points and says 'assessing loss of business between 1st March to the 31st December 2020.'

1255

In relation to that, can he confirm that there is no statistical evidence that he could share with this House which we could analyse?

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**Hon. V Daryanani:** Mr Speaker, I did not say that I had carried out an assessment. What I did say was, and I am going to quote from my answer of last time:

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I have already engaged with operators as to assessing loss of business from 1st March to 31st December.

Nobody has come back to me with any information. I have asked them whether they want to provide the information. It is up to them. It is not that I have carried out an assessment.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister for that reply. That is the answer, so yes.

Going back to the initial part of his question in relation to the visitor face, he seems to indicate that it is driven by COVID but I got the impression that it may have been something more, that the Government may have adopted some sort of policy decision in relation to this whereby they were driving it themselves, clearly in reaction to COVID but that they had some sort of substantive firm policy decision to change the visitor face of, basically, Gibraltar visitors.

In relation to that specific point, in his answer – and he is right that most of these questions arise from the very lengthy answer which he gave me in answer to one of my questions about tourism policy in the future – he says:

The future face of Gibraltar's tourism product must, in all events, be sustainable.

And then he says:

We may need to look to technologies to help us achieve this.

In what way?

**Hon. V Daryanani:** First of all, Mr Speaker, when he says 'so be it', the reason is that he did not seem to like the fact that he seems to have made a mistake on what I actually said. But anyway, so be it. So we move on.

When I speak of the changing face of the customer, what I am referring to is that Gibraltar has been used to a certain age group of visitors, which is normally the 55-plus. At the moment, in a situation where tourism is always changing, we believe if you speak to people all over the world nobody has a fine idea of where we are going. Gibraltar will have to change as time goes on. We might have a situation where, over the next six months or so, we might have people who want to visit Gibraltar who are younger. So, when I speak of the changing face that is what I mean. Face change is the type of customer we have. We might have a different kind of customer. While in the past it has been an older customer, a customer who was over 55, we might have a younger profile, a younger audience.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** I really am not trying to provoke the Minister to come up with the nature of replies he is coming up with. I am really genuinely asking the questions for further particulars on the answers he has given, and he needs to rest assured that I am not trying to catch him out.

In relation to that point that he makes, he also said in his answer, when he talks about more valuable volume of traffic or higher yield – and there was a question mark to that at the end of that statement, and he has not mentioned it in his reply ... Is he looking at basically perhaps maybe even fewer visitors but who have greater spending power? And if so, how is he thinking at this stage – I know it is very early stages – to achieve that?

**Hon. V Daryanani:** At the moment what we are doing is trying to look at all different ways of marketing Gibraltar. Things are changing. It is not the same. In the past we have marketed Gibraltar by actually visiting trade fairs – we visited the World Travel Market, we visited other trade fairs – but things are changing and we are now looking to market Gibraltar online, as I explained in my answer at the last sitting and you have an answer here on the order paper on that.



1310 We have had to change. Webinars is one of the things that ... Everybody seems to be going down that road of where Gibraltar is virtual, virtual rooms where people visit and they see what Gibraltar is all about. It is very difficult to pin down at this moment in time how we can achieve that, because whenever we try all we hit are brick walls.

1315 People do not know what is happening, how things are changing, what will happen in two weeks' time. We do not know, so we just have to be ready and prepared to change with the time.

**Mr Speaker:** Next question.

**Q425/2020**  
**Virtual destination platform –**  
**Anticipated launch date**

**Clerk:** Question 425, the Hon. D J Bossino.

1320

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Minister for Tourism state when he expects to be in a position to launch the virtual destination platform?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport.

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**Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport (Hon. V Daryanani):** Mr Speaker, the virtual destination platform was launched on Friday, 5th June on the Tourist Board's website. I am surprised the hon. Gentleman was not already aware of this.

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** No, Mr Speaker, I was not aware of it and indeed I have not had an opportunity to look at it, but I will do so after this meeting.

Can the hon. Member state what the main message is in that website in terms of the marketing drive in it – unless I have misunderstood what the virtual platform is meant to be achieving?

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**Hon. V Daryanani:** Mr Speaker, I suggest he looks at it and sees what a great product we have put together, but the main thrust of it is marketing. We are marketing Gibraltar: new videos and new products that we have aimed primarily at the UK market because that is what we are targeting at the moment.

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** Can he say in what way? I know that he and I have had a discussion during the lockdown in relation to this. Is the main thrust or drive of the marketing campaign that Gibraltar, for example, has done well throughout the crisis and therefore, for that reason, is a safe destination to visit?

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**Hon. V Daryanani:** Of course, remember that people like to see new pictures, people like to see new products. I am not sure how long we have had the older version on our website or when was the last time we changed it. It has not changed since I became Minister for Tourism, so I wanted to give it a revamp, especially with COVID, when there was less work within Tourism, so we took that opportunity to change things and make it look a lot better.

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** I am grateful for that answer. Is the Minister able to give me an indication as to what the cost of the launch of this platform has been to date, and indeed if there are any ongoing costs to that?

1355 **Hon. V Daryanani:** Mr Speaker, I would not want to give a firm answer. I have got an idea but I would not want to give a firm answer to Parliament. If he wants, I can write back to him and let him know what the exact cost was.

**Q426/2020**  
**Marketing drive in Spain –**  
**Launch date**

**Clerk:** Question 426, the Hon. D J Bossino.

1360 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Minister for Tourism state when he expects to be in a position to launch the marketing drive in Spain?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport.

1365 **Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport (Hon. V Daryanani):** Mr Speaker, the marketing drive in Spain is being launched in July, this month.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** I thought he was going to say it has already been launched! Mr Speaker, he says in July – does he have a precise date?

1370 Secondly – and this is an important supplementary question – in relation to the cost, does he have an idea or does he have that information available?

**Hon. V Daryanani:** Mr Speaker, I do have an idea but I cannot give you specifics because we are doing a few things. We are doing TV, social media and radio.

1375 **Hon. D J Bossino:** And can he state how long he expects this marketing drive to continue for?

**Hon. V Daryanani:** The initial idea, Mr Speaker, is two months.

1380 **Hon. D J Bossino:** And, similar to the other virtual platform question, can he state whether there is any uniformity as to the message? Is it the same message: come to Gibraltar, to the same place, new products? Or is it another message which is more specifically driven to the Spanish market?

1385 **Hon. V Daryanani:** Mr Speaker, what I have been told is that the Gibraltar Tourist Board has not previously marketed Gibraltar in Spain because they have thought that perhaps people come to Gibraltar anyway – based on that. But because of COVID and the staycation idea, with people in Spain staying in Spain, I thought that perhaps it would be good to encourage those people who might come from further afield and come down to the Costa or come down to the Campo de Gibraltar, that they could visit Gibraltar at the same time. There are many people who actually have not visited Gibraltar. They live in the nearby area but actually have not visited Gibraltar, so we thought it would be a good idea to encourage them to visit Gibraltar.

1390 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, presumably as part of that marketing drive – again, I will see it when it is launched, no doubt – the shopping experience also will also feature as a central aspect of that drive?

**Hon. V Daryanani:** Well, actually, not, Mr Speaker; it is just part of it.

1400 My main emphasis in this campaign is our Britishness, because I think it is important that the Spaniard can see the difference – because we are different, we are British. We wanted to sell the idea that they are visiting Gibraltar and they are visiting part of Britain. They are coming here to see the apes, they are coming here to see the Union Jack, they are coming here to see the changing of the guard, they are coming here to see the bobbies and they are coming here to see our red telephone boxes; they are not coming here to have tapas.

**Q427/2020**  
**ANTOR virtual exhibition –**  
**Level of interest shown in Gibraltar**

1405 **Clerk:** Question 427, the Hon. D J Bossino.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Minister for Tourism provide evidence of the level of interest that was shown in Gibraltar as a travel destination at the virtual exhibition hosted by the Association of National Tourist Offices and Representatives (ANTOR) on 8th June?

1410

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport.

1415 **Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport (Hon. V Daryanani):** Mr Speaker, 187 agents took part in the first virtual exhibition hosted by ANTOR on 8th June. Gibraltar was one of the 27 destinations with virtual rooms available on those days. The Tourist Board was joined by Sunborn Gibraltar and was able to present face to face with 10 agents across the session time. A further 140 agents downloaded Gibraltar’s fact file and viewed the video, and from this pool of interested agents a further destination webinar slot for a 30-minute destination presentation is scheduled to take place in the near future to further discuss the product and how Gibraltar is opening up post-COVID-19 lockdown.

1420

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Can I just receive clarification in respect of two figures, Mr Speaker? There was one where he said that there were some views. He mentioned a number but I did not quite catch it.

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Secondly, can he confirm that there were 187 agents? Presumably they are travel agents. And then, if that is confirmed – I see that the Minister nods – how that tallies with the answer which he gave at the last meeting, that invitations were sent out to over 3,000 travel agents. Would he be disappointed with that result, or is he happy with it?

1430

**Hon. V Daryanani:** Mr Speaker, this is hosted by ANTOR. The invitation was not really sent out by us. We would have wanted more agents to take part, but I suppose, at the end of the day, in the middle of a pandemic people have not wanted to participate as much as we would have preferred.

1435

I think the other question that you were asking was ... Gibraltar was one of the 27 destinations with virtual rooms.

**Q428/2020**  
**EasyJet –**  
**Resumption of services to Gibraltar**

**Clerk:** Question 428, the Hon. D J Bossino.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Is the Minister for Tourism in a position to now state when easyJet will resume its services to Gibraltar?

1440 This question was filed, as Mr Speaker will know, before it was announced in the press.

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport.

1445 **Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport (Hon. V Daryanani):** Mr Speaker, as I already announced, easyJet will resume some flying from Manchester on Monday, 20th July, and London Gatwick on Saturday, 25th July.

**Q429/2020**  
**BEAT COVID measures –**  
**Assistance for retail businesses**

**Clerk:** Question 429, the Hon. D J Bossino.

1450 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Again, this question I think has been superseded slightly by events. I will read it out.

Can the Minister for Small Businesses advise this House what plans the Government has to assist retail businesses in the immediate term after the BEAT COVID measures end?

By the 'BEAT COVID measures' I was referring to the initial ones and not the ones which were announced by the Government recently.

1455

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport.

**Minister for Business, Tourism and Transport (Hon. V Daryanani):** Mr Speaker, I did not get your last bit. I will read out the answer as we have it.

1460 The Government, in consultation with CELAC, is constantly reviewing the measures by which it can continue to generally assist retail business. As Gibraltar unlocks and the rest of the world unlocks, we will need to monitor how the economy starts to pick up.

I would just like to add that, as you know, we have announced BEAT 2.2 and that will assist retail businesses.

**Adjournment**

1465 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, I move that the House should now adjourn to Monday, 20th July at 4 p.m.

Mr Speaker, I now propose the question, which is that this House do now adjourn to Monday, 20th July at 4 p.m.

1470 I now put the question, which is this House do now adjourn to Monday, 20th July at 4 p.m. Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye.) Those against? Carried.

The House will now adjourn to Monday, 20th July at 4 p.m.

*The House adjourned at 5.16 p.m.*