



PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

AFTERNOON SESSION: 3.10 p.m. – 7.40 p.m.

Gibraltar, Tuesday, 16th March 2021

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The Gibraltar Parliament

The Parliament met at 3.10 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*]

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

Clerk: Meeting of Parliament, Tuesday, 16th March 2021.
Suspension of Standing Orders. The Hon. the Chief Minister.

5

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

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

GOVERNMENT STATEMENT

COVID-19 – Statement by the Chief Minister

10 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, it is *exactly* a year today since we locked down our over-70s. I want to therefore just quickly reflect that a year has passed since we took measures to confine some of our citizens to their homes. These days that sounds like something quite normal, but it was something quite abnormal a year ago and it must always remain abnormal.

Days after that, we acted to lock down our whole population. It has been a year like no other.

15 I want to briefly say, thank you to everyone for their help this year. I do not want to break that down into a thank you to each individual group that has been of assistance, but I just want to highlight, of course, the work of those in the GHA and ERS.

20 What I want to do today is extend my personal thanks and the thanks of the whole Government also, and no doubt all Members of this House, to everyone in this community. We have all played a different part in this difficult year, from leading in difficult decision-making to accepting the equally difficult obligations to stay at home. All of us have been just as important. All of us have been Team Gibraltar.

25 Mr Speaker, we have worked together in the Cabinet and we have worked together across the floor of this Parliament. We have worked together across the political divide, across the community and across the whole nation. That is what has been the core of our work.

Additionally, we have felt the real support of the United Kingdom in the provision of PPE, testing and the sovereign guarantee for our COVID spending. But perhaps most importantly, with the provision at no cost to Gibraltar of the COVID vaccine in quantities that enable me to say today that Gibraltar will be the first nation to complete a whole nation vaccination programme. We will

30 do that thanks to the United Kingdom, thanks to its Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary and thanks to its Department of Health and Care.

Mr Speaker, those in the Convent, in King Charles Street and in Downing Street who have been there to help will live for ever in our political hearts and in our political history as our guardian angels at this time. Our sincere thanks.

35 The loyalty of the people of Gibraltar to the Crown of the United Kingdom has never and will never be in doubt. In these harrowing and difficult times, our deep loyalty has been recognised and repaid. The United Kingdom has in fact played a blinder on vaccinations and we have been amongst the beneficiaries in the British family of nations.

Mr Speaker, today I must also report the COVID-19 statistics to the Parliament. The total number of Gibraltarians lost to COVID-19 is now 94 – 87 of them since the start of the year. Happily, though, we have no patients in our critical care unit, and we have only two non-resident visitors in our Victoria Ward.

As at midnight last night, we have now administered 48,296 inoculations. Of these 29,667 have had a second dose and 18,629 only a first dose for now.

45 After 200,713 tests, 1,489 of which have happened overnight, and after some weeks of very low daily numbers, today I must report seven new cases in our community. Four of these were close contacts of an existing identified active case. That active case was a waiter in a restaurant.

I want to highlight that four of those infected have had one vaccine dose and one had had both vaccine doses. I highlight that so that people are reminded that we must remain cautious and vigilant even after vaccinations.

50 One positive is a lunch lady in one school that has led to three staff – not teachers – and 17 children isolating. Another is a lunch lady in another school, and that has led to four staff, also not teachers, and 15 children isolated.

Additionally, we have had an infection in one of our elderly care facilities through one of the care professionals. In this case, the care professional had already had two doses of the vaccine and the two residents exposed have also had two doses of the vaccine. So there is evidence that we must remain vigilant even post-vaccination.

Please let us remind ourselves that the virus is still around us, even though we have been inoculated, and that vaccination does not provide 100% immunity.

60 I am aware, Mr Speaker, that the community, the media and fellow parliamentarians have been keen to receive information on the variants that have been in play in Gibraltar. The Government is now in receipt of this information. It tells us the following, Mr Speaker, and I ask Parliament please to excuse the technical aspects of the information I am about to provide. I have ensured that both you, the Leader of the Opposition, Ms Hassan Nahon and the leader of the Liberal Party have a copy of my Statement so that you can follow the more technical aspects of it.

65 Mr Speaker, we have had 60 results back from samples dating from 27th December 2020 to 6th January 2021.

70 Of note is that 15 of these were B.1.1.7 lineage, known as the Kent variant of concern. None of these cases were particularly severe cases or in in-patients or residents of healthcare or residential facilities.

We still have over 300 results of samples pending at Public Health England. We should soon be able to carry out this testing here in Gibraltar, as I have already told the House. All sequencing on GHA samples to date has been undertaken by Public Health England.

75 To date, we have had valid sequencing results from Public Health England back on 565 SARS-CoV-2 viral RNA extracts, sent from 624 positive cases. The dates of the samples from which we have valid sequencing results span from 8th August 2020 to 6th January 2021. Of the 565 samples sent, 59 samples sent have failed to yield a valid sequencing result at Public Health England due to technical reasons.

80 There remain those 300 results on GHA samples pending, which I have referred the House to before. Samples sent to date have largely consisted of an unselected random sample of positives

obtained by testing from GHA labs: both St Bernard's Hospital and Public Health University Laboratory.

85 The predominant strength detected in the 565 samples sent has been the B.1.177 strain, which emerged as the predominant strain in the United Kingdom and Western Europe from late summer onwards, with 357 of the 565 classified as within that B.1.177 lineage; 333 of those were the pure B.1.177 lineage and 24 were subtypes of it.

90 One important point to emphasise is that we still have over 300 samples pending, as I said before, which date from December to February during the third wave that we have come out of. But for now, what we have seen is that the predominant strain in our third wave, at the beginning of our third wave, was there B.1.177 strain – that is to say, *not* the Kent strain.

95 In shorthand, this was labelled the 'Spanish' strain by some sectors of the United Kingdom media back in the autumn, as it was first identified in arrivals from Spain after the summer. The important issue, of course, is that the data we have up to now suggests that we are not seeing the third wave here or around us prompted, at least originally, by the more transmissible Kent variant, which is the B.1.1.7, or any other variant of concern based on the data that we have available to us at the moment. This is based on the result of a relatively small sample that we have had back from PHE, Public Health England, and there remains the possibility that this may change once we get more genotyping results back of that third wave in the period of December to February.

100 The B.1.177 variant is not associated with any notable mutations of concern in the spike protein and is not classified as a variant of concern. The predominant sequence from results to date from samples dating from wave 3 over the Christmas and New Year period remains the B.1.177 strain.

105 There have been to date 16 samples that have shown either a mutation of note in the spike region or are classified as a variant of concern. Fifteen of these 16 have been sequenced as the more transmissible Kent variant of concern; one of 16 as a B.1.1.49 lineage.

The B.1.1.7 Kent variant lineage was detected in samples dating, as I said before, Mr Speaker, from 27th December to 5th January. From the analysis, none of these 15 originated from severe or fatal cases or from admitted or resident cases within a healthcare or residential facility. The ages of these cases range from 16 to 74.

110 As far as the Government is aware, there has been no assessment of antecedent travel on these cases to ascertain route of acquisition.

So, in summary, Mr Speaker, although we have identified some instances of the Kent variant in Gibraltar, our third wave seems, for now, to have originated from the Spanish variant.

115 There have been no cases in samples sent from Gibraltar identified as a South African B.1.351 lineage variant of concern or a Brazilian P.1 lineage variant of concern.

No Gibraltar viral sequences of any lineage have been reported as having the E484K escape mutation to date, which is associated with increased evasion of the immune response and reported in some cases of B.1.1.7 in the Bristol, Somerset and Liverpool regions of the UK.

120 At present, there are no data available on sequencing results to be able to communicate any findings on specific groups, including but not limited to severe or fatal cases, post-vaccination cases or any clusters or outbreaks.

I know, Mr Speaker, that this is very detailed and very technical information, but it is information that we must put in the public domain.

125 I also ask that people do not read the references to 'Kent variant' or 'Spanish variant' in any political terms. These are shorthand terms adopted to label variants with numerological names and are associated only with place of first detection.

Finally, Mr Speaker, the sun is shining at last and we are all now vaccinated or on the way to being vaccinated, but we are not out of the woods yet.

130 One year on from our first restrictions, we are in a good place, but we are not yet in our happy place. We have a road still to travel.

I want to assure our community that we remain exacting in the continuation of the restrictions.

We will release all restrictions, including on the freedom of assembly, as soon as we are advised we are able to; but we will only do so when we are advised, it is safe for us to do so. For now, we have released all the restrictions that we have been advised we are safe to release, but we will not keep any restriction in place for one moment longer than is strictly necessary.

But caution must remain our watchword, prudence must define our approach and success must be the objective that we keep in mind.

Mr Speaker, before I sit down, can I just, I am sure on behalf of the whole House, send best wishes to the Duke of Edinburgh, who has today been released from hospital after having had a cardiological intervention.

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

Hon. K Azopardi: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Yes, before I respond to the Chief Minister, I associate myself and Members on this side of the House with the remarks he has made about the Duke of Edinburgh, that we wish a prompt recovery.

Mr Speaker, yes, indeed, it is apt that we should reflect on the COVID situation, as we are, as the Chief Minister says, exactly a year from those restrictions on the over-70s. Indeed, we are just a bit more than a year on from our own reflection that there was the first active positive case in Gibraltar on 3rd March. We have had quite a lot go on in that 12 months, if I can put it in an understatement in that way! Things that we certainly did not envisage – at least I speak for myself – when we fought the 2019 election and we were all so consumed by the issues of the day expecting that, of course, Brexit and the post-Brexit scenario was going to be the sole concern of people in 2020, and yet we found ourselves thrown into a spiral of a public health situation that no one could envisage. Of course we have spoken about that before, but in making reflections at any moment, it is almost necessary to say it again – almost, because it is not that we cannot believe it, because we have had the last 12 months which is a living testimony to something which is now part of our history and which we must believe, but because it is worthy of restatement, purely because of the international and historical significance of the fact that suddenly we had an onset of an issue that we could not envisage and that completely changed our attitude, not just to what was important but the priorities that we had as a community and yes, we came together to fight that fight.

In doing so, on behalf of Members on this side of the House, I want to thank everyone in the health services and indeed essential workers, as I have done before, for their participation and role in fighting the virus and, indeed, everything that has kept us safe. Equally, I also want to mourn, as I do, with the families of those who have lost members to COVID: to those 94 members of our community that were lost to COVID. They have family members and friends and they are deeply lost, and I know that we will mark them as a community as we go forward.

At the same time that we are introspective as a community and reflect on what has happened over the last 12 months, and everything that changed and how we needed to re channel resources and take a completely different view about how we dealt with the issues of the day – and we did that in a radical way by coming here united as a community and kicking the Budget forward and so on, and working together on public health and economic measures – in the same way as we do that, it is important now, as we go forward, that we take also a reflective but forward-looking attitude to what needs to happen next, because even though there has been a successful vaccination programme, that I am the first to congratulate the GHA on, and even though we appear to have navigated the worst effects of a public health crisis, there are now still new challenges in the developing public health pandemic situation – new challenges in terms of getting this economy regenerated and kick-started in an effective way. Those are things that we need to reflect on.

There has been assistance given to certain sectors, but that assistance has been to stabilise, prop up and try to smooth the path for those businesses to start again, but we need to reflect

again on: is there anything more active that we can do to regenerate, kick-start and reposition our
185 economy and the different areas of the economy that have suffered and will suffer effects as we
go forward? There are plenty of areas of the economy that will suffer for quite some time.

Also, we need to reflect as a community on the restoration of freedoms and how quickly we
can do that. The Chief Minister's Statement raises several issues and I have a number of questions
for him.

190 Before I turn to those questions, there was a generic point that was occurring to me. Not only
do we need to reflect on how we grapple with the challenges as we go forward, because I think
what we have learnt ... Any issue in public administration, when you are in Government, you learn
that you face a challenge and even though you face down a challenge and you think you have
defeated it, sometimes the challenge transforms itself into an offshoot of a challenge. If I can use
195 the COVID terminology, a variant of the challenge then spawns a new challenge that needs to be
dealt with. That is so, I think, because isolation, and the effects of the pandemic and the social
lockdown and so on, has brought to the fore issues of mental health and wellbeing in a much more
dramatic way, that I think as a community we need to deal with.

Mr Speaker, on a more granular basis, can I ask the Chief Minister for clarification on a number
200 of issues, and let me first start by saying that we are grateful on this side of the House for his
technical outlay of information on a much more detailed basis. We have asked questions around
all these variants before, but this time ... and understandably, because it is no criticism; it has
taken some time for there to be a study of all these variants, so I am not criticising when I say that
we are getting it now.

205 But first of all, can I ask the Chief Minister to comment on his statement that, of these new
cases in our community, four of those infected have had one vaccine does and one had had both.
On the basis that we have had more than 29,000 first doses and about 17,000 second doses –
because that can sound dramatic to anyone listening to the statement, in the same way as perhaps
it has sounded dramatic for some people to hear that there have been 37 cases, I think it was, of
210 people with blood clots in relation to the AstraZeneca vaccine, even though the AstraZeneca
vaccine has seen 30 million people being vaccinated – does he agree that, given that the vaccine
was forecast to be 95% effective, there was always a likelihood that there is going to be a small
number of cases still positive, despite the vaccine? And does he think or agree that this is not an
issue that should concern members of the community that have had the vaccine, in the sense that
215 it in any way undermines the reason for the vaccination programme or its effectiveness, and
rather this simply increases the case for the vaccination programme, in the sense that it shows
the danger of the virus, despite the vaccine?

It is interesting to see that that particular statistic – and I was going to ask whether the GHA
intended to, and if not, I would ask the Chief Minister to agree or perhaps consider that the GHA
220 should, study the effects of COVID in relation to those who have been vaccinated already, to see
if the effects of COVID on those persons who have been vaccinated is less or is on the milder side,
because they have been vaccinated, it would be interesting to know that and to see whether there
is any international sharing of information that the GHA can plug into in respect of that? That
would be certainly interesting for those of us on this side of the House.

225 It must be the case that that experience is being repeated in other countries of the world. So
does the GHA have contacts? I am sure it does, but it is the GHA intending, in the context of its
own contacts with public health authorities in the UK, to plug in this research and this information
to try to assist in tracking the development of the virus?

Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister has indicated that there have been 60 results. He said from
230 samples dated 27th December 2020 to 6th January 2021. He then gave a further number of
samples later on in his Statement, but I was not sure if it was from the same number of samples,
so can he confirm that the 60 results that he talked about from 27th December 2020 to
6th January 2021, is that from a total of 565 samples, or is that a different number of samples?

235 If I understood his Statement correctly, and I think that is right, given his conclusion to it, the
predominant strain that was seen in Gibraltar is a slightly different mutation. I am trying to resist

giving it the descriptions of Kent and Spanish for the same reasons as the Chief Minister, but it is a different strain or a different mutation. But given the similarity of the numbering of the strains, is it because the strain that was predominant in Gibraltar is itself a descendant of this other strain that was more predominant in the UK? I ask, so I do not know if he has information in respect of that.

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The Chief Minister will recall that he did give us previously in this House a confirmation that they had found a positive case of the more UK variation at some point in September/October, I think it was. Has further research been done around that particular case? I assume, from the information that we are being given today, that the GHA is satisfied that that particular strain was contained to that particular positive case.

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Mr Speaker, is it the case ... As I say, we are grateful for this information as to the particular predominant variations in Gibraltar and, indeed, we as a community are glad that there have been no cases of the South African or Brazilian variants of this virus. Is the Chief Minister able to confirm that, because the GHA is now systematically testing for variants every time there is a positive case marked in Gibraltar? It would be a good thing if they were.

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Can the Chief Minister give us any information as to the kind of systematic testing programme the GHA have in respect of these issues and these variants because, as the situation develops with the virus, it will be important for the GHA to test for local developments? We were under the impression in this House itself, in the run-up to Christmas, that we were seeing so many cases because of the UK variant. Now we know contrary, but it is important for the GHA not only to have access to what is going on locally, but to be able to plug in to more regional and, indeed, international pools of knowledge so that we can prepare better as a community.

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Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister in his Statement has not made mention of ERS or other institutions of ERS, other than to say that I noticed that there has been one new infection in our elderly care facilities, and I was going to ask him where that was. I do not propose to ask other questions on ERS, because I have a number of Questions on ERS on the Order Paper, so I will wait to ask those more focused Questions on that.

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Then finally, Mr Speaker, he ends on a note of positivity and about restoring the freedom of assembly and so on, and other freedoms. Has the Government had an opportunity to reflect on when it will make a further review on the COVID measures? At the moment, masks are still wearable in the city centre. I am not expecting answers to these questions by the way, but I am just asking whether he has got a timescale in mind, given that, for example, we spoke last time when he made a COVID statement that there was a desire by the Government to perhaps move towards a controlled ability to have some attendance of the public at sporting events or cultural events. There are some coming up at the end of March. Is there a timescale in mind for the Government to make a further announcement on the restoration of further freedoms?

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Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker: The Hon. Chief Minister.

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Hon. Chief Minister: Well, Mr Speaker, I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman. I will start by dealing with his remarks about how we all mourn those who have been lost to this disease. As I have said before, I think it is right that there should be a moment of national mourning and that that should be led by a motion in this House that I hope to be able to agree with the hon. Gentleman and the hon. Lady and Dr Garcia, so that it is a motion that represents all the political parties represented in this place.

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In terms of his request for a forward-looking approach to the way that we re-establish the activity in our economy, he will have seen that the Government is actually very active indeed, in that respect, in particular in the areas of tourism, where we are seeing hopefully flights, when they come back, will come back from destinations from which they have never operated before and which had been negotiated before in respect of lockdowns in particular in the United Kingdom. He has seen that we have worked hard to bring sporting events to Gibraltar, not just

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those that were scheduled, but also at the end of the month, an international boxing bout, the first heavyweight fight that will be held in Gibraltar. So we are trying to do many things. That is just the tip of the iceberg of what it is that we are trying to do in order to reinvigorate the economy.

All that I would gently say is that when we try and shake things up a little bit and make things happen in a different way, which is what requires change to bring energy, if all that we are going to face is criticism from hon. Members, it would be unfortunate, because we would like hon. Members to join us in this journey of reinvigorating the economy, exactly in the same way as we have worked together to deal with this pandemic. I know that the Hon. the Minister for Tourism reached out to the Hon. the Shadow Minister for Tourism on the issue of the fact that we are going to change, for example, the location of the CEO of tourism in an attempt to try and have conversations with them, to try and give them a heads-up of what we are doing. We are going to bring energy. We are going to bring vigour to the way that we do things and we hope that hon. Members will support us in doing that.

Look, if the results of that are not there, we are of course open to be criticised for having made a decision which is not a good one, but we are making decisions in order to bring energy and vigour to our economy going forward by doing things in different ways.

Mr Speaker, I think the mental health impact of the COVID pandemic is yet to be seen. I think we are seeing the early stages of our ability to rationalise what has gone on. I think that there is a deep effect in respect of the consequences of the lockdown and what we have seen, which will affect all of us deeply. I must say, I have felt some very dark moment in the last 365 days. I am sure that is true for all members of our community: some days when they just did not feel as if there was a way out or that we could *find* the way out, but we have found it together, and I have found great solace in the affection of colleagues and in the work that we have done together as we brought Gibraltar together. But the consequences to all of us of what has gone on, I think are still to be understood and that when we talk about the mental health consequences of this pandemic, we do not just I think need to concentrate on the effect on the mental health of those who might have had some mental health issues at the beginning of this process. I think, in particular, our young children, our young people will have been affected greatly by this, and this is something that I think will be a developing area of health.

Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman is right to say that we need to be careful with the interpretation of statistics. I have seen some remarkable statements in the past 48 hours from what I would have expected to have been more responsible quarters in respect of the AstraZeneca vaccine, which, when measured against data on blood clots and thrombosis show that there is actually very little to be concerned about in respect of the AstraZeneca vaccine. That has already been clarified by the European Medicines Agency and by the United Kingdom's Medicines Agency also. I think that people need to put in the proper context all of this data that is being thrown up, because the health authorities are still of the view that nothing has changed in respect of the AstraZeneca vaccine being a very useful tool in the fight against the pandemic and the numbers of blood clots, which are being reported are no higher than would usually be reported in those heads of population.

In that context, Mr Speaker, there should be no alarm whatsoever by the fact that some people who have had one dose of the vaccine may have contracted coronavirus or, indeed, that people who may have had two doses of the vaccine may contract coronavirus, because this is not a vaccine that gives you 100% immunity to the infection, and although 95% might seem like a very high number, it does mean that one in 20 people will still be susceptible to it. That is to say if we gathered 200 people at Casements and expose them to COVID, even though they had all had two vaccinations and three weeks had passed since the second one, 10 of them would get it. It is important that people reflect on that.

I am grateful for the Leader of the Opposition highlighting that because it is an important point. We are not rendered immune to the virus because we have had the second vaccine. We are

rendered much more likely to be able not to contract the virus, but it is important that we keep that in mind.

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Of course, the GHA is very active in monitoring all those who contract the virus after they have had a second dose. This is one of the most developing areas of medicine at the moment, to look and analyse the reaction of those who have had the second vaccine and nonetheless contract the virus and how they react to it. It is very likely that people who contract the virus having had the second vaccine will need hospitalisation. It is very, very, very unlikely that people who have had the second vaccine will require hospitalisation or will pass away as a result of the virus. So those are the key areas for data mining at the moment, and the GHA is working very closely with Public Health England in that respect, and data sharing and developing the understanding that there is there.

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Mr Speaker, on the more technical aspects of what I said, I believe that the 15 cases of the Kent variant that I referred to are included in the 565 that have been analysed. Obviously, there are still 300 to be analysed which are from what you might call the nucleus period of the third wave, the period late December going through to the early part of this year.

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Whether B.1.1.7 or B.1.177 are related or not is not something on which I can advise. They do sound a little different to P.1 and of course, E484K is something that happened in some instances of B.1.177, etc, but this is not something on which I can assist the hon. Gentleman. I am almost tempted to refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave his colleague to his left in respect of my not being scientifically competent to give advice in that respect, and I was reflecting, as I told the House, the information I had been provided with, and as I am not able to safely interpret it, I will not wander into trying to do so.

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Mr Speaker, as for the case in November that the hon. Gentleman reminds the House that I referred to, I think he should recall that I had told the House at the time that our authorities were satisfied that that particular case had been isolated and confined entirely and therefore should have died out on its own.

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As for every case being tested for variant, Mr Speaker, that is *not* the position at the moment. We are taking a random sample of positive cases and sending those to the United Kingdom. That is the way it is done everywhere in the world. So in other words, hon. Members should know that the understanding that we have is that at the moment you do not do the genetic testing of every case; you do the genetic testing of random samples of cases. I do not know whether it is viable or possible, although it would certainly be desirable, to do a genomic test for every positive. Perhaps in the future when there are less positives, we hope, it might be possible to do that. Perhaps in the future, when there is less testing and we have brought to Gibraltar the ability to do this, as I have told the House that we are in the process of doing, it may be possible to do so. I certainly agree, Mr Speaker, it would be desirable if it is something which can be done.

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Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman is right. I mentioned ERS and I mentioned it not once as he suggested, but twice: first, when I singled them out for gratitude and second, when I referred to the existence of a positive there and the exposure of two residents. So there are two residents exposed to a positive, but not two residents who have been shown to be positive. They may be shown to be positive when they are tested in coming days in the relevant intervals, but at the moment they are not positive. I am just reporting to the House that they have been exposed. That is the John Mack wing, as I understand it, Mr Speaker.

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There are a number of freedoms which remain impacted. One of them is the freedom of assembly. Another one is a requirement that in public places in the centre of our city, people should continue to wear masks. My interpretation of the rules is that we are no longer required to wear masks here, Mr Speaker, because we are not in a public place. The Parliament is not a public place behind the Speaker's Chair. We should wear them when we are in the Chamber, because this is a place that has access to the public. So, in a public place in the centre of town, you do have to wear a mask. That an imposition on civil liberties. We are requiring people to put something on their faces. This is contrary to the attitude we want to take. So until when you have to wear masks, until when you will not be able to assemble freely, all of these things are very

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actively under consideration. I have said publicly that we consider these things every week, and we do, and the advice, as soon as we have it, Mr Speaker, will be communicated that we are able to put aside these issues and no longer have to wear masks, no longer have to restrict the number of people who are able to gather, or the number of people who can sit at a table in a restaurant or other catering establishment to celebrate, the House can rest assured that, as we have done throughout the past 52 weeks, we will continue to, every week, ensure that a restriction moves forward *only* and continues *only* if it is absolutely necessary.

Mr Speaker: The Hon. Marlene Hassan Nahon.

Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Firstly, I would like to echo my wishes and those of my party for a speedy recovery of course for the Duke of Edinburgh; we heard some good news coming out of the UK about him today.

In response to the Chief Minister's Statement, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Government, all Members across this House, officials and essential services for their work, their commitment and their dedication over the last year, which has been, of course, a year like no other.

Of course, Mr Speaker, we share our deepest condolences with the families and friends of those who have fallen to this cruel virus.

So, Mr Speaker, we have come full circle over the last year, culminating with the vaccine, which we have to also thank the medical community for in terms of having such a new lease of life that has been afforded to us, and I hope for a brighter future. For this we also, I believe, have to thank the Chief Minister and his entire team, the UK government of course, and, above all, His Excellency the Governor of Gibraltar for his dedication and commitment to make this happen and broker these logistics as well.

Mr Speaker, the one issue I would like to focus on, in my plea for clarification from the Chief Minister, and to also let him know that I have been receiving many, many representations from families of loved ones in ERS, and I get the same the type of questions and concerns all the time, and complaints even, which is that they feel penalised because they feel that, having had the vaccine, they are only allowed to spend one hour with their families. They explained to me, unfortunately – well, fortunately, I do not have my own mother in ERS, but I do live with my mother, who suffers from dementia – and I do know what they mean when they say that one hour sometimes is not enough; it is the wrong timing; their family members may be sleeping and they do not get that stimulation in the moment that they are allocated, which of course, has a domino effect on their cognitive abilities and preservation – something that has already been suffering for a whole year. So they feel very frustrated and do not really understand why, considering that they have been vaccinated.

The Chief Minister has explained today that, of course, vaccinations are not 100% fool proof, but I do keep getting the impression that there is a recurring theme of lack of communication between Public Health and the families of these loved ones, because, of course, we do have the utmost respect for Public Health decisions, but I believe if the Chief Minister could maybe provide some clarity on any plans for a future visit or changing the logistics of how this is going to be offered, if perhaps he could offer some solutions in terms of separate spacing or different sections that might give families more time with their loved ones ... I do know that it is a very difficult and delicate balance, but this is an issue that is coming up a lot and I think it is very crucial and necessary to address, in order to ease the difficulties being faced at this time. When we are looking at the future and we all have hope, thanks to the vaccines, the families of loved ones are feeling like they are staying behind because they are not catching up with the time and affection they could be offering their families after this awful year that we have all had.

So I just would like the Chief Minister to offer some more clarification on that and hopefully some solutions for these families. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker: The Hon. Chief Minister.

Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, I want to thank the hon. Lady for her generosity in the way
445 that she has expressed gratitude to all those who have been involved in efforts in the past year. I
think it is absolutely right to recognise that this is an achievement, as I tried to do in the context
of my Statement, across the community, including everyone in the community because we
required people to stay at home and people stayed at home. So I wanted to say thank you to those
450 who have stayed at home because at every level of decision-making and at every level of action
and every level of agreement to act in keeping with the rules, we have to recognise that there was
sacrifice and there was effort.

Mr Speaker, I hear what the hon. Lady says about ERS. Nobody should feel penalised by the
rules. The rules that ERS are putting in place, with the advice of Public Health Gibraltar, are
455 designed for one purpose and for one purpose alone: to protect the most precious relatives of
those who want to carry out visits to those who are in ERS. We fully understand how difficult and
frustrating this is. We have done everything possible to permit as much access as possible within
the rules of safety and that is not going to be a balance that is ever done to everyone's satisfaction,
except, of course, that they who have relatives in ERS will want to be satisfied that the main
concern, which is the concern of safety for their relatives, is the one which is primary. So what ERS
460 is trying to do is to balance that cautious approach it must take with its responsibility to relatives
and to residents to be able to meet.

But the hon. Lady needs to understand. She says can they not provide more spacing, etc? We
are trying to provide the spacing and with the numbers of people that need to be able to come,
465 we have the tightest possible spacing within the context of the social distance that is required in
order to be able to provide as many slots as possible for people to come.

I fully get that ERS was a place that is known for having an open approach, where you could go
at any time to see your relative; relatives appreciated that; and residents appreciated that and we
need to go back to that as soon as possible. But we can only go back to that when it is safe to do
470 so.

I implore people to understand, because it is not that today I have explained the one in 20 and
the vaccination. I have been explaining that since the vaccination programme started. Anyone
who watches any news on any channel in any language on television or reads any newspaper will
know that that is the case, and we now have one case in an ERS facility and two exposed residents,
475 so were we to find that, if we had not followed to the letter of the Public Health advice and we
had allowed our feelings to get in the way and permit more visits and then found that some had
been exposed and that they were in the one in 20 category in the vaccination, and they were in
the category of those who are very, very unlikely to require hospitalisation or very, very unlikely
to die after hospitalisation, despite having the two vaccines, the relatives would feel very bad and
the residents and the relatives of other residents would feel extraordinarily bad.

480 So this is a balance that has to be done by putting our feelings to one side and following the
Public Health advice, whilst understanding the frustration and feelings of the relatives who want
to see their loved ones.

The hon. Lady has, I think today, for the first time referred publicly to the condition of her
485 mother. She knows that I understand what that means.

Mr Speaker: Does any other hon. Member wish to raise a question?

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Standing Order 7(1) suspended to proceed with Questions

Clerk: Suspension of Standing Orders. The Hon. the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): I beg to move, under Standing Order 7(3), to suspend
490 Standing Order 7(1) in order to proceed with Questions.

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

Questions for Oral Answer

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

**Questions deadline –
Ruling by Mr Speaker**

Clerk: Order of Proceedings.

We now continue with Answers to Oral Questions, and we start with a Communication from
495 the Chair.

Mr Speaker: As hon. Members will know, it has been the practice in the past for Questions to
be taken on the first day of a meeting.

I have been asked to rule on whether Standing Order 13(2) provides for the tabling of further
500 questions if other business is taken before Questions and in so doing provides a lengthy enough
intervening period to submit further questions.

Standing Order 13(2) states:

Notice of questions shall be given by delivering a copy in writing to the Clerk at least five days, exclusive of Saturdays,
Sundays and public holidays, before the day on which it is intended to ask the question.

In my view, as a matter of textual interpretation of the Standing Orders, Standing Order 13(2)
505 refers to the five-day rule being in relation to the proposed 'day' when a question may be
answered and not to the date of the 'meeting'. Therefore, it is permissible to submit further
questions, provided that the provisions of Standing Order 13(2) are met.

Furthermore, as long as answers to questions remain an unexhausted item on the Order Paper,
the ability to submit further questions remains unaffected regardless of whether the Standing
Orders are suspended during a meeting which is then adjourned.

510 It follows that where questions have been submitted for answer in compliance with Standing
Order 13(2), and a meeting of Parliament is then adjourned to a day in the future without answers
to the original questions having been concluded, additional questions can be submitted as long as
they comply with the requirements of Standing Order 13(2).

In anticipation of this Ruling, I have allowed further questions to be tabled.

**Procedural –
Supplementary questions**

515 **Mr Speaker:** On a separate matter, I would like to speak about the process that we are going to be following for this particular question-and-answer session, given the large quantity of supplementaries that need to be answered.

Parliament last had a question-and-answer session on 30th October 2020. Since then and for the reasons well known to all hon. Members, the House has met very infrequently. This has led to an accumulation of a considerable number of tabled but unanswered questions.

520 Today we are facing the prospect of dealing with 376 questions. This is indeed a very high number but not dissimilar to the numbers when Parliament used to meet two or three times a year.

In light of this, I would like to enlist the support and understanding of hon. Members to clear the backlog as expeditiously as possible. I therefore respectfully request that hon. Members keep their answers as concise as possible and the number of supplementary questions to a reasonable level.

As a yardstick, I am turning to Speaker Alcantara for guidance, who introduced the practice of allowing hon. Members to ask two supplementaries and three in respect of the Leader of the Opposition. I intend to follow this practice and will exceptionally allow the Leader of the Opposition a further supplementary for the purpose of elucidating any matter arising out of an Oral Question posed by an Opposition colleague. I will afford the Hon. Marlene Hassan Nahon the same courtesy. However, should a question raise matters of significant public interest, I will use my discretion and allow additional supplementaries.

530 Having said this, I will return to a more liberal practice when monthly meetings of the House are resumed.

Thank you.

HOUSING, YOUTH AND SPORT

Q508/2020

**Premises at King's Bastion Leisure Centre –
Extension of business licence**

Clerk: We now commence with Question 508/2020. The questioner is the Hon. E J Reyes.

540 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, can Government provide information as to the purpose of an application submitted, as published through Government Notice No.1658 in the Gibraltar Gazette, to extend the scope of the current business licence held, Number: BL152615, and which has been made in respect of the premises at King's Bastion Leisure Centre?

545 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Housing, Youth and Sport.

Minister for Housing, Youth and Sport (Hon. S E Linares): Mr Speaker, Leisure Management Services (Gibraltar) Ltd already has a business licence for toys, sportswear and certain other goods which are sold in The Cannonball Store, which opened in the King's Bastion Leisure Centre on the 1st July 2020.

550 However, because it is a collectibles shop and some goods may fall out of the range of this description, LMS have extended the scope of the licence to make sure that they are covered for all the goods that are imported for the store.

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

So if I understood correctly, we are making sure that any legal extensions are covered for not necessarily another major change of business, further to what has happened in July 2020. Am I correct in that?

560 **Hon. S E Linares** Yes, Mr Speaker, as the answer states, it is just to get in the scope of collectibles, which is what I have answered.

Q509/2020

**Lathbury and Europa sports facilities –
Management arrangements and long-term plans**

Clerk: Question 509, the Hon. E J Reyes.

565 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can the Minister for Sports update this House with details of the management arrangements presently in operation for Lathbury Sports facilities and Europa Sports facilities, together with details of what the long-term plans are for the day-to-day operation and maintenance of these facilities once Covid-19 restrictions are lifted and sporting events return to normality?

570 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Housing, Youth and Sport.

575 **Minister for Housing, Youth and Sport (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, the Lathbury Sports complex is yet to be completed and therefore not operational as yet. Once the complex is finished the Gibraltar Sports and Leisure Authority will manage the facility and will become another facility under its remit.

At present interim staffing arrangements have been made at Europa Point with the long-term management of the facility still under review.

Q510/2020

**Housing Pre-List –
Updated details**

Clerk: Question 510, the Hon. E J Reyes.

580 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can Government provide updated details as to how many applicants are currently on the Housing Pre-List, broken down statistically by months, showing the dates when they first joined the list?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Housing, Youth and Sport.

585 **Minister for Housing, Youth and Sport (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, the information requested by the hon. Member opposite has been updated and can now be found on HMGoG's statistics page.

[Table H.2 on HMGoGs Statistics page partially offers this information but provides details only in respect of the number of applicants up to October 2020 and not when they joined the Waiting List]

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

When I submitted this question, I did add a notice which is on the paper in brackets. If it is available there, then following your plea before, I will not waste too much time and repeat information. However, should I require further clarification, would Mr Speaker allow me at the next parliamentary session to perhaps pose a question? Otherwise it means I cannot engage in any supplementaries, unless I have that information here.

595 So I require guidance from Mr Speaker: should I require clarification of any statistics there, how can I pose a question in keeping with the rules?

Q511/2020
Rental flats allocated in 2020 –
Details

Clerk: Question 511, the Hon. E J Reyes.

600 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can Government provide updated details in respect of all rental flats which have been allocated throughout the year 2020, showing rooms composition of these?

Can I anticipate, Mr Speaker, if that also has been updated ... if you do not mind, we can extend as well – *(Interjection by Mr Speaker)* Yes, I am trying to make life easier for the hon. Minister.

605 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Housing, Youth and Sport.

Minister for Housing, Youth and Sport (Hon. S E Linares): Mr Speaker, 176 flats have been allocated during 2020. These were: 16 1RKB; 60 2RKB; 71 3RKB; 25 4RKB; two 5RKB; and two 6RKB. Mr Speaker, the information is now updated and can be found on HMGoG's statistics page.

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Hon. K Azopardi: Can I just ask on that: 176 rental flats have been allocated in 2020 against a backdrop of how many available flats did the Housing Department have in 2020?

615 **Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, I think there is a question here which might answer the hon. Member's question.

Q512/2020
Tenants in emergency homes –
Details

Clerk: Question 512, the Hon. E J Reyes.

620 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can Government provide updated details in respect of the number of tenants currently residing in the emergency homes they have been allocated, indicating the dates such allocations were made and clarifying if these are temporary or permanent allocations, together with details of what housing provisions are planned for them for the future?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Housing, Youth and Sport.

625 **Minister for Housing, Youth and Sport (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, the Housing Department does not have any tenants in emergency accommodation.

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, I know that there has been a ruling, sir, and we are keen to get on, but I was waiting in case my hon. colleague needed to ask a supplementary.

630 The Hon. Minister answers in that way, that the Housing Department does not have anyone in emergency accommodation. Does that include those people who we have been told in this House before were put into the hostel because they had nowhere to live?

Hon. S E Linares: Well, Mr Speaker, strictly speaking, the question is 'under the Housing Department'. There is not anybody in the ... like it says, the Housing Department does not have any tenants. These are tenants that have other needs and are not in the housing list, for example, and we have been able to help them in different ways, in order to give them *some* accommodation, but they are not necessarily in the housing list.

640 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** If I can just help the hon. Gentleman, the answer provided in respect of this question – and this is a question that comes from the time that we were in opposition, which has been asked traditionally just to monitor this particular head – these are tenants of the Government who have had to move out of their property for emergency reasons. That is what emergency provision is. As the Minister says, that is why the question is about
645 tenants, so it is somebody who has signed a tenancy agreement with the Government, who has had to be moved out of their Government accommodation for a reason. It is not somebody who is waiting for housing and whose case may be more or less urgent.

Hon. K Azopardi: So yes, but if I pull the thread of that, there may be someone who is a tenant of a house who, for example, as a result of marital breakdown has to leave the house, then is rendered, in effect, homeless, has nowhere to live. I understand, in discussions with Housing in respect of some of those particular cases, that the Housing Department tends to move them, if possible, so they find somewhere for those people to live. If those people are being put in the hostel, are those people not precisely within this category?

655 **Hon. Chief Minister:** No, Mr Speaker, they are not. They are not because the way that this question has traditionally been interpreted is where the tenants have been moved out of the property – and that means *all* of the tenants; in other words, the property has been vacated – and there is an emergency reason for that. That is the way that this question has traditionally been
660 put and answered.

Now, if the hon. Gentleman thinks that we should answer it in a different way, the answer might still be zero. There may be no persons in that sort of situation that the hon. Gentleman may refer to, or the answer may be two or three or four of that category, but this has always been ... and the way that we asked the question and sought the answer and the way that we have
665 continued to give the answer in successive meetings of the House is when you have a whole household's tenants moved out, because of flood, because of fire, because of other circumstances making the property uninhabitable, and they have been put as a unit in emergency accommodation.

670 **Hon. K Azopardi:** So, Mr Speaker, it is a question of interpretation, then. They are answering the question in the way that they have interpreted historically, because they were on this side of the House and now they are on that side of the House interpreting the question.

So to be clear, that answer that the Hon. Minister has given does not provide an answer to the question of whether there are people housed elsewhere, in the hostel, for example, that have
675 been housed by the Government because they needed to be housed and they had nowhere else to live.

680 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Because that question, Mr Speaker, that the hon. Gentleman has now put as a supplementary would only be relevant as a supplementary arising from this question, if that person were also a tenant in Government housing. What I am saying to the hon. Gentleman is that that is not the interpretation that has ever been given to this question. I do not think it is a reasonable interpretation of the question. It is a reasonable question that he is putting, but it is not, in our view, a reasonable interpretation of this question and I think the hon. questioner has never intended it to be that way.

685 If they were to put that question, then we would be able to give them the answer, which may be zero or may be a number.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q513/2020
Rental flats allocated in 2020 –
Allocations for Senior Citizens

Clerk: Question 513. The Hon. E J Reyes.

690 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can Government provide details of how many of the rental flats which have been allocated during the year 2020 were within the housing units/blocks reserved for exclusive allocations and residency by Senior Citizens?

695 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Housing, Youth and Sport.

Minister for Housing, Youth and Sport (Hon. S E Linares): Mr Speaker, 23 rental flats have been allocated during 2020 in blocks reserved for Senior Citizens.

700 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, just that those 23 obviously are already included in the figure of 176 that the Minister gave in the answer to Question 511. It is just so that if I make mathematics, I know I am correct.

Hon. S E Linares: Yes, Mr Speaker.

705 **Mr Speaker:** Next question.

Q514/2020

**Rental flats returned to Government housing stock in 2020 –
Details**

Clerk: Question 514. The Hon. E J Reyes.

710 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can Government provide details in respect of all rental flats which have been returned to Government's housing stock throughout 2020, showing rooms composition of these and the dates when they were returned?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Housing, Youth and Sport.

715 **Minister for Housing, Youth and Sport (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, I now hand over to the hon. Member opposite a schedule with the information requested.

Answer to Question 514

RKB	Date Returned	RKB	Date Returned	RKB	Date Returned	RKB	Date Returned	RKB	Date Returned	RKB	Date Returned
	JANUARY		FEBRUARY		MARCH		APRIL		MAY		JUNE
2RKB	03/01/2020	2RKB	01/02/2020	3RKB	02/03/2020	2RKB	01/04/2020	2RKB	04/05/2020	2RKB	02/06/2020
3RKB	06/01/2020	3RKB	03/02/2020	2RKB	02/03/2020	3RKB	01/04/2020	4RKB	11/05/2020	2RKB	03/06/2020
6RKB	06/01/2020	1RKB	04/02/2020	3RKB	05/03/2020	2RKB	02/04/2020	3RKB	13/05/2020	2RKB	03/06/2020
2RKB	06/01/2020	3RKB	07/02/2020	3RKB	10/03/2020	3RKB	03/04/2020	3RKB	13/05/2020	4RKB	08/06/2020
4RKB	07/01/2020	3RKB	10/02/2020	4RKB	11/03/2020	3RKB	03/04/2020	4RKB	14/05/2020	3RKB	08/06/2020
3RKB	09/01/2020	3RKB	11/02/2020	3RKB	13/03/2020	2RKB	03/04/2020	3RKB	15/05/2020	3RKB	10/06/2020
2RKB	10/01/2020	2RKB	11/02/2020	2RKB	17/03/2020	3RKB	03/04/2020	2RKB	20/05/2020	4RKB	10/06/2020
3RKB	13/01/2020	2RKB	13/02/2020	4RKB	19/03/2020	1RKB	06/04/2020	4RKB	20/05/2020	3RKB	10/06/2020
4RKB	20/01/2020	1RKB	19/02/2020	3RKB	19/03/2020	4RKB	07/04/2020	1RKB	20/05/2020	1RKB	12/06/2020
4RKB	20/01/2020	2RKB	24/02/2020	1RKB	19/03/2020	3RKB	07/04/2020	2RKB	22/05/2020	2RKB	16/06/2020
3RKB	20/01/2020	3RKB	25/02/2020	4RKB	23/03/2020	3RKB	07/04/2020	3RKB	26/05/2020	1RKB	16/06/2020
3RKB	21/01/2020	3RKB	26/02/2020	2RKB	24/03/2020	2RKB	07/04/2020	2RKB	26/05/2020	3RKB	18/06/2020
1RKB	21/01/2020	2RKB	28/02/2020	2RKB	25/03/2020	2RKB	07/04/2020	3RKB	28/05/2020	4RKB	18/06/2020
2RKB	24/01/2020	2RKB	28/02/2020	1RKB	26/03/2020	3RKB	08/04/2020	1RKB	28/05/2020	2RKB	18/06/2020
4RKB	29/01/2020	3RKB	28/02/2020	1RKB	26/03/2020	2RKB	09/04/2020	3RKB	29/05/2020	3RKB	24/06/2020
2RKB	31/01/2020			1RKB	30/03/2020	3RKB	20/04/2020	3RKB	29/05/2020	3RKB	26/06/2020
				2RKB	30/03/2020	3RKB	21/04/2020			2RKB	26/06/2020
						2RKB	21/04/2020			3RKB	30/06/2020
						3RKB	27/04/2020				
						6RKB	29/04/2020				

Continued Answer to Question 514

RKB	Date Returned	RKB	Date Returned	RKB	Date Returned	RKB	Date Returned	RKB	Date Returned	RKB	Date Returned
	JULY		AUGUST		SEPTEMBER		OCTOBER		NOVEMBER		DECEMBER
2RKB	01/07/2020	2RKB	05/08/2020	3RKB	03/09/2020	4RKB	01/10/2020	2RKB	03/11/2020	4RKB	01/12/2020
4RKB	02/07/2020	2RKB	05/08/2020	3RKB	08/09/2020	2RKB	02/10/2020	4RKB	04/11/2020	2RKB	01/12/2020
3RKB	03/07/2020	4RKB	05/08/2020	2RKB	09/09/2020	3RKB	07/10/2020	4RKB	05/11/2020	2RKB	03/12/2020
3RKB	06/07/2020	2RKB	06/08/2020	3RKB	15/09/2020	3RKB	08/10/2020	4RKB	05/11/2020	3RKB	07/12/2020
3RKB	07/07/2020	3RKB	10/08/2020	4RKB	15/09/2020	2RKB	08/10/2020	2RKB	05/11/2020	3RKB	08/12/2020
2RKB	07/07/2020	4RKB	11/08/2020	4RKB	22/09/2020	2RKB	08/10/2020	3RKB	06/11/2020	2RKB	09/12/2020
3RKB	13/07/2020	3RKB	13/08/2020	2RKB	25/09/2020	1RKB	09/10/2020	2RKB	06/11/2020	3RKB	09/12/2020
1RKB	13/07/2020	2RKB	14/08/2020	2RKB	29/09/2020	2RKB	12/10/2020	2RKB	10/11/2020	5RKB	09/12/2020
1RKB	14/07/2020	2RKB	17/08/2020	3RKB	30/09/2020	3RKB	12/10/2020	2RKB	11/11/2020	3RKB	09/12/2020
1RKB	20/07/2020	4RKB	19/08/2020			2RKB	12/10/2020	3RKB	12/11/2020	3RKB	10/12/2020
3RKB	21/07/2020	1RKB	21/08/2020			2RKB	13/10/2020	3RKB	16/11/2020	2RKB	10/12/2020
3RKB	27/07/2020	2RKB	21/08/2020			3RKB	16/10/2020	3RKB	19/11/2020	1RKB	10/12/2020
3RKB	28/07/2020	2RKB	21/08/2020			2RKB	16/10/2020	4RKB	23/11/2020	4RKB	11/12/2020
2RKB	29/07/2020	4RKB	24/08/2020			3RKB	21/10/2020	3RKB	24/11/2020	2RKB	11/12/2020
2RKB	30/07/2020	3RKB	25/08/2020			2RKB	22/10/2020	2RKB	25/11/2020	2RKB	11/12/2020
1RKB	30/07/2020	2RKB	25/08/2020			1RKB	22/10/2020	3RKB	26/11/2020	2RKB	14/12/2020
2RKB	31/07/2020	3RKB	26/08/2020			5RKB	23/10/2020	3RKB	30/11/2020	1RKB	15/12/2020
		3RKB	28/08/2020			3RKB	23/10/2020	2RKB	30/11/2020	3RKB	15/12/2020
						4RKB	26/10/2020	2RKB	30/11/2020	2RKB	15/12/2020
						2RKB	26/10/2020			3RKB	16/12/2020
										2RKB	16/12/2020
										3RKB	17/12/2020
										2RKB	18/12/2020
										3RKB	21/12/2020
										2RKB	22/12/2020
										2RKB	22/12/2020
										1RKB	23/12/2020

Q515/2020

**Rental homes currently unoccupied –
Reasons not yet allocated**

Clerk: Question 515. The Hon. E J Reyes.

720 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can Government provide details of how many rental homes are currently unoccupied and awaiting allocation, indicating the rooms composition of such homes, together with reasons why these have still not been allocated?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Housing, Youth and Sport.

725

Minister for Housing, Youth and Sport (Hon. S E Linares): Mr Speaker, there are a total of 23 flats currently unoccupied. These are: three 1RKBs; six 2RKBs; 12 3RKBs; and two 4RKBs. *(Interjection)* Yes, Mr Speaker, I have got that as a supplementary in order to aid the hon. Member.

730 These are either in refurbishment; stock awaiting the Housing Authority ... as in the keys to come back; and stock already for allocation – that means it is ready to be allocated but has not yet been done so. That is it, basically.

Hon. E J Reyes: Mr Speaker, in the past, a couple of years ago, when Miss Sacramento was leading on the housing issue, when she answered a question she was able as well to provide a figure for the number of homes that perhaps would not even be able to be repaired, they might be beyond economic repair. Does the Minister have any information on how we stand in respect of a number of homes that could end up no longer being suitable for allocation?

740 **Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, in the list that I have, I do not have those properties. We do have properties that are beyond economical repair, but I do not ... This does not include any of the ones that I have just given the hon. Member. The others are ... there are different ways in which we are dealing with them, but if the hon. Member wants as well, I can pass to him by e-mail or whatever my list of the supplementaries, so that he could understand exactly which ... for example, the 1RKB in refurbishment and so on. *(Interjection)*

745 Yes, what the hon. Member is saying is that the ones that are not economically viable, we are trying to take out of the housing stock. *(Interjection)* Yes, I think there is another question in relation to that, as well. We take it that once the block is empty or the houses are empty, we would take a decision on what we do with the actual asset, whether we sell it or we take out an expression of interest in order for people to buy or if there is a block where there is only one tenant, we can offer the tenant the sale, or we decant the tenant and then sell the house. We are looking at certain properties that we are doing that.

Hon. E J Reyes: Thank you, Mr Speaker.
755 Yes, I will accept from the Minister, if he can give me behind the Chair or e-mail the additional information he has.

Just one very small clarification, which I will probably bring up at some other future questions. When we are talking about the non-economically viable houses, that obviously is not included in this figure of 23 that he has given me today. Am I correct in assuming that?

760 **Hon. S E Linares:** They are not included, no.

Hon. E J Reyes: Thank you, Mr Speaker.
Once I get that information, I think I will be all right for today.

Q514/2020

Rental flats returned to Government housing stock in 2020 – Supplementary questions

765 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, can the hon. Minister perhaps help us so that we do not have to do the number-crunching ourselves: he may have had, by way of supplementaries ... He has given us a schedule of the rental flats returned by month, but obviously on a singular basis, one by one depending on the composition. Does he have a total of the 1, 2, 3 and 4RKBs returned during the calendar year 2020, which would be the result in that table? If he does not have it, we will do the counting ourselves. In Question 514, in the schedule.

770 You have given us a schedule by month of the houses that had been returned, but it is by house and depending on the composition, but does he have a total in that year of the 1, 2, 3 and 4RKBs that have been returned? If he does not have it in front of him, we will just have to go away and count the numbers ourselves. He does not have it, okay.

775 **Mr Speaker:** Does the Hon. Mr Reyes wish to ask any supplementaries on Question 514?

Hon. E J Reyes: No, Mr Speaker, not at this moment, because like the Leader of the Opposition was trying to ascertain, unless I do mathematics of how many were in each room category and then compare them to those that have been allocated ... so I do not wish to waste the House's
780 time on this issue.

Thank you, sir.

Mr Speaker: Next Question.

Q516/2020

Rental home tenants wishing to purchase – Procedure

Clerk: Question 516, the Hon. E J Reyes.
785

Hon. E J Reyes: Can Government provide this House with relevant and detailed information as to what procedures present tenants of rental homes should follow should they desire to purchase the homes they currently occupy?

790 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Housing, Youth and Sport.

Minister for Housing, Youth and Sport (Hon. S E Linares): Mr Speaker, only tenants of pre-war flats are eligible to purchase as sitting tenants. These tenants would need to express their wishes in writing to the Housing Department or to Land Property Services.

Q517/2020

Rental homes sold to sitting tenants – Details

795 **Clerk:** Question 517, the Hon. E J Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Can Government provide detailed information in respect of all Government rental homes, inclusive of rooms composition, which have been sold to sitting tenants as from December 2011 showing the dates when such sales were made?
800

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Housing, Youth and Sport.

Minister for Housing, Youth and Sport (Hon. S E Linares): Mr Speaker, I now hand over to the hon. Member opposite the information requested in respect of rental homes sold to sitting
805 tenants from December 2011 inclusive of dates of sale and room composition.

Answer to Question 517

Pre/Post-War	Date of Purchase	Room Composition
PostWar	19/12/2011	3RKB
PostWar	09/01/2012	3RKB
PostWar	11/01/2012	4RKB
PostWar	24/01/2012	3RKB
PostWar	03/02/2012	3RKB
PostWar	08/02/2012	3RKB
PostWar	16/02/2012	3RKB
PostWar	01/03/2012	2RKB
PostWar	21/03/2012	3RKB
PostWar	12/04/2012	3RKB
PostWar	25/05/2012	3RKB
PostWar	28/05/2012	3RKB
PostWar	07/06/2012	1RKB
PostWar	25/06/2012	3RKB
PostWar	28/06/2012	3RKB
PostWar	29/06/2012	4RKB
PostWar	03/07/2012	2RKB
PostWar	04/07/2012	4RKB
PostWar	11/07/2012	4RKB
PostWar	17/07/2012	4RKB
PostWar	14/08/2012	3RKB
PostWar	20/08/2012	3RKB
PostWar	31/08/2012	1RKB
PostWar	03/09/2012	5RKB
PostWar	04/09/2012	3RKB
PostWar	25/09/2012	4RKB
PreWar	11/10/2012	5RKB
PostWar	19/10/2012	4RKB
PostWar	25/10/2012	3RKB
PostWar	05/11/2012	3RKB
PostWar	06/11/2012	3RKB
PostWar	13/11/2012	2RKB
PostWar	15/11/2012	3RKB
PostWar	26/11/2012	3RKB
PostWar	26/11/2012	3RKB
PostWar	29/11/2012	3RKB
PreWar	07/12/2012	3RKB

Pre/Post-War	Date of Purchase	Room Composition
PostWar	14/12/2012	4RKB
PostWar	14/12/2012	3RKB
PostWar	19/12/2012	4RKB
PostWar	04/02/2013	3RKB
PostWar	23/04/2013	4RKB
PostWar	25/04/2013	4RKB
PostWar	02/05/2013	4RKB
PostWar	07/05/2013	3RKB
PostWar	20/05/2013	4RKB
PostWar	06/06/2013	2RKB
PreWar	14/06/2013	5RKB
PostWar	26/06/2013	4RKB
PostWar	18/07/2013	4RKB
PostWar	24/07/2013	4RKB
PostWar	30/07/2013	3RKB
PreWar	06/08/2013	5RKB
PostWar	29/08/2013	3RKB
PostWar	17/10/2013	4RKB
PostWar	22/10/2013	3RKB
PostWar	29/10/2013	5RKB
PostWar	10/12/2013	1RKB
PostWar	06/01/2014	4RKB
PostWar	28/01/2014	3RKB
PostWar	28/02/2014	4RKB
PostWar	03/03/2014	2RKB
PostWar	03/03/2014	4RKB
PostWar	11/03/2014	4RKB
PostWar	25/03/2014	4RKB
PostWar	20/05/2014	4RKB
PreWar	14/08/2014	5RKB
PreWar	14/08/2014	4RKB
PostWar	21/08/2014	1RKB
PostWar	02/09/2014	3RKB
PostWar	23/10/2014	2RKB
PostWar	23/10/2014	3RKB
PostWar	30/01/2015	3RKB
PostWar	18/02/2015	4RKB
PostWar	27/05/2015	4RKB
PostWar	27/05/2015	3RKB
PostWar	28/05/2015	3RKB

Pre/Post-War	Date of Purchase	Room Composition
PostWar	19/06/2015	2RKB
PostWar	19/06/2015	3RKB
PostWar	07/07/2015	3RKB
PostWar	06/08/2015	2RKB
PostWar	21/08/2015	3RKB
PostWar	18/11/2015	3RKB
PostWar	01/12/2015	4RKB
PreWar	10/12/2015	5RKB
PostWar	15/12/2015	2RKB
PostWar	05/01/2016	3RKB
PostWar	03/03/2016	4RKB
PostWar	08/03/2016	1RKB
PreWar	09/03/2016	5RKB
PostWar	04/05/2016	3RKB
PostWar	23/05/2016	3RKB
PreWar	27/05/2016	5RKB
PreWar	31/05/2016	3RKB
PostWar	07/06/2016	4RKB
PostWar	16/06/2016	3RKB
PostWar	18/06/2016	3RKB
PostWar	19/06/2016	4RKB
PostWar	28/06/2016	4RKB
PostWar	11/07/2016	3RKB
PostWar	11/07/2016	3RKB
PostWar	15/07/2016	4RKB
PostWar	18/07/2016	3RKB
PostWar	04/08/2016	4RKB
PostWar	04/09/2016	3RKB
PostWar	26/09/2016	4RKB
PostWar	26/09/2016	3RKB
PostWar	29/09/2016	3RKB
PostWar	10/10/2016	3RKB
PostWar	10/10/2016	4RKB
PostWar	11/10/2016	3RKB
PostWar	14/10/2016	3RKB
PostWar	17/10/2016	3RKB
PostWar	27/10/2016	4RKB
PostWar	28/10/2016	3RKB
PostWar	29/11/2016	3RKB
PostWar	30/11/2016	3RKB

Pre/Post-War	Date of Purchase	Room Composition
PostWar	21/12/2016	1RKB
PostWar	06/03/2017	3RKB
PostWar	06/03/2017	2RKB
PreWar	08/05/2017	4RKB
PostWar	12/05/2017	3RKB
PostWar	16/05/2017	4RKB
PostWar	06/06/2017	5RKB
PostWar	27/06/2017	4RKB
PostWar	25/07/2017	3RKB
PostWar	27/07/2017	3RKB
PreWar	15/01/2019	6RKB
PreWar	11/02/2019	6RKB
PreWar	29/11/2019	9RKB
PreWar	18/06/2020	3RKB
PreWar	18/06/2020	3RKB
PreWar	10/08/2020	4RKB
PreWar	12/08/2020	3RKB
PreWar	12/08/2020	3RKB
PreWar	02/11/2020	2RKB

Q518/2020
Queen's Hotel hostel –
Restoration

Clerk: Question 518, the Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon.

Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon: Will Government be restoring the dilapidated and substandard Queen's Hotel as a matter of urgency in the near future?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Housing, Youth and Sport.

Minister for Housing, Youth and Sport (Hon. S E Linares): Mr Speaker, a Health and Safety Audit inspection of the premises was commissioned in August 2020. The survey identified several defects with recommendations labelled as Very High, High, Medium and Low priority in respect of the works needed to be undertaken.

The Housing Works Agency are currently working through the more urgent recommendations, including electrical works, fire and safety issues, and an asbestos survey of the premises.

The Government is, as already announced, in the process of building a new hostel for workers

Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon: Mr Speaker, unfortunately, as we see all too often with this administration, we hear of audits and committees and reports, but the bottom line is that people are living here in a substandard condition – so substandard that my party a few months ago exposed some disgraceful photos showing vermin, the state of cockroaches and standards that do not even classify as recommended. This is completely unacceptable and not becoming of a country that professes to have one of the highest GDPs in the world.

My question obviously is: bottom line – how much longer are the residents of the Queen’s Hostel going to be subjected to living under these squalid conditions? And doesn’t this socialist Government consider itself to have a social responsibility to either immediately evacuate these residents or to do urgent refurbishment imminently? This is the question.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Well, Mr Speaker, I think it is remarkable that we should be facing such a question, for a simple reason. We were criticised when we bought the Queen’s Hotel to put a hostel in there, because it was considered to be too good and too much money spent to put a hostel there. Yes, in the time that it has been used as a hostel, it has deteriorated, but I do not know whether the hon. Lady expects us to go in and do all the cleaning in the hostel, or whether there is not also a responsibility in respect of those who are tenants of the hostel.

Now, we are saying that we are going to build a new hostel, in order to be able to put people in a brand new hostel facility. That will be the first time that people are put into a new hostel facility since we bought the Queen’s Hotel, and we brought the Sunrise Motel, to put people from the extraordinarily squalid, *inhuman* conditions in which people lived in the 1980s in Gibraltar at Casements; and Mr Speaker, indeed, in the extraordinarily squalid circumstances that I found, when I was elected, that people were living in the stone block up at Buena Vista.

So, Mr Speaker, this socialist Government takes pride in the fact that we acquired a hotel, which people could use as a hostel, and not one but two: the Sunrise Motel and the Queen’s Hotel. This socialist Government considers that it is unfortunate that, for reasons unrelated to the Government, those facilities have deteriorated. And this socialist Government is investing money in building the first new hostel facility in Gibraltar’s history.

In the past, Mr Speaker ... I think that is unfair, I may have made a mistake. There was a hostel in Devil’s Tower Road, which was from prefabs, which was also obviously built in the lifetime of a government, but other than that, Casements was refurbished – an old military facility – and Buena Vista was refurbished – an old military facility. But a bespoke hostel, not of prefabs, has never been built before.

So this socialist Government expects the support of those who are less than socialists for the investment we are going to make, but no doubt when we make that investment we will be told that we are ‘spending money’, that ‘money is being spent’; ‘what money is going to be used to build the hostel?’

So Mr Speaker, I think that this is a question of trying to find a balance, not trying to make statements about socialism and ideology, none of which will help the people who are living in the conditions in which they are living – which are, in my view, greatly unsatisfactory, and that is why, Mr Speaker, we moved them from some place which was even less satisfactory into a place that is now unsatisfactory and will soon be new, bespoke and newly built, just like most of what this socialist Government has done.

Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon: Mr Speaker, I thank the Chief Minister for his own defence, but I find it sad that they are bragging about a lesser level of squalid from the previous higher level of squalid; I do not think ‘squalid’ should apply at all in this day and age in a place like Gibraltar.

But in any case, my questions would be the ones that effectively the Chief Minister has not answered, which is: can he give us a commitment to when these residents will actually have a decent place to live in? We have no dates and I think we should have some kind of yardstick, a milestone, something to look forward to.

Another question – I am trying to group them in one to save time – is if the Chief Minister says that himself and his Government, understandably, are not going to be the ones to go in and do the cleaning, interestingly he has reminded me that a lot of the people who saw the pictures that we exposed were so affected by this that there are people in this community who would like to volunteer to either clean or provide certain electro-domestics and other tools for people to have a better quality of life in there. Would the Government be amenable to allow me to refer them to

880 certain sort of do-gooders in the community who would like to commit to helping out to make
this place a little more liveable?

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

885 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Well, Mr Speaker, I think what is unfortunate is that the hon. Lady should
not give us credit for the fact that the facility was not squalid when we handed it over. This is
something that I hope the hon. Lady will recognise in the way that she is phrasing her questions.
This was something done in the lifetime of this executive, not this Parliament. We handed over a
890 facility that was not squalid and if it is squalid now, Mr Speaker, look, the Government has not
failed to do maintenance, the Government has not failed to contract cleaning services; but it is
also about the state in which some people keep their rooms and how that unfortunately is not to
the standard that we would expect, and some people who are meticulously careful about how
they look after their room, etc. therefore find themselves having to live in circumstances which
are not the ones that the Government would like to provide for them.

895 In respect of the do-gooders, as the hon. Lady describes them, we would be delighted to hear
from them if they want to assist. We all have to pull together in order to make sure that we all
provide for each other and so therefore we would be delighted to hear from them. She knows
that she can ask them to write to me or through her she can put them in contact with me.

Q517/2020

Rental homes sold to sitting tenants – Supplementary questions

Clerk: We now move to –

900 **Mr Speaker:** Just a second, Mr Clerk. The hon. Member wishes to ask a supplementary
question.

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

905 I am grateful for the schedule which the Minister provided in answer to Question 517. I notice
in the schedule there is a combination of the sale of post-war and pre-war houses. Can the
Minister clarify for the record, for these houses, if the sale of homes to sitting tenants is now only
applicable to pre-war housing as from what is the effective date of that policy decision?

910 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, we have made an announcement about this on
a number of occasions going back into the lifetime of the previous Parliament and the one before,
when we said specifically that the policy of our Government would not be the sale of the post-war
housing stock.

915 I think during the course of Budgets we have had exchanges on the subject, and in particular
during the course of the discussion of the investment into Gibraltar that hon. Members described
as a mortgage. On a number of occasions, we have had those discussions and exchanges in this
House.

I cannot give him the precise date, which is what he is asking for, but it goes back, I think, to
the lifetime of the first Parliament after the glorious New Dawn.

920 **Hon. E J Reyes:** That is precisely why I asked, Mr Speaker, because I see that post-war houses
were sold up to 2017. So therefore, that was the second term in office of the present executive.

Hon. Chief Minister: Yes, Mr Speaker, because what we have said before is that, where in some
instances there had been an agreement with a tenant that there would be a sale before we were

925 elected and before we changed the policy – indeed, we did a mailshot to everybody to tell them
that we are changing the policy. In some instances we have honoured those sales: where there
was a good reason to honour it and where in particular, for example, they were not in a block or
they were in an area where, although it was post-war, it did not affect the policy of the
Government to continue to consolidate ownership of that post-war stock.

Procedural

Mr Speaker: I just wanted to re-read the Ruling or the advice I was giving about how we were
930 going to deal with these 376 questions.

You want to ask a supplementary? Right.

I said that as a yardstick I was turning to Speaker Alcantara for guidance who introduced the
practice of allowing hon. Members to ask two supplementaries, meaning each Member has two
supplementaries in respect of his own question.

935 I said that I would allow the Leader of the Opposition, exceptionally, a further supplementary
for the purpose of elucidating any matter arising out of an Oral Question posed by an Opposition
colleague – which is what has been happening up to now, which is fine.

I also said that, however, should they question raise matters of *significant* interest, I will use
my discretion and allow additional supplementaries. Now, my question to you is: is it a significant
940 issue that you want to tackle? Otherwise there is really no point in me reading this out and then
(*Interjection*) on the way I want to conduct business in the House.

Hon. R M Clinton: Mr Speaker, unless I ask the question, it would be hard to assess whether it
is of significance.

945

Hon. K Azopardi: Can I just also say, before your ... I do not know what the question is and the
hon. Member will explain it and then you, Mr Speaker, will make a ruling on whether he can ask
it. But can I also ask Mr Speaker to perhaps bear in mind that while, of course, on this side of the
House, we want absolutely to comply with the Speaker's Ruling and we respect it and defer to the
950 Speaker's Ruling, there is a context here. The context is that, for whatever reason, without
ascribing blame, there is a backlog of questions and we have been systematically doing our duty
to put further questions that we think in the public interest need to be asked and questions need
to be tendered; and while we understand where the Speaker is coming from, it does constrain our
ability to ask supplementaries, which, in the interests of efficacy makes sense perhaps, but that
955 perhaps the Speaker, in considering a ruling on the hon. Member's questions and a general
approach for today and the rest of the week, may bear in mind the fact that the context is one
that the Opposition itself has not created.

We understand that there may be reasons why we have not been able to be in this House, but
that inevitably, if we had had normal question-and-answer sessions, they would have been on a
960 more liberal approach, as the Speaker himself as described it.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, if I may just assist, none of what the hon.
Gentleman has said would contradict the fact, I am sure he will agree, that we have been
scrupulous in ensuring that the House has met in keeping with its constitutional requirements at
965 every stage and that, indeed, in the instance, which the Hon. Mr Alcantara was referring to, where
there were restrictions on the number of supplementaries put and there was a backlog, and then
it was normal for the House to meet only on two or three occasions a year. So, Mr Speaker, I think
that must be factored into the equation as well.

Indeed, the very liberal practice that exists in this House, which I am not arguing against, but
970 which I think is unique to this House of all of the Parliaments in the Commonwealth that people

ask supplementaries of questions other than their own – I think that is also something to be borne in mind because, as we look at modernising the way that this Parliament works, one of the things that we will have to do together, I hope, is to give business efficacy to Question Time.

975 In most other parliaments, Question Time happens as often as here, sometimes less often than here, but questions are sharper, there is a shorter period for questions, (*Interjection*) and we sometimes engage in one question that sometimes, clearly ... The hon. Gentleman says from a sedentary position that answers are sharper. Sometimes the hon. Gentleman will find that answers are actually very long-winded and designed to avoid providing any answer.

980 Here, Mr Speaker, we sometimes have questions ... one question can sometimes go on for half an hour, and that is something that we need to ensure that we deal with, with respect, Mr Speaker, not just today as I think you have rightly indicated, but generally. I think that the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the hon. Lady and the leader of the Liberal Party will agree when the time comes to consider those issues in select committee.

985 **Mr Speaker:** I have to say I fully agree with the Chief Minister. Let us continue. I am going to try and be as accommodating within the constraints that I have ruled upon. Thank you.

Q518/2020
Queen's Hotel hostel –
Supplementary questions

Mr Speaker: The Hon. Roy Clinton.

Hon. R M Clinton: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will be brief.

990 In response to the answer to the question of the hon. Lady, Question 518, the Chief Minister said that his Government would be building a new hostel at the Government's cost. Mr Speaker, I would like him to clarify that statement that he made, because I think – and it may be that my understanding is incorrect – that the cost of the build would be borne by somebody else on the model pretty much along the Rooke nursing home site; and if that is not going to be the case, I would be grateful if the Chief Minister could confirm that the Government will indeed be meeting
995 the entire cost of construction of a new hostel.

Mr Speaker: I have to say that is digressing from the original question and the original answer given. I am just trying to make the point that I do not want to be severe. As I say, I want to be
1000 accommodating, but you must also play by the rules.

Hon. K Azopardi: Sorry, Mr Speaker, just again on this on this point, I understood that the rules say that the supplementaries must be related to the answer. The answer that was given invoked immediately the issue of the building of a separate hostel. So the hon. Member is asking a
1005 supplementary on the hostel – that is what he is doing. It is not an issue that did not stem from the answer. (*Interjections*)

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, the financial model is under consideration.

1010 **Mr Speaker:** Next question.

EMPLOYMENT, HEALTH AND SAFETY AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Q522/2020

Employment figures 2020 –

Full-time, part-time and self-employed

Clerk: We now move to Question 522, and the questioner is the Hon. K Azopardi.

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, what was the total number of people employed in Gibraltar on a full or part-time basis or registered as self-employed on 31st March 2020 and 31st October 2020 respectively, broken down by persons in full-time employment, part-time employment and self-employed persons?
1015

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Employment, Health and Safety and Social Security.

Minister for Employment, Health and Safety and Social Security (Hon. P J Balban): Mr Speaker, the authoritative record of employment which provides this data is the Employment Survey.
1020

From the records held at the ETB, the total number of people employed in Gibraltar on a full or part-time basis or registered as self-employed on 31st March 2020 and 31st October 2020 are as follow:
1025

On 31st March 2020, the number of persons employed was 37,445; and self-employed was 2,210.

On 31st October 2020, the persons employed were 36,889; and self-employed, 1,879.

These numbers may involve duplication and may not be entirely accurate given the potential absence of terminations being entered on the system.
1030

The Terms of Engagement provided by the employers which is the basis for registration of the worker does not define employees as full time or part time, therefore the persons in employment are not classified as either full time or part time.

In order to produce this figure a manual exercise would be required, and this would need to be provided by each employer.
1035

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, I will roll up a couple of questions that just came to my head, listening to the hon. Member give his answers.

First, can he explain perhaps what he means by saying that the statistics he has just given on the total numbers of employees are not accurate for reasons that he gave, but I did not quite follow. Perhaps he can explain.
1040

Secondly, in terms of full and part-time employment numbers, he says it has to be done manually, so it is quite an onerous task and so on. I had understood that in previous employment surveys and other statistics issued by the statistics department, there is a breakdown of full-time and part-time employment numbers. So why is that a problem now in relation to these numbers?
1045

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, I am going to answer, because these issues were all issues that I have come to understand in the context of the BEAT process that we have been through this year, and trying to use these statistics has proved challenging, for the reasons that the hon. Gentleman will now understand.
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Mr Speaker, the system of employees on the ETB's computers provides for all of the terms of engagement of the registered. Then you have separately the terminations of those.

Now, there is usually a backlog of terminations being entered into the system of anything between 30 and 60 days, and that means that there is a catch-up between the new terms of registration for individuals and the terminations for individuals. So technically, Mr Speaker, there could at any one stage be an individual who is on the computer as a statistic, nothing else, and is
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registered as holding two employments. So if somebody who goes from employer A to employer B, both those terms of engagement may be registered. The termination may not yet have been entered into the system.

1060 So the hon. Gentleman will find that if we were to look at the number of people employed in Gibraltar on a particular day ... Let me give him a day, which I think is the most accurate day to play for, which is 31st October, which is the date to which the employment survey every year refers to – then he would find that it is very likely that the number is closer to 32,000, looking at the last employment survey; but on that day, if we had interrogated the computer at the ETB, it might have given us a figure of 36,000 or 37,000 as it has given us for March or October, because the employment survey, as I think the Hon. Minister has said in his first Answer, is the precise measure, because in the employment survey we are working out exactly who is employed directly with each of the employers, and he knows, Mr Speaker, that the return throughout different administrations in respect of the employment survey is extraordinarily high, in the very high 90% of people who respond to the employment survey.

1070 And also, the questions on the employment survey are different from the fields in the ETB computer so the questions in the employment survey classify employment as full-time or part-time and therefore you get a precise answer there. The ETB, you provide for the number of hours to be worked and so it would be possible to give the hon. Gentleman, as I understand it, from the information I have had, how many people in our economy are working four hours a day, that is to say, for example, 20 hours a week; and how many are working 40 hours a week or more, or less – 20 or less and 40 or more – but not to say which are the full-time, which are the part-time. So that is why, Mr Speaker, the employment survey gives us that precise data with information divided into full-time and part-time, and why it gives us the exact number of jobs in the economy as close as it can be on that day, which is, I think, 31st October, which is the date which is determined to be the survey date.

Q523-525/2020
Social security benefits –
Public information; appeals

Clerk: Question 523. The Hon. K Azopardi.

1085 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, does the Government think that there is sufficient publicly available information on the system of social security benefits?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Employment, Health and Safety and Social Security.

1090 **Minister for Employment, Health and Safety and Social Security (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, I will answer this Question together with Questions 524 and 525.

Clerk: Question 524. The Hon. K Azopardi.

1095 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, is there any individual or individuals or section within the Department of Social Security charged with the responsibility of increasing public awareness or providing public information in respect of the benefits system, procedure for making claims and appeals processes?

1100 **Clerk:** Question 525. The Hon. K Azopardi.

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, does Government consider that it would make sense to have a common system of appeals administered by one appeals tribunal in relation to any appeal brought against decisions in respect of statutory or non-statutory or discretionary social security benefit applications?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Employment, Health and Safety and Social Security.

Minister for Employment, Health and Safety and Social Security (Hon. P J Balban): Mr Speaker, the hon. Member is legal counsel for a client in a case involving these issues and should declare that interest.

1110

Presently all the information relating to social security benefits can be found within the Government website. Furthermore, since joining the Department as Minister for Social Security in September, I have been looking carefully at ways of improving this further and we are currently in the process of designing guides, holding workshops and seminars on the system of social security benefits for employers.

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Mr Speaker, there is no person in the DSS charged with increasing public awareness of the benefits system. The Director of Social Security and his staff provide the necessary information to those that request it. All this information is available in the Government website.

Mr Speaker, the present system of appeals on social security benefit applications has been in place since 1965 and appears to have served its purpose throughout successive administrations, including the one of which the hon. Member was a Minister.

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I have not received any advice, neither has it been suggested to me, that the current system needs to be revised. Nevertheless, the Department of Social Security will be asked to look at the system to see whether a common appeals system may benefit or otherwise, if this question is indeed one of constructive suggestion.

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Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, they have rolled up three questions, so if I may have slightly more latitude, but I may not even need it.

In the first place, Mr Speaker, I take the initial statement made by the Minister as a bit of a jibe. Of course, the Minister knows that I am acting for someone on a legal case in relation to a judicial review but it is not the purpose of the questions, nor is there a conflict in making these questions which stem from matters which other people have been raising with me. They have nothing to do with those cases.

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Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, we have not suggested that, and if he has taken it as a jibe, he would be wrong because our jibes are much more pointed, as far as I am sure he will recall.

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All the Hon. Minister has said is that the hon. Gentleman is legal counsel for a client in a case involving those issues and should declare that interest. Mr Speaker, I encourage him simply to declare the fact, as he has *de facto* now, that that is the case, because he will then note that the Minister went on to answer the questions because we have not imputed to him any improper motive in asking the questions. We have accepted that these could be issues that are raised generally by constituents in respect of which he wants an answer, but they are issues that are live in the litigation that he is handling and therefore we have wanted to set that out. I would be grateful if he would just simply for the sake of the record confirm that interest.

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Mr Speaker, then we will deal with whatever supplementaries he may put, but if it had been intended to be a jibe, it would have been put in a different way.

I will just also say, Mr Speaker, that what the Government does not intend to do is to engage in litigation in respect of the issues that are live in that judicial review across the floor of the House, because I do not think it is in his interests, in his client's interests or in the Government's or the public's interests for us to have that litigation here.

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1155 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, if the hon. Member is aware about what issues are live in that case, then he has misled the House. If the hon. Member is not aware, as I assume he is not actually, because he does not have conduct of it, then he has been misled himself, because none of these questions are live in this litigation.

1160 The issue of whether there is sufficiently publicly available information on the system of social security benefits is not live in that case. The issue of whether there should be a different appeals mechanism or not is not live in that case; nor is the issue of whether there should be an increased public awareness.

So I would encourage the hon. Member to perhaps consider the issues properly, take better information and check the information before he makes ... If it was not a jibe before, it is certainly a jibe now, because he has suggested that I should declare a conflict in relation to issues that are live in litigation, which is actually not true! That is not true.

1165 So, Mr Speaker, the point I am making is I have made it very clear I am acting for person in relation to – I have not given way, Mr Speaker. *(Interjection by the Hon. Chief Minister)*

Mr Speaker: Right, I hear your point of order, Chief Minister.

1170 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, I am going to keep this point of order very short.

The point of order is that the advice that the Government has is *contrary* to what the hon. Gentleman has said, namely that the issues which are raised in the litigation do touch and concern the matters which have been put here and that, therefore, Mr Speaker, the invitation that the hon. Member should declare an interest should now be pursued by him as the appropriate way to act in keeping with Standing Orders, if he has such a matter.

1175 Whether he thinks it is the sort of issue that he is raising or not, the advice that the Government has is that these are the live sorts of issues in that case.

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

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Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, I made clear, as I did in my original contribution to this part of the question, that I am acting ... *(Interjection)* Yes, that I am acting ... *(Interjection)* If the hon. Member will stop interjecting from a sedentary position, I will get to the end of it, and then I will get to my supplementaries.

1185 I made clear, as I did originally at the beginning of my supplementaries, that I am acting for someone in a judicial review against the Government, as I will act for anyone who has a problem with the Government on a judicial review basis. I have no issue with that. I have no issue, I have never had an issue taking the Government on.

1190 But what I have also said is that in that particular litigation, none of the issues that are raised by these questions are live in that, and I maintain that position, and that is my position.

1195 Now, let me ask supplementaries, Mr Speaker, which the Minister has gone on to answer. The Minister says that the information is available in the Government website. My understanding from my own trawl from the Government website is that it is not the easiest thing to find, but there is a booklet which I have been able to locate, which is what is called the Guidelines on Social Security Benefits, but that seems to deal with statutory benefits only. It is not overarching, wider information.

1200 I am surprised to hear the hon. Member say there is no person available or, sorry, there is no person who handles issues of awareness and so on. This is an issue that has been talked about by various people before. Before the election, the hon. Member, the Hon. Minister, may be aware of the establishment of this group, this social platform, called Action on Poverty. One of the issues that they have brought up domestically in Gibraltar is the fact of a lack of public awareness on issues of social security – on the impossibility or at least the difficulty that people have in navigating the benefits system. Is the Hon. Minister not aware of those concerns, and does he not think those concerns are well placed?

1205 And then Mr Speaker, again rolling it up to make it easier for everyone to go on today: I am grateful that, despite what seemed a reluctant answer, the Hon. Minister is willing to ask the Department to look at the system of consolidated appeals. It was a suggestion that I put to him constructively. He is obviously right that the system has had the appeals mechanisms it has had from inception. I am not suggesting it has not, and I am not suggesting that the problem may have
1210 been born in the tenure of the hon. Members; nor am I suggesting necessarily that there is a massive issue.

But does the hon. Member not think it a constructive proposal to consider that in a system of variation of benefits, perhaps one Benefits Appeals Tribunal, given probably the low numbers of appeals that we are talking about, might actually be useful and then easier for the public to follow.
1215 That was the reason I put the question. It is not intended to be combative in fact, and I would ask the Government to take it on board.

Hon. Chief Minister: Well, Mr Speaker, I confess that the hon. Gentleman I think has failed in his duty to this House. He has failed because first of all he says that he has referred to the fact that he is involved in the case setting out involving these issues, and I think in his nervousness has also pretended that the case does not involve these issues. As far as the Government is concerned,
1220 Mr Speaker – (*Interjections*) The jousting continues.

Hon. K Azopardi: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, the hon. Member, when he puts things that I have said to the House, has to put them accurately. I have not said in a contradictory fashion that my case involves issues and then does not. I made clear that I am involved in a case, but I also said that the case does not involve these issues.
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Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, that is not a point of order. That is an attempt to once again clarify the confusion that the hon. Gentleman is seeking to create, because he is saying both that he has nothing to declare and that he is involved in something which he has no reason to refer to if it is nothing that is relevant to the question.
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So, Mr Speaker, I want to be very clear. I want to be very clear. The hon. Gentleman has got up in this House this afternoon to seek to advertise his legal services by getting up and saying, 'I am ready to take on any case against the Government.' Well, Mr Speaker, when I was the Leader of the Opposition and when I was in Opposition, I was ready to take on any case against the Government. There is absolutely nothing wrong with that.
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The only consequence is, Mr Speaker, that that litigation, when it is done for reward as a barrister of the Supreme Court of Gibraltar, is litigation which is carried out in the Supreme or Magistrates' Court of Gibraltar, and the Government – because the Government does believe that all of these issues are engaged in the litigation on the basis of the advice that we have – has tried to be accommodating by giving a first answer, but we will not become involved in litigation across the floor of this House on matters which we consider to now be *sub judice*.
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Mr Speaker: I think there is a difference of position, difference of view and interpretation. I think the best way forward is just to move on to the next Question.
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Next question, please.

Do you wish to speak? Please do so, if you feel you need to say ...

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker on that question, because I am aghast at how anyone can advise the hon. Member that those issues are live in the litigation, can I ask: who gave him that advice?
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Hon. Chief Minister: Government legal service, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker: Right, next question.
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Q526/2020

**Non-statutory or discretionary benefits 2015-20 –
Amount paid and numbers of recipients**

Clerk: Question 526. The Hon. K Azopardi.

1260 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, what monies were paid out by way of non-statutory or discretionary benefits or social assistance by Government in each calendar year from 2015 to 2020 and in respect of how many applicants, breaking down the sum of money by calendar year and particular benefit and the number of recipients of each such benefit?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Employment, Health and Safety and Social Security.

1265 **Minister for Employment, Health and Safety and Social Security (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, the Department of Social Security administers the following non-statutory and discretionary benefits: Disability Benefit; Elderly Persons Allowance; Social Assistance; Child Welfare Grant; and Minimum Income Guarantee.

I now hand over a schedule to the hon. Member with the requested information.

Answer to Question 526

DISABILITY BENEFIT

Year	Amount	Recipients
2015	£859,506.91	227
2016	£983,474.49	271
2017	£1,136,168.94	316
2018	£1,397,238.37	354
2019	£1,278,593.56	397
2020	£1,699,381.03	412

ELDERLY PERSONS ALLOWANCE

Year	Amount	Recipients
2015	£18,544.93	21
2016	£29,994.21	25
2017	£16,371.24	22
2018	£16,119.77	20
2019	£13,796.87	19
2020	£12,128.63	16

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Year	Amount	Recipients
2015	£1,191,947.89	483
2016	£1,332,422.01	515
2017	£1,282,635.85	515
2018	£1,193,279.14	506
2019	£1,201,471.26	518
2020	£1,323,284.76	528

CHILD WELFARE GRANT

Year	Amount	Recipients
2015	£1,205,453.75	1693
2016	£1,110,913.59	1613
2017	£1,107,863.58	1547
2018	£1,057,031.56	1508
2019	£1,040,075.63	1413
2020	£889,205.94	1273

MINIMUM INCOME GUARANTEE

Year	Amount	Recipients
2015	£753,930.18	422
2016	£906,314.70	417
2017	£813,411.56	406
2018	£887,755.33	385
2019	£868,210.15	360
2020	£827,776.08	353

1270 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, can I ask on the Elderly Persons Allowance, there is on the Government website, on the statistics part, some information on the Social Assistance Child ... I think Minimum Income Guarantee as well, there is a sort of breakdown of information. But on the

Elderly Persons Allowance, can the Hon. Minister perhaps ... does he have information in how that is administered, what the criteria are for the Elderly Persons Allowance?

1275

Hon. P J Balban: Mr Speaker, the Elderly Persons Allowance is a non-discretionary benefit, which operates under administrative arrangements. It provides a monthly allowance to Gibraltarians over the age of 65 who have a right of permanent residence in Gibraltar and are permanently residing in Gibraltar. Recipients must be unemployed and in financial need. Applicants must not be entitled to an old age pension or benefits of similar nature.

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The rate for that is, I think, £88 per month.

Hon. K Azopardi: So I assume the over-65s, as I took the note, I think he said, but not in receipt of an old-age pension, hence why it is such a small number. Presumably it is people who have perhaps worked overseas and have returned – does he have an indication of the kind of profile we are talking about?

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Hon. P J Balban: No, Mr Speaker. I have not got that information available to me.

Q527/2020

Various benefits –

Payments made and number of recipients

Clerk: Question 527. The Hon. K Azopardi.

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Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, how much money was paid out in the calendar year 2020 by way of: (1) Death grant; (2) Industrial Accident — Disablement Benefit; (3) Guardians allowance; (4) Industrial accident or disease — industrial death benefit; (5) Injury benefit; (6) Maternity allowance; (7) Maternity grant; (8) Old age pension; (9) Unemployment benefit; (10) Survivors benefit; and (11) Minimum Income Guarantee to Pensioners; and in respect of how many recipients, setting out the number of recipients by way of each benefit?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Employment, Health and Safety and Social Security.

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Minister for Employment, Health and Safety and Social Security (Hon. P J Balban): Mr Speaker, The monies paid out in the calendar year 2020 are as follows:

There were a total of 202 recipients who took Death Grant, amounting to £142,953.32.

Disablement Benefit: there were 116 recipients, and they took £383,122.15.

One recipient of Guardian's Allowance of £1,568.55.

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Three Industrial Death Benefits for a total of £8,425.08.

Injury Benefit: there were 23 recipients amounting to a total of £38,114.27.

For the Maternity Allowance, there were 255 recipients, and the amount was £397,800.04.

Maternity Grant: 475 recipients and the amount was £351,974.00.

Old Age Pension was 12,425 recipients. That amounted to £37,617,955.48.

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Unemployment Benefit: there were a total of 306 recipients, and they took £229,011.89.

Survivors' Benefit: 347 recipients, amounted to £1,315,748.04.

The Minimum Income Guarantee: there were 353 recipients, and that amounted to £827,776.08.

DIGITAL, FINANCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC UTILITIES

Q528/2020

Devil's Tongue proposed development –
Development licence

Clerk: Question 528. The Hon. D J Bossino.

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Hon. D J Bossino: Can the Minister for Planning state whether the Government has granted a development licence to allow the proposed development on Devil's Tongue?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Digital, Financial Services and Public Utilities.

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Minister for Digital, Financial Services and Public Utilities (Hon. A J Isola): Mr Speaker, no, sir.

Hon. D J Bossino: That is in keeping with Mr Speaker's Ruling over short answers! I will try to be as short in my supplementaries as well.

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Is the Government supportive of this? He says no. It is the Government's intention ... is that a definite no? Is it a negative in terms of granting a development licence into the future, or is it something that the Government would consider in the future?

I am expressing my own personal view in relation to the project, Mr Speaker. I certainly do not like it. I think it is a blot in terms of the architectural horizon, and I think the Government itself, as members in the planning process, members of the Planning Commission, have expressed contrary views, albeit, I understand, limited to the environmental concerns. What I would be interested to learn is whether the Government is intending to support this by way of granting a development licence.

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Hon. A J Isola: Mr Speaker, the hon. Member has asked a question to the Minister for Planning specifically as to whether a development licence has been issued. A development licence is an issue of land under the auspices of the Deputy Chief Minister. I have absolutely nothing to do with the development licence as to whether it is or is not, whether it is liked, whether it is not liked – any issue whatsoever in relation to the development that the hon. Member is referring to.

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What I can tell the hon. Member is that the development did have a planning permit, which comes within my area of responsibility, which was issued and expired. The permission has been deferred following a DPC meeting some weeks back for further consideration. That is all we can say at this stage because, as you know, the DPC is entirely independent of Government.

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Hon. D J Bossino: I am conscious that in fact, I did some research in relation to the planning aspects, and he is right. In terms of the summary which is provided, it states that this particular application is pending. I think the matter was discussed on 28th January: although I was unable to have a look at the minutes, it was in the agenda for that meeting, but the minutes have not yet been published online.

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Just by way of final, second supplementary, Mr Speaker, is the hon. Member telling me, if I have understood him correctly, that if I had posed the question and directed it at the Minister for Development, the Deputy Chief Minister, then the answer would have been different and would have been more forthcoming than what he has provided? Is that exactly what he is telling me?

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Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Well, Mr Speaker, yes, it would have been.

First of all, I would just remind him that he could have gone online on 28th and watched the whole meeting, because contrary to the advice that we had from him and his colleagues between 2011 and 2015, when they were explicit in telling us that we should not make the DPC public and

1360 change the rules, we did make it public and so instead of just relying on the minutes, which was the case before, he could actually have watched the whole meeting live.

1365 Second, Mr Speaker, he would have got a different answer if he had not posed it to the Minister for Planning. If he had posed it to me or to the Government generally, which I understand is the way that the question should be answered in respect of a development licence, he would have been told firmly and clearly that a development licence will not be granted by the Government in respect of this project. For a simple reason: none is required.

1370 This is not a Government plot in respect of which a development will only happen if a licence is granted with a lease being granted at the end. The people who are wishing to develop this plot already own the lease. A development licence is only granted when the Government owns the land and the condition on which the Government grants the land is that they will give a lease at the end of the development period.

So a development licence is entirely and completely, totally, in law, in fact and in practice, irrelevant in the context of this particular development.

1375 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, is that statement accurate? I have taken this from ... I think this is information, I have not annotated, from the Development and Planning Commission.

No, it was actually a GBC report, I must say, but according to the reporter there – just to be candid and open with the hon. Chief Minister – and this may be inaccurate, but I would ask him to confirm that this is inaccurate, the report reads this. It says:

Other issues were raised.

This is in the context of the report of the planning process. It said:

The proposed development's footprint includes land which is still owned by other parties – such as Government and a private concern ...

1380 Does the Chief Minister stand by what he has just said in relation to lack of ownership, as far as the Government is concerned?

Hon. Chief Minister: On hundred per cent, Mr Speaker, because what is being sought is the assignment of the Government land, which the Government is not minded to assign.

1385 But he has asked a question very specifically. Mr Speaker, as a lawyer, he knows what the term 'a development licence' means, or *should* know what the words 'a development licence' mean. A development licence is in respect of land which is not owned by the Government on which a development is going to be erected and a lease is granted at the end of the development period because the development of the property is a condition of the licence. So this is completely outside what is relevant in respect of this plot. One hundred per cent an otiose reference to the way that this plot is going to be developed.

1390 Mr Speaker, if I had not read the drivel that he wrote yesterday in the *Chronicle*, I would not have believed that he could have made such a basic mistake in the context of the terminology of land. But having read what I read yesterday, I will believe anything. (*Interjections*)

1395 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Yes, I thought it was a good article, too!

Mr Speaker, is the Chief Minister saying that if the Government's consent is sought to allow the current holders of leases in the plot to do this development, that the Government's consent will not be given?

1400 **Hon. Chief Minister:** No, Mr Speaker, that is not what I have said, because what I have said has been in answer to a question not about landlord's consent; it has been about the nonsense of a reference to a development licence in respect of property that is already in the leasehold ownership of the developers.

1405 So the hon. Gentleman can ask me the question if he likes about whether we might or might not give that consent, but that is not what I am saying, because that is not the question that I was asked.

Mr Speaker: Next Question.

Q529/2020
DLT regulations –
Introduction of 10th core principle

1410 **Clerk:** Question 529. The Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Can the Minister for Financial Services state when he intends to introduce the 10th core principle to the DLT regulations and what will it comprise?

1415 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Digital, Financial Services and Public Utilities.

Minister for Digital, Financial Services and Public Utilities (Hon. A J Isola): Mr Speaker, work on the creation of the 10th core principle is at a very advanced stage and is in the process of being reviewed by external subject matter experts. At this stage we expect publication in May. The 10th core principle will cover issues relating to market integrity.

Hon. D J Bossino: Thank you for that reply, to the Minister. Is he able to say, does he think that we are still ahead of the game? I think he mentioned that in the context of his video presentation, when he announced that this was going to be introduced in relation to other jurisdictions.

1425 **Hon. A J Isola:** Mr Speaker, I believe we are still miles ahead of other jurisdictions, yes.

Q530/2020
Gibraltar Association of New Technologies –
Key deliverables

Clerk: Question 530. The Hon. D J Bossino.

1430 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Following his statement with regards to the election of the new executive committee of the Gibraltar Association of New Technologies, can the Minister for Digital and Financial Services provide details of the key deliverables which he said would come on stream in 2021?

1435 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Digital, Financial Services and Public Utilities.

Minister for Digital, Financial Services and Public Utilities (Hon. A J Isola): Mr Speaker, there are a number of ongoing initiatives in this space. These include but are not limited to the following:

(a) Market Integrity Working Group creating the '10th principle' of the DLT Providers Regulatory Framework, which we have just referred to in the previous question.

1440 (b) Implementation of Financial Action Task Force (FATF) requirements including the 'Travel Rule' by licensed Virtual Asset Services Providers (VASP) firms.

(c) The introduction of technology to assist relevant organisations that monitor the activity of VASPs from a regulatory perspective.

1445 (d) Continued participation in/support of the work of international representative bodies, for example, Blockchain for Europe, Start up Grind, INATBA, GBBC and others.

(e) Ongoing attendance and participation in international events without the need to be physically present.

(f) Outreach to Commonwealth countries to establish commercial opportunities in this area.

1450 (g) Complete a formal gap analysis between the FATF and VASP terminology and definitions, as well as the guidelines around this, to assess any changes or amendments to the framework in Gibraltar.

(h) We will engage with HMT with a view to gaining formal regulatory recognition of a Gibraltar DLT firm or VASP, if possible we would look to achieve this as part of the GAR process with the United Kingdom government.

Q531/2020
GBC archives –
Plans to digitise

1455 **Clerk:** Question 531. The Hon. K Azopardi.

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, are there plans to fully or partly digitise the GBC archives and make these available online to the public?

1460 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Digital, Financial Services and Public Utilities.

Minister for Digital, Financial Services and Public Utilities (Hon. A J Isola): Mr Speaker, yes, sir, and this is already happening.

1465 The GBC video diary is in the process of being digitised by a specialist firm in the United Kingdom. Over 16,000 tapes have been sent including programmes and footage dating back to the 1980s, with these being of different formats, such as U-Matic, BETA and DigiBeta, which were in use until 2013. Although many images have been lost forever as a result of floodings and poor damp conditions at Broadcasting House, as well as the practice of recycling expensive tapes, it is expected that a wealth of historical images and retro-programming will eventually be returned.
1470 The first batches of digitised footage have already arrived and are being used to illustrate programmes where appropriate.

It will take a number of years to complete the project, as it is delicate and complex work due to the fragility of the tapes, some of which need treatment prior to being transferred.

1475 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Thank you. I thank the Minister for that. Can I just ask a few supplementaries again? If I may, I will just roll them up, and then the hon. Member can try to answer them all, and if he forgets to answer one I can always pick it up.

The hon. Member says they have appointed a firm in the UK. Can he say who they are, and the expected cost of this project? I appreciate that it is a big project and it will take time to do.

1480 He says they have sent 16,000 tapes – of how many? Are we talking about ... is that a big part of what they had already or is it just a small part?

He says that it is a project that will take time and we understand that. How much time?

1485 I think the one aspect that he perhaps did not specifically answer, which was part of my original question, was whether they were going to be made available online to the public, not just be used as a resource by GBC to illustrate programmes. Is there a kind of programme ...? I think he said yes to it, but as part of this long project, is it intended for there to be a historical online archive in

the same way as there might be a project to have, hopefully, a documentary archive in due course of paper records? I am not talking about GBC; I am talking about the national archive.

1490 **Hon. A J Isola:** Mr Speaker, I am afraid I do not have the complete costs or, indeed, the name of the UK firm that is providing the service for the GBC, but I will of course write to him and give him that information. Nor do I know what percentage the 16,000 is of the total amount of tapes that we have.

1495 We hope it will be an online archive. However, before we get to that stage, we will require investment in an on-demand video-sharing platform to be created for GBC, which is currently being considered and costed.

Obviously, until the initial phases of digitisation are complete, we are really not able to accurately determine what will be needing to be built, so we cannot even get it costed at this stage in terms of making it available to the public.

1500 We will also in future require a librarian to manage the video library and, obviously, until, again, this is completed, that will not be possible and we will not be engaging in that expense until we are able to actually deal with what we have back.

So I will write in the next couple of days to the hon. Member, giving him the details to the answer of questions which I have not been provided with by GBC.

Q532/2020
Online Government services –
Improvement of delivery

1505 **Clerk:** Question 532. The Hon. K Azopardi.

Hon. K Azopardi: How will Government improve the delivery of online services to the public across the various departments?

1510 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Digital, Financial Services and Public Utilities.

Minister for Digital, Financial Services and Public Utilities (Hon. A J Isola): Mr Speaker, online services are currently being delivered in a basic form enabling citizens to interact with Government whilst our counters have been closed. The services being offered are basic and we are working to expand on a daily basis the extent of the services offered.

1515 At the same time, we are working to deliver eServices which provide a much more comprehensive and user-friendly interaction with citizens and businesses. This month we have soft launched the new Employment eServices and these will be fully operational online, with other departments being rolled out in the coming months.

1520 These will result in a significant change to the existing user experience, and I can tell the hon. Member that the next department after Employment will be the Income Tax Office.

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, that answer, with all due respect to the hon. Member – I know that efforts are being made because I can see it in certain areas – it is fairly scant on detail. Can I ask him, is there an overarching Government strategy in respect of the delivery of online services or the improvement of online services holistically across the departments? Is there one in writing? That is what I am asking.

Hon. A J Isola: Mr Speaker, there is indeed an eServices Plan, which we are working through. Obviously, the last four months with COVID have significantly shifted the time lines that we anticipated in being able to deliver these services.

1535 I can tell hon. Member that the basic eServices, which we implemented solely as a result of COVID, in a number of departments have resulted in almost 15,000 service requests having been completed between the public and Government. So even the basic services which are available now have been subscribed to fairly significantly by the public.

1540 And, yes, the eServices, which is what we are all anticipating to come live on stream, first with Employment, then with tax and then with GHA, are the same three areas that we have been talking about from the inception of this programme over two years ago. So what should have happened this time last year is happening this time this year as a result of the deviation in the works that have been going on resulting from COVID.

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, can I ask this, stemming from that: first of all, when was the eServices strategy plan that he is talking about, that exists – when was it drafted?

1545 Secondly, what kind of period of time does it span? What is the expectation on timescale of delivery for the roll-out of this plan?

Thirdly, given that the hon. Member recognises that the online services can be improved and in some cases are basic, does he not consider that in some respects, there needs to be also an improvement on counter services while the online delivery is carried out?

1550 **Hon. A J Isola:** Mr Speaker, the issue of counters is something that is under consideration at this moment in time. Government is considering what we should be doing in the immediate term. There was always intended to be a service for customers of our senior citizens. The hon. Lady has asked questions in the past about whether senior citizens who do not use the internet will have the service available to them. The answer to that has always been yes.

1555 In terms of the quality of the service, let's not forget that the services that are currently being offered are not eServices; they will be core basic services.

1560 So I fully recognise and accept that the existing troop of eServices of some 15,000 requests in the past probably eight months that have been used is nothing like the service that is coming, simply because with basic eServices, you will have to put all of your details in each and every time you use the service. With the new eServices, what you will do is register, then have access to it through the different security portals, and it will then know who you are, and you will have your entire interaction with Government You will literally click a button for the service that you have because it knows who you are, it knows your address, it knows your contact number, it knows your email and you will communicate with it in a very seamless manner.

1565 So where we are today and where we will be, I hope, in the coming months are very different places. I have no doubt, but when the public see the extent of the eServices being delivered and the manner in which they will be delivered, they will understand the difference that I am trying to articulate between the basic eServices and the eServices that we are intending.

1570 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, can I just ask this final supplementary, because a lot of what the hon. Member has just said is about the mechanics and the expectations that in the future things will get better. I understand that when it is rolled out, it will get better and so on. But because we have not seen this eServices Plan, so we do not know where the hon. Member is trying to drive us, can he give us a sense of the ambition of the Government in relation to where he hopes we will be able to get, from the point of view of the consumer? What can the consumer expect if the eServices Plan is carried out, in terms of his or her interaction with Government services in day-to-day uses?

1580 **Hon. A J Isola:** I think the consumer can expect a dramatic difference from what it is using today. In terms of the intended roll-out, as I mentioned briefly, Employment is currently in soft go-live, which is with 15 companies using the system and so that we can test it thoroughly, with firms giving us a feedback, ensuring that everything is working before we build go fully live. So

that it is as good as done. We are working through the suggested changes that both firms and the Employment Service have requested, and this is being worked through.

1585 By 1st July, I expect returns to the Income Tax Office for next year to be done digitally. I expect those to be online and processed online. The GHA will come pretty quickly afterwards and then there is a whole list of departments which will be coming online gradually. But we picked three large chunky departments to start with which will give us a good entry point into the remaining Departments.

1590 If you look at some of the other areas which are very relevant – DVLD, CSRO – they are all in the next wave of departments that we seek to introduce. The CSRO because we hope that will be one of the key entry points. Once you have satisfied CSRO with who you are, where you live and your due diligence, there should be no need for you ever again to go to any other Government department and prove where you live, a copy of your lease, like we ask in so many other departments at the moment.

1595 So I think the change will be significant, but it will take us time to roll out every single department. The big chunky ones at the front end and then the others will come on stream as we work our way through.

1600 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Sorry, Mr Speaker, I did say final, but the hon. Member has raised an interesting point, and I did not want to leave the issue without asking him, so with your indulgence ...

That all sounds good and positive, but does it also mean ... ? That is about the interaction of the consumer with Government generally as a body. Does it also mean, therefore, that, in terms of that online activity, it will improve the communication between Departments so that once someone does precisely that – as the hon. Member has said, once you have registered CSRO ... Sometimes people come to see me because they have difficulties in just interaction with Departments. Sometimes it is not even a political issue. It is simply about they go to one Department, CSRO perhaps it is about, and until they sort themselves out there, they cannot sort out their health card ... It is not a political issue. It is a bureaucratic, administrative one.

1610 Will it be the expectation that once that system is put in place, the communication between Departments will also improve so that they will have access to this information and that will make life easier for anyone seeking certificates or renewals in any other particular Department?

1615 **Hon. A J Isola:** Mr Speaker, yes, and that has been one of the enormous challenges that we faced. If you imagine that somebody is recorded in one Department as James, in another Department as Jimmy, and another one as Jaime, you begin to see how difficult it is to trust the data and ensure you are talking about the same person. So there is a cleansing of all of the different datasets that we have across every single Department in Government to ensure that when somebody registers in one Department as Jamie and tries to get his tax returns, we have actually got the right person. We have got to be able to trust the data.

1620 So apart from linking all the data into the central brain, if I can call it that, from each of the different Departments, we need to go through a process of ensuring that the data is consistent and cleansed, if I can call it that, to remove all of these anomalies.

1625 So, yes, absolutely. The expectation is that once you are registered with Government and if you make a change, it will automatically happen in all the other Departments too, so that should make life and the need for electricity and water bills far less frequent in the future, I would hope.

Q533-35/2020

**Beat COVID contact tracing app –
Number of smartphone downloads; number of users in self-isolation;
details of app developer and cost**

Clerk: Question 533. The Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon.

1630 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** Mr Speaker, if I could just briefly give a little preamble to these questions, and I just talked about it earlier with the Hon. Minister, in that a few of the answers within these questions have already been dealt with via the *Chronicle* paper on 11th March, but nonetheless I will continue to present the questions.

How many users have installed the Beat COVID contact tracing app on their smartphones?

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Clerk: Answer the Hon. the Minister for Digital and Financial Services and Public Utilities.

Minister for Digital and Financial Services and Public Utilities (Hon. A J Isola): Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 534 and 535.

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Clerk: Question 534. The Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon.

Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon: How many individuals have been asked to isolate as a result of having been identified as coming into contact with a COVID positive case via the contact tracing app?

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Clerk: Question 535. The Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon.

Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon: Who/what is the entity contracted to develop the Beat COVID contact tracing app, and how much did it cost the taxpayer?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Digital and Financial Services and Public Utilities.

Minister for Digital and Financial Services and Public Utilities (Hon. A J Isola): Mr Speaker, may I just say at the outset that I have not made any statement or invited any press commentary in respect of any of the issues arising from the hon. Lady's question. We had, through the Press Office, a request for information from one of our local newspapers. When information was provided, they subsequently requested an interview, which I gave. I actually did not link this question with that interview and my apologies for that, but it certainly was not intentional.

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One of the first governments to research and develop a decentralised version of a COVID-19 app was the Irish government. Through contacts in Apple, the Gibraltar Government was introduced to the Irish Health Authority, who kindly agreed to share their app source code, free of charge, with Gibraltar. We were then introduced to Nearform, the company building the app for the Irish government. Nearform adapted the technology that they had developed for the Irish government and created an app for us which met our requirements for a fraction of the cost. The total cost to the Government to develop the app was €71,280.

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Like all apps using the Apple-Google API, the Beat COVID app uses the Bluetooth signal on a smartphone to determine how closely and for how long two smartphones are nearby, without collecting the location of the contact or the identity of the user. This interaction is enabled via the smartphone's COVID exposure notification function, meaning that the phone is the one checking for close contacts, not the app. If a person tests positive for COVID-19, the Contact Tracing Bureau provides a unique code, which can be typed into the Beat COVID app. The smartphone's COVID exposure notification function then checks the close contact logs stored over the last 14 days, and

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1675 if there is a match the smartphone automatically notifies the users to self-isolate and, if they have symptoms, to call 111. This is all done anonymously via the Apple-Google API.

For the close contact notifications to work, the Beat COVID app must have been downloaded and installed on a smartphone for a period of 14 days. If this is not done, the smartphone cannot log any close contacts and it is pointless for the Contact Tracing Bureau to issue a unique code to a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 if the app has not been installed on their smartphone for at least 14 days prior.

1685 To date, the Beat COVID app has been downloaded a total of 33,281 times. Due to the anonymous nature of the app, we are unable to track how many people have received a close contact notification. I can confirm that, to date, as far as we are aware, the Contact Tracing Bureau has provided a unique code to some 105 people who have the Beat COVID app installed on their phones.

Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon: Mr Speaker, if I can ask the Hon. Minister a couple of supplementaries? I just want to remind the House that I was a very big advocate for this app when it was announced by the Minister. I downloaded it myself immediately when there was so much doubt about people's privacy and encouraged people to download it themselves, but I just do not understand how, for the price that was paid... At 70-odd thousand euros one would think it would have been elementary to have some kind of cohesive strategy that ensured that the users or people who were speaking to these representatives at Contact Tracing would be given a code. I myself fell ill with COVID and when they called me to tell me that I was positive nobody offered me a code. I appreciate that in his interview the Minister said people are not going to be asking for the code, but I do not think it was for the positive case. I certainly did not think of asking for a code.

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1700 So, my first question would be: how is it that we could have spent €70,000 on an app where it was not an elementary function within the Contact Tracing Bureau to offer immediately this code to the COVID positive case, so that we could actually make this app value for money and fit for purpose?

Hon. A J Isola: Mr Speaker, the cost of the app was a giveaway, if I can put it that way, and when you consider that in the United Kingdom I think they spent, it is reported, some £12 billion on developing an app that was subsequently abandoned, it puts it a little bit into context. We were very fortunate to have had the support of Apple, who have a Gibraltarian contact who was put in contact with me by the Chief Minister and who introduced us to the Irish government and introduced us to Nearform, where we did not pay a penny for the app source code; they gave it to us for free. So, I think that the cost of the app was extremely reasonable and extremely good value for money.

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1715 As I said in the interview, like the hon. Lady herself, the last thing on your mind when you are told you are positive is to ask for a code. Many people, the ones I know, were told they were positive and then rang up subsequently to request a code. The only way in which we could safely ensure that a person's identity was anonymous in the way that was proposed was by having this unique number that could only be issued by the GHA. At the outset of developing this app, the hon. Lady will recall there was a huge amount of concern about people knowing who you were, where you were going, who else knew, who could see and who could look, and so we took the very simple decision to have it totally anonymised. But that meant that the only person who could give the number was the person who was telling you you were positive, the GHA, and they had to go through a quick process specifically to get the particular unique number, because those numbers had to be recognised, obviously, by the app to ensure that the system triggered and it worked. It was for that reason that we set in place this process to ensure that people who wanted to have the number and wanted to put it into the app, if they downloaded it, would do so. The result is that few people did. Whose fault is that? I am not going to stand here and blame the people who were taking calls at a rate of knots in the GHA or in Contact Tracing, dealing with these

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calls, telling them they were positive. It is easy to say now that they should have taken more time, but I am not going to do it. Likewise, I am not going to blame people who have had the shock of being told they are positive – that they should have asked for the number because they failed in some duty or other not to do so.

1730 As the Chief Minister said at the time that we launched this app, if it helped to save one person from death or serious injury through the use of the app it was worthwhile doing, and it was worth the effort that we made to ensure that we had this available well ahead of many of the much larger countries that subsequently introduced apps like this.

1735 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** Mr Speaker, once again I thank the Minister for his answer, but I fail to understand how the Government can consider this app a ‘giveaway’, in his own words, when at the end of the day we have 105 cases exposed as a result of the app. With 33,000 downloads, that means a rate of 0.0032% of activity or cohesion with the app between people.

1740 I think that the last thing on anyone’s mind, as the Minister correctly says, is to ask for the code, but clearly that is not what we should be looking at. The point is that the Contact Tracing Bureau should have had the tools to provide the code for us. It is not about blaming them or not blaming them; this is about the design of the app, whether it was fit for purpose and whether it was value for money. Maybe yes, we did save one life, but we could have saved a lot more. In the seven or eight months that it was live I never got one notification, and I was always checking it because I was very interested to see how it would work – I think it can be widely accepted that I have a lot of friends and I know a lot of people in this place.

1745 I cannot understand how the Government cannot appreciate or accept that this money has been practically thrown away. I want to ask the Minister if he still thinks that the €70,000 spent on this app with a 0.0032% engagement was value for money at a time when we are being told by the Government that we need to prioritise our public spending.

1750 **Hon. A J Isola:** Mr Speaker, I would not quantify a life as 0.0032% of value for money, ever. What the hon. Lady seems to forget is when I said a giveaway, I said by comparison to the £12 billion that the United Kingdom had spent (**A Member:** Billion?) on their own app – billion is what was reported as having been spent. So, you have to compare the €72,000 to the £12 billion. That is where I said it was a giveaway. And the hon. Lady’s mathematics... She is taking 33,281 downloads as being from Gibraltar. The hon. Lady should know that there are not 33,000 smartphones in Gibraltar, because not every man, woman and child and their dog have a smartphone. What that tells you is that people from outside Gibraltar, from all parts of the world, were downloading this app, not just Gibraltar. So, when you divide the number to work out its value, you certainly cannot use the number of 33,281. She asked me how many times it has been downloaded. That is the answer, but I can tell the hon. Lady that they were not all in Gibraltar. When this started happening, and because we were one of the first to have a Beat COVID app, people from all over the world were desperate for the app and downloaded the Gibraltar app thinking it would work anywhere else in the world, but of course it did not, and so many of the people who downloaded it subsequently came off the app. You cannot legislate for that.

1760 We did, in the situation we are in – as did Contact Tracing, as did the GHA at the call centres – everything we possibly could to make our fight against this pandemic as effective as possible, and we believe we did it way ahead of much larger countries. It is not right or fair to suggest that €72,000 has been thrown away because some useless mathematical calculation seems to suggest that it was. We all know the truth in Gibraltar of how this was used and how we it helped to save people from this infection. On that basis alone, we would do it again if we had to face a similar problem and challenge, as indeed we are now thinking about doing with the COVID vaccine passport.

1775 **Mr Speaker:** Next question.

ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY, CLIMATE CHANGE AND EDUCATION

Q536/2020

**New secondary schools –
Cracks/rectification works**

Clerk: Question 536. The Hon. E J Reyes.

1780 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, can the Government provide details of what has led to cracks occurring in some classroom walls at the newly built secondary schools, as well as detailing what remedial works will be undertaken to rectify this and by whom?

1785 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education.

1790 **Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, the answer is a simple one: settling. It is common for buildings to experience some shrinkages and/or settlement in the first year or two following construction. A number of such cracks have appeared in various walls at the secondary schools, which have been documented by the Project Team and will be remedied by the contractor Casais, as is normal practice. In addition, a structural engineer will be assessing these cracks to confirm that they are indeed due to shrinkages in the plaster finish or are due to normal settlement, as part of the contractual obligation to make good defects during the rectification period. Apart from being normal, these types of cracks are expected.

Q537/2020

**Discretionary scholarships –
Details re applications**

1795 **Clerk:** Question 537. The Hon. E J Reyes.

1800 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can Government provide a list showing all applications received for discretionary scholarships starting in 2019, inclusive of details showing: (a) course title, (b) name of institution delivering the course, (c) qualification to be obtained, (d) duration of course, (e) tuition fees payable, and (f) confirmation of which applications were successful and which ones were not?

1805 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education.

Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, I have just handed over a schedule to the hon. Member which contains the information requested. I will have several such schedules in the next few questions.

GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT, TUESDAY, 16th MARCH 2021

Answer to Q537/2020

Course	Name of Institution	Qualification	Duration	Tuition (£)	Outcome
AAT	University of Gibraltar	AAT	1	1,028	Successful
ACCA	Kaplan London Bridge	ACCA	1	968	Successful
ACCA	Manchester Metropolitan University	ACCA	1	7,000	Successful
Advanced Operative Aesthetic & Restorative Dentistry	Aspire Dental Academy	Certificate	1	8,424	Successful
Airport Transport Pilot License	2Fly Aerodynamics	ATPL	2	18,000	Successful
Airport Transport Pilot License	BAA Training	ATPL	2	18,000	Successful
Animal Sciences	Nottingham College	BSc	1	0	Successful
Archaeology	Durham University	BA	3	9,250	Successful
Archives and Records Management	University College London	MA	1	9,860	Successful
Art, Design & Media	Greater Brighton Metropolitan College. MET	PGCE	1	8,290	Successful
BPTC	BPP University (London)	BPTC	1	16,070	Successful
Business Administration	University of Gibraltar	MBA	2	7,250	Successful
Business Administration	University of Gibraltar	MBA	2	7,250	Successful
Business Administration	University of Gibraltar	MBA	2	7,250	Successful
Business Administration	University of Gibraltar	MBA	2	7,250	Successful
Business Administration	University of Gibraltar	MBA	2	7,250	Successful
Business Administration	University of Gibraltar	MBA	3	9,250	Successful
Business Administration	Imperial College London	MBA	2	13,250	Successful
Business Administration	University of Gibraltar	MBA	2	7,250	Successful
Business Administration	University of Gibraltar	MBA	1	7,250	Successful
Child and Educational Psychology	University College London	PhD	3	14,250	Successful
Clinical Conscious Sedation and Anxiety Management	University of Bristol	PGCert	1	7,000	Successful
CMI	Gibraltar College of Further Education	Certificate	1	0	Successful
Cognitive and Clinical Neuroscience	Goldsmith University London	MSc	1	9,040	Successful
Counselling	Brisbane Australia	Mcounts	2	12,000	Successful
Counselling, Coaching and Mentoring	York St John University	BA	3	9,250	Successful
Creative Enterprise and Innovation	Cardiff Metropolitan University	MA	1	9,000	Successful
Design and Technology	Manchester Metropolitan University	PGCE	1	9,250	Successful
Education, Gender and International Development	University College London	MA	1	8,680	Successful
Fashion design & manufacture	Marbella Design Academy	BA (HONS)	3	9,250	Successful
Finance	Bocconi University	MSc	1	16,600	Unsuccessful
Foundation Certificate in Accounting	University of Gibraltar	Certificate	1	1,028	Successful
GDL	BPP University (London)	GDL	1	11,590	Successful
GDL	The University of Law	GDL	1	9,350	Successful
GDL	The University of Law (London)	GDL	1	11,650	Successful
GDL	The University of Law (Manchester)	GDL	1	9,350	Successful
Graduate Entry Medicine	University of St Andrew's	MBChB	4	0	Successful
Hairdressing VTCT	Marbella Beauty Academy	NVQ	1	4,901	Successful
HBS 2	Kauai Hawaii		1	2,800	Successful
HBS 2	Kauai Hawaii		1	2,800	Successful
Health Psychology	Cardiff Metropolitan University	MSc	1	9,000	Successful
Health Psychology	Uni of Stirling	MSc	1	6,500	Unsuccessful
History and Philosophy	University of Leeds	BA	3	9,250	Successful
International Trade Law	University of Leeds	LLM	1	9,000	Successful
ITEC Level3 Diploma in Sports Massage Therapy Course	St. Mary's University	Diploma	1	1,600	Successful
LLM Qualifying Law	Liverpool John Moores University	LLM	1	6,600	Successful
MA Investigative Journalism	City University of London	MA	1	10,200	Successful
Manne Engineering	Solent University	HND	3	9,906	Successful
Marine Science and Climate Change	University of Gibraltar	MA	1	7,750	Successful
Marketing Management	University of Chester	BA (Hons)	1	9,250	Successful
Master Orals	Glasgow Maritime Academy	Master Mariner	1	1,375	Successful
Masters of Music Composition	Boston Conservatory	MMus	2	17,042	Successful
MRes RCA (Communication Design)	Royal College of Art	MRes	1	12,350	Successful
Ms Psychology of Sport and Exercise	University of Roehampton	MSc	1	8,095	Successful
MSc Cybersecurity	Cardiff University	MSc	1	9,350	Successful
MSc Finance & Investments	University of Liverpool in London	MSc	1	13,000	Successful
MSc Integrative Counselling & Coaching	University of East London	MSc	3	3,900	Successful
MSc International Public Pol cy	Queen Mary Univeristy of London	MSc	1	9,150	Successful
MSc Physician Associate Studies	University of East Anglia	MSc	2	0	Successful
MSc Physiotherapy	London Southbank University	MSc	2	9,250	Successful
Nursing	University of Hertfordshire	BSc	3	9,250	Successful
PGCE	St. Mary's University	PGCE	1	0	Successful
PGCE	St. Mary's University	PGCE	1	9,250	Successful
PGCE	University of Gibraltar	PGCE	1	9,250	Successful
PGCE	University of Gibraltar	PGCE	1	9,250	Successful

PGCE	University of Gibraltar	PGCE	1	9,250	Successful
PGCE	University of Gibraltar	PGCE	1	9,250	Successful
PGCE	University of Gibraltar	PGCE	1	9,250	Successful
PGCE	University of Gibraltar	PGCE	1	9,250	Successful
PGCE	University of Gibraltar	PGCE	1	9,250	Successful
PGCE	University of Gibraltar	PGCE	1	9,250	Successful
PGCE	Oxford Brookes University	PGCE	1	9,250	Successful
PGCE	Sheffield Hallam University	PGCE	1	9,250	Successful
PGCE	University of Portsmouth	PGCE	1	9,250	Successful
PGCE Secondary	University of Brighton	PGCE	1	9,250	Successful
PGCE Special Needs	University of Reading	PGCE	1	9,250	Successful
PhD Cancer Research	Kingston University	PhD	4	13,200	Unsuccessful
PhD Business	Kingston University	PhD	4	0	Successful
PhD Clinical Veterinary Science	University of Bristol	PhD	4	4,300	Successful
PHD in Education (Doctorate of Philosophy)	Liverpool John Moores University	PhD	3	4,000	Successful
PhD Interdisciplinary Methodologies	The University of Warwick	PhD	4	4,327	Successful
Postgraduate Certificate (Assistive Technology)	Ace Centre with Manchester Met University	Certificate	1	2,000	Successful
Primary Education 3- 7	University of Brighton	BA	3	9,250	Successful
Professional Certificate of Competence in Blockchain and Smart ...	University of Gibraltar	Professional Cert.	1	2,000	Successful
Psychology With Counselling Skills	Middlesex University	BSc	3	9,250	Successful
Security Studies	University College London	MSc	1	13,340	Successful
Sports Performance	Leeds City College	BSc	1	7,250	Successful
Tourism and events	Cardiff Metropolitan	BA	3	9,000	Successful
Tropical Medicine & Hygiene	Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine	Diploma	1	6,000	Successful
Warsash Maritime Academy (Southampton Solent)	Warsash Maritime Academy	Chief Officer	1	2,880	Successful
Yacht Master Fast Track Sail	All Abroad Maritime Academy	YachtMaster	1	8,650	Successful
Yacht Master Fast Track Sail	All Abroad Maritime Academy	YachtMaster	1	8,650	Successful

Q538/2020

Distance learning scholarships – Details re 2019 applications

Clerk: Question 538. The Hon. E J Reyes.

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Hon. E J Reyes: Can Government provide a list showing all applications received for distance learning scholarships starting in 2019, inclusive of details showing: (a) course title, (b) name of institution delivering the course, (c) qualification to be obtained, (d) duration of course, (e) tuition fees payable, and (f) confirmation of which applications were successful and which ones were not?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education.

1820

Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, I am handing over a schedule which the hon. Member will see contains the information requested. I am happy to hand them all over at the same time, provided they are not confused one for the other. If we want to save them for the next few questions, I think it is another two questions after this one, Mr Speaker. This is the one after this one, just in order to avoid the staff having to ... and there is one more. I just do not want to confuse my papers either. I do apologise, but I do not want to then not be able to answer. The other one comes later, so I think that is it for now.

1825

Answer to Q538/2020

Course Title	Name of Institution	Qualification	Duration (Yrs)	Tuition (E)	Outcome
ACCA	Kaplan	ACCA	3	8950	Successful
Accountancy	BPP	AAT	3	6450	Successful
BPTC	Uni of Law London	BPTC	2	3012	Successful
Building Services with Sustainable Energy	Brunel University London	MSc	5	5175	Successful
Business Management (Innovation & Enterprise)	The Open University	Ba (Hons)	3	3148	Successful
Childcare and Education	Online Learning College	Cache	1	6024	Successful
Childhood & Youth Studies	The Open University	Ba (Hons)	4	3012	Successful
Childhood & Youth Studies	The Open University	Ba (Hons)	5	830	Successful
CIM Digital Diploma in Marketing	Oxford Professional Edu Group	Diploma	1	3012	Successful
Combined STEM	The Open University	BSc (Hons)	6	6024	Unsuccessful
Data Science	The Open University	BSc (Hons)	6	340	Successful
Dementia Studies	University of Stirling	MSc	3	2640	Successful
Early Childhood Studies	The Open University	Ba (Hans)	3	1800	Successful
Education Studies	The Open University	Ba (Hons)	3	6024	Successful
English Literature & Creative Writing	The Open University	Ba (Hans)	2	1932	Successful
Environmental Health	University of Derby	MSc	3	3360	Successful
EPTI - Advanced personal trainer diploma	EPTI - Las Mesas Centro Deportivo	Diploma	1	2499	Unsuccessful
ILLM LPC	The University of Law	LPC	2	6273	Successful
ILLM LPC	University of Law	LPC		3000	Successful
Law	The Open University	LLB	3	4800	Successful
Law	The Open University	LLB	6	1274	Unsuccessful
Law	The Open University	LLB	6	3012	Successful
Law with Criminology	University of Essex	HNC	1	7300	Successful
Master of Business Administration	The Open University	MBA	2	1570	Successful
Masters of Business Administration	The Open University	MBA	2	4250	Successful
Mechanical Engineering	Unicourse (Edexcel)	HND	2	3380	Successful
Mechanical Engineering	Teeside University	HNC	1	1932	Successful
Med in SEND	Real Training (via Middlesex uni)	SEND	2	13165	Withdrawn
Medical Law & Ethics	University of Edinburgh	LLM	2	7280	Unsuccessful
NCRQ- Diploma in Applied Health & Safety Level 6	NCRQ	Diploma	1	4620	Successful
Non-Executive Director Diploma	Financial Times	Diploma	1	3012	Successful
Nutritional Therapy	Centre for Nutrition Education & Lifestyle Medicine	Ba (Hans)	4	3012	Successful
Open Degree	The Open University	Ba (Hons)	6	4518	Successful
Photography	Open College of the Arts	MA	3	3300	Successful
Podiatric Surgeon Training	Queen Margaret University		5	3012	Successful
Primary Education	The Open University	Ba (Hons)	4	6024	Successful
Professional Certificate of Competency in Mechanical Engineering	Engineering Inst of Technology	Certificate	1	3012	Successful
Professional Qualification Chartered Institute of Management Accountants	CIMA	CGMA	3	7280	Unsuccessful
Professional Qualification Chartered Institute of Management Accountants	The Open University	CIMA	3	21320	Successful
Psychology	The Open University	BSc (Hons)	3	6024	Successful
Psychology	University of Essex (online)	BSc (Hons)	3	6540	Successful
Qualified Electrician NVQ 3	Able Skills	NVQ	3	2475	Successful
Qualified Electrician NVQ 3	Able Skills	NVQ	3	2130	Successful
Special and Additional Learning Needs	University of East London	Master	2	5550	Successful
Sports Therapy UK	Sports Therapy UK	Level 3	1	1350	Successful

Q539/2020
Discretionary scholarships –
Details re 2020 applications

Clerk: The next question is Question 539. The Hon. E J Reyes.

1830 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can Government provide a list showing all applications received for discretionary scholarships starting in 2020, inclusive of details showing: (a) course title, (b) name of institution delivering the course, (c) qualification to be obtained, (d) duration of course, (e) tuition fees payable, (f) signifying which applications were successful in the initial granting of scholarships, (g) separately signifying which applications were eventually successful when a revised criterion was applied, and (h) details of which applications have not been successful?

1835

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education.

1840 **Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, the schedules which have just been handed over to the hon. Member contain the information requested.

Answer to Q539/2020

Course Title	Name of Institution	Qualification	Duration	Tuition (E)	Initial	Revised
A Level	City College of Plymouth	Level 3	1 Year	2900	Unsuccessful	Unsuccessful
AAT	University of Gibraltar	AAT	1 Year	1271	Successful	Successful
AAT	University of Gibraltar	AAT	1 Year	1271	Successful	Successful
AAT	University of Gibraltar	AAT	1 Year	2599	Successful	Successful
AAT	University of Gibraltar	MT	1 Year	1271	Successful	Successful
AAT	University of Gibraltar	AAT	2 Years	2599	Successful	Successful
AAT	University of Gibraltar	AAT	1 Year	1148	Successful	Successful
AAT	University of Gibraltar	AAT	1 Year	2599	Successful	Successful
Adult Nursing	University of Gibraltar	BSc	3 Years	9250	Successful	Successful
Adult Nursing	University of Gibraltar	BSc	3 Years	9250	Successful	Successful
Adult Nursing	University of Gibraltar	BSc	3 Years	9250	Successful	Successful
Adult Nursing	University of Gibraltar	BSc	3 Years	9250	Successful	Successful
Adult Nursing	University of Gibraltar	BSc	3 Years	9250	Unsuccessful	Unsuccessful
Adult Nursing	University of Gibraltar	BSc	3 Years	9250	Successful	Successful
Adult Nursing	University of Gibraltar	BSc (Hons)	3 Years	9250	Successful	Successful
Adult Nursing	University of Gibraltar	BSc (Hons)	3 Years	9250	Successful	Successful
Adult Nursing	University of Gibraltar	BSc	3 Years	9250	Successful	Successful
Architecture	University of Westminster	PgDip	1 Year	3600	Successful	Successful
Art	Camberwell college of arts	BA	1 Year	5420	Successful	Successful
Art & Design	Bournemouth	Foundation Diplc	1 Year	5421	Successful	Successful
Art & Design	University of Brighton	PGCE	1 Year	9250	Successful	Successful
Art 8 Design	Sheffield Hallam University	PGCE	1 Year	9250	Successful	Successful
Beginners Cut and Colour	London	Level 3	8 Months	13000	Unsuccessful	Unsuccessful
Biological and Medical Sciences	University of Liverpool	BSc	3 Years	9250	Successful	Successful
BPC	Leeds	BPC	1 Year	11750	Successful	Successful
Brands, Communication and Culture	London	MA	1 Year	8640	Unsuccessful	Successful
Business Administration	University of Gibraltar	BBA	3 Years	9250	Successful	Successful

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Business Administration	University of Gibraltar	BA	3 Years	14000	Successful	Successful
Commercial Photography for Fashion, Advertising and Editorial	Plymouth College of Arts	BA	3 Years	9250	Unsuccessful	Successful
Computational Arts	Goldsmiths	MA	2 Years	10450	Unsuccessful	Successful
Contemporary Performance	Manchester School of Theatre	MA	1 Year	9252	Successful	Successful
Criminology and the criminal justice system	Wolverhampton University	BSc	4 Years	9250	Unsuccessful	Successful
Culture. Creativity and Entrepreneurship	Leeds	MA	1 Year	10000	Successful	Successful
Dance and Performance	Manchester	BA	3 Years	8900	Unsuccessful	Successful
Design and Technology Secondary Education	Huddersfield	PGCE	1 Year	9250	Unsuccessful	Successful
Dietetics	Leeds	MSc	2 Years	9250	Successful	Successful
Digital Media Production	Sheffield Hallam University	BA	4 Years	9250	Successful	Successful
Electrical and Electronic Engineering	Sheffield Hallam University	BEng	4 Years	9250	Successful	Successful
Electronic Music Production	University of West London	BA	4 Years	9250	Unsuccessful	Successful
Elite Coaching Practice	The University of Central Lancaster	PGDip	2 Years	6900	Unsuccessful	Successful
Engineering Doctorate	Newcastle	EngD	5 years	0	Successful	Successful
Environmental Science & Management	York, UK.	MSc	1 Year	8040	Unsuccessful	Successful
Equine Management	Brackenhurst College	Level 3	2 Years	0	Unsuccessful	Unsuccessful
Field Town Planning & Sustainability	University of Gibraltar	PhD	6 Years	6100	Unsuccessful	Unsuccessful
Fine Art	Glasgow	MFA	2 Years	7920	Unsuccessful	Successful
Graduate Diploma in Law	London Bloomsbury	GDL	1 Year	12050	Successful	Successful
Graduate, Diploma in Law	University of Law. Bloomsbury C,	GDL	1 Year	12050	Successful	Successful
Graduate Diploma in Law	BPP London Waterloo	GDL	1 Year	11590	Successful	Successful
Graduate Diploma in Law	Cardiff University	GDL	1 Year	9450	Successful	Successful
Graduate Diploma in Law	University of Cardiff	GDL	1 Year	9450	Successful	Successful
Graduate Diploma in Law	University of Law, Leeds, UK	GDL	1 Year	9700	Successful	Successful
Graduate Diploma in Law	Manchester Metropolitan University	GDL	1 Year	1157	Successful	Successful
Heritage Erasure Mitigation Strategies	University of Gibraltar	PhD	6 years	6100	Unsuccessful	Successful
History	Anglia Ruskin University	BA	4 Years	9250	Successful	Successful
History	University of Kent	PhD	6 Years	2204	Unsuccessful	Successful
Implantology	Bristol	MSc	3 Years	5400	Unsuccessful	Successful
International Business with Language	University of Greenwich	BA	3 Years	9250	Successful	Successful
International Football Business	Buckinghamshire New University	BA (Hans)	3 Years	9250	Unsuccessful	Successful
International Human Resource Management	Manchester	PGDip	9 Months	7125	Successful	Successful
International Relations	University of Oxford	Mphil	2 Years	18455	Unsuccessful	Successful
Law	London	GDL	1 Year	12050	Successful	Successful
Law	Leeds	MA	1 Year	10950	Successful	Successful
Law	University College London	LLM	2 Years	8300	Unsuccessful	Successful
Law Conversion	London	GDL	1 Year	11590	Unsuccessful	Successful
Leadership and Management	University of Gibraltar	MA	2 Years	6250	Unsuccessful	Successful
Leadership and Management	University of Gibraltar	MA	2 Years	6250	Successful	Successful
Leadership and management	University of Gibraltar	MA	2 Years	6250	Successful	Successful
Learning and Teaching in the Creative Industries	Brighton	Masters	1 Year	9000	Unsuccessful	Successful

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Legal Practice Course	BPP University	LLB	1 Year	16200	Successful	Successful
Legal Practice Course	BPP University Bristol	LPC	1 Year	13130	Successful	Successful
Legal Practice Course	BPP University Law School - Lee	LPC	1 Year	12290	Unsuccessful	Successful
						Cont...
Legal Practice Course	BRISTOL	LPC	1 Year	13000	Successful	Successful
Legal Practice Course with Business and Management	University of Law, London Bloom	LPC with MSC	1 Year	17300	Successful	Successful
Level 3	Gibraltar College	Level 3	1 Year	1000	Unsuccessful	Unsuccessful
Maritime Operations Management	Liverpool	MSc	1 Year	8500	Unsuccessful	Successful
Maritime Science	University of Gibraltar	BSc (Hons)	3 Years	9750	Successful	Successful
Maritime Science with Engineer Cadetship Programme	University of Gibraltar	BSc	3 Years	9250	Successful	Successful
Marketing	Manchester Metropolitan University	MSc	2 Years	9250	Successful	Successful
Marketing	Manchester Metropolitan University	MSc	1 Year	9250	Successful	Successful
Master of Business Administration	University of Gibraltar	MBA	2 Years	7250	Successful	Successful
Master of Business Administration	University of Gibraltar	MBA	2 Years	7250	Successful	Successful
Master of Business Administration	University of Gibraltar	MBA	2 Years	7500	Successful	Successful
Master of Business Administration	University of Gibraltar	MBA	2 Years	7250	Successful	Successful
Master of Business Administration	University of Gibraltar	MBA	2 Years	7250	Successful	Successful
Master of Business Administration	University of Gibraltar	MBA	2 Years	7250	Successful	Successful
Master of Business Administration	University of Gibraltar	MBA	2 Years	7250	Successful	Successful
Master of Business Administration	University of Gibraltar	MBA	2 Years	7250	Unsuccessful	Unsuccessful
Master of Business Administration	University of Gibraltar	MBA	2 Years	7250	Successful	Successful
Materials for Environment and Climate	University College London	MSc	1 Year	11470	Unsuccessful	Successful
Mental Health	Liverpool	MA	1 Year	8100	Unsuccessful	Successful
Microblading Training	Marbella Beauty Academy	ABT Accredited	2 Days	1900	Successful	Successful
Nutrition and Dietetics	University of Chester	MSc	2 Years	9200	Successful	Successful
NVO Diploma	Liverpool	NVO Diploma	1 Year	994	Unsuccessful	Unsuccessful
Outdoor and Adventure Education	Chichester	BA (Hons)	4 Years	9250	Unsuccessful	Successful
Paediatric Dentistry	Eastman Dental Institute (UCL)	MSc	3 Years	6155	Successful	Successful
PGCE	St Mary's University, Twickenham	NOT	1 Year	9250	Successful	Successful
PGCE	Leeds City College	PGCE	1 Year	7950	Successful	Successful
PGCE	University of Gibraltar	PGCE	1 Year	9250	Successful	Successful
PGCE	University of Gibraltar	PGCE	1 Year	9250	Successful	Successful
PGCE	University of Gibraltar	PGCE	1 Year	9250	Successful	Successful
PGCE	University of Gibraltar	PGCE	1 Year	9250	Successful	Successful
PGCE	University of Gibraltar	PGCE	1 Year	9250	Successful	Successful
PGCE	University of Gibraltar	PGCE	1 Year	9250	Successful	Successful
PGCE	York St John University UK	PGCE	1 Year	9250	Successful	Successful
PGCE	University of Gibraltar	PGCE	1 Year	9250	Successful	Successful
PGCE	University of Gibraltar	PGCE	1 Year	9250	Successful	Successful

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PGCE	Nottingham	PGCert	1 Year	9250	Successful	Successful
PGCE	University of Gibraltar	PGCE	1 Year	9250	Successful	Successful
PGCE Primary Education	Northumbria University and Sunderland	PGCE	1 Year	9250	Successful	Successful
PGCE Primary Education	University of Gibraltar	PGCE	1 Year	9250	Successful	Successful
PGCE Primary Education	Roehampton University	PGCE	1 Year	9250	Successful	Successful
PGCE Primary Education	Canterbury Christ Church University	PGCE	1 Year	9250	Successful	Successful
PGCE Primary Education	Northumbria University and Sun	PGCE	1 Year	17300	Successful	Successful
PGCE Primary Education	Canterbury Christ Church University	PGCE	2 Years	9250	Successful	Successful
PGCE Secondary Education	Canterbury Christ Church University	PGCE	1 Year	9250	Unsuccessful	Successful
PGCE Secondary Education	University of Derby	PGCE	1 Year	9250	Successful	Successful
PGCE Secondary Education	Liverpool Hope University	PGCE	1 Year	9250	Successful	Successful
PGCE Secondary Education	Canterbury Christ Church University	PGCE	1 Year	9250	Successful	Successful
PGCE Secondary Education	Cardiff Metropolitan University	PGCE	1 Year	9000	Successful	Successful
PGCE Secondary Education	Chichester	PGCE	1 Year	9025	Successful	Successful
PGCE Secondary Education	Sheffield Hallam University	PGCE	1 Year	9250	Successful	Successful
PGCE Secondary Education	Reading	PGCE	1 Year	9000	Successful	Successful
Pharmaceutical Science	Anglia Ruskin University	PhD	4 Years	9407	Unsuccessful	Successful
PhD by Research	University of Gibraltar	PhD	6 years	6100	Successful	Successful
PhD by Research	University of Gibraltar	PhD	4 Years	6700	Successful	Successful
PhD by Research	University of Gibraltar	PhD	6 years	6100	Successful	Successful
PhD by Research	University of Gibraltar	PhD	6 Years	6100	Unsuccessful	Successful
PhD By Research	University of Gibraltar	PhD	6 years	6000	Unsuccessful	Successful
Philosophy	Reading	BA	3 Years	9250	Successful	Successful
Photography	Canterbury Christ Church University	BA Photography	4 Years	9910	Unsuccessful	Successful
Physician Associate Studies	University of East Anglia Norwich	MSc	2 Years	9900	Successful	Successful
Physiotherapy	University of Central Lancashire	MSc	2 Years	10.5	Successful	Successful
Popular Music Performance	Bristol UK	BMus (Hons)	3 Years	9250	Successful	Successful
Psychology of Education BPS	University of Bristol	MSc	1 Year	8500	Successful	Successful
Psychology with substance misuse	London	BSc	3 Years	9250	Unsuccessful	Successful
Public International Law	Leiden	LLM	1 Year	1946.11	Unsuccessful	Successful
Real Estate	South Bank University	PGDip	2 Years	4795	Successful	Successful
Science in Counselling	University of Lincoln	MSc	2 Years	9000	Unsuccessful	Successful
Secondary Initial Teacher Education Biology with Science	University of the West of England	OTS	1 Year	9250	Successful	Successful
Short Course	University of Gibraltar	C1	4 weeks	1120	Unsuccessful	Unsuccessful
Social and Cultural Anthropology	University College London	MSc	1 Year	13640	Successful	Successful
Sociology	Cambridge University	PhD	3 Years	8589	Unsuccessful	Successful
Sport & Exercise Psychology	Manchester Metropolitan University	MSc	1 Year	11950	Unsuccessful	Successful

Q540/2020
Distance learning scholarships –
Details re 2020 applications

Clerk: Question 540. The Hon. E J Reyes.

1845 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can Government provide a list showing all applications received for distance learning scholarships starting in 2020, inclusive of details showing: (a) course title, (b) name of institution delivering the course, (c) qualification to be obtained, (d) duration of course, (e) tuition fees payable, and (f) confirmation of which applications were successful and which ones were not?

1850

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education.

1855 **Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, the information is contained in the fourth schedules I have handed over to the hon. Member.

Answer to Q540/2020

Course Title	Name of Institution	Qualification	Duration (Yrs)	Tuition (£)	Outcome
ACCA	ACCA/BPP	Chartered Accountant	4	5000	Successful
Access To Nursing	Distance Learning Centre	HED	1	1250	Successful
Accounting	ACCA and Kaplan	ACCA	3	3584	Successful
Accounting	London School of Economics	Chartered Accountant	2	7000	Successful
Applied Educational Leadership	University of London	MA	3	12850	Successful
Archive Administration	Aberystwyth University	Diploma	5	8350	Successful
Business Management	The Open University	BA (Hons)	6	13932	Successful
Certificate in securities, advice & dealing	Personal finance society/Chartered Insurance Institute	Certificate	1	1068	Successful
Childhood and Youth Studies	The Open University	BA	6	18576	Successful
Childhood and Youth Studies	The Open University	BA	6	10576	Successful
Childhood and Youth Studies	The Open University	BA	3	18576	Successful
CILEx Graduate Fast-track Diploma	CILEx Law School	Chartered Legal Executive	1	3403	Successful
CILEx Level 3 Professional Diploma in Law and Practice	CILEx Law School	Chartered Legal Executive	3	6875	Unsuccessful
CIPD Advanced Diploma in HRM	MOL	CIPD	2	5995	Unsuccessful
CIPD Diploma	AVADO	Diploma	1	2580	Unsuccessful
Clinical Education	University of Edinburgh	MSc	3	14610	Successful
Clinical Education	University of Edinburgh	MSc	3	15352	Successful
Computing and IT with a second subject	The Open University	BSc	3	18576	Successful
Digital Marketing	Anglia Ruskin University	BSc	3	14100	Successful
Diploma in International Trust Management	STEP	STEP	2	35E10	Unsuccessful
Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership	Brighton School of Business and Management	Chartered Manager	1	1713	Successful
Discovering Arts and Humanities	The Open University	BA	4	18576	Successful
Early childhood	The Open University	BA (Hons)	6	18576	Successful
Education	Oxford Brookes	MSc	2	6525	Successful
Education	University College London	MA	2	9210	Successful
Education Studies	The Open University	BA	3	16576	Successful
Education Studies	The Open University	BA (Hons)	3	18576	Successful

Education Studies	The Open University	BA	6	18576	Succeeded
English Language and Literature	The Oven University	BA	3	18575	Successful
Graduate Diploma in Law	University of Law	GDL	2	9700	Successful
HNC Mechanical Engineering	Teeside University	HNC	4	3465	Successful
IT Computing and Business	The Open University	BSc	4	12000	Successful
ICA International Advanced Certificate in Anti Money Laundering	International Compliance Association	Advanced Certificate	1	1775	Unsuccessful
International Sports Management	UFCB	MSc	1	7500	Successful
Introduction to Responsible Gaming	University of Gibraltar	RCG	1	100	Unsuccessful
Languages	The Open University	BA (Hons)	3	16576	Successful
Law and Psychology	University of Essex	LLB	4	18500	Successful
Legal Practice Course	University of Law	LPC	2	11600	Successful
Management with Project Management	University of Lincoln	MSc	1	8880	Successful
Masters in Law in Medical Law	De Montfort University	LLB	2	8750	Successful
Mediation Training Course	Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors	RIGS Accredited Mediator	0	4140	Unsuccessful
Medical and Health Education	University of Manchester	Post Graduate Certificate	1	3600	Successful
Mental Health Psychological Therapies	Queen Mary University of London	MSc	2	9300	Successful
Nursing and Midwifery	Distance Learning Centre	HED	1	1286	Successful
Open Degree	The Open University	BSc	3	18576	Successful
Pain Management	University College London	MSc	2	7050	Successful
Primary Teaching	The Open University	BA	3	15576	Successful
Psychology	Northumbria University Newcastle	MSc	2	7170	Successful
Psychology	The Open University	BSc	6	18576	Successful
Psychology and Learning Disability	University of Portsmouth	MSc	2	9000	Successful
Psychology and Neuroscience of Mental Health MSc	King's College, London	MSc	2	17700	Successful
STEP	CTL International	TEP	5	4475	Unsuccessful

Q541/2020
Discretionary grants –
Details re change in criteria

Clerk: Question 541. The Hon. E J Reyes.

1860 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can the Minister for Education provide details in respect of the change in criteria which led to some applicants who were initially not granted discretionary grants later having the original decision rescinded and subsequently awarded a grant?

1865 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education.

Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, there was a review in criteria which resulted in masters, doctorates and equivalentents being supported for this year.

1870 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Does the Minister have any details on what yardstick was changed that made that difference?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, the decision was taken that applications for second/third degrees, masters and doctorates and their equivalent would be successful. This was a decision taken at the time by way of supporting our young people in furthering their studies. It is a decision which resulted in more students going over, and not fewer, and was greatly welcomed by the students and their families.

1880 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, is the Minister aware that there were a number of young people, around August or so, I guess, who were told that they had been unsuccessful for a period? It was quite a significant number – I do not know how many, he will have statistics, but they were told they were unsuccessful. Is he aware of that, and, if so, why were they initially told they were unsuccessful.

1885 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, because the criteria used changed during August.

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, I am trying to follow the hon. Member. He has said that people have been successful and it was agreed that they should go to the United Kingdom for these studies. We were approached by people who were told they were unsuccessful and were then subsequently told they were successful. So, how do the criteria change and evolve? Can he give us a bit more detail? Why is it that people were initially unsuccessful and then subsequently successful? If there was a change of criteria, what was the change of criteria? If there was not a change of criteria, was there a change in the way that the criteria were being applied, and for what reason?

1895 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, it is very simple. At the beginning of August – I do not recall exactly when – students were advised whether they had been successful or unsuccessful using the criteria that had been used at the time. During the course of August the criteria changed and expanded to include all those who had applied for masters, doctorates or equivalent. That was a change of criteria, therefore the applications were reassessed based on that, and some who had been unsuccessful were subsequently deemed successful because the criteria had changed.

1900 **Hon. K Azopardi:** So, just for clarity, given the answer, they are now applying, subsequently at the end of that process, a more expansive criterion – is that correct?

1905 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, for last year, the academic year we are in at the moment ... for applicants of last year they were more expansive criteria. That is not to say that the same will apply in subsequent years, but certainly for this last academic year it was more expansive and more inclusive.

1910 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, thank you very much for your indulgence.

The Hon. Minister knows that I wrote to him in relation to a number of those people who were unsuccessful, trying to plead their case for a reverse of the original decision, and in fact I think that all of them were, later on, successful.

1915 What I think we want to get to the bottom of, and not really for historical reasons, quite frankly, because everybody on this side would accept that actually what Gibraltar PLC does – of course the Government, but the Government does it on behalf of everybody – on behalf of students really is not mirrored, or certainly not that I am aware of, outside the jurisdiction. Gibraltar is very generous to our students. We want that, of course, to continue, because this is a good investment for Gibraltar.

1920

1925 Can he answer: why was there a restriction? What were the criteria? It looked like the Government had taken a blanket approach, that the Government was not going to be funding any master's degrees, and then it reversed the decision. Moving forwards, because really the concern is moving forwards, what are the criteria going to be for this year, so that people are aware of what is going to be the position of the Government in relation to applications that are now going to be made in the summer in relation to second degrees in particular?

1930 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, for one moment I thought the hon. Member was going to thank me for having been able to allow more students to go over. He has stopped short of that, but I am sure he will do that later.

Hon. D A Feetham: Do you want me to thank you? I will thank you.

1935 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** No, there is no need at all. I said it in the humour that our relationship, I think, sustains.

Clearly, we are talking about students who, until this Government got into office, would not have been given grants at all, because it was this Government that decided to support a second degree. That point clearly has to be made.

1940 The criterion at the start of the process last year was, as has been alluded to, more restrictive. It analysed more the nature of the subject, the relevance to the subject that had been done by a particular student before and whether that student had perhaps had some other additional degree other than a first degree, so it was quite complex and quite selective. We discussed it and thought there was enough merit and it was possible at the time to expand the criteria and to open it to all those who had been successful in obtaining places for masters, doctorates and equivalents.
1945 That was a decision taken at the time.

Every year the criteria are reviewed. This year they may not be identical. Clearly, we have to look at all sorts of elements in deciding the criteria, but that is what happened at the time, and I am glad to say that a lot more students have been able to go and are currently pursuing their studies outside Gibraltar, and I am very glad that we were able to do that.

1950

Mr Speaker: We need to move on. I am sorry, I beg your pardon – the hon. Member responsible for education.

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

1955 A couple of minor things. The Minister clarified that those who are doing postgraduate, in the review of their application had, luckily for them, moved from being unsuccessful to successful, yet I notice in the schedule in the answer to Question 539 there was an application for a discretionary scholarship to do a PhD at the University of Gibraltar – so, that is at the doctorate level – and the unsuccessful status remains unsuccessful. That does not tally 100% with what the Minister has said. It could be a typographical error.
1960

And whilst we are asking, Mr Speaker – perhaps if the Minister does not have it now, he could look at it – when I asked for the course title, one of the course titles says 'Level 3'. Level 3 is a qualification to be attained, not a course title. Another course title in the schedule is NVQ Diploma. That is a qualification to be attained, not a course title. And on one of the occasions where the student doing a doctorate in engineering is successful, tuition cost is put down as zero. That is certainly a matter that needs to be checked, because it would be the first time in history that a student needs to apply for a scholarship if the funding he is asking for is zero. But I appreciate, Mr Speaker, not to delay your time, the Minister can look at it in his own time, in tranquil ... check and then get back to us at another stage.
1965

1970

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, clearly I have to go back. I have to talk to the civil servants who have worked very hard in providing all this extensive data for the benefit of the Member

1975 opposite, but the particular details, whether they are mistypes or maybe somebody withdrew, I do not have the detail of those two or three cases, but I undertake to look into them. Perhaps, Mr Speaker, behind your chair he would be able to point out exactly where those are or send me some kind of communication during the course of tomorrow, and I will revert as soon as I can.

Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Next question, please.

Q542/2020

**Tuition fees and scholarship grants –
Payments and reason for delays**

1980 **Clerk:** Question 542. The Hon. E J Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Can the Minister for Education confirm that all tuition fees and scholarship grants for the academic year 2020-21 have now been processed, and also provide explanations as to why many delays were experienced this year in respect of processing the payment of these?

1985

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education.

1990 **Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, all students who have submitted the relevant and completed documentation with respect to either their initial application or their continuation of studies are now in receipt of the maintenance grant due to date. All universities that have invoiced the Department of Education in respect of tuition fees for a Gibraltar scholarship award holder have also been processed.

1995

There were delays in the paying of maintenance grants last year, primarily due to COVID, which resulted in the window for scholarships opening later than usual. Tuition fees are paid upon receipt of relevant invoices from the university, and those received will be paid promptly.

2000 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, these were questions that were set last October. The Minister, very patiently, gave me his time and we had direct communication.

Am I right in assuming from what the Minister has said that sometimes it is just the bureaucracy, the paperwork and the universities submitting the invoices and the students themselves informing the appropriate authority? Is that the nature of the problem? And, if it is, we can leave it at that because we can just provide better guidelines for future applicants?

2005

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Yes, indeed, Mr Speaker. Sometimes the universities will invoice the Department directly, and that is the best and quickest way. Sometimes they will do it through the student. The student may then take time or forget, or not pass on the invoice to the Department, and that can lead to delays and sometimes anxiety when the student had not realised that it was for them to forward it. Usually, we pick them up. As the hon. Member says, we were in contact quite a number of times last autumn trying to solve these problems, but I am glad to say that my latest information is that we are up to date.

2010

Q543-44/2020
Scholarships for uncompleted courses –
Outstanding debts

Clerk: Question 543. The Hon. E J Reyes.

2015 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can Government provide updated details of repayments outstanding from pupils who have not completed any courses for which they were granted scholarships, indicating the dates from which such repayments were due, frequency and amounts to be paid, together with the date by when individuals' repayments are expected to be completed?

2020 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education.

2025 **Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 544, which will have a schedule.

Clerk: Question 544. The Hon. E J Reyes.

2030 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can Government provide updated details of the grand total debt outstanding from pupils who have not completed any courses for which they were granted scholarships, together with details of what actions are being taken against debtors who are failing to make repayments as required by their contracts?

2035 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education.

Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, the information requested is set out in the schedule that has just gone across the floor.

2040 Debtors who are failing to make repayments are initially chased by the Department. When they do not respond, they are referred to the Central Arrears Unit.

Answer to Q544/2020

			Debt Under Agreement	Amount owed	Currently Paying	Next Payment Due	Date Expected to complete	Referred to CAU *
1989/90	Student	1	No	£788.99	No	Feb-06		yes
1990/91	Student	2	No	£164.00	No	Mar-16		
1996/97	Student	3	Yes	£1,046.59	Yes	Sep-20	Mar-25	
1997/98	Student	4	No	£1,614.80	No	Dec-09		yes
1997/98	Student	5	yes	£481.60	Yes	Sep-20	Aug-22	
1998/99	Student	6	Yes	£1,077.50	Yes	Sep-20	Apr-22	
1999/00	Student	7	No	£240.39	no	Aug-20	Oct-20	
1999/00	Student	8	No	£1,856.61	No	Aug-19		yes
2000/01	Student	9	No	£5,790.20	No	Oct-03		yes
2000/01	Student	10	Yes	£6,637.81	Yes	Jun-20	Feb-29	
2000/01	Student	11	Yes	£1,749.60	Yes	Sep-20	May-40	
2000/01	Student	12	No	£2,312.59	Yes	Sep-20	May-24	
2000/01	Student	13	Yes	£3,807.03	Yes	Sep-20	May-36	
2000/01	Student	14	No	£2,110.40	No	Feb-20	Dec-23	yes
2000/01	Student	15	No	£6,007.40	No			yes
2000/01	Student	16	No	£9,568.19	No	Jun-06		yes
2000/01	Student	17	No	£532.80	No	Apr-10		yes
2002/03	Student	18	No	£4,342.81	Yes	Sep-20	Oct-25	
2002/03	Student	19	No	£823.80	No	Jul-09		yes
2002/03	Student	20	No	£1,782.41	No			yes
2002/03	Student	21	No	£2,873.69	No	Jan-12		yes
2002/03	Student	22	No	£1,573.80	No	Jan-06		yes
2002/03	Student	23	No	£593.13	No	May-04		yes
2002/03	Student	24	No	£1,910.19	Yes	Sep-20	Oct-23	
2002/03	Student	25	Yes	£2,043.14	Yes	Sep-20	Apr-22	
2003/04	Student	26	No	£11,540.82	No			yes
2004/05	Student	27	No	£4,211.41	No	Mar-10		yes
2004/05	Student	28	No	£70.00	No	Jul-11		yes
2004/05	Student	29	Yes	£4,472.41	No			yes
2005/06	Student	30	Yes	£2,147.41	No	Oct-18		yes
2005/06	Student	31	No	£8,411.33	No	Apr-06		yes
2005/06	Student	32	Yes	£418.07	Yes	Sep-20	Jul-22	
2005/06	Student	33	No	£5,149.40	No	Aug-12		yes
2005/06	Student	34	No	£4,937.41	No			yes
2005/06	Student	35	Yes	£2,554.41	Yes	Sep-20	Oct-24	
2006/07	Student	36	No	£2,130.73	No	Jul-20		yes
2006/07	Student	37	Yes	£472.40	NO	Jun-20		
2006/07	Student	38	No	£5,526.60	No	Jul-08		yes
2006/07	Student	39	No	£4,097.40	No	Nov-09		yes
2006/07	Student	40	No	£2,482.36	Yes	Jul-20	Sep-22	
2007/08	Student	41	Yes	£2,130.94	Yes	Jul-20	Mar-22	
2007/08	Student	42	No	£1,715.99	NO	Jun-20		
2007/08	Student	43	Yes	£1,335.37	No	Oct-19		
2008/09	Student	44	No	£3,722.26	Yes	Sep-20	Aug-33	
2008/09	Student	45	No	£7,113.81	No	May-12		yes
2008/09	Student	46	Yes	£208.57	No	Aug-17		yes
2008/09	Student	47	Yes	£1,355.39	No			yes
2008/09	Student	48	Yes	£2,766.72	Yes	Sep-20	Mar-22	
2008/09	Student	49	Yes	£2,143.60	Yes	Sep-20	Apr-24	
2009/10	Student	50	Yes	£2,841.80	Yes	Sep-20	Sep-23	
2009/10	Student	51	Yes	£2,982.46	Yes	Sep-20	Feb-33	
2009/10	Student	52	Yes	£2,032.06	No	Nov-18		yes
2009/10	Student	53	No	£660.24	Yes	Sep-20	Mar-21	
2010/11	Student	54	Yes	£4,696.86	Yes	Sep-20	May-30	
2010/11	Student	55	Yes	£3,581.20	Yes	Sep-20	Feb-28	
2010/11	Student	56	Yes	£5,552.81	Yes	Sep-20	Apr-25	
2010/11	Student	57	Yes	£2,114.79	Yes	Sep-20	Aug-25	
2010/11	Student	58	No	£1,190.14	Yes	Sep-20	Jul-22	
2010/11	Student	59	No	£1,199.26	Yes	Sep-20	Mar-22	
2010/11	Student	60	Yes	£849.27	Yes	Sep-20	Oct-21	
2010/11	Student	61	No	£620.06	No	May-15		yes
2010/11	Student	62	No	£1,514.26	Yes	Sep-20	Feb-27	
2010/11	Student	63	Yes	£3,833.46	Yes	Sep-20	Aug-36	
2011/12	Student	64	No	£5,190.81	Yes	Sep-20	Jul-35	
2011/12	Student	65	Yes	£1,200.00	Yes	Sep-20	Aug-22	
2011/12	Student	66	No	£2,312.13	Yes	Sep-20	Mar-30	

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2011/12	Student	67	Yes	£5,530.80	YES	Sep-20	Mar-25	yes
2011/12	Student	68	Yes	£1,478.81	Yes	Sep-20	May-21	
2011/12	Student	69	No	£6,336.41	Yes	Sep-20	Mar-31	
2011/12	Student	70	Yes	£3,530.81	Yes	Sep-20	Jun-30	
2011/12	Student	71	No	£5,151.80	Yes	Sep-20	Mar-29	
2011/12	Student	72	Yes	£8,569.80	no	Mar-20	Aug-34	yes
2011/12	Student	73	Yes	£3,679.79	Yes	Sep-20	Sep-26	
2011/12	Student	74	Yes	£4,792.10	Yes	Sep-20	Aug-40	
2011/12	Student	75	Yes	£8,799.66	No	Jun-19		
2012/13	Student	76	No	£2,710.00	Yes	Sep-20	Mar-25	
2013/14	Student	77	Yes	£6,178.93	Yes	Jul-20	May-31	
2013/14	Student	78	Yes	£7,285.29	Yes	Sep-20	Feb-51	
2013/14	Student	79	Yes	£570.00	Yes	Sep-20	Feb-22	
2014/15	Student	80	Yes	£6,433.81	Yes	Sep-20	Oct-25	
2014/15	Student	81	Yes	£3,348.55	Yes	Sep-20	Jul-34	
2014/15	Student	82	Yes	£8,282.38	yes	May-20	Jul-43	
2014/15	Student	83	No	£1,885.80	Yes	Sep-20	Aug-23	
2015/16	Student	84	Yes	£1,509.80	Yes	Sep-20	Apr-23	
2015/16	Student	85	Yes	£9,205.80	No	Sep-20		
2015/16	Student	86	Yes	£511.20	Yes	Sep-20	Mar-21	
2015/16	Student	87	Yes	£5,915.81	No			yes
2015/16	Student	88	Yes	£11,017.80	Yes	Sep-20	Sep-38	
2015/16	Student	89	Yes	£133,375.40	Yes	Sep-20	Jun-33	
2015/16	Student	90	Yes	£3,165.80	No			yes
2016/17	Student	91	Yes	£13,270.20	Yes	Sep-20	May-34	
2016/17	Student	92	Yes	£2,422.16	YES	Sep-20	Jan-25	yes
2016/17	Student	93	Yes	£313.00	No	Sep-17		yes
2016/17	Student	94	Yes	£798.00	Yes	Sep-20	Sep-22	
2016/17	Student	95	Yes	£6,676.60	Yes	Sep-20	Mar-26	
2016/17	Student	96	Yes	£1,725.00	Yes	Sep-20	Aug-27	
2016/17	Student	97	Yes	£10,989.80	Yes	Sep-20	Oct-38	
2016/17	Student	98	Yes	£12,540.00	Yes	Sep-20	May-21	
2016/17	Student	99	No	£8,875.41	Yes	Sep-20	Jun-25	
2016/17	Student	100	Yes	£1,548.00	No	Oct-19		
2016/17	Student	101	Yes	£703.00	No	Jun-17		yes

2016/17	Student	102	Yes	£3,115.80	Yes	Sep-20	Sep-25	
2016/17	Student	103	NO	£8,027.60	No	Dec-18		yes
2016/17	Student	104	Yes	£599.00	Yes	Sep-20	Jul-21	
2016/17	Student	105	Yes	£1,885.00	Yes	Sep-20	Oct-25	
2016/17	Student	106	Yes	£13,896.80	No			yes
2016/17	Student	107	Yes	£3,000.00	Yes	Sep-20	Aug-22	
2016/17	Student	108	Yes	£1,180.00	No	Feb-19		
2016/17	Student	109	Yes	£12,064.80	Yes	Sep-20	Sep-30	
2016/17	Student	110	yes	£1,550.00	No	Jan-20	Jan-23	
2016/17	Student	111	Yes	£1,185.17	Yes	Sep-20	May-21	
2017/18	Student	112	Yes	£150.00	Yes	Sep-20	Oct-20	
2017/18	Student	113	Yes	£14,185.80	Yes	Sep-20	May-32	
2017/18	Student	114	Yes	£12,281.80	Yes	Aug-20	Nov-29	
2017/18	Student	115	Yes	£6,170.60	Yes	Aug-20	Mar-22	
2017/18	Student	116	Yes	£4,704.80	Yes	Sep-20	Jun-28	
2017/18	Student	117	Yes	£2,343.00	Yes	Sep-20	Jun-24	
2017/18	Student	118	Yes	£16,159.80	No	Aug-17		yes
2017/18	Student	119	Yes	£12,225.80	Yes	Sep-20	Feb-30	
2017/18	Student	120	Yes	£2,310.00	Yes	Sep-20	Sep-27	
2017/18	Student	121	Yes	£15,780.40	No			yes
2017/18	Student	122	Yes	£1,427.60	Yes	Sep-20	Mar-22	
2017/18	Student	123	Yes	£5,350.00	NO	Jun-20		
2017/18	Student	124	Yes	£1,862.80	YES	Aug-20	Oct-25	
2017/18	Student	125	Yes	£9,149.80	No			yes
2017/18	Student	126	Yes	£4,534.00	Yes	Sep-20	Jun-39	
2017/18	Student	127	Yes	£12,858.80	Yes	Sep-20	Mar-31	
2017/18	Student	128	Yes	£222.00	Yes	Sep-20	May-21	
2017/18	Student	129	Yes	£6,366.40	No	Apr-20	Jun-25	
2017/18	Student	130	Yes	£3,826.30	yes	Sep-20	Sep-23	
2017/18	Student	131	Yes	£700.00	Yes	Sep-20	Oct-21	
2017/18	Student	132	Yes	£11,279.40	Yes	Sep-20	May-39	
2017/18	Student	133	Yes	£1,067.30	Yes	Sep-20	Apr-22	
2017/18	Student	134	No	£15,765.80	No			yes
2017/18	Student	135	Yes	£14,134.80	Yes	Jun-20	Mar-37	
2017/18	Student	136	No	£900.00	YES	Sep-20	Jun-21	

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2018/19	Student	137	Yes	£8,484.80	Yes	Sep-20	Feb-35
2018/19	Student	138	Yes	£2,531.55	Yes	Sep-20	Aug-22
2018/19	Student	139	Yes	£1,782.00	Yes	Sep-20	Jul-23
2018/19	Student	140	Yes	£2,902.80	Yes	Sep-20	Feb-23
2018/19	Student	141	Yes	£13,714.80	Yes	Sep-20	Mar-32
2018/19	Student	142	Yes	£15,897.80	No		
2018/19	Student	143	Yes	£3,721.30	Yes	Sep-20	Aug-23
2018/19	Student	144	Yes	£14,325.60	Yes	Sep-20	Jul-32
2018/19	Student	145	Yes	£15,004.80	no	Dec-19	Jan-41
2018/19	Student	146	No	£16,688.20	NO	Apr-20	
2018/19	Student	147	Yes	£8,918.80	no	Oct-19	Aug-34
2018/19	Student	148	Yes	£15,964.80	No		
2018/19	Student	149	Yes	£8,159.40	Yes	Sep-20	Feb-23
2019/20	Student	150	Yes	£14,475.80	Yes	Sep-20	Aug-32
2019/20	Student	151	No	£9,400.00	No		
2019/20	Student	152	Yes	£20,819.60	No		
2019/20	Student	153	Yes	£14,714.80	No		
2019/20	Student	154	Yes	£3,726.46	Yes	May-20	Sep-23
2019/20	Student	155	Yes	£4,731.43	Yes	Sep-20	Sep-24
2019/20	Student	156	Yes	£4,230.30	Yes	Sep-20	May-22
2019/20	Student	157	Yes	£5,664.80	Yes	Sep-20	Apr-25
2019/20	Student	158	Yes	£6,055.00	Yes	Sep-20	Mar-24
2019/20	Student	159	Yes	£13,815.80	Yes	Sep-20	Sep-31
2019/20	Student	160	Yes	£15,264.80	Yes	Sep-20	Jul-33
2019/20	Student	161	No	£159,104.80	No		
2019/20	Student	162	Yes	£9,666.80	Yes	Sep-20	Apr-24
2019/20	Student	163	Yes	£2,036.71	No	Jul-20	
2019/20	Student	164	Yes	£570.00	Yes	Sep-20	Dec-21
2019/20	Student	165	Yes	£15,864.80	No		
2019/20	Student	166	Yes	£6,568.00	No		
2019/20	Student	167	Yes	£7,270.60	Yes	Sep-20	Aug-24
2019/20	Student	168	Yes	£700.00	Yes	Jun-20	Dec-22
2019/20	Student	169	Yes	£6,001.00	NO		
2019/20	Student	170	Yes	£16,189.80	No		
2019/20	Student	171	Yes	£13,756.80	Yes	Sep-20	Feb-32
2019/20	Student	172	Yes	£3,145.19	No	Oct-19	
2019/20	Student	173	Yes	£13,969.46	Yes	Sep-20	Nov-31
2019/20	Student	174	Yes	£80.00	YES	Sep-20	Sep-20
2019/20	Student	175	Yes	£15,649.80	Yes	Sep-20	Dec-33
2019/20	Student	176	Yes	£17,044.80	No		
2019/20	Student	177	Yes	£14,525.80	Yes	Sep-20	Aug-28
2019/20	Student	178	No	£15,148.80	No		
2019/20	Student	179	No	£888.00	No		
2019/20	Student	180	No	£1,660.00	No		
2019/20	Student	181	No	£2,370.54	No		
2019/20	Student	182	No	£3,120.00	No		
2019/20	Student	183	No	£890.00	No		
2019/20	Student	184	Yes	£5,124.00	Yes	Sep-20	Nov-40
2019/20	Student	185	Yes	£17,848.80	No		

GRAND TOTAL £1,306,794.52

* those students who have not been referred to the Central Arrears Unit are being chased up by the Department of Education.

2045 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, thank you for the schedule. I see that the Minister has identified those that have been referred to the Central Arrears Unit; however, there are a couple of things.

2050 There are cases where a student is not paying and a payment was due in March 2016, but in the box it does not say it has been referred to the Central Arrears Unit. Other than the Central Arrears Unit chasing it up with the student, is it not the case that students are asked to have a guarantor who comes and signs the scholarship contract with them? Can the Minister confirm that the Central Arrears Unit will also be chasing up the guarantor, who has a legal liability as well for this outstanding debt?

2055 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Yes, indeed, Mr Speaker, as far as that particular entry is concerned, as the hon. Member will have seen, we have been looking at hundreds of entries in five or six schedules, but if there is a concern about any particular one, I would be very happy to talk to the Department and get clarification. I am sure they have the answers.

Q545/2020
Schools' academic calendar 2020-21
Plans to adjust

Clerk: Question 545. The Hon. E J Reyes.

2060

Hon. E J Reyes: Can the Minister for Education indicate if our schools have considered adjusting their academic calendars for 2020-21 as a result of the consequences brought about due to COVID-19 pandemic measures resulting in the closure of schools; and, if so, what could these changes conceivably be?

2065

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education.

2070

Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, there are no plans to adjust the 2020-21 academic calendar at this point in time.

2075

Hon. E J Reyes: Mr Speaker, when this question was posed in October there was a lot happening in the UK. I will take that into consideration when we come to the next Question, Question 546, because things have changed a lot in those five months, but I still want to proceed with Question 546.

Q546/2020
2021 public examinations –
Effect of changes announced in UK

Clerk: Question 546. The Hon. E J Reyes.

2080

Hon. E J Reyes: Can the Minister for Education provide details of how recent changes announced in the United Kingdom in respect of 2021 spring/summer public examinations will affect local students preparing for these in our educational establishments, as well as those who desire to sit these exams as private candidates?

2085

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education.

2090

Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Yes, Mr Speaker, an interesting subject indeed, and I am grateful to the Member opposite for the question.

2095

The UK government announced that the summer session of GCSEs, AS- and A-level examinations would not run as had been expected prior to the school closures. Shortly after this initial announcement the UK government confirmed that grades for students due to sit these exams would be awarded using teacher assessments. Subsequently, the UK government opened a consultation process on these particular qualifications and on their proposals for the awarding of teacher assessments. This consultation process ended at the end of January and details on how teacher assessments will be awarded were published at the end of February.

Local students who were due to sit GCSEs, AS- or A-level exams in schools will be impacted by the changes made by the UK government, as all the public examinations completed by local students come under the governance of Ofqual, the official body which regulates qualifications,

2100 examinations and assessments in England. The Department of Education is now actively engaged
with its examination centres to ensure that the teacher assessments awarded to pupils this
summer are a fair and accurate reflection of their ability. Teachers will continue to support these
students on their learning journey in all subject areas, with teaching set to continue up to and
including 26th May. After this point teacher assessed grades will need to be submitted for each
2105 and every student who would have typically been entered for an examination during this summer
examination season.

It is important to note that some awarding bodies and some qualifications have not yet
indicated that they are cancelling their examination sessions in the summer. For example, one of
the boards responsible for iGCSE examinations has confirmed that it still plans to run its
2110 examination session in the summer. If the public health situation allows us to run these exam
sessions, through consultation with their schools, students following these particular
qualifications may still have an opportunity to sit their scheduled exams.

Hon. E J Reyes: Thank you, Mr Speaker, it is about as much of an update as one can get in
2115 respect of students who are in school. However, I did end my question by asking what would
happen to those who desire to sit exams as private candidates if they have not been receiving
tuition in schools and therefore they cannot have a teacher assessment. Is the Department of
Education aware of any provision being made for them?

2120 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, in those subjects where, as we have seen, there will be some
bodies were examinations will be sat, there will be no problem. In the case of private students,
this will be more complicated because unless they have been following courses ... For example,
adult education in the Gibraltar College will offer the opportunity for assessment, but otherwise,
clearly, private individuals who are sitting exams in a private capacity may be impacted. The
2125 Department of Education would obviously be able to assist any such student and contact the
examination boards, who may have specific advice, but there are a variety of examination boards
and no two will be following the same process.

Q576/2020

Chatham Counterguard toilets – Construction and maintenance costs

Clerk: We now turn to Question 576, and the questioner is the Hon. D J Bossino.

2130 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Government confirm the exact cost of the construction of the toilets
at Chatham Counterguard, the continuing maintenance to include security provided, and who is
responsible for those costs?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and
2135 Education.

**Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E
Cortes):** Mr Speaker, these toilets were installed because of a large number of complaints from
patrons in the area as to the inadequacy of the toilet facilities originally provided at Chatham
2140 Counterguard.

The total costs summed up to £84,206.58 for the 10 toilets, which compares very favourably
to £157,183.93 per toilet which the Members installed when they were in office. Just for the sake
of mathematical clarity, one of their toilets cost £157,183, and one of ours cost £8,420, which is

2145 not bad value for money. In fact, I have not included a number of urinals also. That is to say their toilets cost just under 20 times more than ours.

The cleaning of the toilets is part of the work done by Britannia in cleaning Chatham Counterguard and the adjacent parking area at a total of £1,537 per week.

2150 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, I cannot believe that a question on toilets has resulted in such a partisan answer from the hon. Member. (*Interjection by Hon. Prof. J E Cortes*) I really am disappointed in him.

Has he addressed the issue of security in his answer? If he has, I do apologise. Has he addressed in his answer the cost of security provided? I do not think he has, but he may have done and I may have missed it.

2155 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** No, Mr Speaker, I have referred to the cleaning, not to security. There is no specific security for the toilets, other than during the time of COVID I believe that there was security, or there was some presence there in order to control access, but there is not any specific security provided by the Government for the area.

2160 **Hon. D J Bossino:** I am not sure what the agreements with the various businesses provide, but is it something which the Government may, in the future, when hopefully things stabilise, wish to recoup from them in terms of recovery of those moneys, given that it is a service which they will obviously use for their own patrons?

2165 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, it is something that can always be considered. If I recall correctly, as far as the cleaning goes, there was no significant increase, because Britannia was already cleaning the area and this was a relatively small add-on. I would have to check the figures, but certainly it is something that is worth considering in order to reduce costs to the Government.

2170 **Hon. D J Bossino:** In breach of your ruling, Mr Speaker, if I may have just one more question – it is not of public interest, but does he have the information with regard to the cost of the security that was provided, as he said, during the height of the COVID pandemic?

2175 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** No, Mr Speaker, I would need notice of that detail – and I am happy to look into it.

Q577/2020
***El Calpense* –**
Purchase by Government

Clerk: Question 577. The Hon. D J Bossino.

2180 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Minister for Heritage state whether the Government has purchased, is in negotiations or has an intention to purchase the collection of *El Calpense* held by the Marrache family; and, if so, at what price?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education.

2185 **Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** My apologies, Mr Speaker, I passed it over and found myself facing Question 578. The Government purchased the *El Calpense* collection for the sum of £50,000.

2190 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Is it going to be made available to the public, or is that already the case?
Where is it currently housed for the public to see, or where is it intended to House it for the public
to see?

2195 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, this was arranged through the Garrison Library, which
negotiated the process. It is housed in the Garrison Library and will be accessible to the public.
They are in the process of digitising it, and it is expected to be fully available in digital form during
the course of this year.

Q578/2020
Cross of Sacrifice –
Listed status

Clerk: Question 578. The Hon. D J Bossino.

2200 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Minister for Heritage state whether the Government has any
intention of granting listed status to the Cross of Sacrifice?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and
Education.

2205 **Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E**
Cortes): Mr Speaker, this is under consideration.

2210 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Minister provide us with an answer as to when he thinks that a
conclusion will be arrived at? I am conscious that the intention is to move the Cross of Sacrifice
from its current location to the Midtown area, and it would be, I think, appropriate in those
circumstances to try to get to the Cross of Sacrifice should the Government decide to either list it
before then or shortly thereafter.

2215 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, the move of the Cross of Sacrifice is still under discussion,
but regardless of that, the Heritage and Antiquities Advisory Council has raised the possibility of
the Cross of Sacrifice and a number of monuments being listed. It is currently being discussed and
then obviously the Government will have to take a view as to whether it wants to schedule any or
all of the monuments and buildings under discussion. It should not be a long process. I think we
are talking about months.

2220 **Hon. D J Bossino:** He says that the relocation of the monument is still under discussion – I
thought that a firm decision had already been made. Am I incorrect in that thinking?

2225 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, there are still final discussions to be had with the War Graves
Commission. There have been a number of exchanges, but they are not yet concluded.

2230 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Can I just ask on that, just pulling the thread from the two last answers that
he has given my hon. colleague, if the relocation is under consideration and there are talks with
the British War Graves Commission, and indeed so is the listing of the monument, how is the
monument going to be moved if it is listed? (*Interjection*)

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Under licence from the Minister for Heritage, provided the Advisory Council recommends it and the Minister considers that it can be done, but I do not think there is a conflict between one and the other.

2235

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q579-80/2020

**Refurbishment of Northern Defences –
Heritage reports conducted; inventory of items recovered from site**

Clerk: Question 579. The Hon. D J Bossino.

2240

Hon. D J Bossino: Can the Minister for Heritage state whether heritage reports were conducted in relation to the refurbishment of the Northern Defences to include desk-based assessments and archaeological monitoring reports?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education.

2245

Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 580.

Clerk: Question 580. The Hon. D J Bossino.

2250

Hon. D J Bossino: Can the Minister for Heritage state whether an inventory of any items that may have been recovered from the site of the Northern Defences has been kept?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education.

2255

Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, yes, numerous heritage reports have been and continue to be conducted in relation to clearing works at the Northern Defences. These have proved to be extremely useful and have influenced, even guided, our progress on site. Amongst these studies, but not limited to, has been the three-dimensional digitised survey of the Kings and Queens Galleries, which is proving to be extremely useful.

2260

In relation to an inventory of the items recovered, the answer is yes, sir.

2265

Hon. D J Bossino: Mr Speaker, in relation to Question 579, which dealt with the heritage reports, did any of these include any desk-based assessments? Also, given that the answer is yes, that these reports were conducted, would these be available for public viewing and disclosable?

2270

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, there were desk-based reports. I am looking at the information here, and certainly the reports will be available. The Ministry of Heritage website is currently nearing conclusion, and a number of such reports may be available there. Certainly they make interesting reading, and the inventory as well, which is partly kept by the Heritage Trust, who were involved at the time, is also something that can be made available.

2275

Hon. D J Bossino: Mr Speaker, keeping to my tally of two, as there were two questions on the Order Paper, when ...? I am grateful for the answer which he pre-empted in relation to

Question 580, which dealt with the inventory. I think he did say that information would also be made available online.

2280 In relation specifically to the heritage reports, if I may, he says a number of such reports will be made available. Why a number? That, for me, suggests that the language is limiting in nature, and basically the question I am asking is whether he can commit to providing a disclosure of all the reports which have been made in relation to that particular site.

2285 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, unless there is anything particularly sensitive which cannot be made available – and I suspect there is not anything that is going to be, for example, threatening the safety or the airfield which it overlooks; I am sure there is nothing like that at all – there is no reason why these reports should not all be made available.

2290 The Member opposite will know that this project is very ably led by my friend and colleague the Deputy Chief Minister, who has wide knowledge of the subject and with whom I work very closely, and any reports that have been presented either to him or to me which do not have that kind of sensitive information – and I repeat I do not expect there is any – will clearly be available and they will enrich our knowledge of heritage.

2295 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Just one final question, Mr Speaker. He attaches the disclosure of these reports to the concluding of the projects in relation to the website. Is it within the realms of possibility to have these reports made available by the Ministry, even if people can go and view them if they wanted to, rather than wait for disclosure – basically make it dependent on the website being up and running?

2300 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** The launch of the website is very close, but if anybody were interested in this report there would be no problem in making it available – all these reports. Very often this is done through the Heritage Trust. The Heritage Trust may be approached and they may get in touch with us. They may well have a copy of some of the reports themselves, they may have been shared in the process, but specific details of each one I do not have to hand.

Q581/2020
Tourist sites –
Plans to refurbish

2305 **Clerk:** Question 581. The Hon. D J Bossino.

2310 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Minister for Tourism – well, in this case Environment perhaps – state whether the Government has any plans to refurbish Gibraltar’s tourist sites, particularly those situated in the Upper Rock?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education.

2315 **Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, the sites on the Upper Rock, as I think I have mentioned to the hon. Member, are now run by the Department of Environment and Heritage, and the Minister for Tourism concentrates on marketing what we provide. We hope to keep them to a high enough standard so that he can very successfully market them in future.

2320 The Government is continually refurbishing tourist sites within and outside the Upper Rock. We are the only Government to have done so consistently and to have opened new sites,

something that the hon. Member might want to consider welcoming. We have an annual maintenance programme that covers all minor works.

2325 **Hon. D J Bossino:** The hon. Member says that these sites are being refurbished continuously. I can tell him from direct experience that when I have been up with my family to the Upper Rock I have been somewhat surprised at the lack of maintenance on many of our sites. Gibraltar has the inherent advantage of being Gibraltar and having the wonderful Rock that we have with the wonderful views, particularly on the Upper Rock, but I really urge the Minister to perhaps take a greater interest in this aspect, because I can tell him that, from direct personal experience, it is not the case. I do not get the sense that these sites have been continuously refurbished.

2330 Does he not agree with me – and I am sure his answer will be no, in the negative, but I was reading a report in *The Sunday Times* only last week about how Israel has done very well in taking advantage of the period of the lockdown to spend a considerable amount of its money to refurbish many of its sites, and that, combined with the fact that they have been very successful in the vaccination programme, will give them greater impetus to attract new tourists to that particular country beyond those who are normally interested in the religious sites etc. In fact, I think the article was ‘Costa Tel Sol’ in reference to Tel Aviv. Does the Minister not agree with me that the Government has missed the boat?

2340 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, just by way of clarification, can I ask the hon. Member, in the context of –?

Hon. D J Bossino: I am asking the questions and he answers them.

2345 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, can I ask the hon. Member just to clarify, in the context of the question he has asked, whether the article that he is referring to in respect of Israel is the one that appeared in *The Sunday Times*?

Hon. D J Bossino: Yes.

2350 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Is it the one that appeared on the page of *The Sunday Times* on top of the article about Gibraltar (**Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes.) and how Gibraltar was definitely the place to visit (**Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes.) because of the job that had been done by the authorities in Gibraltar? (*Interjection*) Does he want me to read him the article that refers to the job done by the authorities in Gibraltar to make Gibraltar one of the most attractive places to visit, if that is the article that he is referring to, just by way of clarification?

2360 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, he has done this for me twice already, but I look forward to the day when the hon. Member will be asking *us* questions, when we are on that side of the House and the hon. Member is back in opposition. I look forward to that day.

But in answer to his question, yes, it was in the same edition of *The Sunday Times* – he is absolutely right – however, the focus of the articles were completely and utterly different, and the focus of the article that predicated the question I have asked the hon. Member opposite still remains and still remains accurate.

2365 **Mr Speaker:** Answer –

2370 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman is going to have to wait a very, very, very long time, if not for the whole of his life, to be in a position where he is going to be asking me questions, because I do not anticipate that I will put myself in the position where I will have to be asking him questions for him to reply to, other than in a court of law, but you never know the number of rings and roundabouts that life may take. But the one thing that he is never going to

do is find himself in a position where I am going to fail to pull him up on when he is disingenuous with this House and the people of Gibraltar – like, for example, suggesting that Gibraltar has anything to envy anybody in respect of an article which appears in *The Sunday Times* about one destination without realising that he is asking us about the page of *The Sunday Times* where Gibraltar is praised for the job that its authorities have done in the same period. *(Interjection)* It is utterly disingenuous for him to think that he can come here to somehow get people to believe that there has been the praising of one place – which fully deserves praise; I think Israel has done a magnificent job of its vaccination programme; I think the ‘Costa Tel Sol’ was a brilliant headline and I was delighted that, at the foot of that page, across four columns –

Hon. D J Bossino: Mr Speaker, a point of order.

Hon. Chief Minister: No. Mr Speaker, the Hon. Member likes to give it, but never likes to take it.

Mr Speaker: I will listen to the point of order of the hon. Member.

Hon. D J Bossino: Mr Speaker, surely the question needs to be answered. I accept all that he has said. I accept every single word he said. I read both articles. I read the Israeli article first. The Gibraltar article I am glad and pleased was there, but the Gibraltar article dealt with the vaccination programme, as indeed did the Israeli article, but what the Israeli article also dealt with is the massive investment which the Israeli government has entered into in order to refurbish its sites. That was not covered or dealt with or was an issue in point in relation to the Gibraltar article, much of which was based on an interview with one particular individual who operates in the tourism industry. The Israeli article was much wider than that and included – *(Interjection by Hon. Chief Minister)* No, Mr Speaker, the point of order I am raising is that the hon. Member, the Government and the hon. Minister is not answering the very basic question which I asked. I expected that the answer was going to be in the negative. Does the Government not agree that they have missed the boat by not taking advantage of the lull in tourist activity that we had during the course of the pandemic?

A Member: Hear, hear.

Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, when Slim Shady gets praised by the person who called him that name, Slim had better realise the trouble that he is getting himself into.

He has misled the House, Mr Speaker, and I ask him to clarify that he has misled the House. *(Interjection)* In the article that he is referring to – *(Interjection)* In the article that he failed to refer to, which he is now trying to pretend that he had consciousness of, there is specific reference to ‘In the meantime, a new history-focused visitor attraction in the Upper Rock is being prepared’ There is specific reference to the organisation of events in Gibraltar. There are all of the things that he says the Tel Aviv article referred to and the Gibraltar article did not refer to, but given the nonsense that I saw him put his name to in yesterday’s *Chronicle*, I am not surprised at anything that the hon. Gentleman does. I will tell him something for nothing, Mr Speaker: he can turn if he wants to; none of the hawks on this side will ever be for turning. *(Interjections)*

Mr Speaker: This has gone far enough. I think both Members need to calm down, take a seat, and let’s continue with questions and answers, please.

Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, just on a point of order, from a sedentary position the Hon. Mr Bossino has made an insulting reference to me and to Members of this side of the House, which I think is utterly intolerable but which I will bite my tongue on out of respect to our

2425 friendship for the past 30 years. I will simply ask him to stop misleading the people of Gibraltar on all issues on which he dares to open his mouth.

Hon. D J Bossino: Why am I misleading, Mr Speaker?

2430 **Mr Speaker:** Just hold on a second. Please resume your seat.

Hon. D J Bossino: I was not misleading –

Mr Speaker: Please resume your seat.

2435 **Hon. D J Bossino:** – from an anodyne question. I am talking about refurbishment of sites. The article does not ... He has not, in all the – (*Interjection*) No, he is talking about new events and stuff like that. He is not talking about the refurbishment of the sites. Can the –? (*Interjection*) Mr Speaker, I will sit down.

2440 **Mr Speaker:** Yes, please take your seat.
The Hon. Minister.

2445 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, no Government of Gibraltar has ever invested in the Upper Rock more than this Government, and I have been (*Interjection*) visiting the Upper Rock ever since I was a child. I am not just talking about the Sky Walk and the Windsor Bridge, or the major investment that has sadly been delayed due to COVID in the new presentation in St Michael's Cave; from bicycle racks and picnic balconies, general interpretation, road signage, balustrade replacement, upgrades of manikins in the Great Siege Tower, refurbishment of the Apes' Den, and outside the Upper Rock the Nun's Well, the Harding's Battery, the Du farol interpretation Centre
2450 the 100-Ton Gun refurbishment. There has also been the opportunity taken, (*Interjection*) if the hon. Gentleman will listen to what I am saying –

Hon. Chief Minister: They don't want to hear it.

2455 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Clearly they do not want to hear it. The opportunity has also been taken during lockdown to spruce up all the sites in readiness for their reopening on 1st April.

Mr Speaker: Next question, the Hon. Damon Bossino, please.

Q582-83/2020

Upper Rock Nature Reserve –

Responsibility for operating system; plans to privatise aspects of management

2460 **Clerk:** Question 582. The Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Can the Minister for the Environment state which company runs the operating system for the Upper Rock Nature Reserve?

2465 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education.

Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 583.

Clerk: Question 583. The Hon. D J Bossino.

2470

Hon. D J Bossino: Can the Minister for the Environment state whether the Government has any plans to privatise any aspects of the management of the Upper Rock Nature Reserve?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education.

2475

Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, Wrightech Ltd runs the operating system for the Upper Rock Nature Reserve; and in relation to Question 583, no, sir.

2480

Hon. D J Bossino: In relation to the first of those questions, Mr Speaker, can he divulge any of the details of the agreements with ... I think he has mentioned Wrightech Ltd – for example, the pricing structure and that type of thing, and the cost that this entails to the Government?

I have a couple of other supplementaries. I am willing to ask them all in one, but I am also –

2485

Mr Speaker: Please continue, Mr Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: When did the contract and the operation start with Wrightech?

I think if he answers the question relating to the pricing structure first, then I will be able to consider whether I will ask a question as to cost.

2490

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, I do not have the contractual details here. They are not specifically asked for. It just asks for the name of the company, so those details I do not have. I am happy to answer them on another occasion if they are relevant.

2495

As far as when the operating system started, it was before the first lockdown, so it was probably very early 2020 or late 2019, but once again I would need to check the details. Because of the year we have had, we have lost a year. It is very hard, I think, for our brains to exactly remember, but it was several months before the first lockdown, because when lockdown came, the operating system clearly was no longer as active as it had been. For any other details I would need notice.

2500

Hon. D J Bossino: Mr Speaker, I did ask about the running of the operating system, which I would have thought would have included the supplementary questions I have asked, but is he able to, just by way of confirmation, tell me that what Wrightech does is limited to operating the ticket sales in relation to the entry points?

2505

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, the Hon. Member did not ask about the running of the contract, he asked which company runs it and I have answered with the right answer. There was no indication there that any detail on the running was requested. Yes, it deals with ticketing, essentially, and co-ordinating the different kinds of sales and so on, but once again I would need notice for more detail.

2510

Q584/2020
Green Lane –
Plans for reopening

Clerk: Question 584. The Hon. D J Bossino.

2515 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Minister for the Environment state if the Government has any plans to open the section of the Green Lane which is currently closed off due to rock falls; and, if so, when?

2520 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education.

Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, the Government is considering how to address the issues that arise in respect of Green Lane and will make an announcement when it is able to do so.

2525 **Hon. D J Bossino:** I understand, Mr Speaker, that that area has been closed now for a number of years. Does he have an indication as to when he will be able to come to a ... well, not a decision, but as to when he thinks he will be able to open that area? I think it is something which obviously blocks the easy passage of individuals, because obviously it is closed. And what are the issues preventing the Government from making access freely and openly available to that particular section of the Green Lane?
2530

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: The Green Lane has not always been totally open. At one stage – I am talking about a long time ago – there was restricted access for residents and so on, and I think that is what we would be looking at, rather than a new thoroughfare through the Upper Rock which would also mean that visitors could get in without paying the fees, but that would need to be dealt with.
2535

The problem is rocks. It is a very unstable structure. The whole of the area below Devil's Gap at the entrance to the footpath to town, where there are little tunnels and so on, is very unstable. The cost of making it stable would be very high indeed, and the risk of opening it without those works is too high, so I am not very hopeful that it is going to happen anytime soon, but purely on the grounds of safety.
2540

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Clerk: Question 585. The Hon. K Azopardi.

Q544/2020
Scholarships for uncompleted courses –
Outstanding debts –
Supplementary question

2545 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, before I ask this question, in answer to Question 544, which was about the total amount of moneys due by students in respect of unpaid moneys of students who had not completed courses etc., there was a schedule provided and the hon. Member, the shadow for Education, did not ask any supplementaries. With your indulgence, I wanted to ask one in particular.

2550 So, if I may, I did notice on the lists that obviously there are quite a number of students making
up the total of £1.3 million, but two figures tend to jump out at you, which are number 89, where
there is a figure in relation to a student of £133,000-odd, and then at 161 there is also a figure of
£159,000. Can I just confirm, first, that that is not a mistake, that in respect of one particular
2555 student there is a debt of £159,000? And what is this for? It sounds like massive amounts of money
in respect of two individual students. Does the Hon. Minister have any information on that?

Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): No, Mr Speaker, but I will clearly seek it.

2560 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Will the hon. Member write to me with that information?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: I would be happy to do so. I do not think I need a reminder, but I would
be happy to receive a reminder by whatever means tomorrow, and I will get the information to
him right away.

Q585/2020

British War Memorial steps – Completion date for landscaped area

2565 **Clerk:** We turn to Question 585 and the questioner is the Hon. K Azopardi.

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, again, as a preface to this, I tabled this question, I think, some
months ago.

2570 When will the works establishing a landscaped area next to Midtown at the bottom of the steps
leading to the British War Memorial be finished?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and
Education.

2575 **Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, the Midtown Park was opened on 18th December 2020. There are still some
works required to complete the lift, as well as the play park and woodland areas, which, COVID
permitting, are expected to be completed by the end of next month.

2580 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, they may have been notionally finished on 18th December, but
the hon. Member knows that these works have spanned a long time. They were probably started
before the last election and, even now, there are days when you go and they are still fenced and
that kind of thing. It is very close now, but it seems to have taken a long time to finish a small,
partially green, triangle with some cement. It looks better than it used to, so I am glad that it has
2585 been done, but does the Minister have any explanation for why it needed to take the better part
of 18 months or two years to finish it?

2590 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, the triangle is not partially green; it is actually extremely,
beautifully, green, if I may say. The un turfed area has a specific purpose, and I am happy to share
it. It is so that the area can be used for performances, can be used for an open-air cinema and can
be used for perhaps the Christmas fair without damaging the green area. So, we have the big lawn
in Commonwealth Park and this smaller one in Midtown Park, but also an area where children can
play about on bicycles, skateboards or whatever. So, there is a reason for that.

2595 Regarding the delays, COVID is largely to blame. During lockdown ... The hon. Member opposite
may shake his head from a sitting position, but we must remember that the construction industry
was frozen for a long period of time, supplies were also delayed and specialist equipment was not
able to come in. Also, the period for planting trees is specific and it cannot be done any time of
2600 year. It had to wait until quite recently – the autumn-winter-spring period – but the proximate
reasons are largely to do with the inability of the contractors to bring the equipment over, and
specifically the playground area, which is produced by a specialist UK firm ... they have not been
able to send their experts over to commission it yet. We are hoping that this will happen very
soon, now that we are largely unlocking, and that we will be able to enjoy the full extent of
Midtown Park in a matter of weeks, rather than months, certainly before the spring is over.
(Interjection)

2605

Hon. K Azopardi: Yes, which spring? It almost springs to mind, I guess, but I will not ask that
rhetorical question.

How much has all of this cost? Does the hon. Member have an idea of that?

2610

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: No, Mr Speaker, it was not specifically asked. I do not have that
information. It is not completed yet, but I am sure that that information ... I do not have it here.
Worth every penny, I am sure, like Commonwealth Park.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

**Q586/2020
Public Health –
Office in the Hospital**

2615

Clerk: Question 586. The Hon. K Azopardi.

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, does Public Health no longer have an office in the Hospital?

2620

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and
Education.

**Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E
Cortes):** Mr Speaker, it does.

2625

Hon. K Azopardi: It does, fine.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: And an office [inaudible]

2630

Hon. K Azopardi: I am glad it does. The reason I tabled this question was because we had
received information that, having had an office, it no longer had one. Are there any plans to
relocate Public Health out of the Hospital? Were there any plans at all?

2635

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Not at the moment, Mr Speaker. The relevance and importance of Public
Health has not increased but has been certainly much more noticed following the pandemic. How
Public Health in Gibraltar – indeed, as elsewhere in the world – develops is something yet to be
seen, but at the moment they are still in the offices in St Bernard's Hospital.

Q587/2020
Pupils with special needs –
Number in publicly funded schools

Clerk: Question 587. The Hon. K Azopardi.

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, what was the total number of pupils with special needs at publicly funded schools for the academic year 2018-19, broken down by school and by particular special need?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education.

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Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, the information is provided in the schedule being handed over.

Answer to Q587/2020

Figures for 2018/2019

	SLD	ASD	GLD	SPLD	BES	HI	VI	PI	DS	ADHD
St Joseph's First	29	4	29	1	19	0	0	0	0	2
St Bernard's First	2	0	4	2	14	0	0	0	0	1
St Mary's First	17	1	23	0	5	0	1	0	0	0
St Paul's First	33	1	7	2	23	1	0	0	0	3
Notre Dame First	54	10	76	2	5	3	0	0	1	3
Governor's Meadow First	8	2	31	1	17	1	0	0	0	3
Hebrew Primary	2	3	5	3	7	0	0	4	0	2
St Martin's Special	43	19	25	0	21	1	2	7	4	2
St. Bernard's Middle	25	4	55	8	19	2	3	6	0	7
St Joseph's Middle	1	5	28	5	18	2	0	0	0	4
St Anne's Middle	7	2	43	7	22	1	0	1	0	6
Bishop Fitzgerald Middle	29	11	56	3	21	0	0	0	0	3
Westside Girls' Comprehensive	1	3	47	29	77	9	5	28	0	5
Bayside Boys' Comprehensive	0	25	171	35	68	4	10	1	1	23

KEY

SLD = Speech and Language Difficulties

SpLD = Specific learning Difficulties (Dyslexia)

VI = Visual Impairment

ADHD = Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

ASD = Autistic Spectrum Disorders

BES = Behaviour, Emotional and Social Development

PI = Physical Impairment

GED = General Learning Difficulties

HI = Hearing Impairment

DS = Down's Syndrome

Q588-92/2020
Learning support assistants –
Numbers employed full time and part time; number on supply list;
academic and training requirements; on-the-job training

Clerk: Question 588. The Hon. K Azopardi.

2650 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, how many learning support assistants (LSAs) were employed full time in schools over the last three years, giving a breakdown of the number of LSAs per school?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education.

2655 **Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 589 to 592.

Clerk: Question 589. The Hon. K Azopardi.

2660 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, how many learning support assistants (LSAs) were employed part-time in schools over the last three academic years, giving a breakdown of the number of LSAs per school?

2665 **Clerk:** Question 590. The Hon. K Azopardi.

Hon. K Azopardi: How many learning support assistants are on the Government's supply list as at 30th November 2020?

2670 **Clerk:** Question 591. The Hon. K Azopardi.

Hon. K Azopardi: What are the academic or training eligibility requirements for the recruitment of learning support assistants?

2675 **Clerk:** Question 592. The Hon. K Azopardi.

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, what on-the-job training is offered or required of learning support assistants?

2680 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education.

2685 **Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, the information in answer to Question 588 is provided in the schedule being handed over.

Answer to Q588/2020

		NDLP	GMLP	SAUP	BFUP	SMSS	SBLP	SMLP	SJLP
September 2020	Permanent	13	5	5	10	21	3	2	5
	Supply	3	4	13	12	21	0	0	1
September 2019	Permanent	14	4	5		24	2	2	5
	Supply	2	1	10	12	10	1	0	0
September 2018	Permanent	10	2	0	6	14	2	2	4
	Supply	4	1	3	2	3	0	0	1

		SPLP	SJUP	SBUP	HEB	WES	COL	BAY
September 2020	Permanent	2	2	2	1	7	3	15
	Supply	1	7	7	3	13	2	5
September 2019	Permanent	1	3	2	1	8	2	15
	Supply	0	6	7	3	2	1	4
September 2018	Permanent	*2	1	0	0	7	1	11
	Supply	1	0	4	2	0	1	4

*Includes 1 permanent LSA working in Varyl Begg Nursery

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: In answer to Question 589: in 2018, two; in 2019, one; and in 2020, one.

In answer to Question 590, the answer is 110.

2690 In answer to Question 591, in order to apply for the recent – no longer so recent, given when the question was asked, of course – post of supply special needs learning support assistant (SNLSA), individuals needed four GCSEs, grades A, B or C, and one of them had to be English.

2695 In answer to the final question, Question 592, an initial induction is delivered to all staff in conjunction with Human Resources. HR provide information about the Civil Service side of the role and the education adviser shares information regarding the main areas of special educational needs. Individuals are also given training in the role of LSAs in school, frameworks for scaffolding pupils' learning, safeguarding, first aid, manual handling and de-escalation techniques. SNLSAs also attend school INSET days on various educational topics related to special educational needs. I think that is it – and the schedule, yes, sir.

2700

Hon. K Azopardi: I was having a look at the schedule. Can the Minister simply repeat for me, if he will, the ... I think he has given me the schedule. I do not think I took a note of the answer to the statistic he gave me for ... He said 110 learning support assistants are on the Government supply. I wonder if he could just repeat it for me before I ask a supplementary.

2705

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, Question 589 referred specifically to learning support assistants employed on a part-time basis, and the answer was two in 2018 and one in each of 2019 and 2020. The majority, clearly, are full time.

2710 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Thank you, I am grateful for that. Does the hon. Member think that the number of learning support assistants employed in schools is sufficient?

2715 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, how long is a piece of string? If Gibraltar could afford a learning support assistant for every single child, then perhaps that would be what we would aim for. I think it is adequate. There will be some schools in which they may feel it is not, depending on the particular child, depending on the particular time, depending on what they particularly may be going through. We certainly have many more LSAs than have ever been in schools at any time, but I am not going to answer the question in the way that the hon. Member has posed it, because, as I say, how long is a piece of string?

2720

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, in terms of actually getting to the final figure of the permanent people employed, he has handed me a schedule which is headed 'Answer to Question 592, Answer to Question 588'. I assume the first line is an error and it is the 588 answer. Does he have a total number of LSAs employed in Gibraltar at schools in the past three academic years?

2725

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, the top line, 'Answer to Question 592' was not an error; it was an aid in preparing a batch of questions together, to know that that had to be attached to that batch. The answer is yes, this schedule does relate to Question 588, and this is the breakdown

2730 that has been provided by the Department of Education. Therefore, my answer is that these are the numbers that were employed in the schools in those particular years.

Hon. K Azopardi: I am just asking the hon. Member if he has to hand an easy answer on the total, without me –

2735 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** For the total, add it up.

Hon. K Azopardi: Yes, without me trying to work it out while I am on my feet, so I can ask the question easier.

2740 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, we could both try to work it out and see who is quicker at the maths. I do not have the figure. I have not got it summed here.

2745 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Well, then, Mr Speaker, if you will bear with me ... It looks to me that there are no more than 80 to 90 permanently employed learning support assistants in schools, roughly speaking, without ... Obviously, I have not got a calculator in front of me. I am on my feet, so I have not done the calculation precisely, so the hon. Member will correct me if I am wrong, but that is what it looks like, loosely, to me, just glancing at the schedule.

2750 The hon. Member has given me the answer to Question 587. I asked him for a breakdown of the students with special needs in the academic year 2018-19. I know that in 2017-18, without doing that calculation, because again, although he will say that is what I asked for, unhelpfully they have not given us a total, but I know that in 2017-18 there were 1,500 pupils with special needs in Gibraltar. If we are talking about learning support assistants of 80 to 90, doesn't the hon. Member think it is wholly insufficient?

2755 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I must say that if I have not answered something that the hon. Member has not asked, I cannot be challenged for not having answered it. If he wants more information, he should be more specific with his questions, and then – as I always do, and I now have a track record which is over nine years; I always provide as full answers as are available – ask me the right question, Mr Speaker.

2760 Not every child with special educational needs has the same special educational needs. They will be on our register. They do not all need the same kind of attention. They do not all need one-to-one support. They could have support on a one-to-five basis, in which case you would have to divide that by five.

2765 These things are very specific. There is flexibility, and this is why we have – and I make no secret of it – a considerable number of SLSAs who are on supply, who are called in as and when specific needs are identified. I think we have a good number, but I am not going to go back to saying whether I think it is enough, because, as I always say when I am asked whether enough is being done for the environment, never will we ever do enough for the environment, and in this kind of situation the more we can provide the better, but certainly we are providing a lot more than has
2770 ever been provided before.

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, the hon. Member is right, of course, in saying that not all children need an LSA. That is correct, but the converse is also true, in my experience. At least in the people who come to see me, there are sometimes children who have so many special needs that they
2775 need more than one LSA. They need the support of more than one, or at least that is what parents tell me. That being the case, it is not an easy point for the hon. Member to just bat away the fact that there are 1,500 students with special needs and only about 80 or 90 LSAs.

2780 Just looking at the statistical breakdown for the previous academic year – which is not the one he has given me – in the previous academic year, in that breakdown, there were 411 students with behavioural or emotional social development needs. There were 80 students with autism.

There were 54 with ADHD. There were five were Downs. There is a whole gamut of students – as I say, 1,500 – and it seems to me that the figure that the hon. Member has given in respect of LSAs seems quite low. Is the Government intending to recruit more LSAs? Is there any plan in the pipeline to do so?

2785

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, any parent of a child who feels that they are not getting enough support from an LSA is clearly going to the wrong person if they are going to him. (*Interjection*) It is absolutely true. These concerns should be made known to the Department of Education or to the Minister for Education and will be acted upon.

2790

This is not a statistical analysis. We are talking about children with specific needs. If a child has a specific need, the LSA support, if it is requested, once it is assessed by the teacher will be provided. Not all of them need one to one, so it is not a mathematical analysis that we need here.

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As far as whether we would recruit more, if there are specific needs that are identified, these will be considered, which is the reason why we have supply lists and which is the reason why we have a considerable number of suppliers who have been brought in and who are over and above the complement that we inherited when we came into office.

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Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, he does not need to get so defensive about people coming to see me. I can assure you of one thing: when people come to see me, it is because they have tried to go and see the Government first. People do not come to see me because they think it is an easy route to find success, the obvious route. The usual thing that I am told when someone has come to see me is that they have tried to speak to the Government or to civil servants or officials first. My door is open, and if people are finding difficulties then I try to assist them in the way that I can, and that is a fact.

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On this issue, is the hon. Member in active discussion with experts in the field to make some kind of analysis or correlation between the numbers of students with special needs and the number of LSAs required generally and going forward?

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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, yes, and we are constantly reviewing the provision for special needs children.

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Hon. K Azopardi: So, is there a projection? That is why I asked. In the pipeline, is there something? Is there going to be more recruitment, or is that assessment ongoing and you have not formed a view on further recruitment of LSAs?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: It is constantly ongoing because no two years are the same, no two terms are the same, and no two weeks are the same.

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Mr Speaker: Can I ask the hon. Member –?

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, can I ask one further –?

Mr Speaker: The last question, please.

2825

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, I am going to the training questions, if I may. The hon. Member gave us a feel for the kind of training that they get. Can I just ask him who devises the training, how long that training is for, and who runs the training?

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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, as I said in my answer, this is partly done by HR and it is partly done by the education advisers, and the training is ongoing because they attend INSET days on subjects that are related to special educational needs.

2835 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Is this training ...? It is not my field, so I am asking. I assume ... One of the hon. Members now sitting on the back benches issues a jibe from a sedentary position, but he is free to form his opinions. Is the training not based on any kind of training that they would deliver in the United Kingdom, for example?

2840 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I am not aware of what they deliver in the United Kingdom, but this is bespoke and specific for our schools and is delivered by the people who know the situation in our schools.

Hon. K Azopardi: So, being completely bespoke, it is not based on any training that they would deliver in the United Kingdom?

2845 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I would hope that in the United Kingdom they would be as good as us in providing information and training on their role in the school, the frameworks of scaffolding pupils' learning, safeguarding, first-aid, manual handling and de-escalation techniques. Hopefully, in the UK they have a programme that is at least as good as ours.

2850 **Mr Speaker:** Next question.

Q593/2020
Online learning provision –
Equivalence with schools' curriculum

Clerk: Question 593. The Hon. K Azopardi.

2855 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, is the Government satisfied that the online learning provision in schools provides equivalent learning in accordance with the schools' curriculum?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education.

2860 **Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, I was very tempted to answer 'Yes, sir,' but I will expand.

2865 As a Government, we closed schools with a heavy heart and as an absolute last resort in order to keep our community safe. It is important to state that the type of learning which takes place in a school environment is impossible to replicate remotely. In the same way that a conductor is able to co-ordinate an orchestra, schools and the professionals who work in them are able to fine tune every aspect of the learning journey when their pupils are in school and are able to maximise the effectiveness of their interactions. Regrettably, this is simply not something that can be replicated remotely.

2870 Notwithstanding the inherent differences between remote learning and in-school learning, and acknowledging the absolute preference to have in-school learning as soon as it was deemed safe to do so by our Public Health experts, the Department of Education drafted and published detailed contingency learning guidelines which focused on continuing to support students through their learning journey. The guidelines state clearly that schools should ensure all children continue to make progress through the curriculum and there is clear focus on the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum.

2875 Remote or online learning is an alternative way of delivering the curriculum that our learners would have engaged with in an in-school learning setting. Our teachers delivered on the curriculum expectations set by the Department of Education, albeit remotely. They at all times

used their professional judgement, training and experience to ensure that the learning journey they provided for their students was as effective as possible given the challenging circumstances faced by our community.

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Our professionals have advised the Government that delivering live synchronous lessons is not necessarily the most effective approach to learning. This advice is supported by Ofsted's recently published guidelines to remote learning. We are extremely pleased to report high levels of engagement across our educational sectors and would like to thank the heroic efforts of our school leaders, teachers and staff in delivering the contingency learning plans as they have done, as well as the extraordinary efforts of parents, grandparents and other carers in supporting their children with contingency learning. Their efforts have made all the difference at this challenging time.

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Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, I am glad, first, that he did not just answer 'Yes, sir,' because at least we have got something on the record to go on, apart from the press release that he issued, which was helpful. *(Interjection)* Indeed, Mr Speaker. *(Interjection)* Yes, well, we had better not go there. But does the Minister accept that it has been a tough time for everyone, educationalists as well, so everyone was hit by the pandemic? Does he accept that the level of online learning that was delivered, at least in the initial phases of the pandemic, was much less satisfactory than the current level? Does he at least accept that?

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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, yes, but there are reasons. First of all, we were new to online learning. This was a completely new experience and the Department had to look at the platforms, had to look at how to populate it, the teachers did not have the experience in it and they did not know how long this was going to go on for, so there was less concentration on curriculum and more concentration on engagement, perhaps wider activities, perhaps more craft-related activities, and there was less satisfaction from the community in relation to the curriculum content.

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Since then, and what we did last term or the beginning of this term, certainly there has been a lot more curriculum content and a lot more hard work – this is why I praise the families and carers who have supported it – and more satisfaction. I am pleased to say that even some of the parents' groups, with whom I meet regularly, who had concerns about online learning have now reported back – because they do collect statistics among the members – indicating a high level of satisfaction.

2910

I must also say that the level of engagement was high. It was in the upper 90s, so the children were at least as engaged in online learning as they are when they attend school. The percentage of engagement in online learning was very similar to the percentage attendance at school, so I think certainly we did rather well in those weeks when the children were having to do that.

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Hon. K Azopardi: Here is the thing. For us, at least ... certainly what Members on this side are told by parents is that yes, they were engaged, but the impetus at the beginning was simply to keep children occupied, more than actually delivering equivalent learning, that it was far removed from this sort of learning experience and it was more about, 'Let's keep the children busy, let's keep them interactive,' – as interactive as was possible in those days of the initial few months – but the reality is that they were not. The Education Department was not delivering that kind of equivalence of learning. That is the first point, and so I am asking the hon. Member: is he really saying that during that period there was learning being delivered which was equivalent?

2925

Secondly, just to roll it up, so that it is easier for the hon. Member to answer in one answer, when we come to the more recent period now in the vaccination programme, post the vaccination programme we would be hoping that not so many pupils or teachers need to go into self-isolation, although I saw from the Chief Minister's Statement that that in itself is not a guarantee, of course, going forward. But there was a period where you were getting dozens of pupils and teachers in self-isolation, towards the end of last year. In that period, having had several months of the COVID

2930 pandemic, is he satisfied, really, that they were delivering equivalent learning, meaning that
learning was not just keeping them engaged and busy, but that if they were doing GCSEs in science
or art, or whatever, they were being engaged in geography, they were being engaged in equivalent
learning, so that if, for whatever reason, the period lasted, or if, for whatever reason, that child
2935 needed to be in self-isolation for longer, or into prolonged periods because the teacher then went
into self-isolation, they did not suffer as a learning experience? That is what I am asking.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, in answer to the last part of the question, referring to self-
isolation rather than lockdown, there were relatively few GCSE classes that had to go into self-
isolation. When we talk about younger children, primary school children, it is easier to catch up,
2940 so, although there was online offer during the times of self-isolation – as a grandparent, I
experienced this myself – I am satisfied that the teachers engaged with the young people at that
time.

In relation to the first, compared to the second, tranche of home learning, there was much
more time to prepare. There were lessons learned. There was an ability to have planned a full
2945 system and prepared lessons. It is very different knowing from nearly a year before what you are
expected to do, to hearing the Chief Minister on television saying, one day, ‘We are locking schools
as from tomorrow.’ You need time to prepare. You are left nothing, and nothing of this nature had
ever been done before, so I have all praise for the Department and particularly for the teachers
to have been able to do exactly what was needed at the time. This was a new experience:
2950 ‘Lockdown, COVID – what’s this all about? Let’s keep the children entertained. Okay, we have got
to get on with the curriculum, but give us time to plan our lessons and so on. In the meantime,
give them something to keep them active and keep them engaged.’ I do not have to apologise for
that. I think they did what they had to do at the right time, and when they had to step up with
more serious curricular work, that is when they did it and we have seen the results.

2955 Mr Speaker, I am very satisfied with the teaching profession and all that they have done during
this difficult time.

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, nothing that I said, of course, was a critique of the teaching
profession. I was trying to find out what the hon. Members’ policy position was. At the end of the
2960 day, they are here to defend their policy, their decisions taken as to the quality of online teaching
raised.

Can I ask him this by way of a final supplementary, if I may? Learning from this experience
going forward – as I think the hon. Member said that online teaching may be here to stay, or words
to that effect, or at least the sentiment was there – does he accept that online teaching is here to
2965 stay in the same way as I suppose the pandemic has led to the change of business and working
practices in many fields? We will all learn from remote ways of dealing and working, and one of
the things that may be available in the future is ... Even though the pandemic may be over, it may
be that universities, schools and other educational institutions think, ‘Well, actually, the idea of
remote learning ... That period funnelled us into learning very quickly and expediting methods of
2970 doing this, and we have learned from this and actually do this going forward.’ Is there any kind of
thinking being done in the Education Department to see how online learning can be used in the
future in a non-lockdown period?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, I will go a bit further. The whole of Education has learnt a
2975 lot from the pandemic and there are even questions being asked in some other home nations as
to whether exams will ever come back in the way we have done them before. Some countries do
not have them, and the home nations in the UK are considering whether we are going to go back
to the old exam system.

As far as online learning, I think it will be a very useful and resilient tool as a supplement to
2980 face-to-face learning. I do not think it should replace it, unless it has to in pandemic situations,
which we hope will not come any time in our lifetimes again. But it is already being used. Teachers

2985 are using online platforms to send notes to parents, to share photographs in the class, to supplement and do these little extra bits, and the one good thing about it is that children love using their iPads, their iPods and their laptops, so they are engaging a lot more in doing things for school after school hours, because they can do it through these platforms. We have to learn from difficult situations, and I think that Education has certainly learnt a lot.

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the hon. Member, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, for giving me the opportunity to say all these wonderful things about Education.

Q594/2020

Dog parks –

Completion date for Queensway and plans for more

2990 **Clerk:** Question 594. The Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon.

Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon: Can the Minister indicate when the Queensway dog park will be ready and if his Government will commit to rolling out more modest-sized dog parks across Gibraltar which might tackle the problem?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education.

3000 **Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, the Queensway dog park will be ready within this term of office.

In answer to the second part, about the smaller-sized dog parks, the answer is that the Government is certainly considering these.

Q595/2020

Trees –

Numbers cut down and replanted

Clerk: Question 595. The Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon.

3005 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** Can Government give details of how many trees have been cut down in the last 12 months and how many have been replanted, including statistical information about the class of tree and their age?

3010 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education.

Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, the information requested is in the schedule which I am now handing over.

3015 Regarding age, it is very hard to be specific in years, so we have decided to do it as mature/small, rather than specific age. It is very difficult to do in trees.

3020 Sixty-two trees have been cut down in the 12 months to December 2020. Of these, four were in poor condition, 14 were dead and 11 were dangerous. One hundred and ninety trees have been replanted in the past 12 months. This net gain of 128 trees is something to be proud of. For every tree lost, three have sprung up in its place. That is a 206% increase in trees when looking at the 62 that have been removed and the 190 planted in their place. This is a record most nations would be proud of.

If I may just add some late information, that information was valid for the 12 months of 2020. Since 1st January, there have been a further 19 trees planted.

Answer to Q595/2020

Trees Felled November 2019 - November 2020					
Area	Trees	Size	Specimen	Reason	Date
Mid-Town Park	1	Medium	Phoenix canariensis	Mid-Town Park Project	Dec-19
Edinburgh Estate	2	Medium	Salix alba	Dead	Dec-19
Dr Girdaldi	1	Mature	Eucalyptus camaldulensis	Dangerous	Sep-20
Westside Girls Comprehensive School - Boundary wall	2	Small	Phoenix canariensis	Chatham Views Project	Feb-20
	2	Mature	Tipuana tipu		Feb-20
	2	Mature	Acacia retinodes		Feb-20
	3	Mature	Cupressus sempervivens		Feb-20
	1	Mature	Callistemon viminalis		Feb-20
	Westside Girls Comprehensive School	1	Mature		Prunus domestica
	1	Mature	Grevillea robusta	Feb-20	
Bishop Fitzgerald School	2	Mature	Eucalyptus camaldulensis	New Schools Project	Feb-20
Bishop Fitzgerald School	3	Mature	Cupressus Macrocarpa		Feb-20
7 North Pavilion Road	1	Mature	Alianthus Altissima	Dangerous	Apr-20
Road to the Lines	1	Mature	Ficus carica	Dangerous	Jul-20
Castle Estate	1	Mature	Phytolacca dicocia	Dangerous	2019
Europa estate	1	Mature	Pinus pinea	Dangerous	Oct-20
Cumberland Road Terrain	1	Mature	Eucalyptus camaldulensis	Dangerous	Nov-20
Ragged Staff Car Park	1	Mature	Eucalyptus camaldulensis	Dangerous	Apr-20
Gardiner's Road	1	Mature	Cupressus sempervirens	Dangerous	Oct-20
Convent Gardens	1	Mature	Cedrus atlantica	Dangerous Dead	Oct-19
	1	Mature	Cupressus sempervirens		Oct-20
Transport Lane	1	Mature	Eucalyptus camaldulensis	Dead	Aug-20
Saluting Battery	1	Mature	Robinia pseudoacacia	Dangerous	Jul-20
Market Place	2	Mature	Bauhinia variegata	Dead	Jun-20
Winston Churchill Avenue	1	Mature	Phoenix dactylifera	Dead	Mar-20
The Mount Grounds	1	Mature	Phoenix canariensis	Dead	Jul-20
Landport	1	Mature	Washingtonia robusta	Dangerous	Nov-20

Continued Answer to Question 595

Red Sands Estate	1	Mature	Washingtonia robusta	Dead	Oct-20
North Front Camp	1	Mature	Phoenix canariensis	Dead	Nov-19
Governors Parade Piazzella	4	Mature	Robinia Pseudoacacia	Poor Condition Governor's Parade Piazzella Project	Feb-20
St Joseph's Car Park Terrain	8	Semi	Robinia pseudoacacia (5) Olea europea (3)	St Joseph's Car Park Project	Feb-20
Old Casino - The Reserve	7	Mature		The Reserve Project	Oct-20
Buena Vista Mews	4	Semi	Bauhinia purpurea	Dead	Nov-20
Total	62				

Trees within the above list were felled because they had either perished, they posed a health and safety risk or to make way for new construction projects approved by DPC. In the case of the latter trees removed are normally replaced at a ratio of 2 to 1.

Trees Planted November 2019 - December 2020				
Area	Trees	Size	Specimen	Date
Cumberland Road	5	Small	Metrosideros excelsa	Nov-19
MOD North Front	2	Small	Washingtonia Robusta	Nov-19
	2	Small	Washingtonia Robusta	Jul-20
Convent Gardens	1	Small	Cedrus deodara	Nov-19
	1	Small	Melaleuca armillaris	Nov-19
	1	Small	Roystonea regia	Nov-19
Trafalgar Cemetery	1	Small	Cedrus deodara	Nov-19
	1	Small	Paulownia tormentosa	Jul-20
	1	Small	Quercus Canariensis	Jul-20
	1	Mature	Quercus cerris	Nov-20
	1	Small	Tecoma Stans	Nov-20
	1	Small	Castanea Sativa	Dec-20
St Jago's Car Park	1	Small	Citrus aurantium	Dec-19
	1	Small	Lagunaria patersonia	Dec-19
	2	Medium	Prunus dulcis	Jan-20
	3	Small	Tamarisk africana	Dec-19
Gib Power Station	2	Small	Araucaria heterophylla	Dec-19
Edinburgh Estate	3	Small	Salix alba	Dec-19
Camp Bay Road to Tunnel	9	Small	Tamarisk africana	Jan-20
Mid Harbours Estate	5	Small	Ficus lyrata	Jan-20
	1	Mature	Olea europea	Jan-20
Dr Giraldi Home	1	Small	Quercus suber	Feb-20
	1	Mature	Magnolia grandiflora	Aug-20
Little Bay Little Bay - Walkway Phase 2	19	Small	Tamarisk ramosissima	Jul-20

Continued Answer to Question 595

Urban Car Park	1	Small	Paulownia tormentosa	Jul-20
	1	Small	Ficus Benjamina	Jul-20
Ocean Village Commercial Works	20	Mature	Olea europea	Jul-20
Ocean Village West facing	15	Mature	Olea europea	Oct-20
Kings Wharf Phase II	7	Small	Metrosideros excelsa	Jul-20
Lower Red Sands Estate	1	Mature	Araucaria heterophylla	Jul-20
Saluting Battery	1	Small	Bauhinia Variegata	Jul-20
North Front Cemetery	1	Small	Araucaria heterophylla	Nov-20
Transport Lane (Green Area)	2	Small	Corymbia Ficifolia	Nov-20
Hargreaves (Court)	1	Small	Jacaranda mimosifolia	Nov-20
St Joseph's Car Park Terrain	16	Semi	Quercus ilex Celtis australis Ulmus minor	Oct-20
Governor's Parade	6	Semi-mature	Platanus x acerifolia	Nov-20
Mid Town	24	Semi-mature	Platanus orientalis	Nov-20
	15	Semi-mature	Quercus cerris	Nov-20
	5	Semi-mature	Quercus suber	Nov-20
	3	Semi-mature	Olea europaea	Nov-20
Ragged Staff Car Park	2	Semi-mature	Platanus x acerifolia	Dec-20
Buena Vista Mews	4	Semi	Bauhinia purpurea	Nov-20
Commonwealth Park	2	Semi	Quercus ilex	Dec-20

3030 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** Mr Speaker, I thank the Minister for his answer. I would like to ask, though ... I have been approached by several people who are lovers of trees and the environment, and they have asked me why the does not Government have a system in place to ask developers to do the replanting at their own cost. The recurring example that I get is the reserve by the old casino: why didn't Government ask the developer perhaps to replant these trees, or could the Government have negotiated with the developer to preserve those trees at cost to the developer? From what I understand, we lost about 20 trees there and then.

3035 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, the figures will be in what I have provided in relation to that. There were a number of olive trees that were removed, but the developer has to plant, and has undertaken to plant, 46 trees in their place, so there will be a net gain in the number of trees in the area. Sadly, because of the way they were growing into the rock, it was not possible, physically, to move them, but the developer will have to plant 46 trees in compensation.

3040 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** Mr Speaker, if I can ask the Minister: as an expert, I believe, in botany himself, what would he say to constituents who strongly believe that olive trees weather all types of challenges within the environment and can easily be replanted, and would challenge his assumption that they could not be and they were just thrown away? Would he have anything to say about something like this?

3045 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Yes, absolutely, Mr Speaker. For one, olive trees are resilient. I remember being involved with the move, many decades ago, of the big olive tree in the grounds of the Calpe Rowing Club, which was one of the first trees that was moved in Gibraltar in my days running an NGO, and that survived very well, but these particular trees were growing into rock and therefore you would not have been able to remove the root ball with it; you would have had to cut the roots away, and those trees would have perished. It was just the situation that they were in. But rest assured we will ensure that those 46 trees that need to be planted are planted. We will be making absolutely sure that.

3055 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** Mr Speaker, I cannot seem to find ... or maybe the information that I have is different to that in the schedule, but the old house that was demolished just beside the Jewish Cemetery –

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: That was before.

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Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon: Can I have some more information on that one?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, yes, that was prior to 2020. I think the question specifically said in the last 12 months; this would have been before then. The developer has a commitment to replace those, but I am not party to what has happened since. That is not featured here because they predate the 12 months.

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I do not think we must let escape the fact that my Department and, if I may say, myself personally are always keeping an eye on trees and we have ensured a net increase in the number of trees in those 12 months. On some occasions, they are dead or they are dangerous, and then we always replace with more than we have lost.

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Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon: Thank you for that, and, Mr Speaker, if I could just ask the Hon. Minister whether he is satisfied with the particular aftercare and maintenance that trees need, the special attention, after they have been relocated and repotted or re re-treed, rehoused.

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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: I cannot recall any tree that has been moved, or new tree that has been planted, that has perished, and I keep an eye on them. Whenever I go round, I look at my trees. I cannot recall any that has suffered. I may be wrong. If I pick them up, I always report them and get them replaced, so I do not think we have a problem right now on that. That is my answer.

3080

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q596/2020
Year 13 non-A-level religion class –
Reason for timetabling

Clerk: Question 596. The Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon.

3085 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** Mr Speaker, can Government confirm why it has implemented a non-A-level religion class slot in year 13 timetables?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education.

3090 **Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, non-A-level Religion and Liberal Studies have existed in the year 12 and 13 timetables in one format or another over at least the last 15 years – I am sure a lot more. In different years, the two secondary schools have delivered these two non-examined subjects in different ways, in order to provide a continuation of the statutory general RE and PSHE offered to students earlier in their school journey.

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Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon: Mr Speaker, can the Minister give me some more information on what exactly is the agenda within these religious lessons? What religion are we talking about?

3100 From what I understand, it is not a comparative religion slot, it is more a particular religion that is being taught.

3105 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, that should not be the case. The comprehensives, one of them has a specific slot for RE, which is different to RS, Religious Studies, which is the exam subject, which is timetabled for exam purposes. The other one includes religious education within Liberal Studies and these are all religions in a comparative way, by way of information. This is what I have been told, and my own experience in young people I know. I do not think the concerns that seem to be coming across ... I would be very happy to address them if I could have more details. I do not think we have concerns. I think it is done in a liberal, responsible and comparative way.

3110 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** Mr Speaker, I would be happy to have a deeper conversation with the Minister on this, because he knows that I approached him and the Chief Minister about a year ago with some other concerns that the religion classes were not consistent with the comparative religion agenda that is supposed to be deployed.

3115 Can I ask if the general curriculum or the agenda for religious A-level liberal religion is passed through him, or someone in Government accountable as such?

3120 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** No, Mr Speaker, I do not get directly involved in the lesson or the curriculum. I do not. I am consulted, for example, when there is going to be change in the offer – perhaps one subject being offered for examination one year and they want to change it; then there is a discussion – but not in the content. If there are concerns of any nature that we are not doing this properly – my information is that that is not a concern, but if there are any concerns – certainly I would get involved and I would try to resolve them.

ADJOURNMENT

3125 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, may I start by thanking you, because it may not have been noticed by many that you have actually been in that Chair now for almost five hours, and it has been remiss of me to offer to lead a recess, but of course you could have done so, and you have stoically ensured that we have got through as much business as possible. Thank you.

3130 Mr Speaker, can I apologise for my earlier flush of passion? Perhaps the absence of being in this Chamber as often as we would like to be led to that. I am also pleased to report to the House that the Hon. Mr Bossino and I have engaged in what is known as digital diplomacy and our relationship is now flourishing, as it always eventually does.

Can I invite, Mr Speaker, the House to return tomorrow at 3.30 in the afternoon to continue with questions?

3135 **Mr Speaker:** I now propose the question, which is that this House do now adjourn until Wednesday, 17th March at 3.30 p.m.

I now put the question, which is that this House do now adjourn to Wednesday, 17th March at 3.30 p.m. Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye.) Those against? Passed.

This House will now adjourn to Wednesday, 17th March at 3.30 p.m.

The House adjourned at 7.40 p.m.