



PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

AFTERNOON SESSION: 3.35 p.m. – 5.25 p.m.

Gibraltar, Wednesday, 22nd June 2022

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The Gibraltar Parliament

The Parliament met at 3.35 p.m.

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

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

PRAYER

Mr Speaker

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Clerk: Meeting of Parliament, Wednesday, 22nd June 2022.

Order of Proceedings: (i) Oath of Allegiance; (ii) Confirmation of Minutes – the Minutes of the last meeting of the Parliament, which was held on 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 24th and 25th May 2022.

5

Mr Speaker: May I sign the Minutes as correct?

Members: Aye.

Mr Speaker signed the Minutes.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

Condolences to the Clerk

Clerk: (iii) Communications from the Chair.

10

Mr Speaker: The Hon. the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, I rise, today, with a heavy heart, to start the proceedings with various condolences, the first to the Clerk upon the death of his well-known and well-liked father, Charlie.

15

Tribute to Lady Marcelle Hassan

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, since the last session the community has learnt of the death of two of our most prominent and strongest women, Lady Marcelle Hassan and Claire Borrell. I know the whole House will wish to make tributes to both and will want to do so separately, to give each their due. I shall start with Lady Hassan.

20 Marcelle Bensimon was not a native Gibraltarian, but she became one. She arrived in Gibraltar from her native Morocco to work for a worthy and charitable purpose, which was to help Jewish immigrants using Gibraltar as a staging post in transit to the state of Israel.

25 Having been married to Sir Joshua in 1969, she experienced with him his only – short-lived – election loss and his subsequent four consecutive election wins. As the spouse of Chief Minister Hassan, Lady Hassan carried the burden of being in the public eye at an immensely difficult time. In fact, for the lion's share of that time, the Frontier was closed. Let us not forget how hard those times were. Every day would have been a struggle to maintain supplies and even a working economy. More than that, every day there would have been one mission: to maintain morale in this community. Lady Hassan was the non-political focal point for many in that respect. She was 30 also the ray of glamour in that period that so many looked at, as well as being a close political adviser to Sir Joshua and the AACR team.

35 Whilst he was Chief Minister, Lady Hassan bore Sir Joshua two daughters, both of them following him into public life. The youngest, Marlene, is well known in this place in her own right as an hon. Member. The eldest, Fleur, is Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem and does not fail to evangelise her Gibraltarian origins, whether in Israel or elsewhere. I know Lady Hassan was more than proud of her daughters and their own contributions to public life in different jurisdictions of such importance to her.

40 A personal reflection for a moment, Mr Speaker. I remember Lady Hassan telling me not to get into politics. She told me – for my good, she said – that no one would thank me for anything once I was in politics. When I did take the first steps into politics, she took me to one side in the lift at the law firm that bears her late husband's illustrious name and said, 'Now, don't cower when they criticise you, do what you think is right and do what you have to do. That is what my husband did.' Both pieces of advice she gave me were good pieces of advice. Having failed to follow the first, I was clear that I at least had to follow the second, because it was equally clear that it was advice 45 given from the heart to *el hijo de Magda*. My mother, in particular, was an admirer of Lady Hassan's style. In fact, she had been Sir Joshua Hassan's secretary when they married, and I recall the warmth between them.

50 Mr Speaker, the pressures on the spouses of those at the top of the political hierarchy are often overlooked. At least those of us who are in the public arena are here because we choose to be here. Those who accompany us – our children, our spouses, our partners – are, in effect, volunteered for the role by us. Theirs is the part that is often as hard as ours, however, and no doubt Lady Hassan carried that burden lightly.

55 In her time, Lady Hassan represented us on royal visits – including the visit of the next monarch, Prince Charles – innumerable ceremonial functions, innumerable local events, and for 16 years she was at the very top of the representation of our people, alongside Sir Joshua Hassan. I recall a photograph of Sir Joshua and Lady Hassan and Joe Garcia Snr and Mrs Garcia being feted together at the Marbella Club just after the Frontier opened. That photograph is an illustration, after the end of the last Siege of Gibraltar, of Gibraltar's success in surmounting that challenge under Sir Joshua's leadership, with Marcelle at his side.

60 Lady Hassan came from beyond our shores, but she became one of us. She is now buried amongst us and she will forever remain with us. May she rest in peace. I extend the condolences of the whole of Gibraltar and the whole House to her daughters and grandchildren.

65 Marlene Hassan, who is a Member of this House, has asked that, as Leader of the House, I should extend her apologies to the people of Gibraltar for her absence today and from this session. There is no need for her to apologise. I have no doubt that we all agree that she should absent herself from this session and we support that she tend to her family at his time and address, together with them, the pain of this sad bereavement.

Mr Speaker, after tributes from others, I will invite the House to observe a minute's silence in honour of Lady Hassan's memory.

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

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, on behalf of the Members on this side of the House, of course I associate myself with the comments of the Chief Minister. He started by making the observation and also his condolences on the death of the father of the Clerk of the House, and I do so as well.

75 Lady Hassan, as the Chief Minister has said, was Sir Joshua's partner and confidante for so many years. She was part of the public life of Gibraltar. During that period when Sir Joshua was Chief Minister, between 1972 and 1988, she was by his side not only politically but also bringing up the family.

80 As the Chief Minister has said, the recognition of spouses, who are ... he used the more elegant term 'volunteered' for the role, but almost pressganged into public life. The role of the spouses is not perhaps recognised enough. The family comes under pressure when someone is in politics. I was a very small boy, but I am sure that during the Frontier years, in leading Gibraltar, Sir Joshua did ... In that very difficult time the political pressure must have been intense, and also the intensity of the proximity of voters to his own immediate family at the time of the closure of the border and the pressures that Gibraltar was feeling, both in terms of social pressures and confinement, must have been intense, and Lady Hassan played an impressive role in assisting Sir Joshua during those years.

85 So, certainly on behalf of Members on this side of the House I associate with everything the Chief Minister has said in respect of Lady Hassan. She played a significant role, not least of course in the community, in public affairs, but also as a mother, and you see that combination of efforts in the work that Sir Joshua and Lady Hassan's daughters do today. Both have gone into politics. Both, in their own right, have carved out their path in political roles in this community and in Israel, and it is clear when you look at that, both in the case of Fleur and Marlene, that you see that combination of the efforts and upbringing of Sir Joshua and Lady Hassan.

90 So, on behalf of the Members on this side, I certainly extend our condolences also to the family and our thanks as parliamentarians for the role she played during so many years in this community to assist one of our Chief Ministers, our longstanding Chief Minister, who had a very difficult role to play – and an excellent role he played – during so many years.

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

100 **Mr Speaker:** The Hon. the Deputy Chief Minister.

Deputy Chief Minister (Hon. Dr J J Garcia): Mr Speaker, I would like to add a few words to what has already been said in expressing my own sincere condolences on the sad passing of Lady Hassan.

105 I had the pleasure of meeting her on several occasions, obviously not recently but Sir Joshua and Lady Hassan and my parents were close friends for many years, so I was able to meet her and my impression was that she was a passionate, forceful and determined lady, particularly in relation to her husband, the AACR, the Government at the time and the political issues that were current at that moment.

110 As has rightly been said, she fulfilled a personal role – obviously, as Sir Joshua's wife and as a mother – but also a political one in advising and in having very strong political views, which is what I remember. That is my own enduring memory.

115 I would like to express my deepest sympathy and condolences to Marlene, to Fleur and to the family. May she rest in peace.

Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, I now invite the House to hold a minute's silence in honour of Lady Hassan.

Members observed a minute's silence.

Hon. Chief Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Tribute to Mrs Claire Borrell

120 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, the sad news has also reached us that women's champion Claire Borrell passed away this weekend also.

Mrs Borrell was the force behind the creation of the charity Women in Need and she was exactly that: she was a force. I remember working with Claire in the law, in Opposition and in Government, and I can tell the House that there was little chance of not agreeing to give Claire the support that she might be seeking from time to time, whichever role she might have found me in.

125 She was a person who, herself, had suffered marital abuse. She stood up to it in a society where those things were still taboo, and she took a stand for her children and for herself. In doing so, she was, in fact, taking a stand for other women. She really did trail-blaze in this area and her work helped hundreds to free themselves from similarly abusive relationships. Claire made us talk about these uncomfortable truths and realities that had lain hidden in our community for so many years. The fact is that those issues have not gone away, even if they are no longer hidden away. In the last years she was working in Women in Need she was also providing some services to men who were abused and found themselves downtrodden; such was the nature of her approach to helping everyone who found themselves in that sort of situation.

130 I enjoyed working with Claire immensely. She was not a do-gooder, she was a go-getter who wanted not to give people charity but help them to get back on their feet and move on to a better place. I confess that she also had a wicked sense of humour and there was not one time when we met when she did not tell me off for something and make me laugh over something else, most especially when she broke off into her heavily accented Spanish.

140 Mr Speaker, Claire Borrell House is a fitting tribute to the work of this magnificent pioneer, who was recognised by Her Majesty the Queen with an MBE for the work she did in Gibraltar. The condolences of all of Gibraltar, in particular on behalf of all those she helped, go to her children, Amanda, Jonathan and Theresa. None will have suffered this loss like they have, but we will all mourn the loss of Claire.

145 Again, Mr Speaker, after tributes from others, I will invite the House to observe a minute's silence in honour of her memory.

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

150 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, I first met Claire ... I think it would have been in the mid-1990s. We were still in Opposition then, but she was already engaged quite heavily, and had already been for some time, with one of the leading voices on domestic issues, bringing those issues to the fore and lobbying hard on those matters.

155 Her career speaks for itself. She worked for decades tirelessly to bring these issues to the fore, to ensure that women got a home that they could go to as a shelter, so that they could be safeguarded and protected in a better way. She was one of the leading lights behind Women in Need and indeed the establishment of the refuge, and her work has served many families and put many families in a better place than they would have been had she not done that tireless work.

160 When you are involved in politics you meet a lot of people and a lot of people working for sectoral organisations and individual groups. They usually are unpaid servants who have a particular interest and are working tirelessly, and it is those people who actually are bettering the quality of life of many people in this community on the ground. Claire was one of those people who worked so hard, and even though, yes, she was recognised towards the end, sometimes it is difficult when you do that kind of balance sheet ... Was it enough recognition of all her work, because of the incredible efforts that she gave this community for so many years?

165 So, absolutely, on this side of the House we also associate ourselves with the comments of the Chief Minister and extend the condolences of Members of the Opposition to her family at this

time. She was, as I said the other day, a champion of women. She will be remembered as a champion of women and she will be fondly remembered.

Mr Speaker: The Hon. Samantha Sacramento.

Hon. Miss S J Sacramento: Mr Speaker, I first met Claire when I was in private practice and it was at that time that I was introduced to the problem of domestic abuse in Gibraltar. Subsequently, when I became Minister with this responsibility, in my capacity as Minister for Equality, I worked very closely with Claire and her team at Women in Need and I can truly say that, as we have already heard, Claire was very much a force to be reckoned with all the time and she was equally inspirational in reminding us all of our duty to help support and protect victims of domestic abuse. She has set a legacy, which we will, of course, continue.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my condolences to her family.

Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, I ask that the whole House now join us in one minute's silence in memory of Claire Borrell.

Members observed a minute's silence.

Hon. Chief Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Armed Forces Week

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Finally, Mr Speaker, this week is Armed Forces Week. The whole of Gibraltar will want to join me in wishing all members of the British Armed Forces all the very best for the week and for Saturday, which is Armed Forces Day.

The British Armed Forces are amongst the best in the world and the most professional. Our own Royal Gibraltar Regiment is a part of the British Armed Forces, and today the Speaker of the House of Commons wore the regimental tie of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment during Prime Minister's Questions there, as I do this afternoon in this House.

The British Armed Forces are the best of us and we thank them for what they do.

Hon. E J Reyes: Thank you, Mr Speaker. May I concur fully with the Chief Minister's comments?

This House, believe it or not, actually represents Members who have been in the reserve forces in all the three armed services. If we start by seniority with the prestigious Mr Speaker himself, who was a Royal Navy reserve officer and indeed the recipient of the reserve decoration for that ... I am one of those peculiar characters who has actually managed to wear both uniforms, both Army, as a reservist in the Royal Gibraltar Regiment, and then later, when I was commissioned in the RAF Volunteer Reserve Training section.

Certainly it should be recorded here, and I think it echoes the Chief Minister's words, that those Gibraltarians, men and women, who are very prominent in this day and age in the services ... we stand and admire their service to Queen and country and it is very fitting in this special anniversary year of Her Majesty the Queen.

PAPERS TO BE LAID

Clerk: (iv) Petitions; (v) Announcements; (vi) Papers to be laid – the Hon. the Chief Minister.

210 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, I have the honour to lay on the table the Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Authority 2021 and the Gibraltar Annual Policing Plan for 2022-23.

Mr Speaker: Ordered to lie.

Questions for Oral Answer

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, EMPLOYMENT, HOUSING AND SPORT

Q207/2022

Youth clubs –

Opening times during school summer holidays

215 **Clerk:** (vii) Reports of Committees; (viii) Answers to Oral Questions.
Question 207/2022. The Hon. E J Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Mr Speaker, further to the answer provided to Question 32/2022, can Government provide details of the opening times at the youth clubs for the forthcoming summer school holidays period?

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

225 **Minister for Industrial Relations, Employment, Housing and Sport (Hon. S E Linares):**
Mr Speaker, during the summer months, club users will be able to take part in the following activities: club outdoor patio games, collaboration Army sessions with the Royal Gibraltar Regiment, interclub sports events, movie nights at the clubs, community barbecues, paddle boarding activities at local beaches, arts and crafts projects, cooking projects, upcycling fashion project, karaoke sessions, leadership programme, pre-work campaigns and elections of youth club representatives, space to relax ‘chill-out’ sessions, rehearsals and practice for the end of summer show, ‘Time to Shine’ end of summer showcase, and barbecue for friends and family at the Youth Centre courtyard. Please note that some of these activities will also take place during the weekends.

230 I now hand over to the hon. Member a schedule with information on the youth clubs’ opening times.

Answer to Question 207/2022

During the summer months, club opening times will be as follow;

Youth Center

- Tuesdays 11:00am -2:00pm — Youth Committee / GYPT
- Wednesdays 7:00pm-9:45pm — Youth Café drop-in
- Thursdays 11:00am-2:00pm or 7:00-10:00pm — Joyful Riot
- Fridays 7:00pm-9:45pm — Youth Café drop-in

There will be a Rockthrifters (upcycling Fashion project) week for ages 11-15 from 18th — 22nd July.

Dolphins Youth Club

- Tuesdays 7:00pm — 10:00pm
- Wednesdays 10:00am — 1:00pm
- Thursdays 7:00pm — 10:00pm

Laguna Youth Club

- Tuesdays 10:00am-1:00pm
- Wednesdays 6:30am-9:30pm
- Thursdays 6:30am-9:30pm

Plater Youth Club

- Tuesdays 10:00am-1:00pm
- Wednesdays 7:00pm-9:30pm
- Thursdays 10:00am-1:00pm

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

I am grateful for the handout. Just one minor clarification: these times are irrespective of the activities that the Minister read out? So, whether a youngster is taking part in any of those activities or not, he can expect the Youth Centre to be open during the times as per the schedule?

240 **Hon. S E Linares:** Yes, Mr Speaker. As soon as a youth club is open, not only do these activities happen but the Youth Service will provide for anybody who wants to come in. The hon. Member should note the timings because it is during the morning time when the children, during the summer, are not in school, and that is why they are catering in the morning for the children who are not in school.

245 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can I be pedantic and double-check that in respect of the Laguna Youth Club it is open, on Wednesday and Thursday, as early as 6.30 a.m. – or is that a typographical error?

250 **Hon. S E Linares:** No, Mr Speaker, I do not see it as a typographical error. I am sure that they start early in the morning, even at that time, at 6.30 in the morning. I will, nonetheless, check, but I am sure, because if the hon. Member looks at the Plater Youth Club, they start at seven on Wednesday, so they do start pretty early and I am sure it is to do with children whose parents go to work and they have nowhere to go, so they will probably pop into the Youth Service.

255 **Hon. E J Reyes:** As you know, we are both reading the same sheet, Mr Speaker. The Plater Youth Club on a Wednesday opens at 7 p.m. and closes at 9.30 p.m. I was referring to the Laguna Youth Club, where on Wednesday and Thursday it is open for something like 15 hours from 6.30 a.m., which is ... I have grandchildren who are very early risers, but to be at a youth club at 6.30 a.m. takes the biscuit.

260 **Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, I will check whether it is a.m. or p.m.

Hon. E J Reyes: And while that is common, from my general knowledge, the footnote at the end of the Youth Centre says 'There will be a Rockthrifters (upcycling Fashion project)'. I know the keenness of certain Ministers in getting us all to cycle to work and so on, but could we please have
265 a layman's explanation of what 'upcycling Fashion project' is?

Hon. S E Linares: Mr Speaker, in today's age, upcycling has nothing to do with actual cycling, it is to do with recycling. Nowadays, due to the young people looking after the environment, they will get all the things that are in fashion and which people with a lot of money use once, and they
270 upcycle – which means recycle – the clothes. There is a big market in that now. You can see in the clubhouse a shop where there are second-hand clothes – very good quality, may I add, and I would ask everybody to have a look and see if they can buy clothes from there. My passion is to go to vintage shops in London to buy many of my clothes, because I think we should be looking after the environment. 'Upcycling' means 'recycling'.

275 **Mr Speaker:** Next question.

Q208/2022
Sports facilities –
Update re expected completion dates

Clerk: Question 208/2022. The Hon. E J Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Further to his answer to Question 35/2022, where he stated his hopes of
280 completion by the month of June, can the Minister for Sport update this House with details of which remedial works in respect of sporting facilities have now been fully completed, together with details of those still pending and their revised completion dates?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Industrial Relations, Employment, Housing and Sport.
285

Minister for Industrial Relations, Employment, Housing and Sport (Hon. S E Linares):
Mr Speaker, I am glad to confirm that the subcontractor responsible for completing the track at the Lathbury Sports Complex has been on site for over two weeks. Works are progressing very well, with completion and subsequent line marking to be completed as expected.

290 The swimming pool testing and commissioning continues progressing. As explained in our last session, whilst a very slow process, this is a necessary step to ensure that any issues are dealt with immediately.

In terms of Europa, works on the wicket will commence on 4th July with the specialist contractor undertaking their portion of these on 18th July. This final phase should take two to
295 three days at most. Whilst on site, the contractor will review the pending fencing issues and address accordingly.

Q209/2022

**Customs Marine section dispute –
Actions to resolve**

Clerk: Question 209/2022. The Hon. D A Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: What is the Government doing to resolve the dispute that Unite the Union
300 has declared with Customs over the issues relating to the Marine section?

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

Minister for Industrial Relations, Employment, Housing and Sport (Hon. S E Linares):
305 Mr Speaker, I can confirm that the dispute is now on hold and that HM Government of Gibraltar
has entered into a consultation process with Unite the Union on the matters pertaining to the
Customs Marine section. This process is ongoing and both parties are working together on the
drafting of policies specific to the Marine section.

Hon. D A Feetham: Arising out of the answer the Minister has kindly provided, what are the
310 matters that are currently in discussion?

Hon. S E Linares: Mr Speaker, as I said in the answer to the question, this is pertaining to policy
specifics. It is to do with the policies of each section. They are undergoing reviews of policies. We
315 are working at them and, as the hon. Member knows, they have already lifted the industrial
dispute completely.

Hon. D A Feetham: Yes, but let's drill down in relation to that: what policies? Of course,
'policies' is generic, but it is policies on some aspect of the job they are doing. Can he give details
320 about the policies of what specifically, so that this House is informed about that?

Hon. S E Linares: On policies pertaining to the Marine section. Therefore, it is to do with having
policies on working practices, issues with shift work, issues which are completely and utterly
pertaining to them. That was the crux of the dispute, that the two unions would not agree to what
325 should be done. When we sat down together and said let's draft out what needs to be done ...
both unions are now satisfied that we are working at that and therefore have lifted the industrial
action.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, I am sorry to persist, but all he has really said in relation to the
330 matters ... This is the word that he used originally in his answer, the 'matters'; then he used the
words 'the policy'. The only specific he has provided is in relation to shift work, so is he saying that
this underlying dispute was about shift work and that is what the Government is now in
discussions about, or are there other matters, which the Government is also discussing with the
union, that provoked the industrial action in the first place?

Hon. D A Feetham: In order to assist the Minister, let me just read a report of the actual press release that Unite
335 issued when it declared a dispute with Customs. It says that it related to a question in relation to
'a rotation period of eight years' for the Marine section. I was not sure what that meant, whether
it related to simply shift or, for example, that somebody is allocated to the Marine section for a
period of eight years and then comes off it after a period of eight years. Those are the types of
340 issues that I am trying to elicit information on, so that we understand what this dispute was about.

Hon. S E Linares: Mr Speaker, he has answered his own question. He has said about the eight
years – that was another issue, and we have now cleared those issues. Therefore, there is not any

longer the issue of the eight years; we have cleared it. So, he has actually answered the question.
If he knows that it is to do with the eight-year period, then it is exactly what we have agreed to.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, I –

Mr Speaker: This will be the final one.

Hon. D A Feetham: Yes. I do not know whether the Chief Minister is in a position to assist the House in relation to this. We are, on this side, I have to say, quite confused about the answers that the Minister is providing about this.

Let's see whether we can at least distil what the Minister is saying, so we can get some clarity. The underlying dispute is about shift work and it is about this eight-year rotational period. Those are the only two issues – one I have proffered, and the other one he has proffered to me.

Given the eight-year rotation period has been solved, according to the Minister, can I ask him at least to inform the House as to how that eight-year rotation period reason for the dispute has been solved?

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, the Government conducts its industrial relations negotiations with the unions, not with hon. Members in this House.

The issue has been resolved in a manner which I commend the Hon. new Minister for Industrial Relations for. I was unable to deal with many of these issues because of the other pressures of work I had and therefore had to pass the industrial relations brief to a man who had previously been president of one of our national unions, and it has been resolved to the satisfaction of all involved.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q210/2022

Work permits –

Policy re non-EU and non-British residents

Clerk: Question 210/2022. The Hon. D A Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, can the Government explain the reasons behind the policy where a non-EU and non-British resident in Gibraltar with a residency card, married to a Gibraltar believer, is not provided by the ETB with a work permit where a recruitment agency wants to place him in firm employment, albeit under a zero-hours contract or a contract below a certain number of hours?

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

Minister for Industrial Relations, Employment, Housing and Sport (Hon. S E Linares): Mr Speaker, I can assure this House that the Department of Employment reviews all applications received from employers who wish to engage non-entitled workers fully in accordance with the Employment Regulations 1994.

The hon. Member must know that whether or not a work permit is granted is not a matter of policy but a matter of law. In particular, whether or not to grant a work permit is a determination to be made by the Director of Employment under the Employment Regulations 1994 in her sole and absolute discretion.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, the Minister will forgive me, but I have been helping a particular constituent; it is a couple. She is British-Gibraltarian, has been in Gibraltar all her life and is married to somebody born in Africa. I just use the continent because I do not want her to be identified. I have looked at the law. The law does not prevent, as far as I can see, a work permit from being issued, but I am being told by the public servants I am dealing with at the ETB that if the contract that underpins that person's potential employment or potential placement by the recruitment agency is zero hours or below a certain number of hours, the policy is not to issue a work permit. Therefore, the problem is the chicken-and-egg situation that he cannot get the employment because he does not have ... The recruitment agency will not place him where the recruitment agency would want to place him, and he is very happy with that, because a work permit does not issue. Of course, simply because the contract is a zero-hours contract does not mean that he is not going to be working, because people on zero-hours contracts ... whatever the morality of that is, the reality is that they may work for many hours in a week, and he is quite happy to sign a zero-hours contract – at least he is working in the placement where it was proposed that he was going to work.

I have raised this matter with Debbie Garcia, whom I have to say I have no criticism of at all. I want to put that beyond doubt because she is probably, out of all the public servants I have dealt with, one of the most helpful. She is a person who always knows what she is doing and she is very helpful and keen to help. But of course we have this situation. Can, at least, the Minister undertake to me to try to look at this, liaise with Debbie Garcia at the ETB and see whether I am right that nothing in law prevents the issue of this permit? And if there is nothing in law that prevents it and it is just a policy, that perhaps that policy might be dealt with in more a malleable situation to prevent injustice? Certainly I think there has been an injustice in this situation. Will the Minister undertake to do that?

Hon. S E Linares: Mr Speaker, the hon. Member has brought up three issues: one pertaining to a personal problem that someone has, which obviously I am not in a position to discuss at all. There is a law that says data protection ... and therefore what pertains to the particular person he represents is not something I am going to answer at all.

The second thing is that I totally agree with him in the characterisation he has given to Debbie Garcia, because she is absolutely a person who does take her job very seriously and has been dealing with this case. That is as much as I am going to say about this case.

The third was the zero-hours contract issue and the policy. It is a matter of law, as I have just said in answer to the question. It is not a matter of whether we should or should not do it, it is a matter of law, so I stick to my previous answer, also adding about Debbie Garcia and adding that I will not comment on any personal issues pertaining to somebody specifically.

Hon. D A Feetham: I have not mentioned this person by name, but when they were in Opposition – I do not criticise him for it at all because it is completely proper – and when we are in Opposition it is completely proper for us to bring to this place the personal issues of constituents that may have some wider implications. It is also, with respect, not impermissible or inappropriate for me, across the floor of this House, to try to help a constituent – because, at the end of the day, here we are all servants of the people, servants of constituents – to try to see whether at least we can get some justice for an individual, even if we do not mention that individual's name.

With that in mind, can he at least ask one of his public servants to write to me referring to the provision in the piece of legislation that says it cannot be done because of x, y and z provision? It may well be that I can write back to them and say 'That cannot be right for these other reasons'. Perhaps we can, by working collaboratively with each other, at least do some justice in this individual case. Will the Minister at least undertake to do that?

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman is absolutely right, there is absolutely nothing wrong with Members of the Opposition bringing to this House, by way of question, matters which relate to a problem that a constituency member has had – a member of our single constituency, because they are all constituents of ours. We used to do the same thing and we encourage them to do the same thing when they think it is appropriate. We also encourage them to get in touch with us if there are things which affect individuals, which hon. Members very often do and we try to assist when we can, without it having to become a ding-dong across the floor of this House.

On the subject matter in question, the hon. Member will know that the rules were much tighter when they were in government. One of the things we did when we were elected was loosen these rules. It was remarkable for me, when I was elected, to receive applications from people who were locally resident British Gibraltarians – that is to say a British Gibraltar who has not moved away, a locally resident British Gibraltar – who wished not to have their spouse start work but wished to marry someone who was from outside Gibraltar and, depending on what continent they might come from, permission would or would not be granted by the person sitting in No. 6 Convent Place. I found it, in my view, an intolerable interference with the personal liberty of the individual to fall in love and make the decision to marry that the permission should be granted for the marriage licence from No. 6 Convent Place, or permission for entry in order for people to marry, so we released that.

In these circumstances what we are dealing with is the right to work after a marriage, and in those instances the question is: is there a real state of work? This is what will be the subject of an issue: is there a real state of work, or is the zero-hours contract a pretence of work? There, we must be very careful not to become the jury of fact. The jury of fact is the official who is making the determination downstream of what is happening.

He is, these days – I cannot remember what his position was when he was in government; I think he was supportive of them, so I will say the usual caveat ‘these days’ – the staunchest enemy of zero-hours contracts. So, in the context of him saying that zero-hours contracts are a bad thing, I am surprised that he is taking the position he is taking at this time, but I encourage him, if he wishes, to write to me or the Hon. Minister with the details of the case in question, so that we can find out whether there is any circumstance in which we could assist in some way, or whether there is a very appropriate and right decision being taken by an official who has been mentioned across the floor of this House – and I think that was not necessary, but who enjoys the full confidence of us on this side of the House, who does a diligent and careful job on every application that is brought to her attention to ensure compliance with Government policy, Government’s compliance with the law and fairness to the individual who may be an applicant in any particular case.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, whilst I do not accept the comments the hon. Gentleman has made in relation to zero-hours contracts – I dislike them, I do not agree with the issue of zero-hours contracts – this is wider than that. This is about somebody who says, ‘I understand that I am being given a zero-hours contract but it is the only way I have to access this particular job, which is a job that I really want to do, and in all fairness I have been told that even though it is a zero-hours contract I am going to be doing x number of hours a week.’ In those circumstances is not for me to say do not take the job because it is a zero-hours contract. This is a decision that the constituent has taken.

Nonetheless, I will take up the offer that he Hon. the Chief Minister has made and I will write either to the Minister or to him about this particular case, to see whether we can unblock it.

Hon. Chief Minister: The hon. Gentleman may or may not accept what I have said about zero-hours contracts and he may characterise it as he wishes, but what is engaged in his question is none of that. What is engaged in his question is the discretion to grant the work permit, and in granting the work permit the nature of the work will be relevant where it is a discretionary permit.

That is the point, Mr Speaker, and that is what he is trying to avoid in trying to present his remarks – which are not a question – at the end of this exchange.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q211/2022
Mid Harbours estate –
Update re construction of new play park

495 **Clerk:** Question 211/2022. The Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Please provide an update with regard to the construction of the new play park at Mid Harbours estate.

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

Minister for Industrial Relations, Employment, Housing and Sport (Hon. S E Linares): Mr Speaker, the Gibraltar Sports and Leisure Authority and the Housing Works Agency are working closely together to deliver this project soonest. Quotes are currently being revisited with a decision to commence works to be taken shortly.

510 **Hon. D J Bossino:** May I raise this with him? I received a copy of an email which a member of the tenants' association there wrote to his Department. It may have been the Department of the Environment – I am not too sure about the accuracy of that – but it was a very similar response I then received in early June, which the hon. Member has just given us. The comment made by this gentleman is that the GSLA already sent a quote last year which was approved this year and the only issue was whether it was going to be done in the previous financial year, in this financial year or the one coming now. I just raise this by way of greater specificity, so that he can consider in his ... whether he can comment on that, basically.

515 **Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, it is obvious that we have gone beyond 31st March, we are now in a new financial year, and therefore it cannot be last year's, so it will be this year.

520 **Hon. D J Bossino:** But why the need for new quotes? I thought that issue was settled and he could go and basically build the thing.

525 **Hon. S E Linares:** No, Mr Speaker, because, as I have said in answer to my question, it is two entities. They are two different things. The GSLA are the ones who procure the equipment and the Housing Works Agency is the one that contracts whoever is going to do it, i.e. the plinth, prepare the place, and place the equipment. They have to get together. They have done that. They are now getting quotes. We can budget. We know, more or less, what it is going to cost. This is what you put in the budget, and then, if you get that budget, you spend it, and this is where we are now. We are getting the two entities to get this done. I cannot now say whether it is in the Book or not in the Book until next week, when we can see whether it is in the Book, or not.

530 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, can I drill down on 'soonest'? Is he able to say with more particularity when he thinks this is going to be done?

535 **Hon. S E Linares:** I would not like to do that because when you procure things like equipment, which needs to be procured, we would also look at if we could make some savings by looking at

the old equipment and whether it can be fixed – that is another issue we were looking at – but I would not like to commit myself, like I have probably done too many times in this House, and then the next question is ‘Why didn’t you do it by this date?’ ‘Soonest’, for me, is a very, very short time.

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Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q212/2022
Housing Department –
Complaints re answering correspondence

Clerk: Question 212/2022. The Hon. D J Bossino.

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Hon. D J Bossino: Thank you. Please state what efforts are being made to improve and resolve what the Public Services Ombudsman has described in his 2020 report as ‘an unacceptable level of complaints’ relating to non-reply and/or delay in replies to letters to the Housing Department/authority.

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

Minister for Industrial Relations, Employment, Housing and Sport (Hon. S E Linares): Mr Speaker, the Ombudsman’s report only captures a number of complaints and not the full volume of correspondence received by the Department, which is answered in accordance with established protocols.

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Nonetheless, since the report was made public the Housing Department has introduced an in-house complaints procedure, as recommended by the Office of the Ombudsman, to enhance the quality of the service provided by the Housing Department. Subsequently, the Department has also created specific emails for each section to further facilitate their dealings with the public.

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Hon. D J Bossino: May I ask him when these measures were introduced?

Hon. S E Linares: Mr Speaker, without trying to give away what I probably will be mentioning in my Budget speech, it was a couple of months ago. I am going to give him the specific date.

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Hon. D J Bossino: Is he able to say, from his point of view, whether there has been an improvement, as was being called for by the Public Services Ombudsman? And if I borrow from the Ombudsman’s report, where he suggests that senior management will have to nip this in the bud, would he say that this has been nipped in the bud?

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Hon. S E Linares: Yes, sir.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q213/2022
Government rented accommodation –
Means testing

Clerk: Question 213/2022. The Hon. D J Bossino.

575 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Please state whether the Government is considering adopting a policy for means testing in connection with Government rented accommodation?

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

580 **Minister for Industrial Relations, Employment, Housing and Sport (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, no, sir.

585 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, is the rationale behind that negative that this party does have a policy in relation to that? They put it in their manifesto in the 2019 election. Is the rationale behind that an ideological one, or is it more – as I heard, I think, other politicians in the past say – that introducing this measure would prove administratively burdensome?

590 **Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, this Government is not very keen on doing means testing in general since, in the past, where the GSD Government has done so, it has mainly affected those on PAYE as opposed to targeting those who can afford or not, as the case may be. It has become an unfair system.

Hon. D J Bossino: Can I glean, from that, that the Government is not keen because of those reasons, rather than from a firm ideological basis or premise for it?

595 **Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, I refer to the answer just given.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q214/2022
Housing Allocation Scheme –
Update re review

Clerk: Question 214/2022. The Hon. D J Bossino.

600 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Please provide an update with regard to the Government's review of the Housing Allocation Scheme.

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

605 **Minister for Industrial Relations, Employment, Housing and Sport (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, as the hon. Member is aware, the Housing Department is reviewing the Housing Allocation Scheme and this should be completed soon – and 'soon' means exactly the same as I said before.

610 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can he provide information to this House as to ...? How far advanced is the Minister? I know it leads to the same answer, but how far advanced is he in producing the Housing Allocation Scheme? Quite apart from it being a pending matter, the reason it arises is because again it features in the context of a specific complaint which the Ombudsman reviewed, as set out in the 2020 report, which actually he is unable to reach a conclusion on until the scheme is
615 finalised.

Hon. S E Linares: Mr Speaker, I can assure the hon. Member that it is very, very advanced.

Q215/2022

**Information Technology and Logistics Department –
Update re resolution of dispute**

Clerk: Question 215/2022. The Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

620 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, can Government update the House on the discussions to resolve the dispute at the Information Technology and Logistics Department?

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

625 **Minister for Industrial Relations, Employment, Housing and Sport (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, I can confirm that the dispute is now on hold and that HM Government of Gibraltar has entered into a consultation process with the GGCA on the matters pertaining to ITLD. Our first meeting is scheduled for early July 2022.

630 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, at the time there was public information about this dispute, the concerns that were expressed by the union were that there was a fear that the Government was under-resourcing ITLD and there was a fear that there was a dismantling of the Department and that the functions of the Department were being usurped and transferred to another area within the Government. Does the Minister recognise those complaints in the discussions he has had? And what is the Government's attitude towards that?

635 **Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, I have told the hon. Member that we are meeting in early July to discuss all the issues with them and I am not in a position today, in this House, to put forward all the issues that they might bring up with the Government. The hon. Member must understand that if you go into negotiations, discussions and consultation ... I am not now going to spell out all the issues that we have to discuss. After 22nd July when we meet, if it is not resolved it depends on how they want to take it, or, if it is resolved, all well and good, but I am not in a position now to say what the discussions are going to be.

645 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Can I just ask the hon. Member: when he says the dispute has been put on hold pending this meeting, was it put on hold pending the meeting on the basis of a promise for a meeting, just on that basis; or were there any discussions in relation to the issues of resources and the specific complaints that were had at that stage, which then led to a promise of a further meeting?

650 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, I genuinely think that it is not conducive to the interest of the taxpayer for us to conduct the post-mortem of each phase of industrial relations in respect of a dispute that is open between the Government and a union in order to satisfy hon. Members' curiosity. Therefore, the Government position is that we have answered the question that hon. Members have put but this is an issue that we are negotiating with the GGCA and we do not want to say anything that exacerbates the position because it would not be in the interest of the taxpayer or the Civil Service. Putting our view as to what it is that is happening and has happened might exacerbate matters. Putting the union's view might require us to put our view. So, because this is a live process of negotiation, we do not think it is prudent for us to be saying anymore at this stage. By all means, when the issue is resolved we will have to explain to the public and to the taxpayer how it has been resolved and what compromises have been reached, but 'How are you compromising in order to go to the next stage of the negotiation and the meeting?' is a level of curiosity that the hon. Gentleman is evincing which does not go to the proper discharge of Government business or otherwise.

665 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, a final question on this. Let me just say that it is not to satisfy our curiosity. We do not come to this House to satisfy our curiosity. We could stay at home and watch Netflix and watch more interesting programmes and documentaries. What we are trying to do is probe issues that are of public interest and are matters of concern which have reached the public domain. This concerns our constituents, members of the union and indeed lots of people
670 who work in the public service and we are trying to probe it. Nonetheless, I accept and understand what the Hon. Chief Minister is saying about not wishing to get into the detail of that.

Can I just ask is the Hon. Minister leading on the Government side in the forthcoming meeting in July?

675 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, if the hon. Gentleman thinks it is more interesting to stay at home to watch Netflix than it is to come to this House to do the job which he has been elected to do, he should say that to the general public without shying away from the fact that he thinks it is boring to come here to do his job.

The fact is that we are in the process of negotiating something which is of interest to the
680 members of the union, which is of interest to the members of the political Government and which is of interest to members of all the public service and the public who receive that service. Of course we accept that. That is why we are negotiating to get the best deal for everyone in a way that works for everyone.

One thing is to probe, the other thing is to look at something which is as yet an open issue and
685 to try and pry it open, and that is what I am saying to the hon. Gentleman he is seeking to do.

Yes, Mr Speaker, the matters are going to be dealt with by the Minister for Industrial Relations, who will be leading that meeting with the support of all other Ministers. He will have my support, if he needs it, because I have had a background in this issue from when I was Minister for Industrial Relations; and the Minister for ITLD, the Hon. Albert Isola, has also been providing input and
690 feedback.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q216/2022

Knight's Court –

Contract re cleaning of communal areas

Clerk: Question 216/2022. The Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

695 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, are the communal areas in Knight's Court included in any cleaning contract with the Government, and if so, with whom; or are they the responsibility of the Housing Ministry or anyone else, and if so, who?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Industrial Relations, Employment, Housing and Sport.
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Minister for Industrial Relations, Employment, Housing and Sport (Hon. S E Linares): Mr Speaker, Knight's Court is included in a contract on the same basis as other estates, with arrangements for commencement being finalised. The contract is between the Ministry of the Environment and Britannia Ltd.
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Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, I am not sure I understand that. He said it is included but then he added the words 'with the arrangements to be finalised', so is the contract in place now or is he saying that it will be in place in the future? Is that what he is saying?

710 **Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, if I may assist, there is a contract in place. There had been a difference in interpretation between Britannia, the Department of Environment and the Ministry for Housing as to whether it was included or not. This is now resolved, and therefore, if it has not started already it will commence imminently.

Q217/2022
Government housing –
Number empty and available for allocation

715 **Clerk:** Question 217/2022. The Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, how many dwelling houses has the Government identified as empty at 31st May 2022 and available for housing allocation?

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

Minister for Industrial Relations, Employment, Housing and Sport (Hon. S E Linares): Mr Speaker, there are currently three flats available.

Q218-19/2022
Government housing –
Number allocated in 2021 and up to end of May 2022

725 **Clerk:** Question 218/2022. The Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, how many dwelling houses have been allocated by the Housing Authority in the calendar year 2021, breaking these down by room composition?

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

Minister for Industrial Relations, Employment, Housing and Sport (Hon. S E Linares): Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 219.

Clerk: Question 219/2022. The Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

735 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, how many dwelling houses have been allocated by the Housing Authority in the first five months of 2022 up to 31 May 2022 breaking these down by room composition?

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

Hon. S E Linares: Mr Speaker, the breakdown of flats allocated in 2021 by room composition is as follows: 1RKB, 13; 2RKB, 55; 3RKB, 64; 4RKB, 18; 5RKB, three; and 6RKB, none.

The breakdown of flats allocated up to 31st May 2022 by room composition is as follows: 1RKB, five; 2RKB, nine; 3RKB, 12; 4RKB, 12; 5RKB, none; and 6RKB, none.

745 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, I am grateful for those figures. Obviously, I need to add them up, but I can see from the numbers he has given in respect of 2021 and the first five months of 2022 that ... I suppose it averages out at around a few houses a month. In his experience as Housing Minister, is that the kind of pattern he sees?

750 Can I just ask him, given the answer he gave to the previous question, which is that there are three dwelling houses identified as empty, is that number the number of houses that are potentially now available for allocation, or is the allocation that has been done by the Department under these other questions coming from other sources?

755 **Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, the hon. Member poses a few issues which I have already explained to the Hon. Mr Bossino in the last Question Time and it was in relation to ... He said that it had been lower in 2021, and we went through all that about COVID and why COVID had then affected the allocation of houses – and I am not going to go into that again. That is why, probably, the numbers are slightly lower than usual. But I can also say to the hon. Member that it is not only because three houses are empty that allocations happen. One of the empty ones, for example, 760 might be allocated to someone who is already a Government tenant and moves on, and therefore the next house becomes empty. That is what we call a chain. I have already explained to this House exactly how these things work, where you might have five allocations with one empty flat because people move from A to B, from B to C, from C to A, and therefore these chains are the number that has been given to the hon. Member.

JUSTICE, EQUALITY AND PUBLIC STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

Q256/2022

Ketamine – Reclassification

765 **Clerk:** Question 256/2022. The Hon. E J Phillips.

Hon. E J Phillips: Mr Speaker, can the Government state whether it is considering the reclassification of ketamine from a class C to a class B controlled substance?

770 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Justice, Equality and Standards.

Minister for Justice, Equality and Public Standards and Regulations (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento): Mr Speaker, following a recent arrest in relation to possession of, importation of and possession with intent to supply ketamine, the question of reclassification of ketamine from 775 class C to class B will be considered in consultation with the Drugs Advisory Council.

Hon. E J Phillips: Mr Speaker, does the Minister know when the Drugs Advisory Council will next meet to consider this very point?

780 **Hon. Miss S J Sacramento:** Mr Speaker, a meeting has been convened. However, because of the number of people who attend the Drugs Advisory Council, it may not be possible to have everyone in the room because of arrangements during the summer, so I would safely say within the next few months.

Q257/2022

**Nitrous oxide –
Provision of testing equipment to RGP**

Clerk: Question 257/2022. The Hon. E J Phillips.

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Hon. E J Phillips: Mr Speaker, can the Government state whether the RGP have been provided with equipment that allows them to test for nitrous oxide in advance of the legislation being brought before this House criminalising the misuse of this substance?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Justice, Equality and Standards.

Minister for Justice, Equality and Public Standards and Regulations (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento): Mr Speaker, the RGP is looking into the most appropriate way to test for nitrous oxide to the appropriate criminal evidential standard. Once proposals are put forward by the RGP the Government will consider them.

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Q258/2022

**Juvenile delinquency –
Plans to address**

Clerk: Question 258/2022. The Hon. D A Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, what plans does the Government have to address juvenile delinquency?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Justice, Equality and Standards.

Minister for Justice, Equality and Public Standards and Regulations (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento): Mr Speaker, as this Parliament is aware, I recently set up a Youth Justice Committee under the Ministry of Justice to look into this area of concern. I appointed the chief executive of the Care Agency to chair and the members include senior representatives from the Care Agency, the Ministry for Justice, the Royal Gibraltar Police, Probation Services, HMP Windmill Hill, the Gibraltar Health Authority and the Education Department.

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The Committee members have worked closely together, and minutes of the meeting held and information submitted by the individual services have been used to compose a report which includes analysis and conclusions of the main issues that have arisen. I am assured I will be receiving it very shortly.

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All the services are united to ensure that children are supported and empowered to make the most of their lives, enjoy and achieve and make a positive contribution to the community within Gibraltar, and agree that this requires all involved to tailor their services to the individual child's needs.

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The following goals have been identified by the Committee: a reduction in first-time offenders, a reduction in reoffending, a reduction in the use of custody, and a reduction in first-time offending, and preventative work.

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Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, can she inform the House when she expects to be able to make an announcement to the House as to the measures that she might bring to bear in order to deal with this issue?

Hon. Miss S J Sacramento: Mr Speaker, I am very grateful to the Committee because I set up this Committee and they have been working on this alongside initially their commitments in COVID – because unfortunately we are small and a lot of people overlap in their responsibilities. I know that there is a draft report which they are working on, to submit to me. I know that this report is at an advanced stage. I am in the hands of the Committee and its chair. I would like to be in a position to make announcements in this respect after the summer.

Hon. E J Phillips: Mr Speaker, just one question on a matter of interest to me, as well as my learned and hon. Friend. Insofar as the question has been addressed to the learned Minister in relation to juvenile delinquency, as the Minister will know from the last Police Report that was laid on the table of the House at the last session, there was a direct link between public disorder and drugs misuse and we saw significant increases over the last two years. Is this going to be central to this question about juvenile delinquency? We have seen, on the face of the paper that was laid before the House, serious increases in public disorder and drug misuse offences, and therefore those would appear, would they not, to be central to the strategy of the Government in tackling juvenile delinquency? Would she agree with that?

Hon. Miss S J Sacramento: Mr Speaker, it is for this very purpose that when I set up this Committee there was a multi-agency approach to it. The main players that deal with the issues the hon. Gentleman has mentioned, mainly drugs and the correlation between that and crime, are represented by those who sit on the Committee by way of the Gibraltar Health Authority – which will, of course, have input by its Director of Public Health – the Royal Gibraltar Police and by the Care Agency. Because there is an overlap and these things cannot be considered in a vacuum, all these professionals who are connected in the way that they work with young people have had an opportunity to express their voices, and this will all be contained in the report once I receive it.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY, CLIMATE CHANGE AND EDUCATION

Q242/2022

A-Level and equivalent examinations – Number of students by educational establishment

Clerk: Question 242/2022. The Hon. E J Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Education provide details on the total number of students who sat A-Level or equivalent examinations during the summer 2022 examination sessions, broken down by educational establishment?

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

Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, the summer 2022 examination season is still ongoing. It is scheduled to be completed at the end of June – in fact, within the next few days – and we will be able to answer this question with total accuracy upon completion of the exam session. This said, we are able to project figures, subject to not knowing whether those listed actually turned up for the exam. There can be some variations as a result. We envisage that 128 students from Bayside, 174 students

from Westside and 32 students from the Gibraltar College will have sat A-Level or equivalent examinations once this session is over.

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

I apologise. Perhaps in my wording, instead of putting down the words 'who sat' – the Minister is correct that there are some exams pending this week – I could have put down 'who have been entered'. But yes, as and when information does vary in the future, I would be grateful, but I do not think it will vary by more than one or two at the most.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Q243/2022

**A-Level and equivalent courses –
Academic entry requirements by educational establishment**

Clerk: Question 243/2022. The Hon. E J Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Can the Minister for Education provide details, broken down by educational establishment, in respect of the minimum academic entry requirements required in order for a pupil to enrol in A-Level or equivalent courses commencing in September 2022?

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

Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, the requirements to access A-Level or equivalent courses are the same across all three educational establishments. Students wishing to enrol in an A-Level or equivalent course will require a minimum of four GCSEs at grades 9 to 4. These students will be able to select two courses of study, as long as they meet the subject-specific requirements. Students who have achieved a minimum of five GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 would be able to select three courses of study, as long as they meet the subject-specific requirements.

Each course at this level of study has its own subject-specific entry requirements. I am handing over a schedule to the hon. Member which details the current subject-specific requirements for A-Level and equivalent courses for all our educational establishments.

Answer to Question 243/2022

SUBJECT	MINIMUM ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR A-Level SUBJECTS	RECOMMENDED ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR A-Level SUBJECTS
ACCOUNTING	GCSE Grade 4/C in both English Language and Mathematics	GCSE Grade 4/C in English Language; and Grade 5 in Mathematics
APPLIED BUSINESS	GCSE Grade 4 in Business Studies. <i>If you did not follow the Business Studies GCSE course you can access this A-Level course if you have both a Grade 4 in English Language and a Grade 4 in Mathematics.</i>	GCSE Grade 4 in Business Studies. <i>If you did not follow the Business Studies GCSE course you can access this A-Level course if you have both a Grade 4 in English Language and a Grade 4 in Mathematics.</i>
ART & DESIGN	GCSE Grade 4 in Art & Design.	GCSE Grade 4 in Art & Design.
BIOLOGY	Grade 44 in Combined Science; and Grade 4 in Mathematics.	Grades 55 in Combined Science and a Grade 5 in Mathematics.
BUSINESS STUDIES	GCSE Grade 4 in Business Studies.	GCSE Grade 4 in Business Studies.
CHEMISTRY	Grades 44 in Combined Science; and Grade 4 in Mathematics.	Grades 55 in Combined Science and Grade 5 in Mathematics.
DANCE	GCSE Grade 4 in Dance; or a recognised Level 2 external qualification in Dance.	GCSE Grade 4 in Dance or a recognised Level 2 external qualification in Dance.
DESIGN TECHNOLOGY	GCSE Grade C in Design Technology. <i>If you did not follow the DT GCSE course you can access this A-Level course if you have proven practical ability.</i>	GCSE Grade C in Design Technology. <i>If you did not follow the DT GCSE course you can access this A-Level course if you have proven practical ability.</i>
DRAMA AND THEATRE STUDIES	GCSE Grade 4 in Drama. <i>If you did not follow the Drama GCSE course you can access this A-Level course if you have a Grade 4/C in English Language.</i>	GCSE Grade 4 in Drama. <i>If you did not follow the Drama GCSE course you can access this A-Level course if you have a Grade 5/B in English Language.</i>
ECONOMICS	GCSE Grade C in Economics. <i>If you did not follow the Economics GCSE course you can access this A-Level course if you have a Grade 4 in English Language and a Grade 4 in Mathematics.</i>	GCSE Grade C in Economics. <i>If you did not follow the Economics GCSE course you can access this A-Level course if you have a Grade 5/B in English Language and a Grade 5 in Mathematics.</i>
ENGLISH LITERATURE	GCSE Grade 4 in English Language and Grade 4 in English Literature.	GCSE Grade 4 in English Language and Grade 4 in English Literature.
FRENCH	GCSE Grade 4 in French.	GCSE Grade 5 in French.
GEOGRAPHY	GCSE Grade 4 in Geography.	GCSE Grade 5 in Geography.
HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE	GCSE Grade 4 in Health and Social Care. <i>If you did not follow the Health and Social Care GCSE course you can access this A-Level course if you have a Grade 4/C in English Language and Grades 44 in Combined Science.</i>	GCSE Grade 4 in Health and Social Care. <i>If you did not follow the Health and Social Care GCSE course you can access this A-Level course if you have a Grade 5/B in English Language and Grades 55 in Combined Science.</i>

Answer to Question 243/2022 cont.

HISTORY	GCSE Grade 4 in History. <i>If you did not follow the History GCSE course you can access this A-Level course if you have a Grade 5/B in English Language.</i>	GCSE Grade 5 in History. <i>If you did not follow the History GCSE course you can access this A-Level course if you have a Grade 5/B in English Language.</i>
HISTORY OF ART	GCSE Grade 4/C in English Language.	GCSE Grade 5/B in English Language.
ICT	Cambridge Nationals Level 2 (GCSE equivalent).	Cambridge Nationals Level 2 (GCSE equivalent).
ITALIAN	GCSE Grade 4 in Italian.	GCSE Grade 5 in Italian.
MATHEMATICS	GCSE Grade 6 in Mathematics.	GCSE Grade 7 in Mathematics.
FURTHER MATHEMATICS	GCSE Grade 7 in Mathematics.	GCSE Grade 8 in Mathematics.
MUSIC	GCSE Grade 4 in Music. <i>If you did not follow the Music GCSE course you can access this A-Level course if you have a Grade 5 pass or above in Theory of Music and a Grade 5 pass or above in any instrument.</i>	GCSE Grade 5 in Music. <i>If you did not follow the Music GCSE course you can access this A-Level course if you have a Grade 5 pass or above in Theory of Music and a Grade 5 pass or above in any instrument.</i>
MUSIC PERFORMANCE	You can access this BTEC course if you have Grade 4 in a practical Music qualification. If you do not hold a Grade 4 qualification you may be able to access this BTEC course after a successful participation in an audition process.	You can access this BTEC course if you have Grade 4 in a practical Music qualification. If you do not hold a Grade 4 qualification you may be able to access this BTEC course after a successful participation in an audition process.
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	GCSE Grade 4 in PE and GCSE Grade 44 in Combined Science. <i>If you did not follow the GCSE PE course you can access this A-Level course if you have Grades 44 in Combined Science and are active participants in sport or dance.</i>	GCSE Grade 5 in PE and a GCSE Grade 55 in Combined Science. <i>If you did not follow the PE GCSE course you can access this A-Level course if you have Grades 55 Combined Science and are active participants in sport or dance.</i>
PHYSICS	GCSE Grade 44 in Combined Science and a Grade 4 in Mathematics.	GCSE Grade 55 in Combined Science and a Grade 5 in Mathematics.
PSYCHOLOGY	GCSE Grade 4 in English Language Grade 4 in Mathematics and Grades 44 in Combined Science.	GCSE Grade 5/B in English Language; Grade 4 in Mathematics and Grades 44 in Combined Science.
RELIGIOUS STUDIES	GCSE Grade 4 in RS. <i>If you did not follow the RS GCSE course you can access this A-Level course if you have a Grade 5/B in English Language.</i>	GCSE Grade 5 in RS. <i>If you did not follow the RS GCSE course you can access this A-Level course if you have a Grade 5/B in English Language.</i>
SOCIOLOGY	GCSE Grade 4 in Sociology. <i>If you did not follow the GCSE Sociology course you can access this A-Level course if you have a Grade 4/C in English Language.</i>	GCSE Grade 5 in Sociology. <i>If you did not follow the Sociology GCSE course you can access this A-Level course if you have a Grade 4/C in English Language.</i>
SPANISH	GCSE Grade 4 in Spanish.	GCSE Grade 4 in Spanish.
TRAVEL & TOURISM	GCSE Grade 4/C in English Language.	GCSE Grade 5/B in English Language.

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

In my personal reflection upon this, I am grateful that the Minister has provided two columns, one that says the minimum entry requirements, the benchmark, and then beside that he has the recommended, which would be the ideal situation. Is there a logic behind the thinking that although a student may have met the minimum, if there is a high number of applicants who have
900 the recommended ... because of class size or whatever, they would be unsuccessful despite having met the minimum? Does it follow that logic, or not?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, no young person who is able to undertake a course of study is going to be denied the possibility because of class sizes. If anything, it would be the other way round. Somebody who perhaps has not quite met the recommended requirements but who has
905 otherwise performed well or has done badly in an exam when normally they would have been expected to do better, would be allowed, provided they have the minimum requirement. Really, it works that way round rather than the other way round.

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

Another minor point for clarification. The Minister explained that those having a minimum of four GCSEs could then take on two A-Levels and those who have five or above could take on three A-Levels. Are there any criteria set if someone ... the high fliers? There are occasional cases where a student wishes to take on as many as four A-Levels. Is that judged on a case by case basis by the
915 teachers, or is there a set policy by the Department in that respect?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, the case can be made. There are exceptional students who would be able to cope with more, and obviously the case would be made. One has to be fair to the students and not expect too much of them and then they trip over themselves, but this is
920 something that would be discussed with the students and, as they are under 18, with their parents or carers.

Hon. E J Reyes: Thank you. I know in the past we have had situations where some students have returned to school in order to upgrade their GCSE results and so on, especially in respect of
925 the core subjects like English and mathematics, but to help complete a timetable they were

allowed to undertake one A-Level – before we had lots of AS-Levels, for example, in a particular subject. Is that something that perhaps the schools still consider, so that the student is able to at least attain one A-Level whilst they are still undergoing full-time education?

930 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, the philosophy of the Department of Education, and indeed of these three educational establishments, is to allow every possible avenue to improve and to allow a young person to develop.

What is given here in respect of minimum requirements is minimum requirements set by examination boards. If the Department and the schools can in any way help to advance the development and the learning of a young person, then clearly that would be considered, but we cannot prescribe everything here. No two young people are the same, but we are trying to achieve what is actually best for them.

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Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q244/2022
National Day –
Cultural events

940 **Clerk:** Question 244/2022. The Hon. E J Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Can Government confirm if it intends to organise any cultural events this year in connection with our traditional National Day celebrations, as in the past before COVID-19 restrictions?

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

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

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Hon. E J Reyes: I take it that the information will be made available to the public shortly?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, we are talking about the usual traditional fancy dress, the variety show, the rally, the fun day, the jazz concert, the rock concert and the youth ... I believe that there has been a statement by the SDDG – coincidentally, because it works independently of the Government – so I think there may already be some information out there.

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Q245/2022
Cleaning and restoration of historic walls –
Update re progress

Clerk: Question 245/2022. The Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Please state what progress is being made in respect of the promised ongoing programme of cleaning and restoration of historical walls aside from the Northern Defences.

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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, the estimates for 2022-23 provide – or will provide, hopefully – for the restoration of sites such as Southport Gates and the Tower of Homage, as well as the façade of the future St Mary’s Lower Primary School. Works on these will commence shortly. Restoration of the Convent façade also continues. Other developments also include Orange Bastion, North Gorge, the ex-Casino development, which although being renovated privately has Government involvement throughout in providing advice and setting conditions. We continue refurbishing many of our city plaques as well as restoring and repainting our old street signs. As in previous years, the project is ongoing.

The Urban Renewal Committee and the Town Planning Department continue to work hard in ensuring the restoration and enhancement of buildings and walls throughout the Old Town.

Hon. D J Bossino: Mr Speaker, the hon. Member will no doubt immediately identify that many of these questions arise from the manifesto commitments on which they won the last General Election.

He mentions various things like city plaques and street signs. The question is more specifically in relation to historic walls. I think he has mentioned some of them, but as far as that category is concerned it is much more extensive than what he has mentioned. Is there any plan? He mentioned something at the very tail-end of his answer but it was pretty woolly in terms of time commitment. The manifesto suggests that it was going to be something more extensive, unless I am reading it wrongly.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, the manifesto does in fact suggest that. Clearly, we have had two years of COVID and we have had the financial constraints which we will be discussing next week during the Budget session, so we are not able to restore as many walls as I would very much like to restore. That is the reality. But I think some of the critical ones, which are two of those I have mentioned ... Southport Gates, which has had scaffolding up for some time, is going to be tackled, and the Tower of Homage, which is suffering from the growth of woody vegetation on it, is going to be tackled, providing, of course, as I expect, that we get the Estimates through during the course of next week, because it is an allocation from the next Budget. But we will do everything we can to at least tackle those most critical ones within the constraints.

Hon. D J Bossino: That is reasonable, but there is an admission that it would have been more ambitious had those factors not materialised.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, I think it is important to remind the hon. Gentleman of the things that we have said in this House already. We have said that, unfortunately, as a result of the pandemic, it is not possible for us to perform our manifesto commitments entered into at the last General Election. We have said that we will try to do as much as we can of those areas of work where we can find alternative funding or where funding can be made available, but the restraints at the moment ... we have already announced during the course of the last Budget debate ... already provided for that. So, to an extent he is asking a question that the Government has already addressed.

I fully accept that the hon. Gentleman is looking at the manifesto and asking us questions, but he must do so with that dose of reality that we all had to accept at the last Budget session and which we will have an opportunity to debate again next week.

Q246/2022

**Gibraltar Museum of Naval and Military History –
State of play**

Clerk: Question 246/2022. The Hon. D J Bossino.

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Hon. D J Bossino: What is the state of play in connection with the promised Gibraltar Museum of Naval and Military History?

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

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Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, before I answer the question, the comments of the Hon. the Chief Minister to the last question are relevant to this one too. The Government is looking at all options and discussing with relevant stakeholders, but clearly against that backdrop.

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Hon. D J Bossino: Yes, I understand.

Mr Speaker, can I just ask one question which I think immediately arises, perhaps not from the reply but certainly from the manifesto? Is it the intention that the site of this museum is going to be the same one as announced then, the old fortress headquarters, and is that site available to the Government?

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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, as I said, we are looking at all options. I think it is too early to give anything further than that.

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Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): If it is helpful, Mr Speaker, I can give the House a little bit more information, because that is something that is dealt with by me.

Alternative Forces Headquarters, as it is known, has not yet been handed back to the Government. It is still in the control of the MoD. We are still finalising some aspects of the works necessary for that to come back to us, I think in months.

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Hon. D J Bossino: I am very grateful to both Ministers for their replies. Whilst I understand that the negotiations, if I can put it in those terms, are still ... it is being negotiated and settled, it is a question of the mechanics of transfer, it is a question of when not how.

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Hon. Chief Minister: I think he is now asking a question ... did not need to give way. We negotiated the transfer of Alternative Forces Headquarters. That was an agreement that was conditional on the completion of certain works which related to the Lands Agreement that hon. Members had entered into when they were in government. That programme of works has substantially now ended. I understand that we are now literally at the end of that process. That was not just the very high-profile work that was being done down at Four Corners, which was the new residential accommodation which hon. Members, when they were in government, agreed they would build for the Ministry of Defence, it also involved band block and parking in other areas at Lathbury etc. All of that needs to be completed, snagged and finalised, and then AFHQ comes back. That, I think, is now done, or substantially done, subject to the final snagging and that the handover happens.

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Hon. D J Bossino: Again, I am grateful for the very complete answer. Do I detect that once that happens, the site of this museum is not necessarily going to be there? Is that correct? I understand the original commitment and thinking was that that is where it was going to be placed.

1055 **Hon. Chief Minister:** That was an option and it remains an option. Truth be told, the Hon. Deputy Chief Minister, with his archaeological hat on, has discovered that AFHQ is built on an area which is a magnificent casement, which none of us are aware of, and there may be, therefore, other options for that area; or this may be the best option as a result of that, because a casement is also, in itself, a piece of our military heritage. So there are other factors to consider which have come to light after 2019 when we were permitted access to inspect the property, which we will need to consider with those who advise us on heritage matters.

Q247/2022

**List of statutory schedules –
Progress re adding buildings, monuments and artefacts**

Clerk: Question 247/2022. The Hon. D J Bossino.

1065 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Please state what progress has been made in connection with the Government's policy to add buildings, monuments and artefacts to the list of statutory schedules.

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

1070 **Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, the Heritage and Antiques Act 2018 already has, as we know, more than 200 listed sites located on land and sea that encompass many heritage-sensitive areas in Gibraltar. We will be embarking on the scheduling of private properties in the very near future as well, and discussions with landlords are commencing. In fact, they have already commenced.

1075 The Heritage and Antiquities Advisory Council keeps sites with potential for listing under regular review. Discussions with the MoD on the potential listing of MoD sites also continues.

Hon. D J Bossino: Is he able to identify which private buildings have been identified for addition?

1080 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** I would rather not, Mr Speaker, because we are talking to the landlords at the moment, but they are private properties – some of them are in use as dwellings – which have recently been restored very sensitively to heritage, and therefore we feel that these are the ones that could start this process.

1085 There are some private properties already listed, being the places of worship, and obviously St Andrew's Church is one that was discussed here at the last meeting, and as I said, the MoD has a lot of heritage sites under its custody and there are discussions in connection with those.

1090 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Also, if I can refer to the last session, when I asked about the future of the Social Security Department, I wonder whether – it is not a private dwelling, it belongs to the Government – consideration could be given – the answer was provided by the Hon. Father of the House – to adding that particular building, to give it the adequate statutory protection, into the schedule.

1095 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, there was a reply given that heritage sensitivities would be borne in mind, but I cannot recall the ones that are currently being discussed by the Council for recommendation, so I cannot answer that in detail.

Mr Speaker: The Hon. Edwin Reyes.

1100 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, thank you.

If I recall correctly, when the Bill was presented to this House the Minister at the time explained that eventually, subsequently, because he wanted to make sure he got it right, there were some sites just off the coast, on the actual sea bed, that would be mentioned and included and so on. Does the Minister have information? Have we concluded that exercise yet, or is it something that is still ongoing?

1110 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, some sites were already included at that time. As I said, the Council, which meets with me regularly, every couple of months, has a whole list that it constantly reviews, but I have not got that information off the top of my head to exactly say which are under consideration.

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

1115 Like many Members in this House, as a lover of history and monuments and so on, would the Minister make a note of that so that in one of his regular meetings he can double-check that these items have been already fully integrated? Otherwise – it happens by human error – you leave something in a pending tray and we can realise too late.

Q248/2022
Lord Airey's Battery –
Government assistance re restoration

Clerk: Question 248/2022. The Hon. D J Bossino.

1120 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Did the Government provide any financial or other assistance in connection with the recently completed restoration of Lord Airey's Battery?

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

1125 **Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, the Ministry for Heritage paid for the scaffolding and the temporary toilet facilities, organised the transportation, contributed towards other peripheral costs and also provided heritage advice whenever required.

Q249/2022
Britannia Ltd –
Cleaning contract

Clerk: Question 249/2022. The Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

1130 **Hon. K Azopardi:** When is the cleaning contract with Britannia due to expire and have terms been negotiated for an extension of the contract; and, if so, has a new contract or an extension to the current contract been signed, and what are the main terms of the new arrangements?

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

1135 **Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, the Britannia contract is due to expire on 31st August 2023. The Department of the Environment is currently reviewing the contract and considering options in order to come to a decision, which is likely to include preparing a tender package to be released within the next six to nine months.

1140 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, is the Minister in a position to say whether the future contract, or the reviewed arrangements, would be to cover the same areas, or are they going to cover different areas? Are they discussing that? I suppose the contract has been in place for some time, so in the context of that, things would have come up as to whether there are new things that
1145 should be done or old things that were being done that perhaps were not necessary or should be done in a different way. Can he give us a feel for the kind of discussions that have been ongoing?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Yes, Mr Speaker. As one works with a contractor one looks at things that perhaps could be done differently, perhaps different areas, changes in frequency, and all that will be factored in so that the tender package provides something which is an improvement on what we have now. We always strive to do better and better.
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Hon. K Azopardi: And could I just ask are the discussions aimed at a negotiation of an extension to the current contract with Britannia, or is it that it is going to go out to tender and obviously Britannia can apply and the Government is open as to the options for the future?
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While I am on my feet, perhaps if I may just ask him as well, because it is all rolled up in that: because the arrangements expire at the end of summer next year, which is usually a complicated time to make handover arrangements, I assume the Government has in mind putting arrangements in place that will provide for a more seamless transition, if necessary.
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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, it is early days to commit to any of those. We will ensure a seamless transition, but it is early days.

Hon. K Azopardi: I am not sure he answered the question as to whether there is going to be a tender to everyone or a negotiation with this entity.
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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: I did, Mr Speaker. I said it is early days.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q250/2022
Music festival –
Details of any plans for 2022

1170 **Clerk:** Question 250/2022. The Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, is Government planning to hold a music festival or musical event in 2022; if so, when, where, of what type and how much is it expected to cost?

1175 **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 will not be a so-called Mega Concert this year. There may be smaller

1180 events organised privately, as there has been some limited interest expressed by private entities.
It is not expected that the Government will contribute to these.

Adjournment

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, I move that the House should now adjourn to tomorrow at 3.30 in the afternoon.

1185 **Mr Speaker:** I now propose a question, which is that this House do now adjourn to Thursday, 23rd June at 3.30 p.m.

I now put the question, which is that this House do now adjourn to Thursday, 23rd June at 3.30 p.m. Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye.) Those against? Passed.

This House will now adjourn to Thursday, 23rd June at 3.30 p.m.

The House adjourned at 5.25 p.m.