



PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

AFTERNOON SESSION: 4.34 p.m. – 7.04 p.m.

Gibraltar, Friday, 21st October 2022

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The Gibraltar Parliament

The Parliament met at 4.30 p.m.

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

[CLERK TO THE PARLIAMENT: S Galliano Esq *in attendance*]

Questions for Oral Answer

HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT, YOUTH AND SPORT

Q332-334/2022

Chilton Court –

Parking spaces; refurbishment

Clerk: Meeting of Parliament, Friday, 21st October 2022. We continue with Answers to Questions.

5 **Question 332/2022.** The Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Please state when the construction of the car park at the Chilton Court estate is expected to commence and complete.

10 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Industrial Relations, Employment, Housing and Sport.

Minister for Housing, Employment, Youth and Sport (Hon. S E Linares): Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 333 and 334.

Clerk: Question 333/2022. The Hon. D J Bossino.

15 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Please state to whom the parking spaces at Chilton Court will be made available.

Clerk: Question 334/2022. The Hon. D J Bossino.

20 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Please state whether the Government has any immediate plans to attend to the general refurbishment and upkeep of the communal areas, including the external façade of the blocks and external areas at the Chilton Court estate.

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Industrial Relations, Employment, Housing and Sport.

25 **Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, there are currently two sponsored projects, under the National Economic Plan, at Chilton Court. There will be approximately 50 extra parking spaces, of which 80% will be made available to Chilton Court residents for rent and the rest will be for the use of clubs and associations.

30 The project currently has outline planning approval and has now been submitted for full
planning application to be tabled at the DPC. As soon as the designs are approved I will be in a
better position to inform on the dates.

We intend to do a general refurbishment of all housing estates which have not yet been done.
Chilton Court will also have the benefit of having the estate embellished due to the car parks,
playing areas, clubs and premises building projects currently under the planning stage.

35 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Thank for that reply, to the hon. Member. In terms of the numbers, I have
here that 50 are being made available to the residents. Out of how many parking spaces?

40 **Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, the answer says 50 *extra* car parking spaces.

Hon. D J Bossino: And those 50 are being made available to residents – is that understanding
correct?

45 **Hon. S E Linares:** Eighty per cent of them.

Hon. D J Bossino: So it is 80% of the 50 extra that are going to be made available to the
residents. Does he have a total number of parking spaces? (**Hon. S E Linares:** One hundred and
eighty) Is that the totality of it?

50 And when he talks about two sponsored projects – I think he said – by the National Economic
Plan, is he choosing between the two or it encompasses all of it? There were two projects he was
talking about, if I can put it in these terms. Can he provide more detail in relation to those two
particular projects?

55 **Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, the first project is going to be the project in which the current
space in Chilton Court, which is the middle of Chilton Court, where the playground and the football
and basketball area are, will be lifted. Car parking spaces and stores will be underneath and the
replacement of the total of what is underneath will go on top. That is one project.

The second project is the one with clubs and associations, and also for the tenants to have their
own club. So it is just in the Chilton Court area and that is the second project.

60 **Hon. D J Bossino:** In relation to the balance of those parking spaces, presumably they are being
made available to the general market out there – or is there another residential area that is going
to benefit from them?

65 **Hon. S E Linares:** No, Mr Speaker, those parking areas are for where the premises are going to
be, so people who are using the premises will have certain parking spaces to put their cars in. So
the project in which there are the premises, there are stores, there are the premises for the
tenants' association and commercially it is for them. That means that they can have their own
recreational area and they can do their own children's parties. It is for them. Obviously, if there
70 are going to be premises there, there are certain parking spaces available for people who attend
the premises.

Hon. D J Bossino: I think I know what he means, but in terms of the premises, he is thinking
about clubs and sporting activity types of thing? Okay. I think he has made that clear.

75 In relation to the refurbishment, I have seen correspondence that has been sent to him as
recently as this summer – 10th July – and in fact, although there is a brief reference to the projects
which I think he has now described as sponsored projects, 80% to 90% of the letter is a list of items
that I will not necessarily need to go into now for the purposes of this session, where the residents
are complaining about a lack of attendance in terms of refurbishment works that need to be done.
80 Can he give us more details as to what he proposes to do in relation that? I think the overall

complaint is that there has been absolutely nothing done over the last 11 years. That may be an exaggeration, but certainly very little has been done in relation to refurbishment and upkeep of the area.

85 **Hon. S E Linares:** It is an exaggeration. We do, on a constant, day-by-day basis, maintenance of the whole estate. I am in constant contact with the tenants' association of the Chilton Court area and we discuss all these things. As and when they bring me things that need to be done, they are usually done. That we have not done the big refurbishment that has been done in other estates is true – yes, we have not done it – but, as I have said in my answer to the question, we are looking
90 at doing the whole refurbishment of Chilton Court as well as all the other estates.

Hon. D J Bossino: In relation to doing the whole refurbishment, which presumably is going to be a bigger project than simply touching up areas here and there, does he have a timeline as to when he expects that is likely to commence?

95 **Hon. S E Linares:** No, sir, not at this precise moment. I can tell the hon. Member that already within the projects we are doing we are looking at improving certain things around the estates that will help, but I cannot commit myself to a timeline now.

100 **Hon. D J Bossino:** By 'improving certain things' is he talking about in advance of the major projects? Is that what he is talking about? No?

Hon. S E Linares: In relation the projects we are doing.

105 **Mr Speaker:** Next question.

Q335-37/2022

Government rental dwellings –

Numbers available for allocation, undergoing refurbishment, and beyond repair

Clerk: Question 335/2022. The Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Please state how many units are available from the housing rental stock for allocation, categorising the units into size by the number of rooms.

110 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Industrial Relations, Employment, Housing and Sport.

Minister for Housing, Employment, Youth and Sport (Hon. S E Linares): Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 336 and 337.

115 **Clerk:** Question 336/2022. The Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Please state how many units from the Government housing rental stock have been earmarked for allocation but cannot be allocated as they are currently being refurbished for that purpose, categorising the units into size by the number of rooms.

120

Clerk: Question 337/2022. The Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon.

Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon: Can Government inform the House how many empty government dwellings are being refurbished for allocation and beyond repair?

125

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Industrial Relations, Employment, Housing and Sport.

Hon. S E Linares: Mr Speaker, as at 13th October 2022 there are 11 government rental properties available for allocation, all of which are currently under offer. These are one 1RKB, one 2RKB, four 3RKB, three 4RKB, one 5RKB and one 6RKB.

There are 28 properties which have already been earmarked to applicants on the waiting list and are in the process of being refurbished. These are three 1RKB, five 2RKB, 11 3RKB and nine 4RKB.

There are a total of 40 properties categorised beyond repair within the housing stock which will be put out to tender, and a further 92 properties which form part of the urban renewal project.

Hon. D J Bossino: We will take a look at the answer just given, Mr Speaker, with a bit more care – how many units are available.

In terms of the 28 properties, which he has then broken down, which are currently basically under refurb – they have been identified for allocation but they cannot be allocated until they are refurbished – can he give an indication as to more or less ...? I know it is difficult, because obviously each flat will have its own particular intricacies which will need to be dealt with, but a broad indication as to when these are likely to be made available?

Hon. S E Linares: Mr Speaker, as the hon. Member rightly said, it is very difficult to ascertain exactly, of the 28, how much time each one of them will take. I can tell the hon. Member that it is in Housing's interest to have it done as quickly as possible, but obviously, sometimes doing things quickly might not be of the standard that people expect, so it is a question of trying to balance whether we take a little bit more time in refurbishing a flat, for example, and also it depends on the condition we get the flat back in. It is very important, because we are now taking steps in trying to see that people at least return the flat somewhere near how they got it. It is incredible how, sometimes, we get flats back.

Hon. D J Bossino: It does strike me, in terms of his reply to Question 335, that the number is pretty low. Does he have a comment to make by way of expansion of his reply to the answer he has given? As I understand it, if my note-taking is accurate, there are 11 units available for allocation, and then he kindly categorises – the question was posed on that basis. Eleven does not seem like a lot if one considers the high number of individuals who are waiting for flats to be allocated, and certainly I think on this side of the House – and I suppose I speak on behalf of both parties on this side of the House – a lot of the constituency work we get is to do with housing and people waiting, in some cases, many years in very dire circumstances to be housed. I make just that comment.

Hon. S E Linares: Mr Speaker, I gave you a date, as of 13th October, because this is a moving number. For example, from the 28 properties I said are being refurbished, we might, next week, get eight or 10, or as many numbers as are ready. It is a moving number all the time. That is why I emphasised, when I answered the question ... to put a date, because that means on that date there were 11, but we do allocation every other week. Every other week, we have allocation meetings where we allocate houses to people. Sometimes we get 20, sometimes we get 10. It depends on how they are returned and how soon they are returned. It is not a fixed science where you can say every week I am going to get 11, it is moving all the time and that is why I specifically gave a date.

Hon. D J Bossino: So basically is the Hon. Member telling me – and perhaps the question needs to be phrased in a different way – that if one takes a snapshot as at 13th October, on that particular date there were 11 flats available for allocation? Is he able to tell me that he has information – or simply from experience, given he has done that job for some time – whether that

is an acceptable number for that particular date? How does it change? Does it tend to go up, or is it more or less ...? Is this analysed on a weekly basis? I appreciate I am asking the question perhaps without sufficient knowledge of how the system works, but if he could give some helpful comment in relation to that ...

Hon. S E Linares: Again, Mr Speaker, it fluctuates. Sometimes I am very disappointed when I go to the Allocation Committee and I only have 10 houses to give, and then in two weeks' time we have another 20 to give. So it fluctuates. I cannot give a figure. What would I like? I would like to have 40-50 every week, but I have not got them. What I am saying is that it depends on how quickly they are refurbished and turned around.

Some people want movement from a 3RKB to another 3RKB and that is the allocation we do, because it is not only allocating people new houses, it is also changing people in new houses. As I have explained in the House before, we tend to do chains, where family A wants to move somewhere in estate B and then we wait for that family, and at the end we get one house back. So there is a lot of movement all the time. These are probably people who might be in the private sector or living with parents ... that we allocate a specific house to a new person, but it is, all the time, moving. One week, we might get one number and ...

Like I said, all I am trying to do is to have the turnover of houses quicker and better. That is the only way we can work, so that we can then make inroads into the lists.

Mr Speaker: Does the Hon. Marlene Hassan wish to ask a question?

Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon: Mr Speaker, this is a bit of a vague question but over the years I have been going around estates, especially during election time and such, and there have been many flats – way more than the numbers I am hearing here – that have been empty, closed off, needing a revamp, and to me 28 seems very little. It is a strange question, I know, but considering how many properties there are, how can there just be 28 that are being refurbished for allocation?

Hon. S E Linares: There are two reasons why. The 28 are the 28 that we are refurbishing as from 13th October. That is the first thing, and the second thing is there are a number of flats that are empty and we cannot do anything about it, because they were sold by the GSD to the tenants, who subsequently have passed away and the families are keeping the house, and we cannot do anything at all. That has been, for us, a big mistake, in that the GSD sold houses on estates and these houses are kept empty, so it is a house that we cannot do. Not only that, it is costing the Government a lot of money because we have to create a management company and we have to create the whole of the rigmarole, the whole lot of legality because people own houses on big estates.

Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon: Thank you to the Minister for answering that. Can I just ask him is the GSLP Liberal Government selling houses, or not?

Hon. S E Linares: As soon as we came into government we stopped the sale of those houses. We are talking about – (**Hon. Chief Minister:** Post-war.) Yes, we are talking about post-war on the big estates. Of course we sell houses that are in the Town area, where we do the urban renewal, which the hon. Lady asked ... We sell those houses when they are empty, they are beyond economical repair and we put them out to tender, or we sell them to, say, a block of flats that has three or four people living in it, of which two are being sold and the other two are not. We will offer them the sale so that we can get rid of the whole of the stock. But we have stopped, definitely, the sale of flats on big estates because it does not make sense.

Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon: I thank the Minister again, but can I just ask what exactly does not make sense, or what is costly or not costly, because the GSD administration may have sold

230 flats on estates, but in the same way as you see other estates, whether private or public, and some are rented and some are sold. What is the detriment of selling apartments on estates as opposed to not?

235 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, this is something that I have dealt with on a number of occasions and I think it should be clear already. I have said in this House in detail what the issue is, so I am surprised I have to repeat it, but I am happy to.

When we sold, as a Government – and not the GSLP Liberal administration but the GSD administration – a post-war flat in the Government estate, we were selling it, I think, at a rate of £1,000 or £2,000 per square metre, or a lot less than that, even, and when we build, the cost of building is three, four or five times that. So the Government was alienating an asset that had a value four or five times in its hand to be able to rent to tenants, even though the rent we got was nowhere near the cost of development, and was being deprived of having that asset to rent out. The hon. Members' position from opposite was that we should continue to do that and at the same time we should continue to build for rental. So, in other words, you sell for whatever it was – I think it, literally, in some instances, might have been £500 per square metre – and then you go off and build at £6,000 to £10,000 per square metre, depending on what the cost of building might be, to rent out at the same rate as you were renting out the other property. That is economically and financially nonsensical. It is the worst possible use of taxpayers' money and the worst possible use of the assets of the Government – assets, in particular, that we held to house those who needed Government housing. This is not affordable housing; this is government housing.

245 The hon. Lady asks what is the difference with affordable housing. With affordable housing, the Government contributes the land. We then build and we sell 50% at cost and retain 50%, unless somebody wants to buy 100%. The loss is the value of the land alone, but the growth of the value of the asset and the ability of the family to have the asset available to them, first of all creates economic activity, and second has the very important function of enabling a Gibraltarian family to grow and develop within that property. It is a completely different proposition. There is not the loss that you occasion with the sale of these post-war government flats.

I have explained it a number of times. I hope that is helpful.

260 **Mr Speaker:** Next question.

Q338/2022

Constituent surgeries – Whether conducted face to face by Housing Minister

Clerk: Question 338/2022. The Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon.

265 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** Does the Housing Minister conduct face-to-face surgeries with constituents?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Industrial Relations, Employment, Housing and Sport.

270 **Minister for Housing, Employment, Youth and Sport (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, this question comes as a surprise to me. I am very proud of not only meeting with constituents in my monthly clinics but I also visit regularly the housing estates and engage constantly with the tenants' associations. I see this as part of my work as a Government Minister and will continue to do so. So the short answer is yes, very often and very many.

275 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I was just driving at trying to understand if the Minister could answer the process to obtaining appointments, the typical waiting times and how often they are seen, simply because I have been approached by constituents who want to see the Minister, and I wanted to ascertain this.

280 **Hon. S E Linares:** Whichever constituents go to the hon. Lady and want to see me, I can guarantee that I will see them. At the maximum it will take a month, but I usually see them within a week, so for anybody who wants to come to see me my address is GE Suite, Regal House in Queensway. They can go there and make an appointment, and I usually do see them at the monthly clinics. If the person has an urgent matter, I usually see them before.

285 **Mr Speaker:** Next question.

TRANSPORT

Q339/2022

Bus app – Expected wait for reactivation

Clerk: Question 339/2022. The Hon. E J Phillips.

290 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, can the Government state why the bus app is undergoing maintenance and how long the public will need to wait until it is reactivated?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Transport.

295 **Minister for Transport (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, the bus tracker web app is now fully operational. As the hon. Member may appreciate, the tracking service may, from time to time, falter, as it relies on GPS technology and also telecommunications technology.

Separately, the Gibraltar Bus Company website has been under maintenance. I am pleased to advise the hon. Member that my ministerial office has been working closely with the Gibraltar Bus Company and the website is now up with the general content under review. I am hoping that, once again, all relevant important information and route timetables will be available shortly.

300

Hon. E J Phillips: Can the Minister confirm how long the site was down for – the app?

305 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, I believe I was told it was a matter of days. I would not be able to put an exact figure on that. I am not sure, perhaps a week, but if that information is important, I can definitely seek it.

Q340/2022

Park and ride – Government position re implementation

Clerk: Question 340/2022. The Hon. E J Phillips.

Hon. E J Phillips: Mr Speaker, can the Government state its position on the implementation of a park and ride scheme?

310 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Transport.

Minister for Transport (Hon. P J Balban): Mr Speaker, the position of the Government remains that it intends to develop a park and ride scheme at Devil's Tower Road car park after the tunnel under the runway has become operational. Furthermore, the Government is considering the
315 implementation of park and ride at other locations, such as the old air terminal site. These will be announced in the future.

Q341-43/2022

**Registered vehicles by fuel type –
Numbers and percentages re diesel, unleaded, hybrid and electric**

Clerk: Question 341/2022. The Hon. E J Phillips.

Hon. E J Phillips: Mr Speaker, can the Government state of all registered motorcycles in
320 Gibraltar, how many are diesel, unleaded, hybrid or electric, broken down into percentages?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Transport.

Minister for Transport (Hon. P J Balban): Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with
325 Questions 342 and 343.

Clerk: Question 342/2022. The Hon. E J Phillips.

Hon. E J Phillips: Mr Speaker, can the Government state of all registered cars in Gibraltar, how
330 many are diesel, unleaded, hybrid or electric broken down into percentages?

Clerk: Question 343/2022. The Hon. E J Phillips.

Hon. E J Phillips: Can the Government state of all registered commercial vehicles in Gibraltar,
335 how many are diesel, unleaded, hybrid or electric, broken down by percentage?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Transport.

Hon. P J Balban: Mr Speaker, details are as follows. As regards registered motorcycles, there
340 are zero diesel motorcycles, 15,334 petrol motorcycles, zero hybrid motorcycles and 100 electric motorcycles. The percentages are diesel 0%, petrol 99.31% – obviously, because they are petrol, 0% are hybrid and 0.65% are electric. That relates to Question 341.

The following details are for registered cars: diesel, 6,098, which makes up 24.39%; petrol,
17,289, which is 69.14%; hybrid, 1,482, making up 5.93%; and electric, 115, comprising 0.46%.

345 Finally, when it comes to registered commercial vehicles, there are 1,891 diesel, which make up 66.37%; there are 905 petrol, making up 31.77%; five hybrid, making up 0.18%; and electric, four, comprising 1.58%.

Hon. E J Phillips: Mr Speaker, I am grateful to the Hon. Minister for setting out those numbers.
350 We asked this Question because obviously we are attempting to test not only our community's appetite for electric and hybrid vehicles but also the success of the Government's policy of moving people towards acquiring hybrid or electric vehicles.

I know the Minister will recall a public statement made by a distributor in Gibraltar. We will not name them here, but they suggested that acquisitions of hybrid and electric vehicles were at

355 around 65% insofar as new vehicles. Would the Minister agree with me that there is a very long way to go for our community to transition to electric and hybrid vehicles? And what is the Government doing further to persuade members of our community to do that, given the significant levels of air pollution in our community?

360 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, this very much depends on what the suppliers bring to Gibraltar. By default, most petrol vehicles that are arriving in Gibraltar now are hybrid by nature, so I expect these figures to increase pretty quickly.

When it comes to electric vehicles, I think there are a lot of things people think about when they are going to buy an electric vehicle. It is not as simple as swapping one sort of vehicle, an I.C.E driven vehicle to an electric vehicle, because you need to take into consideration things like range and size. People may want to use their cars to go away on long distances, so it means you have to factor in the next place where you could actually charge your car and, when you go on holiday, whether you choose a hotel that has electric charging points. You need to research that. When it comes to local use, I think it has a lot more potential because you can get, probably, around 400-500 km per electric charge and it makes things a lot easier locally, but the moment we move out ... I think most Gibraltarians will use their cars in Spain whenever they have a chance to.

370 So there are factors that deter people from buying electric and I think these things need to be taken into account before we start saying there has been low take-up. There are incentives, as the hon. Gentleman knows. People out there cash back, attractive cashback schemes. We have recently reduced the amount of cashback on hybrids and pushed it towards electric. There are also incentives for people to set up their own electric charging points at home. They get a deduction for that. So there are incentives in that respect.

380 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, in my view, those statistics are fairly shocking insofar as the number in terms ... If you look at the commercial vehicles for one, we have debated in this House before the number of commercial vehicles that are pumping out, to use the Chief Minister's phrase, dirty, grimy diesel – in another context; let's not go beyond that. We have 1,891 commercial vehicles that are pumping out fumes onto our streets – that is 66%, and 31% are unleaded, so 95% of commercial vehicles in Gibraltar are polluting our environment.

385 What is the Minister doing to persuade businesses in our community to transit their working fleets from dirty, grimy vehicles, as the Chief Minister has characterised them in the past, to more efficient, more green aspects? Clearly this Government is founded on a child-friendly and green policy. Isn't it right, therefore ...? I would ask him this question: hasn't their policy, insofar as green Gibraltar in respect of vehicles is concerned, completely failed?

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, I have never used the phrase that the hon. Gentleman has attributed to me. The phrase I have used is 'grimy, smelly diesel', the abbreviation for which is GSD. I am surprised he does not remember. The reason why I refer them to that is because they were going to establish not any aspect that might relate to vehicles, they were going to establish a power station that was going to be exclusively a diesel power station. They were going to establish it in the Nature Reserve and it was going to be spouting grimy, smelly diesel into the Nature Reserve at the area of Jews Gate, where people would be looking over one of the attractive views of the Straits of Gibraltar. Instead of seeing the view now – of the Lathbury sports facility, which is open and operating, the fantastic green area there and the Straits – they would be seeing the six funnels spewing out grimy, smelly diesel.

400 Indeed, Mr Speaker – just before I allow the Hon. Minister to deal with other points he might raise – we introduced, in a number of Budgets, different measures to stimulate people buying vehicles which were not diesel vehicles, to stimulate people buying hybrid vehicles and to stimulate people buying electric vehicles. Those measures have been improved since they were first introduced and have attracted a considerable number of people, although not the sort of

percentage that would have been attracted if we had provided even more incentives. But hon. Members constantly tell us that we spend too much money, so I am surprised that they are encouraging us to enhance those incentives because those are fiscal incentives – that is to say incentives based on money foregone by the Government; that is money not raised by the Government. The Hon. the Minister for Transport will be able to say more.

Now, just looking at whether a vehicle is diesel or petrol is not enough. You have to look at the characteristics of the vehicle – whether it is diesel and a hybrid, whether it is a Euro 6 engine or whether it is an even more sophisticated engine – and look at the emissions. The Hon. the Minister for the Environment was reminding me the other day, in a meeting we were both attending, that actually the air quality in Gibraltar has never been better since we started to measure it. That is not to say that we do not want it to be even better and that we do not want the traffic to not create problems of air pollution. However much less air pollution there is now, any air pollution is air pollution that we need to be fighting against.

So, Mr Speaker, with that, I just hope that the hon. Gentleman will use today's exchanges to have, now, firmly in his mind that the references to grimy, smelly diesel and the initials GSD remind me always of that.

Hon. P J Balban: Mr Speaker, should I elaborate further? *(Interjection by Hon. K Azopardi)* Yes, just to add a few things I have written.

Mr Speaker: The Hon. Minister is going to be replying to the Hon. ... and then we will allow you to ask the question, Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. P J Balban: Mr Speaker, what we also have to remember is that these vehicles attract 0% Import Duty.

The question the hon. Member has asked is based on the total number of vehicles registered in Gibraltar. You have to understand that in Gibraltar there are vehicles which are 10, 20, 30, 50 years old, which means we are comparing something which is a pretty new technology as it slowly diffuses into the population of registered vehicles in Gibraltar. We have only had these incentives for a number of years and there are vehicles out there that are 30, 40 or 50 years old. Obviously, we cannot expect, just because we implement certain incentives, to have, all of a sudden, 50% of our registered vehicles ... It would be different if you had asked the question 'Of the vehicles bought in the past year, how many are diesel, how many are electric and how many are hybrid?' The figures may be more towards what you expected, which was more positive. Remember, we are diluting this figure on a massive scale, so I think it is a bit unfair to say this is not acceptable. I think the question that needs to be looked at is the short term.

Also, as my colleague the Chief Minister was saying, diesel has come a long way. We have Euro 3 diesels. When you are physically behind them – I know when I am cycling behind them – you can feel the heat of the engine and you can smell what is coming out. They all go for MoT, they are all tested for emissions and they have to conform with the emissions that they release as per the date of manufacture, but in those days the requirements were less stringent. Nowadays, we have Euro 6-plus. When we talk about Euro 6 engines, the emissions are extremely low – not that I am saying it is perfect, it is zero, but they are extremely good.

You also need to look at how you generate your source of electricity. We have our LNG, so it is a much greener form of producing electricity, but in other cities, in other countries, you have diesel power stations providing 'fuel' – electrical fuel – to vehicles. They need to see whether, in fact, it is better to have diesel or to have ...

I hope that helps a little bit more with the reply to the question.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, may I –? *(Interjections)*

Hon. Chief Minister: *[Mr Speaker]* ... answering one question – *(Interjections)*

460 **Hon. P J Balban:** Yes, it has been helpful. We have been – (*Interjections*)

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, I have more answers for Mr Phillips.

Mr Speaker: [*Inaudible*] The Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

465 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the Chief Minister clarifying what, in his view, grimy, smelly diesel was. The Hon. Minister gave us the statistics of the registered cars in Gibraltar, of which there were 24% diesel vehicles and 69.1% petrol vehicles. In the circumstances, does he not agree that it is more likely that there is grimy, smelly, leaded petrol – or GSLP, in fact – in Gibraltar?

470 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Well, Mr Speaker, given that one of the things we did immediately we were elected was take the GSD's Jaguar that cost, at the time, £85 to fill with petrol, and instead brought an electric vehicle – (*Interjection*) I am sorry, Mr Speaker, I am afraid that the hon. Member, from a sedentary position, is obviously getting so nervous, having realised that we were the ones who took action to lead by example, and having forgotten that, he wants to try to throw figures which are irrelevant. It cost £80 to fill the Jaguar with petrol at the time, and the cost is in the region of 80p to power the Tesla's battery for a full charge of 400 km. The GSLP Liberals led in demonstrating that electric vehicles worked and that electric vehicles could work in the Gibraltar environment in particular. We made the official vehicle of the Chief Minister an electric vehicle, instead of the vehicle that consumed the most petrol per kilometre of any class at the time.

475 So, Mr Speaker, no, I do not think we will go down in history in that way. I think they will be the ones who will always now have the difficulty of trying to establish themselves as having any environmental credentials, given what their plans were and given how they were going to finance those plans. That is why, as far as I am concerned, grimy, smelly diesel is the way they will be remembered, and that will be their legacy in terms of what they told us they were going to do for our children and their ability to generate electricity. (*Interjection*)

480 **Mr Speaker:** Hold on a second. This is getting out of hand, yet again. (*Interjection*) No. The first person – (*Interjection*) Excuse me. The first person who used unhelpful language, which has generated this exchange, is not the Chief Minister or the Leader of the Opposition. I leave it like that.

I said before that I would allow the Minister for the Environment to contribute, and then we will ask Mr Bossino, and then that will be the end of this question.

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

I rise in order to add to what my hon. Friend the Minister for Transport has stated, because the Department of the Environment works together with the Ministry for Transport in the transition of forms of transport.

500 I think relying on the Government to do anything is only of limited consequence, because the industry is moving in such a way that it will, within the next decade, be very difficult to get anything other than an electric vehicle, so people will have to respond and change.

505 In any case, the Government, apart from the things my hon. Friend has said, is taking a number of steps. It is encouraging businesses to engage with providers of electric vehicles and a number of meetings and workshops have been held with the private sector introducing some of these vehicles. We are also studying the possibility of the use of hydrogen as a fuel, which seems to be the future of heavy-goods vehicles, where electric batteries may be too heavy to be efficient, so that is another aspect. And finally, if the hon. Members have been keeping aware of the media, the net zero delivery body – which is chaired by my friend and colleague the Deputy Chief Minister, and the Minister for Transport is also a member – one of its sub-committees, which has broad

representation within the public service and elsewhere, is actually looking very carefully at the transition of transport in Gibraltar. So any suggestion that we are not doing anything purely shows that the Members opposite are not keeping up with what is actually happening in Gibraltar.

515 **Mr Speaker:** The Hon. Damon Bossino.

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

In relation to the answer he gave in connection with the hybrid cars, I think the hon. Member said that of the general car population 5.9% are hybrid. He may not have this information available to him, but is he able to further particularise that, as to how many of those are plug-in or otherwise? I think they are called mild hybrids. Does he have that information?

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Hon. P J Balban: Mr Speaker, we are talking about private vehicles and the figure encompasses, globally, all the types of hybrid. That could be petrol-electric, diesel-electric, plug-in and those which are not, so I do not have that figure. If it had been asked for, it would have been provided.

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Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q344/2022
Regulation of electric scooters –
Current position

Clerk: Question 344/2022. The Hon. E J Phillips.

530 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, can the Government state where it is currently in relation to the regulation of electric scooters?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Transport.

535 **Minister for Transport (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, we have recently completed our discussions with the Motor Insurance Bureau (MIB) in respect of a number of matters that touch on personal light electric transporters (PLET) and other areas. We agreed with the MIB that we would conclude our discussions with them before moving forward, and we are now able to proceed in this respect.

540 The PLETs Command Paper published in May 2020 included a number of safety requirements that e-scooter riders would need to comply with, such as the wearing of helmets and having both a bell, or horn, and lights on an e-scooter. The Command Paper did not include a requirement for mandatory insurance and all the indications are that the United Kingdom will not introduce mandatory insurance for e-scooters. However, since the Command Paper was published we have been considering making third party liability insurance mandatory for e-scooters, as is already the case in a number of European countries. We have interest from one particular Gibraltar insurer to provide such third party liability cover, but the insurer is seeking comfort that there is to be strong adherence of all aspects of the Command Paper and vigorous implementation of the proposed penalties for the misuse of e-scooters. We need to determine if third party liability insurance will be generally available in Gibraltar, as to include such a requirement without a committed insurer would be pointless.

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Hon. E J Phillips: I am grateful for the answer to that question, which is a much fuller response than the last time I asked this question, over six months ago.

555 Just one question relating to this subject matter. My understanding is that the Government
has received legal advice in respect of the particular use of e-scooters, because there was an
exchange in this House as to the current legality of e-scooters on our streets. I think the last time
I asked this question the former Transport Minister was unsure whether it was legal or illegal. I
think that was ventilated and we did not really get to the bottom of it. Has the Minister now got
560 to the bottom of the current legal position as to the use of e-scooters in Gibraltar?

Hon. P J Balban: Mr Speaker, when e-scooters arrived on our shores – in fact, the shores of
every modern city in the world – I think no one was prepared for them. Nobody was ready for
them, so there was, I think, what you would call – I am not sure if the word I am going to use is
565 actually correct – a lacuna in the law. Is that what you say? Yes, okay, which means whether they
were to be classified as a vehicle because they have an engine, a motor, albeit electric, or whether
they would be carved out of that particular legislation and would become equivalent to electric
bicycles or a bicycles. With the introduction of this Bill, which we will bring to Parliament, we will
see the definition of what we call a PLET become what it is.

570 Like it or not, these things have taken us by storm. They are an alternative to modern transport,
to mobility. They are greener in certain respects and I think we need to be ... I was extremely
sceptical about these devices. I think they are becoming a mainstay in many cities, but many cities
are struggling with the sorts of details you are asking me about, and if the big cities are still
struggling we may find ourselves chasing. We will be looking carefully at what other cities have
575 been doing and whether they decide to include insurance. I took some details down. For example,
in Germany, France, the Netherlands and Belgium they have introduced mandatory insurance for
e-scooters. In Spain, for example, the general orders say that there is no need for it, but having
said that, the local regulations in a number of cities – Barcelona, Valencia, Castellon and Mahon,
for example – have chosen to include insurance.

580 We need to sit down as a Cabinet, as a collective. As I said, we are ready to go, in terms of the
concerns that the MIB brought us. In fact, it was the Hon. Daniel Feetham who approached us
saying we need to look at this in further detail because he was representing the MIB at the time.
We agreed and we worked together in that respect and thought it was something where we
should really pause and ascertain where we should go. In that respect, we have satisfied the MIB
585 and now we have to decide if there is a product that could give us the assurance – which I think
would make it even better, although, remember, most cities do not have them – or it is something
that we need to consider, regulate, give it some form. Already you cannot use any scooter on the
pavement. Many people on social media say they are running wild. We legislate, we have said is
prohibited, but if you see a policeman, you are not going to be on the pavement. So it is a difficult
590 cat to skin. But that would give it form and there would be a lot more protection for the use of
e-scooters in the future.

Hon. E J Phillips: If I may, there are two questions but I will try to combine them into one, for
ease.

595 I am grateful again for the enhanced explanation to my supplementary question. One thing I
would say, though, is as part of the consultation process with members of the public as to the use
of these vehicles and the question mark over regulation and moving forward insofar as third party
insurance, is the Government also considering the level of infrastructure required to handle the
volume? As you say, it is becoming a very popular mode of transportation and a cleaner one, to
600 be fair; I accept that and I agree with him. What level of infrastructure will need to be put in place?
I know he is a keen cyclist. We all know that in this House – everyone in Gibraltar, I think, knows
it because they see him, often, cycling around our streets. What infrastructure does the
Government have to put in place to provide for that? We have limited geography and we have to
accept that, but there are things that we need to do, to make sure this is a safe activity on our
605 streets.

The second question relates to the duration. How long does he expect this process to continue before a Bill is brought to this House?

I am grateful.

610 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, if I can answer the latter question first, as I think it is a quicker one to answer – as I said earlier, we will be sitting collectively to discuss where we go with insurance. We just need to prod those who have shown an interest in providing this third party insurance, and if it goes ahead I think we will be ready to go in that respect. If we find that there is no appetite to cover these vehicles, then we will take the decision on how to proceed, but I do
615 not see that taking a long time. Again, it very much depends on the reply we get from the insurance company.

When it comes to infrastructure, one e-scooter occupies very little space, so if we set off from the premise that 10 more or less take the space of one car, the more e-scooters we have on the road, in theory, should mean there are fewer cars on the road if you take into consideration that
620 it could well be that one e-scooter could equate to one car. It is not the way it goes, because obviously sometimes these e-scooters rob pavements from pedestrians and they rob the buses from bus users. It is not just a straight equation. We are committed to providing infrastructure, which will be extremely helpful, whereby e-scooters will be able to share bicycle lanes in the future. We are developing our lanes in terms of a planification. We are extremely advanced now
625 in that respect, and we hope to be able to announce our vision and our plans shortly, so that at least people see where we are going. Again, this is not a plan for a year, this is a plan which will take many years because we cannot just ... There is one thing when it comes to development ... When you are developing a plot of land to build a building, you are just talking about a footprint. Cycling is taking up the whole of Gibraltar, so we are looking at the whole footprint of Gibraltar,
630 every single construction that is going on, starting or planned. It is very difficult to be able to work together to find where the disruption is going to be, or whether it is worth breaking ground – then somebody has to break ground after you.

So it needs a lot of planning; it is not as easy as I was hoping it would be. Having said that, once that infrastructure, over the years, is ready, I am very confident that we will have options to be
635 able to use roads, shared spaces, segregated bicycle lanes or just cycle lanes which are not segregated but part of the highway.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q345/2022

Road traffic offences in other jurisdictions – Requests for assistance from foreign authorities

640 **Clerk:** Question 345/2022. The Hon. D A Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, on how many occasions in the last five years have foreign authorities asked for the assistance of the Gibraltar authorities in the identification of the owners or drivers of cars who are alleged to have committed a road traffic offence in their jurisdiction in each of the last five years, detailing the jurisdictions in question?
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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Transport.

Minister for Transport (Hon. P J Balban): Mr Speaker, these requests were received and processed through the EUCARIS platform. However, the requests would ordinarily be made via

650 the UK with no associating information as to the origin of the foreign authority in respect of the requesting member state of the EU.

655 More specifically, the Driver Vehicle Licensing Department, as the competent licensing authority for Gibraltar, has, in the last five years, received 416 requests for vehicle/owner information via the EUCARIS system. The EUCARIS platform went live in August 2020. However, as a result of Brexit, access to this platform is no longer available as of January 2021.

660 **Hon. D A Feetham:** So essentially, the position is – and we spoke about it in an earlier set of questions – that as from January 2021, effectively there is no assistance to foreign authorities asking for the identity of Gibraltar owners or drivers of Gibraltar vehicles that are, for example, caught speeding in Spain, France, Switzerland or anywhere else in Europe?

665 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, I think it was only yesterday the Chief Minister rose to reply to these questions, and I think he was very clear that what we had before is no longer available, since January 2021.

Hon. D A Feetham: Does he have a breakdown of the 416 in the last five years? He has given me the total – does he have a breakdown?

Hon. P J Balban: Mr Speaker, no, I do not.

Q346/2022

Road traffic offences in Gibraltar by non-residents – Requests made to foreign authorities for assistance

670 **Clerk:** Question 346/2022. The Hon. D A Feetham.

675 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, on how many occasions in the last five years have Gibraltar authorities asked for the assistance of foreign authorities in the identification of the owners or drivers of cars who are alleged to have committed a road traffic offence in this jurisdiction in each of the last five years, detailing the jurisdictions to which the request were made?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Transport.

680 **Minister for Transport (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, as explained in my previous answer, upon checking with the Driver Vehicle Licensing Department, as the Gibraltar licensing authority, I am advised that, at present, we do not share vehicle identification or owner details directly with any foreign jurisdiction. The Gibraltar Licencing Authority shares vehicle registration information with the UK, who may, in turn, facilitate this to other jurisdictions.

685 As the hon. Member is already aware, the Gibraltar Driver Vehicle Licensing Authority shared information up until 31st December 2020 with the UK via the EUCARIS platform. Access to this platform is no longer available.

690 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, with respect, I do not think he has quite answered the question; maybe he has misunderstood it. The previous question was about foreign authorities asking for assistance of the Gibraltar authorities. This is about the Gibraltar authorities asking for assistance of foreign authorities. Whether it goes through London or otherwise is immaterial.

I am asking how many times in the last five years have the Gibraltar authorities sought assistance from a foreign jurisdiction in relation to a road traffic offence committed in this jurisdiction. I have asked the question before and I think the answer was that there had not been

695 any requests. I asked this question a number of years ago, and I just wanted to see what the position is now.

Hon. P J Balban: Mr Speaker, unfortunately, as I have mentioned, we lost use of this platform a number of years ago, so in that respect there would have been no change.

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Hon. D A Feetham: No, with respect, you are still not answering the question. My question is about the last five years, Mr Speaker, and I am asking in the last five years.

We exited the system in January 2021 – that is a year and nine months – so there is still a period of time before that when you did have available access to this system. I am asking, in that period –
705 I know that after January 2021 it could not happen, but prior to January 2021, for that balance of those five years – how many times have the Gibraltar authorities asked for the assistance of a foreign jurisdiction.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, and what the hon. Gentleman is saying is that
710 there has been no change in respect of the answer he was given. He said he asked a couple of years ago – I think he might have asked it about then.

Hon. D A Feetham: I said two years ago.

715 **Hon. Chief Minister:** You said some years ago, a couple of years ago. I think it might have been about then, and the answer is there is no change. The independent prosecuting authorities, who would be the ones who would have requested this information, do not appear to have requested this information.

720 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, does the Minister not think it is odd that prior to January 2021 there had been 416 requests by foreign jurisdictions of the Gibraltar authorities via the UK? Most of those, I know, are Spanish. Doesn't he think it is odd that we have not asked for assistance of a foreign jurisdiction in order to obtain the identities of people in those foreign jurisdictions who have committed road traffic offences in Gibraltar? The answer he has given me is zero. That is
725 what you are saying. So, from foreign jurisdictions to Gibraltar it is 416; from Gibraltar to a foreign jurisdiction it is zero. Don't you think it is odd?

Hon. Chief Minister: Well, Mr Speaker, frankly, yes, I do. I think it is odd because if the independent prosecuting authorities have a channel through which they can obtain the
730 information about people who have committed offences in Gibraltar, frankly, I think they should. But there are aspects of the mechanisms in play which might make it less odd. For example, in Gibraltar we have a system, as there is in other places, where people are found to be speeding by police officers who use speed guns. Police officers who use speed guns do not need to rely on EUCARIS or any other platform to determine the identity of the person doing the speeding
735 because they stop the vehicle, the person's details are taken and they are fined on the spot, so there is no need to make a request for the information. The same would happen in Spain. If you are caught by a speed gun, a police officer would stop you, you would give your details and there would not be a request for your details through EUCARIS. But of course, through the geography of Spain, there are many more speed cameras than there are in Gibraltar. It is the speed camera
740 that identifies only the registration mark of the vehicle, which then leads to a requirement to obtain the details of the ownership of the vehicle behind the registration mark. Here, we have had many fewer speed cameras for a shorter period, and that might be why the pertinent independent authorities have not had to seek the information and have not sought to seek the information.

745 **Mr Speaker:** Next question.

Q347/2022

Bus service –

Intention to keep free of charge to Gibraltarians

Clerk: Question 347/2022. The Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon.

Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon: Will Government guarantee in this House that the bus service will continue to be free of charge for the Gibraltarian user?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Transport.

Minister for Transport (Hon. P J Balban): Mr Speaker, it is the Government's intention to keep the bus service free in the future, in line with its green policies.

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This Government made bus transportation zero-fare for the local population on 1st May 2012 by removing the club card system. In doing so, Gibraltar became the first city in the world to offer an entirely free bus service to its residents upon showing their ID cards – before Tallinn, Estonia, in 2013. Many cities are now moving in this direction, with Malta having just done so at the beginning of this month.

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Zero-fare bus transportation ticks all the right environmental boxes, putting a free, sustainable alternative mode of transport right into the hands of all residents. Any excuse may now be given for not choosing to use the free bus service, but fare will not be one of those excuses.

Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon: Mr Speaker, I thank the Minister for his answer. Can I just ascertain that this policy is a general party policy going into the future, or is it something just as long as this legislature remains?

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Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, we can only answer as a Government. We are not here to be asked questions as a party.

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Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, can I just ask the Minister ...? That was a welcome change, it was a real step in the right direction, and on this side of the House I say that ... but the Hon. Minister will see, as I do, that probably we need to encourage people more. What can we do? What does he think we can do? What has he got planned to do to persuade people? Having had a free bus service for 10 years, people are still very eager not to use it. Some people are, but it does not appear to be as widely used as you would think, given that it is free.

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Hon. P J Balban: Mr Speaker, absolutely right. I would love to see a massive take-up of the bus service. What more can one do? You have a free bus service –

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Hon. Chief Minister: Pay them to use the bus.

Hon. P J Balban: That is very good!

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Hon. Chief Minister: A pound every time they go on a bus.

Hon. P J Balban: The bus routes follow very similar bus routes that we inherited. The routes have not changed that much; maybe some buses have changed. What more can one do? I think this is a question of slowly, over time, trying to encourage people by providing ... not so much the bus, because the bus is very well used by the elderly community. It is also very well used by children going to school, and that is a welcome change, because before, children were driven to school and on many occasions you would see mum or dad with one child in the car, whereas nowadays it is becoming something social. My daughter, for example, wanted to get the bus

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795 because her friends all go on the bus together and it was how they got to school. So that is something.

When it comes to other forms of encouragement, we need to develop our pavements and make things greener, encourage people to walk more. Most of our trips in Gibraltar could easily be done on foot. We have considered all the talk about why can't we have a bus after nine o'clock at night – well, the truth of the matter is there is very little take-up at night. In fact, our night buses during the weekends are much better than they were. I was surprised recently – our statistics are 800 incredible. Some nights in the past there would be zero take-up at night, and now there is never a night where there is no take-up, as far as I have seen in the statistics. But what can we do?

There are things that can be done that other cities do, but I think they are economically unviable. Instead of every 20 minutes, we could have a bus every 10 minutes or every five minutes. 805 That would make the service more efficient. You would not have to wait for the bus, but the bus tracker solved those things as well. In the previous question of the hon. Member it was clear that people enjoy using the bus tracker. It is a very useful tool. It has been down for a while, people have complained and I think that is very positive. Now you no longer have to wait for the bus, you can stay that bit longer in the park or stay that bit longer in the restaurant and just meet the bus 810 when it comes.

I think it is a good offering. I think it is a question of changing mindset. How we do it is a question up in the air, really.

ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY, CLIMATE CHANGE AND EDUCATION

Q373/2022

Littering offences –

Number of people reported, warned, prosecuted or convicted

Clerk: Question 373/2022. The Hon. E J Phillips.

815 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, can the Government state how many people have been reported, warned, prosecuted or convicted of littering offences?

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

820 **Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, 46 fixed penalty notices have been issued in 2022, so far. Two are pending payment, 22 have been paid, 12 have been passed for prosecution and 10 have been cancelled. Furthermore, approximately 450 people have been warned.

825 **Hon. E J Phillips:** I am grateful for the answer the Minister has provided. It equates to roughly 10% of the total number warned being eventually dealt with in a more serious way than just a slap on the wrist, Mr Speaker.

I just wanted to refer the hon. Gentleman to littering offences more generally and ask a question about the issue we have been discussing for a number of years before COVID, and that 830 is, of course, the depositing of cigarette butts at Harbour Views Road. I know the hon. Gentleman – as a result of our exchanges in this House, I am sure, but complaints by members of the public in relation to legislating in that area – put forward ... and we warmly welcomed the regulations that were put forward. We are certainly getting representations again about the significant volume of cigarette butts in this particular area, and the Minister is fully aware of how 835 they get deposited into the sea and the dangerous effects of that. What more can the Government do about that? We are talking about thousands upon thousands of cigarette butts being

extinguished on the gravel area between the Hospital and Morrisons car park. Clearly the warnings, if they have been happening, are not having an effect, so what can the Government do about that, insofar as pushing the enforcement process a bit further?

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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, it is difficult because people will insist and persist. We know the problem with littering is not the fact that we do not clear up; it is the fact that it has been deposited in the first place.

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Obviously, enforcement in that particular area is a challenge. It may be possible that the employer of the vast majority of people who do it may be able to encourage their staff not to do so. I think we will start having to issue fixed penalty notices to more people, now that the warning in some cases works and in some cases it does not. We are in the process of upping the ante, as they say, to try to resolve that particular issue.

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Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q374-75/2022

Dog fouling offences –

Number of people reported, warned, prosecuted or convicted;

Trees –

Number destroyed in last 24 months

Clerk: Question 374/2022. The Hon. E J Phillips.

Hon. E J Phillips: Mr Speaker, can the Government state how many people have been reported, warned, prosecuted, or convicted of dog fouling offences?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment 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 375.

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Clerk: Question 375/2022. The Hon. E J Phillips.

Hon. E J Phillips: Mr Speaker, can the Government state how many trees have been destroyed in the last 24 months?

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

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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, in 2022, 45 patrols have been conducted by the Environmental Agency for dog fouling; 145 samples have been collected; 12 fines have been placed, five paid and seven passed for prosecution; 15 fixed penalty notices have been issued for no licence and registration – three of these were passed for prosecution of non-payment of fines. Furthermore, the Environmental Protection and Research Unit carries out patrols on all beaches two or three times daily, depending on the availability of officers, as they are also engaged in other duties on land and at sea. Eighty people have been warned for not having dog registrations in place.

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In relation to the trees, 121 have been felled in the past 24 months. Trees may have been felled because they had perished, they posed a health and safety risk, or otherwise following DPC approval. In the case of the latter, trees removed are normally replaced at a ratio of two for one.

880 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, in relation to the patrols that are conducted in relation to dog
fouling more generally, does the Minister agree that we need to improve that particular statistic?
We live in a small community and every part of Gibraltar is the shop window to every single tourist.
To have what I can see is a very low statistic in relation to fines – five have been paid, and there
885 have been 12 fines in relation to dog fouling and still the problem persists ... Does the Hon.
Minister agree with me that we need to improve and increase the number of patrols, so that we
can continue to prevent this disgusting activity of people leaving their dog mess on our streets?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, I always answer yes when I am asked whether things should
be improved, so that is a standard; in fact, I have referred to that later, on another question.

890 I think the critical figure here is not the 12 fines, it is the 145 samples collected, which is a lot
of samples. Sadly, the collection of samples does not always lead to a DNA identification, and that
is perhaps where more samples might improve that.

Clearly, we will try to do as much as possible. The Environmental Agency obviously has a lot of
responsibilities, but they now dedicate time regularly to this. I do not want to prosecute more
895 people, I do not want to fine more people; I want people to stop doing this thing, this disgusting
habit that people have of leaving dog faeces around.

Q376/2022

Trees –

Number destroyed in last 24 months

Clerk: Question 376/2022. The Hon. E J Phillips.

900 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, can the Government state how many new trees have been
planted in the last 24 months?

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

905 **Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E
Cortes):** Mr Speaker, 207 trees have been planted in the past 24 months.

910 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, I know that this is an area that really fascinates the hon.
Gentleman. I was wondering whether he would have a detailed breakdown of locations and if he
might be able to be more helpful for that particular answer. I would be grateful.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, I have a detailed breakdown of the trees that have perished
and been otherwise removed and of the trees that have been planted. I would be happy to send
those to him after the meeting.

Q377/2022

Refuse collection points –

Collection times

915 **Clerk:** Question 377/2022. The Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Is this the one where he thinks there could be room for improvement?
(*Interjection by Hon. Prof. J E Cortes*)

Please provide details of the refuse collection times in respect of each collection point.

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

Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, I just ask the Hon. Mr Phillips if he would remind me, by email or message, to send him the list. I do not want not to see my note and then he does not get it. Thank you,
925 Mr Speaker.

The evening shift starts at approximately 9 p.m. and arrival at each point depends on the route in question and the amount of time the refuse collectors need to empty the trucks. The three large and three small refuse collection vehicles service the following districts. The first, large, truck covers Main Street and surroundings. The second, large, truck covers Queensway and
930 surroundings. The third, large, truck covers South District to North District. The fourth truck, which is a small one – that is what I mean by that – covers the south end of Main Street and south part of Upper Town. The fifth, small, truck covers Europa Point and surroundings. The sixth, small, truck covers Main Street and surroundings for cardboard only.

The morning shift starts at 5 a.m. It consists of three large and two small refuse collection
935 vehicles which service the following districts. The first, large, truck covers the airfield and surroundings. The second, large, truck covers Laguna, Glacis and surroundings. The third, large, truck covers Varyl Begg and surroundings. The fourth, small, truck covers the Upper Town and surroundings. The fifth, small, truck covers Europa and surroundings. The length of time spent at each collection point will vary every day depending on the traffic, the amount of rubbish at that
940 point and other factors such as cars being double parked and obstructing the ability of refuse collectors to remove the rubbish.

Hon. D J Bossino: Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the full response given by the hon. Member.

There are occasions when it becomes rather unsightly and I understand that it is because the
945 collection point's time has not yet arrived. I suppose it can be dealt with in two ways, and perhaps both could be deployed by Government. I would be grateful for the Minister's view in relation to what I am about to say. One is to increase the number of occasions the refuse is collected, and the other one would be to regulate when individuals can deposit rubbish.

I know that in other cities – indeed, I think even as close by as La Linea – you cannot deposit
950 rubbish as and when you please. I have seen, on more than one occasion, individuals deposit rubbish, let's say on a Saturday morning, and the rubbish is then not collected until Monday morning. I know he is going to be consulting with the Chief Minister, so ... The final point I made, which he may not have heard me say, is that you do see people depositing their household rubbish on a Saturday morning, knowing full well that it will not be collected until the early hours of
955 Monday morning on most occasions, which is a practice that may be controlled if there was some sort of enforcement in terms of when you can deposit the rubbish and therefore avoid the unsightly mess that can stay there for too long.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, there are already limitations in the law – I believe is the
960 Litter Act; I may be wrong, so I would need to reference that – as to the depositing of rubbish on Saturdays and at certain hours. I think perhaps people have taken it for granted that they can deposit rubbish at any time. In fact, in relation to Main Street, we are in active discussion with the Chamber of Commerce and the Federation as to how they can assist in getting business owners, in particular – who, in Main Street, are the ones who mainly put out the rubbish – to stick to the
965 appropriate hours and co-ordinate better with the refuse collectors. We are looking at various options there.

In relation to doing the trips more frequently, this is not easy. The reason why we have to have an evening and a morning shift is because we do not have enough vehicles to do all the districts

970 in one go. These vehicles are extremely expensive and I think we would hesitate, particularly at this point in time, to purchase more vehicles.

As I said, in relation to the putting out of rubbish, we are in discussion with business in order to try to improve that.

975 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, like me, he is not aware of what the Litter Act provides, and whether it controls this is something that maybe we can check. I wonder whether – given that two Members of the House are not aware and given that people, if those rules and regulations are there, are flouting them – it requires the Government to commence some sort of awareness campaign to try to curb the practice in line with the law, should that be the case.

980 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, what I was not certain of was whether it was the Litter Act or another Act, but there are times set out as to the putting out of rubbish.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): For some time since the change was introduced, which I think was either in their time or in the time of the first GSLP administration, it has been illegal to put your rubbish out on a Saturday evening. I am very surprised he does not know it. We are not allowed because there is no collection on a Saturday night, and for that reason it is an offence to put out your rubbish on a Saturday. You are not allowed to put your rubbish out until Sunday evening.

990 **Hon. D J Bossino:** It is not a major issue, honestly. I certainly was not aware. I do not do it myself, but it is not a major issue. I will be checking the point, but the specific question that I asked, which I do not think has been answered, is whether there ought to be a greater awareness campaign.

995 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Awareness, as I am going to say later, in another question, is a continuum. More awareness is always good, but the law is the law.

Hon. D J Bossino: I believe these collection times – just to confirm – do not apply on Sundays; there is no collection on Sundays. (**Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** No.) (*Interjections*) Oh, I see. (*Interjections*)

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: There is no collection on Saturday evenings.

Mr Speaker: Let's move on to our next question.

Q378/2022
Service provision to beaches –
Details of providers

1005 **Clerk:** Question 378/2022. The Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Please provide details of the private entity or individuals which, or who, provide services to the beaches, to include equipment for the disabled, lifeguards and beach attendants, to include their names, financial arrangements and duration of their contracts.

1010 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment and Education.

Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, there are two companies that provide services to the beaches in this regard.

1015 The beach lifeguard service is provided by ALS Telematics Ltd. ALS Telematics Ltd has a contract for the beach lifeguard, pool lifeguard and beach attendant services provided by the Department of the Environment, providing beach management and safety standards policies, with the aim of achieving a safe environment and the enjoyable use of public beaches all year round. The current contractual fee stands at £60,000 per annum and is valid until December 2025. All required

1020 equipment related to the lifeguard service is procured by the Department of the Environment directly.

The beach-accessible equipment is provided by the Mobility Care Centre. The Mobility Care Centre carries out assessments, required repairs, calibration and certification of all our departmental beach-accessible equipment prior to the start of the official bathing season. The company also provides a repairs and maintenance programme covering on-site attendance and service, where required, throughout the duration of the official bathing season. This year has been the first year the Department has purchased new accessible, amphibious chairs, as the ones inherited from the Gibraltar Tourist Board were showing signs of wear and tear and were in need of replacement. These were purchased by the Department of the Environment through the

1030 Mobility Care Centre as the only provider of these locally.

This year's service agreement was broken down as follows: pre-inspection checks of all beach equipment, £600.00; repair and maintenance cover, including call-outs, for all equipment up to the end of September 2022, £1,800; labour costs for making ready all equipment requiring certification, £600; labour costs for certification of patient-handling equipment, including the provision of the certificates of compliance, £1,300. Upon enquiry, and to the best of our knowledge, this is the only entity that is capable of providing the required overall service to the Department.

1035

Hon. D J Bossino: Mr Speaker, in relation to the entity he referred to, ALS Telematics Ltd, he gave us the duration of the contract – it ends in December 2025 – and, as far as the Government is concerned, that arrangement incurs on the public purse a payment of £60,000 per annum. Can he say when that contract started?

1040

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, there was an expression of interest in 2019. Three companies applied and the Department chose this one as the one they felt could best and most economically provide the service. This would have been either 2019 or 2020 – I am not absolutely sure as to whether the actual contract started in 2019 or 2020 – so it looks like a five-year contract.

1045

Hon. D J Bossino: Would he have with him details of the board of directors and shareholders of that company?

1050

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: No, Mr Speaker, but I am sure that that information is publicly available.

Hon. D J Bossino: Is it his view that that commercial arrangement is working well – I appreciate 2025 is still some way away – such that he would consider continuing with that type of arrangement? I do not know what the arrangement was before there was a private entity, whether that was the arrangement which his Government and previous Governments entered into, and it is the first time they have engaged a private entity to carry out these this work. I have asked there for two points.

1055

1060

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Formerly the lifeguards were employed directly by the Department and we were not satisfied with that arrangement. There was not the proper supervision that we could afford and so on. This contract means that the Department can now count on, as a result of training provided through them, two in-house Royal Life Saving Society qualified trainer assessors,

1065 which allows us to keep a much closer eye on the quality and the standards. There are now new
beach risk assessment protocols and procedures which are carried out all year round, and we are
much more satisfied that the service has improved.

1070 I can give some statistics in that, for example, the number of preventive actions the lifeguards
have had to be involved in has decreased since 2019. The need for them to assist has also
decreased. It seems that they are much more on top of it, now that they have this structure, than
was the case in the past.

1075 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Do I take it, from that, that it is an arrangement that he would like to see
continuing into the future? As he knows, I have accepted that in 2025 things may change, but he
seems to be satisfied that the arrangements are working well.

1080 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, yes, fortunately, we have not had any tragic episodes on our
beaches for a long time. It could always happen, so I do not want to tempt fate. I think the lifeguard
service is much improved on what it used to be. We are of the view that we are happy for the
arrangement to continue until 2025, but I am not going to express a view as to what might happen
after that. Hopefully, it will still be Government.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q379/2022
Charles V wall –
Details of works

1085 **Clerk:** Question 379/2022. The Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Please state when the scaffolding structure by Charles V wall was set up, how
long it is expected to remain there, the nature of the works which are being carried out, which
entity is carrying out those works and what the cost is.

1090 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment and Education.

Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, I thank Mr Bossino for the opportunity to talk about heritage.

1095 The scaffolding was placed in December 2020 in order to protect the public from falling
masonry. Preliminary works have commenced this week with a view to restoration works
commencing the week of 24th October – next week; this was obviously drafted previously. The
envisaged works should last between four and six months.

1100 The estimated cost is around £50,000 but could be less. It is very difficult to estimate the
restoration of heritage assets, as you do not know the extent of the damage until you start the
works themselves.

The restoration works will be undertaken by the Ministry for Heritage and Gibraltar National
Museum with the support of Electricon, a private contractor.

1105 A Victorian-era pillar was detached from the medieval wall due to the growth of two olive
trees. They were exerting pressure on the superimposed construction and are now displacing it
towards the outside, with serious risk of detachment of the constituent material. I have to point
out that it has got worse since 2020, which is why we have to act now and cannot delay it any
further.

Ornamental shields and reliefs have also been damaged. They are made with mortar from a
mould. This explains the type of breaks that the lower left shield has, due to its fragility, since it

1110 probably does not have an internal reinforcement frame. Thus, being embedded in the wall, the
horizontal crack in the wall has spread over the shield. The shield has several cracks and fissures
and some very fragile elements, so it must be removed from the wall for restoration and later be
returned to its original location. It is therefore necessary to remove the roots and remains of
1115 vegetation that are causing localised damage in the cracks in the wall and especially, given their
severity, between the wall and the pillar.

The works will focus primarily on the pillar and the wall area, including the entire area of the
walkway, where the vegetation is causing damage to the structure. The pillar and the surrounding
areas of the wall will have to be dismantled in a controlled manner in order to be able to access
the tree roots and eliminate them. Once the roots have been removed, the dismantled area will
1120 be rebuilt.

The choice of material for the reconstruction will be conditioned by the material that appears
during the dismantling – that is, if any ashlar of adequate size are present, these will be reused.
If, on the other hand, only small masonry and bricks in poor condition are present, these will be
discarded and modern construction material will need to be used. In any case, lime and sand-
1125 based mortars will be used.

In order to standardise the surface, a mortar based on sand and lime will be applied, and an
incised drawing of the ashlar masonry will be reproduced. In order to achieve homogeneity in the
surface and eliminate the signs of different repairs carried out on the wall with different materials
and techniques, it will also be necessary to eliminate the surface layer of grey cement that covers
1130 the wall and the pillars.

Hon. D J Bossino: Thank you. I think he enjoyed giving that reply, didn't he? It was very
interesting to listen to the Minister giving that mini-lecture. I am sure he misses his former role.

1135 May ask why there was what appears to be an initial delay? He gave us the date of December
2020 when there was this urgent need to set up the scaffolding because of the falling masonry, as
he was discussing – presumably because of all the things he has just mentioned. (*Interjection by
Hon. Prof. J E Cortes*) It was not, okay, it was separate to the vegetation and the things growing
there. So it was basically delayed from December 2020 to 24th October this year – if he can explain
why there was a delay.

1140 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, there were various reasons. One of them was the fact that
the base of ... The scaffolding and the hoarding were placed as a precaution. It did not look as bad
as it looks now, so it was not that urgent, but you always err on the side of caution. Clearly now it
has become more urgent because of the passage of time.

1145 We had to determine whether, with the limited budget we know we have available at the
moment, it was an emergency, or not, and had to be dealt with. But there is a second reason
which is also relevant and actually probably led to as big a delay as anything else, and that is the
need to have experts working on it. We needed to identify the experts and work with the Museum
to see whether their expert was available, and that has taken quite a number of months because
1150 this is not a job that anybody can do; it has to be done very carefully under careful supervision.
Also, there was a period of time in which the whole arch and the crests and so on had to be
assessed and the details that I have read out here prepared.

So it is a combination of all these things, but I am happy to say that the work will start now,
and within four to six months we should see it repaired and the scaffolding removed.

1155 **Hon. D J Bossino:** He has assuaged the concern I had and anticipated the question I was going
to ask about the expertise surrounding the work, so I am very happy to hear what he has just said
in terms of the expert involvement in all of this, because we are dealing with a very important
historical heritage asset.

1160 From what he tells me, these works seem to have been very specific in the sense that it was in
response to an issue. Presumably they are taking advantage of the fact that they are there and

might as well carry out more wider works. Could this be a precursor to refurbishment – and I appreciate that there is a budgetary constraint – of other historical walls?

1165 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Yes, this was a response. I would love to have millions and millions to spend on restoring our walls. Let's make no secret of that. We have carried out some work in the past few years – the *[inaudible]*, for example. We are about to start work, within the next week or two, on the Tower of Homage, also to remove vegetation. I cannot think of any others we have on the list at the moment, but certainly we will react to any urgent damage or any place which we identify threatens the existence of walls.

1170

In the case of the Moorish Castle, the Tower of Homage has been there for over 1,300 years. We would not like it to start falling to bits on our watch, so clearly, these things are given priority.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q380/2022
Upper Town –
Update re redevelopment

1175 **Clerk:** Question 380/2022. The Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Please provide an update with regard to the redevelopment of the Upper Town, and Road to the Lines more specifically.

1180 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for the Environment and Education.

Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, ideally – I say again – I would like to have a budget of millions to completely upgrade and restore the Upper Town and, indeed, other urban areas, such as parts of the Lower South District, through which the hon. Member walks on a regular basis, but we do not, and therefore our strategy is to encourage positive developments and invest strategically in order to do so.

1185

Examples of areas that have been totally restored over the past decade include the old Police Barracks, which were derelict and now are a beautifully restored complex. That was a private development. Nearby, we have the old St Bernard's Hospital, which now houses two primary schools and a music academy. The proactive planning process has ensured that these areas are developed in consonance with the character of the Old Town.

1190

As another example, this time in the South District, we are currently in the process of allocating the area of the former GBC building to a preferred bidder, which will improve the area and should stimulate further urban renewal.

1195

Another example is the creation of Theatre Royal Park and the refurbishment of Governor's Parade, which has revitalised the area and once again encouraged private landlords to up the ante and improve their adjacent properties. This kind of initiative, which is targeted and at relatively little cost to the public purse, will continue.

1200

Meanwhile, the Urban Renewal Committee has resumed its activity and is tackling such issues as concealing of cables and pipes, and facade restoration. The Urban Renewal Officer continues to work on improving the state of many buildings and has successfully engaged in ensuring removal of cables, junction boxes and other accretions from buildings in the Town. Further to that, in the past few years he has issued 48 notices under section 61 – formerly section 37 – of the Town Planning Act, most of which have resulted in remedial action.

1205

In respect of Road to the Lines specifically, this House was briefed on the proposed redevelopment during the Budget session in June. The Government continues in negotiations with a preferred bidder for the area.

1210 **Hon. D J Bossino:** In relation to his last points, which really inspired this question on the back of a complaint that was raised by Action for Housing ... The Government responded by way of a press release saying that in fact that area is now going to be the subject of redevelopment, and it was indeed the subject of the Hon. the Deputy Chief Minister's Budget address. It was really that I had a particular interest in exploring further, if I may, Mr Speaker.

1215 I think he said they are still in negotiation in relation to that. The Hon. the Deputy Chief Minister, on 20th June, said that the Government was on the verge of concluding an agreement, which he explained would completely reform and refurbish the Upper Town and also the access areas to Road to the Lines and all the rest of it. Is he able to give us a bit more detail as to when he expects that to conclude, and then for the much needed works to commence?

1220 **Deputy Chief Minister (Hon. Dr J J Garcia):** Mr Speaker, yes, there was actually a meeting this week and we are close, but we are not quite there yet.

1225 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Would he have sufficient courage to say when he expects to be in a position to announce that an agreement has been reached and works will commence?

1230 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Part of the answer to that question is part of the negotiations, so the timescales and all that are also what would be included in an MoU, hopefully, if an MoU is signed. Certainly, the Government is interested in getting this done as quickly as possible, and we are nearly there.

Hon. D J Bossino: Presumably he is not in a position to give any insight as to what the – I think he described it as significant – cash premium for the land is likely to be, or is.

1235 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, not at this stage. It is still a live negotiation.

Hon. D J Bossino: These are still relevant questions, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker: Final question.

1240 **Hon. D J Bossino:** *[Inaudible]*

1245 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** I think it depends on when the agreement is finalised. That would allow concept designs to be produced and then those could be presented to the DPC for the start of the formal consultation process with all the entities represented. So I cannot give him an exact timing until the negotiations have concluded.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q381/2022
Schedule of listed buildings –
Whether private properties to be added

Clerk: Question 381/2022. The Hon. D J Bossino.

1250 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Please state whether the Government has considered listing privately owned buildings such as Fortress House under the Heritage and Antiquities Act; and if the conclusion was that they should not be listed, why not?

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

1255

Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, the Heritage and Antiquities Advisory Council has discussed the listing of private properties on several occasions. Indeed, the Heritage and Antiquities Act 2018 expressly envisages the scheduling – that is the listing in Schedule 2 of privately owned buildings under sections 15(4)(e) and 17(3). We are currently in discussion with a number of landlords whose properties we are considering adding to the Schedule.

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Hon. D J Bossino: Specifically in relation to Fortress House, I appreciate that it has been a subject of liquidation and it has already been sold. Do the negotiations include Fortress House?

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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, the discussions, so far, have not included Fortress House. There have been discussions with the proposed developers of Fortress House in relation to their forthcoming planning application and there is another meeting, which we are setting up within the next couple of weeks, at which we will touch a number of issues, which would include this.

1270

Hon. D J Bossino: Is he able to state how many properties he has received advice on in relation to this? And, if I am slightly cheeky, which properties is he looking at?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, I do not think it would be fair with to the landlord, although the Act gives me the power to include in the schedule without necessarily having the consent of the landlord. I think it is good form to engage with the landlord and try to get agreement, even though agreement is not necessary. This happened when we were setting up the Act and we discussed the places of worship with the relevant denominations and got their acceptance, even though it was not necessary.

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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: I do not think it is fair to give the names. I think we are talking, from memory, about maybe half a dozen, six or seven, as the initial tranche of listed private properties, but we are in discussion with landlords, as I say.

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Hon. D J Bossino: Mr Speaker, to get a sense of what the Minister's thinking is in relation to this, of the half a dozen he is considering, is it possible that he may consider proceeding to enforce even without the landlord's consent?

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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, there are a range of views. Some landlords, because this is very new in Gibraltar, tend to feel that, even though they have no intention of damaging their property from a heritage perspective, it would perhaps provide some constraints as to what they can do, and they are worried about the value of the property. However, research in the UK has shown that listed buildings in fact increase in value and do not decrease. That is the kind of conversation we are having. As I said, it varies from those who are keen to those who are less keen.

1290

If there were private properties or artefacts like fireplaces within private properties that I felt, and on advice from the Heritage and Antiquities Council, were under threat, I think my duty to the heritage of Gibraltar would be such that I might be obliged to consider listing them with or without the landlord's consent. I do not think it would come to that because that is not the nature of the conversations we are having.

1295

1300 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Just on this issue, is there a common theme to this bag of six or seven properties? Is it, for example, that they are all in a particular zone of heritage importance, or are they classified because of their age, even though they are in diverse parts of Gibraltar, or is it because there has been a singular assessment of their own integral value – in a heritage sense; I do not mean value in a financial sense.

1305

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: I have to be careful because I do not want to say anything that might identify the landlords in question.

1310 They are significant properties in the old parts of Gibraltar where, in some cases, there have already been recent restorations which have been very sympathetic to heritage and where I sense that the landlord is particularly sympathetic to heritage and therefore the conversation will be an easy conversation to have.

I think it is important that we should list or schedule the first group and then use that to encourage others to come along and put theirs forward.

1315

Hon. D J Bossino: I was going to ask that question, in terms of his thought process in relation to this, whether this is the first batch of properties he is considering and not the only batch and he already has his eye ... and indeed the Council advising him to list another batch when this process is completed.

1320

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Yes, Mr Speaker. Coincidentally, my hon. Friend the Minister for Postal Services, Tourism and the Port and I were at the National Gallery launching the set of Gustavo Bacarisas stamps this morning and we were admiring the works of Rudesindo Mannia, who captured some of the old parts of town. That is the sort of thing that encourages us, and me with the particular responsibility, to try to ensure that we keep the look.

1325

From my point of view, we need to have a few listed buildings that will show landlords that they have everything to gain and nothing to lose, so that others will then come on board much more quickly and much more easily. I think it would be good for Gibraltar and for the future of Gibraltar's heritage.

1330

Hon. D A Feetham: Thank you, Mr Speaker, I really appreciate it.

Can I urge the Minister to actually be more ambitious in relation to this? (*Interjection*) Sorry, but yes, more ambitious in relation to this. At the end of the day, essentially listing by consent with the owners is a little bit of a cop-out if you really want to preserve the heritage of Gibraltar.

1335

If there is heritage that is worth preserving, then of course all of us who are in Government, or indeed we as a responsible Opposition, have to grasp the nettle and say we have just got to preserve these buildings and list them. It is actually not unusual in other parts, in Europe. In the UK it is obviously the system that applies there, the listing of properties from Grade 1 all the way to Grade 1*, Grade 2 etc., so could I urge the Minister to be more ambitious about this?

1340

I live in a historic house myself. If I were asked – (*Interjection*) No, I have absolutely no problem at all in listing Ince's Farm. I think it is a wonderful way of preserving heritage in Gibraltar.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, my ambition, not for myself but for what I do, knows no bounds, but I will consider myself duly urged by the hon. Member.

1345

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q382/2022

**Botanic Gardens –
Refurbishment of footpaths and area near main entrance**

Clerk: Question 382/2022. The Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Please state whether the Government has any immediate plans to refurbish the footpath and surrounding area leading to the northern main entrance to the Botanic Gardens. I hope I have described this sufficiently well, so that the Minister has been able to identify where I mean.

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

Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, this area was earmarked for improvement as part of the Grand Parade Park and underground carpark project proposed in our manifesto. Sadly, and as this House is aware, this is one of the projects that has suffered a delay due to the economic strain of the pandemic.

Some repairs and maintenance works have been carried out in the area, and there is clearing of excess vegetation carried out as required. The area will be improved as soon as funds allow the project to resume.

Hon. D J Bossino: Given that we are in urging mode here on this side of the House, can I urge him not to wait for the wider project in relation to Grand Parade, which I imagine is going to incur quite a lot of expense, and simply fix that area I have just identified?

As he knows, I walk there on my morning walk to the office, and the Botanic Gardens are looking really good, but then, for some inexplicable reason, because it is not held by the Botanic Gardens but directly by the Government, as I understand it, the look of it is quite bad and quite deplorable. Of course, the tourists coming here will simply not be able to make that distinction as to why that is the case. It really is in a bad way and he appreciates – because he and I have discussed this, albeit by WhatsApp – that it is something that needs to be sorted out. Can I urge him to try to at least fix that area, the vegetation and all the rest of it?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, the Botanic Gardens as a whole are looking beautiful and much better than when I was in charge, I must say, which I am very happy to recognise.

The area is one that, when I was Director of the Gardens, always frustrated me. It is a difficult area to maintain because it is not fenced in, it is part of the ... There are many reasons, going back 30 years, why it is not – largely financial at the time.

We do carry out clearing of vegetation. A significant section of wall was repaired last year. It does need investment and, as and when we are able to provide the funds, clearly I am very keen to sort it out. I will not deny that.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q383/2022

**St Martin's School –
Review of capacity**

Clerk: Question 383/2022. The Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

1385 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, will Government be reviewing the capacity of St Martin's School in line with the evolving needs of students and a projection of children likely to be future students there?

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

1390

Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, at the 2015 General Election, the parties that I proudly represent in this House, the GSLP and Liberals, committed to build a new St Martin's, and the GSD, as then constituted, said it was not a priority for them to build such a school, but they did commit, as a priority, to build a new football stadium at Victoria Stadium. We, I believe, got our priorities right. The school we built and delivered was built for the number of pupils expected, according to the advice and projection of our professionals.

1395

The number of pupils we are now advised can benefit from attendance at St Martin's has increased. As a result, the Government is considering several options for accommodating the recent and unpredictable increase in the number of pupils enrolled at St Martin's. These include providing for Early Birds Nursery at a separate site.

1400

I would add that the staff of St Martin's and Early Birds do an excellent job and that their new school is a brilliant addition to our educational infrastructure, delivered very proudly by us and marking the difference in our priorities as parties.

1405

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, in 2017-18 the Government assessed that there were about 1,500 pupils in Gibraltar who were classified as special needs in different ways. The trends in Gibraltar – and, indeed, worldwide, but clearly in Gibraltar – have been that there have been pupils who require greater special needs and greater assistance and so on. When the project of St Martin's was conceived, was no leeway built into the project so that they could deal with issues of capacity going forward? Was there no assessment of capacity projected?

1410

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Yes, Mr Speaker, the school was designed with the full involvement of the staff and the Department of Education's educational advisers and was projected for an increase in size based on the average entry for the past six, seven or eight years.

1415

I have figures here. If we look at the numbers in our pre-school for Early Birds, in 2009-10 there were seven, the following year eight, then nine, then eight, then seven, then nine, then eight, then eight, then nine in 2017-18, and then eight again in 2018-19, which is when we were dealing with designing the school. Unpredictably, the number jumped to 12 in 2019-20, 17 in 2020-21, a slight decrease to 12, and this year 25.

1420

There is no way that an average going over nearly 10 years of eight or nine could have been predicted as an entry of 25. We have been able to accommodate satisfactorily Early Birds this year, but this was not predictable. It is not that it was not predicted, it is that it was not predictable. Therefore, we are considering moving the nursery provision offsite, which would allow more classrooms for the older children there, and we are looking at other options too. But this, I say very honestly, was not something that we could have predicted.

1425

Hon. K Azopardi: Can I just ask the Minister – he may have a figure in front of him, given all the figures he spouted just now – what is the current number of students at St Martin's? Does he have that?

1430

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Yes, I do, Mr Speaker. At the moment, including the Early Birds Nursery, there are 109.

1435 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, if there are 109 at St Martin's now, and that is a number that is giving us capacity issues, how is it that in their table, published on their website, there is a figure of 124 at St Martin's School in 2017-18? How is 109 a bigger problem than 124 in 2017-18?

1440 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I would have to check the figures on the website because the number I have for 2017-18 is 63. I can go back to 2009-10: school plus Early Birds, 34, 38, 40, 47, 48, 50, 55, 55, then it goes to 63, then the big jump to 73, 84, 94 and 109. I will clearly check the website. I am not sure whether we are looking at the same figures, but if that is the figure he has picked up from the website then clearly I will need to check that.

1445 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, I encourage him to do so. It is on the Government's statistics website, in the table which is headed 'Total number of pupils with special needs for the academic year 2017-18', and for 'St Martin's Special' it has 124 in the column of ... That is what it says. It is called that on the table, 'St Martin's Special'. That is what it says on the table. You cut across and under 'Total' it is 124. That is why I could not understand the point. Perhaps the hon. Member can go and check those statistics. They may need amending, but they may also need updating, and I would encourage the hon. Member to update that because there has not been an updated table on the number of pupils with special needs for an academic year beyond 2017-18, which is on the public website. So perhaps the hon. Member can do that.

1450
1455 Can I just ask him, on this issue, so that I can understand the point a bit more ...? He says that, I assume on a temporary basis, some pupils are going to be moved off site or they are considering doing some classes off site? Has he identified those locations? Is it on the basis that there will then be – I am not sure if I captured the entire answer he gave originally – works at the current site of St Martin's to make it greater capacity?

1460 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, of course I will check those figures. I can only give him the figures I have been given by the Department. I just wonder whether those figures might include the learning support facilities in some of the other schools, but I will have to check that.

1465 Regarding the alternatives, the idea is that the Early Birds nursery might move off site. If that is the case, and if we do that, there will be no need for works at the current site because it would release the classrooms that we need to accommodate the children who are not in the nursery.

As regards sites, we are looking at various, but I am not at liberty to discuss that here because we are considering different options.

1470 **Hon. K Azopardi:** I am grateful for that, but on his supposition that it might be that it includes numbers of pupils in other schools, I can tell him that staring at the table there are plenty of numbers for all the other schools, so it does not seem to me that it must be the answer, but by all means if the hon. Member can check that it would be helpful to have that.

1475 In terms of the Early Birds moving off site, again I ask the same question: has there been an identification of specific places for Early Birds? Not yet. Or any timescale of when that could happen to alleviate the capacity issues? If, as the hon. Member says, there has been some unpredictability about it, presumably the capacity issues may be worsened next year, so it would be important to act quickly. So I would urge him to do that, and perhaps he can give us some input on that.

1480 Can I ask, the Government having been surprised by what he says is the unpredictability of it, have he or his Department now engaged expert advice on a projection as to the future?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, I mentioned earlier that we have not yet firmly identified a site. That was one of his questions.

1485 On the projection of the future, I do not think any external expert could have projected the increase there was at the time and I rely on the great expertise I have within the Department and within St Martin's School for advice.

As to when we will work, from September to September, so we will have to be ready in September, when the term starts, to deal with the number of children with learning disabilities we will have to cater for at St Martin's.

1490

Hon. D J Bossino: Mr Speaker, this is, obviously, a –

Mr Speaker: I understand. That is why I am giving a lot of leeway here.

1495

Hon. D J Bossino: Thank you very much.

In terms of predictability, and he talks about September, is he or his Department able at least to have an idea of how many ...? Children at that age, when they access Early Birds Nursery, or thereabouts ... You will know a good five, six, seven or eight months beforehand that your child needs to access that type of facility. Does he have an idea of how many children he is expecting to receive in September 2023?

1500

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Yes, we will have an estimate quite soon. These things are done on a continuous basis and within the next few months we will already have an idea.

1505

I think it is likely that the levels will continue at the higher level rather than at the old, lower level of six, seven or eight, which was consistent for many years. That is the thing about it. But we will be aware and we will be ready. We owe it to the children and to the families. This is one thing on which I need not be urged. This is a completely different level of commitment and we will be absolutely there for them.

1510

Hon. D J Bossino: Permit me just a final question, Mr Speaker, in terms of one statistical piece of information. But just by way of general comment – and I know I have spoken to some Members opposite about this – this is going to have a huge impact going into the future, because then, obviously, of those 25, some will do well and go into mainstream, but many of them may not and will need access to the second facility after St Martin's, which is St Bernadette's. Whilst I know the intake last year was three, when you are looking at those numbers it is going to have a huge impact.

1515

The specific question I was going to ask is, of the 109 – and that is the figure he needs to check – in the current cohort in St Martin's, which I assume includes Early Birds Nursery, if he can take a snapshot – you had an intake last September of 25 – how many are currently in Early Birds? It is a pre-school year, so we will be encompassing two or three years at least.

1520

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, currently in Early Birds in total we have 41. We had 31 last year and 28 the year before.

1525

I think this is something that we have to deal with as a community and it is an issue that we should work on without trying to score political points, if I may.

Hon. D J Bossino: I agree, Mr Speaker.

1530

This is going to be an unfair question, in the sense that I am sure he does not have the information, but does he have an idea at least of what the main condition is? Is it many children within the ASD spectrum, or is it other issues? I am sure he will not have that information, but maybe he has a flavour of what conditions these children are requiring special assistance for.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: No, I do not have that information. It is something that we work on together with the Ministry for Equality, the Care Agency and so on.

1535

I must say, Mr Speaker, that there are children who start in Early Birds Nursery and then continue in mainstream, so we do not necessarily have to assume that all those will carry on in St Martin's. Increasingly, with the learning support facilities that we have in our schools, we are

able to look after children in mainstream much more and it is something we always aim to do, but I do not have the analysis of each child, I am afraid.

1540

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q384/2022
Unqualified teaching staff –
Whether employed in Government schools

Clerk: Question 384/2022. The Hon. K Azopardi.

1545

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, are there unqualified persons teaching subjects in Government schools; and, if so, in which subjects and schools, and on what basis?

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

1550

Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, all persons teaching subjects in Government schools are suitably qualified.

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, what does he mean by adding the word 'suitably' before 'qualified'?

1555

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: That their qualification is suitable, Mr Speaker.

Hon. K Azopardi: Okay, let me ask it in this way: are they qualified teachers?

1560

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, had that been the question, I would have given him the answer. All the teachers are qualified teachers. There are also instructors who are qualified in their subjects and work under the supervision of a teacher. This is a process that is widespread throughout education, largely in connection with music, where you can have specialist instructors who teach particular instruments under the supervision of the qualified music teacher.

1565

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, I hope that the hon. Member ... It is late in the day on Friday. I am not trying to play word games with him. I thought my question was clear, but fine, we can pick on words, and that is okay too.

The hon. Member has given an example. Are there other examples in other subjects and in which schools, and on what basis, which is what I had asked and which was my original intention.

1570

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, I believe it is just in music – I would need to check that – and this will be in Westside, Bayside and the Gibraltar College. I do not believe we have instructors other than in music, because remember that in music you can be a qualified teacher but you may not be a specialist in an instrument, in vocals or anything like that. This is why there is a long record of music instructors, always under the supervision of a teacher, dealing with classes in their specialised area.

1575

Hon. K Azopardi: But as I understand the explanation he has given, whenever it is happening it is always under the supervision of a qualified teacher – to be clear on the words, a teacher qualified in the particular subject in which the instructor is instructing?

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1585 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** If it is music, it will be a teacher qualified as a music teacher, although I believe in one of the schools we have drama and music together, so it could be the drama teacher, but it would be a relevant subject. Clearly that does not mean that that teacher is present in every circumstance, because the instructor may have two trumpet players whom he or she takes into the studio, working on the trumpet, another instructor might be working on the piano and the teacher supervises in general but may not be in the room at the particular time.

1590 They are qualified in their instruments or speciality and their instruction is supervised by the teacher and has also got to be acceptable, if it is an examination class, to the awarding body. We have to ensure that Pearson or AQA, or whoever, would accept the qualifications of those who are instructing, and that, I am absolutely sure, is completely covered. We would not have it any other way.

1595 **Hon. K Azopardi:** If the qualified teacher who is responsible ... Let me use 'responsible'. I do not want to use the word 'supervision' because I used it in my supplementary. The hon. Member, in his explanation, has explained that they are not necessarily present at every single moment. The qualified teacher is responsible for this happening, but the instructor is there.

1600 Obviously teachers are professionals and subject to their codes of practice and so on. In relation to what code of practice is the supervisor instructing? Who is responsible for that situation? They are external people, they are not Government employees, as I understand it.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: We expect the standards and the processes and protocols to be identical to those of the teachers.

1605 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Presumably there is monitoring of that going on by teachers.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: The subject lead and the senior leadership team in the school are responsible for the professional behaviour and standards of their staff, including their instructors, absolutely.

1610

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q385-86/2022

North Front cemetery – Condition and works undertaken

Clerk: Question 385/2022. The Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

1615 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, is the Government satisfied with the state of the cemetery at North Front?

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

1620 **Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 386.

Clerk: Question 386/2022. The Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

1625 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, what works at the cemetery have been undertaken by private contractors in the financial years 2019-21 and 2021-22, by which contractor and at what cost, providing in each case a description of the works undertaken?

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

1630 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, may I just comment that it might amuse the House to know that at one stage in our lives I was instructing the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition to play an instrument, he will recall. I say that with great affection, not with any –

Hon. (Interjection) [*inaudible*]

1635 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Many years go in the Scouts, I might add, just for explanation. Mr Speaker, as I have said many times, including today, I am rarely satisfied with anything, as I always feel that improvement is a continuum. The cemetery is no exception.

1640 Over the past few years the management of vegetation has improved following the engagement of a horticultural contractor, with complaints in this respect down and those that arise being dealt with quickly.

1645 Since the retirement of the Superintendent, we have been implementing a restructure of working practices at the cemetery in order to ensure greater accountability of contractors and all working practices. This has included a review of the quality of work of contractors, who, incidentally, are engaged largely privately by members of the public and not by Government. We have concerns about some of the quality and so will be introducing detailed protocols and prior assessment of contractors. To this end we will shortly be publishing a call for expressions of interest in order to establish a preferred contractors list for works at the cemetery.

1650 I now hand over a schedule with the information requested in Question 386 in relation to works contracted by the Government but not including private graves etc. The contractor for vegetation management is Greenarc. That followed a competitive process some years ago. The building contractors are Cano Monumental Masons and El Yanito. However, as the information could have commercial implications, the names of these contractors have not been allocated to specific works. The schedule mentions Contractor A and Contractor B. They are these two contractors, but I do not think here I should divulge which is which.

Answer to Question 386/2022

Construction works to North Front Cemetery

Contractor A

FY 2019 - 2021	
No payments made	

FY 2021 / 2022		
30/04/2021	White marble macael with inscriptions engraved and cross engraved and painted in black	£ 350.00
16/09/2021	Broken vaults / marble slate with inscription	£ 1,050.00
13/10/2021	Repairs to Broken Vaults	£ 420.00

FY 2022 / 2023 (APRIL - 22 TO DATE)		
07/09/2022	Construction Works to Vault	£ 1,680.00

Contractor B

FY 2019 / 2021		
10/10/2019	Repairs to paths entrance for vaults	£ 1,350.00
03/02/2020	Repairs to vault & marble cross	£ 180.00
21/10/2020	Repairs of various vaults	£ 1,950.00

FY 2021 - 2022	
No payments made	

FY 2022 - 2023 (APRIL-22 TO DATE)	
No payments made	

Contractor C - Greenarc Ltd (Vegetation Management)

FY 2019 - 2021	£ 206,856.00
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FY 2021 - 2022	£ 86,190.00
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FY 2022 - 2023 (April- 22 TO DATE)	£ 77,571.00
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1655 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, may I, for the record, as the hon. Member made that aside before he answered his question, say that the instrument was a bugle and I hope I played it to his satisfaction.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: You did indeed.

1660

Hon. K Azopardi: Thank you. (*Interjections*) Yes, indeed.

Mr Speaker, certainly on this side of the House we welcome that there should be expressions of interest on a preferred contractors list. That makes sense.

1665 Can I ask him, first, without getting into the granular aspects of this ...? He mentioned that there is a vegetation management contractor and there are also two other contractors in respect of, as I understood it, Government works. Because you are issuing a list for preferred contractors, are they going to be asked to submit a response to the expressions of interest, so that there is then the formalisation of a proper preferred contractors list?

1670 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Yes, indeed, Mr Speaker. These two contractors have been used for what you will see is minor expenditure because the fact that they are in the cemetery already has its economical aspect. They are there already with their equipment and so on. But yes, indeed, the

1675 expression of interests will require the current contractors to reapply, or to apply, and they will be assessed together with anybody else who applies, and then we will select those we feel can best carry out these functions.

1680 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, I think the hon. Member acknowledged it, but the reason for the question is because several people have passed me photographs of the state of the cemetery in some respects, and what I have seen, certainly in the photographs, and it is not just hearsay – sometimes people come to see you and they tell you something and then, when you put it to the Government, you get the answer that it is not accurate, but certainly I have seen it for myself in the photographs. What I have seen is broken tombs, the dumping of rubbish, paving issues – some of the paving broken – cement dumping, broken tiles, piping and rubbish or bricks or cement dumped next to graves; pretty disrespectful practices for any family members going to the cemetery. Does he agree that those things are unacceptable, and, to the extent that they are formalising procedures for the application of preferred contractors, that the Government needs to go beyond that and then monitor how those works happen with whatever staff they have there on site, so that these pretty disrespectful practices do not go on at the cemetery?

1690 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, the problems that the hon. Member has described, I am familiar with a lot of them. I do visit the cemetery, sometimes because it is my duty to do so and other times, clearly, because of burials in Gibraltar we tend to frequent because we know so many people.

1695 There are two elements there. There is an element of supervision, which he has mentioned, and there is an element of the practices of the contractors. I think both play a part. I think it would not be right for me to go into any specific details as to what steps we are taking in order to remedy both, but what I can say is that in order to remedy one of those we are going to an expression of interest. There will be very strict written protocols, which do not exist at the moment, as to what work practices can and cannot be done, the expectation of removal of rubble, of respecting of an adjacent tomb. Those will be written protocols and failure to adhere to them would result in those contractors not being able to work in the cemetery any longer.

1700 I am very serious about this, I am not happy with the situation and I am doing something about it.

Questions for Written Answer

1705 **Deputy Chief Minister (Hon. Dr J J Garcia):** Mr Speaker, I have the honour to table the answers to Written Questions submitted by the Hon. Edwin Reyes and the Hon. Roy Clinton numbered as W29/2022 to W36/2022.

I also table questions submitted orally by the Hon. Mr Reyes, which have now been converted to Written Questions W37/2022 to W63/2022 at his request.

1710 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, simply to lay on the record of the House the understanding that we have arrived at with your good self as to how the answers which are being submitted in written form in relation to the oral questions which my hon. Friend Mr Reyes has submitted can be the subject of further supplementary questions for the next meeting of the House and not ...
[Inaudible]

1715 **Mr Speaker:** I accept the representations made by the hon. Member. I also know that the Chief Minister is happy that questions can be raised at the next meeting of the House – follow-up

questions to those oral answers converted into written answers, and they can be put forward as supplementaries but in the form of a fresh question. I understand and accept that.

1720

Minister for Housing, Employment, Youth and Sport (Hon. S E Linares): Mr Speaker, I take it these are the questions which were asked of me, which I have prepared and are now in written form.

1725

Mr Speaker: I fully understand that.

Adjournment

Deputy Chief Minister (Hon. Dr J J Garcia): Mr Speaker, I have the honour to move that this House do now adjourn to Monday, 24th October at 3.30 p.m.

1730

Mr Speaker: I now propose the question, which is that this House do now adjourn to Monday, 24th October at 3.30 p.m.

I now put the question, which is that this House do now adjourn to Monday, 24th October at 3.30 p.m. Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye.) Those against? Passed.

This House will now adjourn to Monday, 24th October at 3.30 p.m.

The House adjourned at 7.04 p.m.