



# PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

**AFTERNOON SESSION: 3.01 p.m. – 5.44 p.m.**

**Gibraltar, Tuesday, 13th January 2026**

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## The Gibraltar Parliament

*The Parliament met at 3.01 p.m.*

[MADAM SPEAKER: Hon. Judge K Ramagge GMH *in the Chair*]

[CLERK TO THE PARLIAMENT: P A Borge McCarthy Esq *in attendance*]

**Clerk:** Meeting of Parliament, Tuesday, the 13th of January, 2026. Suspension of Standing Orders. The Hon. Chief Minister.

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**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, I beg to move under Standing Order 7(3) to suspend Standing Order 7(1) in order to proceed with the laying of documents on the table.

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

10

**Clerk:** Papers to be laid. The Hon. Chief Minister.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Well, Madam Speaker, can I start by wishing every Member a very happy New Year, a happy 2026, and to say a personal thank you to all for their very kind words at the time that I was suffering from some ocular health issues at the tail end of last year.

15 Madam Speaker, I have the honour to lay on the table the report into the retirement of the former Commissioner of Police by Sir Peter Openshaw, the Statement of Supplementary Estimates No. 1 of 2023/2024, the Statement of Supplementary Estimates No. 1 of 2024/2025, and the Annual Report of the Gibraltar Police Authority.

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**Madam Speaker:** Order to lie.

**Clerk:** Answers to Oral Questions. Questions to the Hon. Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.

25

### INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, CIVIL CONTINGENCIES AND SPORT

**Q710/2025**  
**Lathbury Sports Complex –**  
**Wind turbine**

**Clerk:** Question 710, the Hon. G Origo.

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**Hon. G Origo:** Can the Minister confirm whether the Government, in its capacity as landlord of the complex, intends to support the recent filing made by a private entity for plans to build wind turbines at Lathbury Sports Complex?

35 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.

40 **Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport (Hon. L M Bruzon):** Madam Speaker, no ma'am.

40 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, may I ask the Hon. Minister why not? At the time when these plans were submitted, the prospects of having a clean, renewable energy resource such as this was quite exciting, so I would be keen to know what the considerations were considered in order to reach this decision not to support the project.

45 **Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker, the Government would need to review a full assessment of the environmental impacts of the project, and we have not had this.

50 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, so can I take it from the Hon. Minister's answers that because he still needs to consider the environmental impact assessment, that the no which he gave a few moments ago could potentially be a yes if the Government is satisfied with the assessment of this impact report?

55 **Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker, it is my understanding that the application has been withdrawn from the DPC.

55 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

60 **Q711/2025**  
**Rooke site –**  
**Inspection by the GFRS's Safety Department**

60 **Q712/2025**  
**Rooke site –**  
**Certificate of Fitness**

**Clerk:** Question 711, Hon. J Ladislaus.

65 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** When did the first inspection by the GFRS' Safety Department of the elderly care home building at the Rooke site take place and have any subsequent inspections been undertaken by third parties in respect of the issuing of a certificate of fitness? If so, please provide the dates on which those inspections were carried out, by whom and the cost of carrying out those inspections.

70 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.

**Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport (Hon. L M Bruzon):** Madam Speaker I will answer this question with Question 712.

75 **Clerk:** Question 712, Hon. J Ladislaus.

80 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Have the GFRS Safety Department now been satisfied that all the requirements for a certificate of fitness in respect of the elderly care home building at the Rooke site have been met and have they issued a "no objection" to the issuing of the certificate of fitness? If not, what requirements remain outstanding to be met and by when is it envisaged that those requirements will be fulfilled?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.

85       **Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker, the GFRS provided final clearance for the Certificate of Fitness on 21 August 2025. According to the ePlanning Portal, the Department of Town Planning and Building issued the Certificate of Fitness on 1 August 2025. This is public information.

90       Madam Speaker, in relation to question 711, the initial inspection of the elderly care home at the Rook sites was carried out on 25 March 2025, with a further inspection on 29 June 2025. The GFRS Fire Department carried out a final inspection of the elderly care home on 7 August 2025.

95       **Hon. J Ladislaus:** I am grateful, Madam Speaker. Just to unpack some of what is been answered there. So, we hear that the initial, it seems, inspection took place on 25 March, with a second inspection in June, and then finally it was awarded the Certificate on 21 August.

100      May I ask, is it standard for so many inspections to be needed in respect of a building before the Certificate is actually issued, or is it the case that there were outstanding issues that needed to be rectified?

**Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker, I would not know.

105      **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, and I do not know whether the Hon. Minister will have the information, but what is now the hold-up, given that it seems to be that the building was waiting for the Certificate of Fitness to be issued. The certificate has now been issued. We are now in January of 2026.

110      The initial project was actually announced in 2020, and then the completion date was due, if I am not mistaken, by about mid-2023. Here we are in 2026, and the Certificate of Fitness has been issued. What is the hold-up with what is going to be done with the Rooke site?

115      **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, the Government has answered questions in relation to the structure, which relates to the Rooke site and how it is going to operate on a number of occasions, and the Government will be making a statement in future, when the time comes to see the Rooke start to operate. The Government is committed to how that is going to happen. We have debated that in this House before, and very soon I expect a statement will be made about the commencement of operations of Rooke.

120      **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, can the Hon. Chief Minister perhaps clarify what the building is going to be used for? Is it going to be used for its initially announced purpose as elderly care, or is it going to be used for some other purpose that we do not know of? Because we do not know.

125      **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I refer the hon. Lady to the answer I gave a few moments ago.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q713/2025**  
**Bayside Sports Complex –**  
**Floodlights**

**Clerk:** Question 713, the Hon. E J Reyes.

135

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Can Government provide details of the dates when the floodlights or other lights pertaining to the outside areas at Bayside Sports complex have not been working?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.

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**Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport (Hon. L M Bruzon):** Madam Speaker, there was an issue with the switching mechanism of the outdoor areas of the Bayside Sports Complex. Spares were ordered as soon as the issue was identified in mid-August. The lights were restored within a week. The impact was minimal.

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**Hon. E J Reyes:** Madam Speaker, the Minister has explained that they needed to order spare parts and so on. I take it that this area falls obviously under the responsibility of the GSLA as the day-to-day operators. Can the Minister confirm that all the outside areas and its responsibility for maintenance, including the lights and so on, fall exclusively upon the GSLA, or are some parts of it sort of like being leased out or rented out to other entities and it falls upon their responsibility, which in turn they then report to GSLA?

I want to know if there is a middleman section involved in it.

**Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker, the Bayside Sports Complex is the responsibility of the GSLA.

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**Madam Speaker:** Next Question.

**Q714/2025**  
**Europa Sports Ground –**  
**Ball stop nets**

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**Clerk:** Question 714, the Hon. E J Reyes.

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**Hon. E J Reyes:** Can Government provide an update in respect of the still outstanding problems in providing a permanent solution to the ball-stop nets at the Europa sports grounds?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.

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**Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport (Hon. L M Bruzon):** Madam Speaker, my answer remains the same as that to Question 128 of 2025.

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**Hon. E J Reyes:** Madam Speaker, the answer is the same as that given by his predecessor in a previous Parliament. Does the Minister have any hopeful date by when this will be sorted out, given that cricket is becoming not only popular, but becoming an international venue where lots of outside players come, some of which have proved to be very big hitters of the balls. And we have experienced occasions when they have had to put up notices and even temporarily close the children's play park at the eastern end and one is trying to avoid the situation. So, I am trying to get from the Minister

some hopefully date or commitment by when this will be sorted out. Madam Speaker, I do not have a date yet.

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**Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker I do not have a date yet.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

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**Q715/2025  
Allocations –  
Sports associations**

**Clerk:** Question 715, the Hon. C Sacarello.

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**Hon. C Sacarello:** What is the mechanism in place for assigning allocations to sports associations using the large playing fields in Gibraltar and how does Government ensure equitable access for all sports across taxpayer funded facilities?

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**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.

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**Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport (Hon. L M Bruzon):** Madam Speaker, the allocation process was revised around five years ago to make adjustments for the increased availability of facilities at the newly constructed schools, together with the state-of-the-art venues developed as part of the 2019 Island Games, resulting in improved access to sporting associations. Most associations utilise modern sports facilities, particularly indoor venues, and they have had their requests accommodated satisfactorily. As a result of the scheduled changes at these indoor venues, changes are becoming frequent.

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Consequently, it was agreed to continue to operate the same cycle for a two-year period. Most recently, however, outdoor multi-sports venues, particularly in the larger playing fields, have become more increasingly sought after. The heightened demand has seen scheduled allocations more challenging for these venues.

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The mechanisms for the decision-making process used to allocate taxpayer-funded facilities are based on, though not limited to, the following criteria: Firstly, the registered number of individuals within the association; Secondly, the existing structure of domestic leagues, including the number of registered teams; Thirdly, the dynamics of the sport in question, such as the range of age groups involved; Fourthly, the space necessary to carry the sport. Full-scale senior matches may require the entire playing field, while grassroots activities may often be accommodated within reduced space, allowing for shared use; Fifthly, the suitability of particular venues for specific sports, including the type of surface available, and surrounding environment considerations. For instance, the usability of hardball cricket at Lathbury Sports Complex is not allowed due to potential hazards; Finally, the number of teams or national squads preparing for international competitions.

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This structured approach ensures that the allocation of facilities is transparent, equitable and reflective of both community and competitive sports.

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**Hon. C Sacarello:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. Member for the extensive answer. But first, I would like to, with your indulgence, congratulate the GRFU on their admission into Rugby Europe recently, with the support of the Government through the services of the AG, which I would like to acknowledge. But also, the hard work of two people noteworthy of mention, Chad Thompson and Maurice Stagnetto.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, there is a question on the Order Paper, specifically on that issue. I do not know whether we are pre-empting that.

230      **Hon. C Sacarello:** Sure, I will leave it there anyway. It was just to get my congratulations in. Thank you very much for the answer to the Hon. Minister.

235      The first point you mentioned, you mentioned equitable at the end, but it was registered numbers. It is important for rugby, having been admitted, to continue to have access to the pitches. They acknowledge the difficulties with the reduced number of playing fields available, plus also the fact that football's requirements are extensive.

236      But just in terms of numbers alone, there is 140 hours of playing time a week across four pitches that currently exist. The relative numbers there, you mentioned the registered numbers. Rugby to football, the ratio's 10 to 1, so it is about 10%.

240      140 hours a week, that should equate to 14 hours. They are currently allocated 6 hours. They are not asking for more, but they are asking for guarantees that these 6 hours will be protected.

241      At the moment, these 6 hours have been reduced considerably around internationals and other events. Added to that, one of the pitches used is not fit for purpose, it is far too small. It is the second one at Europa, which is subsidiary and smaller to that.

245      And from that point of view, they are asking for stonewall guarantees. Can the Minister offer the GRFU stonewall guarantees that they will have six hours a week minimum, and that he will look into the changing of one of the facilities?

**Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker, the hon. Gentleman's colleague is asking a very similar question, 717.

250      **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q716/2025**  
**Home for netball**

255      **Clerk:** Question 716, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** What happened to the home for Netball promised by the GSLP/Liberals?

260      **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.

265      **Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport (Hon. L M Bruzon):** Madam Speaker, at the time this question was filed, I was going to say that we were barely halfway through our time in Office. We are not anymore, but nonetheless, the home for netball is still very much in line to be delivered by this Government.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** And can the Minister tell us a bit more about that, in terms of timescale and indeed the location of this facility?

270      **Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker, no, ma'am but we are working with the Netball Association when relevant.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** No, because there is not a location for it? Or no, because he is not prepared to say?

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**Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker, no, because there are various alternatives.

280      **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** So, if there are various alternatives, that suggests there has not been a decision on location. Is the Minister then, in those circumstances, if the location is not yet decided, still of the view that it can be delivered by the end of the term of the Government?

285      **Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker, as I said, there are various locations. There is one obvious one, which is where they currently play most or do most of their training. The Chief Minister did mention it during the opening of the Netball World Youth Cup and he mentioned it here in Parliament after the Netball World Youth Cup that we are still committed to providing the home of netball.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

290      **Q717/2025**  
**Gibraltar Rugby –**  
**Access to sporting facilities**

**Clerk:** Question 717, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

295      **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Is the Government in discussions with Gibraltar Rugby on how to improve its access to sporting facilities?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.

300      **Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport (Hon. L M Bruzon):** Madam Speaker, I meet frequently with the Gibraltar Rugby Football Union. I have met with them twice in the last two months, specifically to discuss access to sporting facilities, amongst other matters of course. There is an ongoing commitment to meet regularly in this respect, with the next meeting due very shortly.

305      Additionally, there is a constant and continuous exchange of emails where such matters are also discussed. I am glad to confirm that the outcomes have thus far been positive. Finally, Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Gibraltar Rugby Football Union on finally becoming members of Rugby Europe.

310      It has been a long and arduous journey, where perseverance deserves praise. I also congratulate them on their first win in an international competition in their match against Finland on Saturday.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, I would like to associate Members on this side of the House, although my colleague already to the right has done so, already in the achievement by Gibraltar Rugby of finally becoming members of Rugby Europe.

315      Madam Speaker, my colleague, Mr Sacarello, has already outlined the needs of Gibraltar Rugby in a supplementary on another question, and I would not be able to frame that supplementary in a better way in terms of the granular needs of Gibraltar Rugby. The Minister mentions that he is in regular discussions with Gibraltar Rugby, but, as he knows, the membership of Rugby Europe is conditional on there being certain facilities available for the development of rugby at different levels.

320      So, in the context of these discussions, will he bear that in mind, given the needs to maintain the Rugby Europe membership and that it is intrinsically linked to the availability of facilities?

**Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker, the points raised are part of the discussions that we hold regularly.

325      **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Yes, and I appreciate that, but can he give us a bit more information about whether there will therefore be more facilities available for Gibraltar Rugby going forward?

330      **Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker, as I explained before, use of facilities are all shared and it is all down to requirements and the number of members and the number of teams and so on and so forth. Rugby share facilities, just like almost all sports in Gibraltar do, and all sports in Gibraltar would love to have more facilities, more time. We are working on a new project, which would influence the question asked by the Hon. Mr Reyes before, to try and improve facilities and so on, but that is a constant thing, not just for rugby, but for all sports in general.

335      As I said, most sports have to share facilities and unfortunately, if there is an international football match, we cannot tell UEFA that we are cancelling the match because someone else needs to train.

340      **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I certainly appreciate that and I appreciate the tension between the availability of facilities for different sports, but of course, the Minister needs to consider that this was the home for rugby that is now, in effect, being taken over by the GFA because of the need to have also football facilities while the new stadium is built and so on. Of course, that brings its own tension, but in the interim, I suppose what I am asking the Minister is to give a degree of assurance that both in the interim and in the medium to long term, when the new football facilities are built, that Gibraltar Rugby will have adequate facilities while it is necessary to have an interim situation and that it will regain the use of Europa Point once it is no longer necessary that the GFA should be based there.

345      **Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker, the one assurance I can give the gentleman is that I am holding frequent meetings with him to discuss all of these matters.

350      **Hon. C Sacarello:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I notice that the hon. Gentleman has not answered my previous supplementary, so perhaps I can say it again.

Madam Speaker, in his first breath, he spoke about the first rule being the number of registered members by which they govern allocations, and later on in that same paragraph, he mentioned equitable.

355      If the ratio, roughly speaking, is 10 to 1, and the number of hours Monday to Friday per week are 140, why is the GRFU not allocated 14 hours? Notwithstanding that, the GRFU are happy with their 6 hours. Will he offer stonewall guarantees that 6 hours minimum will not be reduced to 2 around internationals?

360      **Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker, I do not have the figures in front of me, but it is very easy to say 140 hours when many of those hours are perhaps during work time and school time. Madam Speaker, there have been numbers being battered around on social media. As I said, I am not going to have this discussion across the floor because I think it does not do rugby any favours.

365      I am happy to have it with the hon. Gentleman behind the Chair with regards to members and use. I appreciate the hon. Member is a former rugby player, as is the Leader of the Opposition, and I think it does more damage than good to have this discussion across the floor.

**Hon. C Sacarello:** Madam Speaker, how do I know as I am a former rugby player, sadly former, but I am also a football player. I enjoy playing football and I have no compunction with both sports. In fact, rugby are delighted that football are there and the GRFU have no issues with it.

370      The question is this, Madam Speaker. Rugby is a sport that requires a lot of training to prevent any dangerous incidents happening, to lower the level of risk. It is a sport that enjoys between 300 and 500 members at the moment.

375      It is currently at 300-something members and requires the proper training facilities. In the name of safety, will the Minister agree, not agree, that two hours per week training for a match at the weekend is insufficient? Will he not therefore guarantee the minimum six-hour requirement for all the teams from grassroots up to senior level across the board?

380 **Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker, we have had other sports attending international matches or games and they have had zero hours of training. You are talking about rugby; I am talking about sports in general. As I said, I am happy to have this discussion with him behind the Speaker's Chair, but not across the floor, because it does more damage to the sport than what he is trying to do.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

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**Q718/2025**  
**Gibraltar Rugby –**  
**Prospective legal challenge**

**Clerk:** Question 718, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Will the Government provide funding to Gibraltar Rugby for legal assistance should it so require it to defend its position in light of the prospective legal challenge from the Spanish Rugby Federation?

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**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.

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**Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport (Hon. L M Bruzon):** Madam Speaker, any prospective legal challenge to Gibraltar Rugby's administration to Rugby Europe would have to be brought by the Spanish Federation against Rugby Europe, not against Gibraltar Rugby. The Gibraltar Government has stood by and supported Gibraltar Rugby all throughout its long and arduous process, culminating in its well-deserved success in obtaining a rightful admission to Rugby Europe. This was recognised by Gibraltar Rugby in a statement published in the Gibraltar Chronicle on 6 December 2025, where the CEO, Mr Chad Thompson, stated and he said:

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I would like to thank the Attorney-General, Michael Llamas, who from our very first meeting in Paris in 2011 has been a pillar of support, offering incredible guidance on what has on many occasions been very valuable. Of course, thanks to the support and trust of the Chief Minister, Fabian Picardo, who has shown to us.

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Madam Speaker, the Gibraltar Government will continue to support Gibraltar Rugby in any further support it may require. Despite the payment of such legal fees not being a legal obligation.

But it is exactly what the GSLP Liberals have had to Gibraltar Rugby in the past, without having to answer any questions in Parliament.

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**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I am sure that everyone is grateful for the expression of support that the Minister has given. I was wondering, although I note what the hon. Member says about who would bring the prospective legal challenge but I would have imagined that, of course I do not know if the Government has legal advice specifically from the Attorney General on this issue, but I was wondering whether if the procedure was before the Court of Arbitration of Sport, for example, whether it would allow the intervention by Gibraltar Rugby to defend its interests, if there is a challenge and if in those circumstances matters on which the Government is presently advised develop and there is an opportunity for Gibraltar Rugby to at least make representations to whoever is going to determine these matters. In those circumstances, would the Government revisit the issue if necessary, should they require support?

425      **Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker, the Government has already invested a lot of time and money in this application, so of course we will back the Rugby Union.

430      **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

435

## HOUSING AND THE GIBRALTAR UNIVERSITY

Q719/2025  
Reclamation in the horizon –  
Budget address

435      **Clerk:** Questions to the Hon. Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University. Question 719, the Hon. D J Bossino.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Which “reclamation in the horizon” was the Minister for Housing referring to during her budget address recently?

440      **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University.

**Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University (Hon. P A Orfila):** Madam Speaker, the Westside reclamation, which was announced recently by the Chief Minister.

445      **Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes, so is it the Westview Park reclamation? So, this is not a new reclamation, which if one reads her statement, and that is how I took it when she made this point during the course of her delivery during the Appropriation Bill, she gave the impression that it was a new reclamation. Can she confirm and clarify that we are talking about the Westview Park reclamation?

450      **Hon. P Orfila:** Madam Speaker, yes, the Westview Park reclamation.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Given that the hon. Lady is responsible for Housing, and given also that during the course of her intervention she said, and this was back in June or July this year, and as the Hon. Minister for Sport rightly mentioned, a lot of time has transpired since then, she said, and I quote:

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This will very soon become a reality.

So how distant in the horizon is this project?

460      **Hon. P Orfila:** Madam Speaker, when the Government is ready to announce it, we shall make it public.

465      **Hon. D J Bossino:** This was an announcement which her current leader, the leader that we want/ought to be resigning as soon as possible, said during the course of his New Year's message last year, when he said that keys would be delivered during the course of the first half of 2028, given that there appears to have been changes in terms of the financing and who is going to be developing this project, is she able to confirm and stick to those timelines? Yes or no?

470      **Hon. P Orfila:** Madam Speaker, first, the Chief Minister will not be resigning (Banging on desks). And secondly...

**Hon. D J Bossino:** He ought to be resigning. No. He ought to be resigning.

475      **Hon. P Orfila:** Well, that is your opinion. That is your opinion. That is your opinion and it is not a question.

**Madam Speaker:** I am going to direct the hon. Member to answer the question.

480      **Hon. P Orfila:** Once again, Madam Speaker, I refer the gentleman that when the Government is ready, it shall let them know, or it shall let the public know.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** The Government ought to be ready to seek her leader to resign as soon as possible, immediately.

485      **Madam Speaker:** This is not a supplementary question, so if that is the contribution, we will move on to the next question.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** No, no, no. That was just by way of slight preamble, Madam Speaker. The question arises from the answer that the hon. Lady mentioned in her response.

490      When is it that the Government will be ready to make an announcement? People are desperate for housing in this place. People were promised by her current leader and current Chief Minister last year, 12 months ago, that this particular project, which she is referring to, would be ready, keys to be delivered within the first six months of 2028.

495      Can she say whether that is shifted, yes or no? It is a simple, very simple question, as indeed the question which arose from my preamble was also a very simple question.

500      **Hon. P Orfila:** Madam Speaker, the hon. Gentleman is getting very hot under his collar. First of all, like I told you, there is no resignation here on this table. Secondly, I point to you, how many houses did you build when your Office was in power? Very little, actually. Thirdly, I shall once again refer you and say that absolutely you shall learn of everything once the Government is ready to offer it to you.

505      **Madam Speaker:** I am not going to have a discussion and ask the same question again. It may not be the answer the hon. Member wishes to receive, but that is the answer. Did the Hon. Mr Sacarello have a different supplementary question? Yes, that is what we are on.

510      **Hon. C Sacarello:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Would the Hon. Minister be able to confirm whether the Westview Park reclamation, as was planned originally, remains as it was, or has the development changed, and if so, how?

515      **Hon. P Orfila:** Madam Speaker, I have not seen any plans yet.

**Hon. C Sacarello:** And will the number of houses envisaged initially be reduced by the introduction of, or the inclusion of, a separate project separate to housing on that, perhaps in line with some of the larger projects announced by the Government recently?

520      **Hon. P Orfila:** Madam Speaker, may I ask the Gentleman to set that question for me for the next Parliament, and I may have those answers.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q720/2025**

**Housing waiting list –  
Affordable housing schemes**

**Q721/2025**

**Introduced by the Housing Department –  
Affordable housing schemes**

525

**Clerk:** Question 720, the Hon. D J Bossino.

530 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Will the statistics relating to the number of applicants on the Housing waiting list make a distinction between the nature of the application being made to distinguish those who wish to avail themselves of the affordable housing schemes from those who are seeking Governmental rentals?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University.

535 **Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University (Hon. P A Orfila):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 721.

**Clerk:** Question 721, the Hon. D J Bossino.

540 **Hon. D J Bossino:** When will the application form for those who wish to avail themselves of the affordable housing schemes be introduced by the Housing Department?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University.

545 **Hon. P Orfila:** Madam Speaker, the new application form went live at the beginning of October 2026. The application form shall be given solely to the new applicants. Letters have already been sent to all current applicants asking them for confirmation if they wish to purchase or remain on the list of Government flats for rental.

550 Once all the data has been collected, the statistics relating to the number of applications on the housing waiting list, we will have a true reflection, and we shall then be able to distinguish from those wanting to purchase affordable housing and those who seek rental accommodation only.

555 **Hon. D J Bossino:** As I understand it, is the position that this is a very first step that her Department is taking? So that the Hon. Minister is intending, can I ask her this specific question? Once further steps have gone down the line in respect of this particular policy initiative, she will be in a position to make that distinction and there will be a separation of lists.

Is that the position, if she can be more granular in respect of that point? And in fact, it would be in answer to the question in the Order Paper.

560 **Hon. P Orfila:** Madam Speaker, yes.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** So, is the Member in a position to state when she thinks that she will be in a position to make those changes?

565 **Hon. P Orfila:** I have already told the hon. Gentleman that as soon as we collate everything, we shall have the answers.

570 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes, I know, but that is very well and good, but as the Minister responsible for her department, does she have an idea of when that process of collation will complete, such that she will then be able to produce those distinctive lists?

580 **Hon. P Orfila:** Madam Speaker, we are on it at the moment and we are almost there.

575 **Hon. D J Bossino:** And just to understand, I think the first part of her answer, is the position that, and I will ask her to confirm if my understanding is correct, that when one fills in that form, and by filling in that form, one is expressing an intention to be provided an affordable house, so that one is not, by doing that, one is saying I do not want to receive, be in the receipt of Government rental, that individual's position within the housing waiting list remains as is. Is my understanding of the first part of her answer correct?

580 **Hon. P Orfila:** Madam Speaker, by Jove, he's got it.

585 **Hon. D J Bossino:** So is there, I will ignore her, I think, unparliamentary response, quite frankly patronising response, but it is her way and so be it. She certainly belongs on that side of the House and not on this side of the House, given the lack of respect that she has shown to her member.

**Madam Speaker:** Can we get to the question please?

590 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes, I do have a question, Madam Speaker. So is there a point in time, can one imply from that, that once this develops further, that there will be a time when one is then removed from the traditional housing waiting list, such that one loses the position? She's shaking her head.

600 That will never happen, is that what the hon. Member is saying?

595 **Hon. P Orfila:** Can we have the question please? What is your question? I am shaking my head in disbelief.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Because maybe the Hon. Minister is shaking her head because she simply does not understand what I am saying, which fine. I am trying to put it in a different way to make it easier for her to understand.

600 Is she saying that there will come a time, or is not she, that when the policy develops further, there will be a moment in time when somebody is removed from the housing waiting list in respect of Government rentals? Is that the position? And then that individual loses his or her spot for Government rental.

605 Because there could be certain effects of that.

**Hon. P Orfila:** No, Madam Speaker, the person does not lose their place. It is easy to slide across.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

610 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Sorry, Madam Speaker, can I just ask on that? Presumably there is a moment though, if the person has expressed a preference for their desire to buy affordable housing, and that moment arrives at that point, presumably that person is taken out of the list, would that be right?

615 **Hon. P Orfila:** Even if you are on the affordable housing scheme list, you still maintain your points. You do not lose anything. It is just that we have a clear picture whether you want rental or you want 50-50.

620 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Yes, I understand that. But what I am saying is when you consummate your desire to buy affordable housing, you are taken off the other list, are not you? Because you have got the house.

625 **Hon. P Orfila:** You are taken over to the other side. It does not mean that you lose anything. Should you wish not to pursue your 50-50 purchase, it is easy, because you have kept accumulating your points, to put you in whether you belong.

625 So, yes, we are trying to do a very, very fair analysis of this.

**Madam Speaker:** We have had seven supplementaries on this. One more, and that is it.

630 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Yes, Madam Speaker, I am just trying to understand it, really. It is just not being difficult. I am just trying to understand it.

630 I understand that you express a desire to buy affordable housing, so you are on both lists, as I understand it. And the Minister says if you do not buy it, you can then slide back in. I understand that.

635 I am asking the other question. A question of having bought the house, you then presumably fall out of both. That is correct, would not that be correct?

635 **Hon. P Orfila:** Madam Speaker, if you purchase a house, then you are going to be given the keys to your house. So why should you be on the rental accommodation? Or whatever.

635 You may want to not live here at all.

640 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q722/2025**  
**Housing Department –**  
**As-Is scheme**

**Q723/2025**  
**Housing Department –**  
**As-Is scheme applicants**

645 **Clerk:** Question 722, the Hon. D J Bossino.

645 **Hon. D J Bossino:** How does the “as is” scheme operated by the Housing Department work in terms of eligibility criteria for persons who may wish to avail themselves of it?

650 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University.

655 **Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University (Hon. P A Orfila):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question with Question 723.

655 **Clerk:** Question 723, the Hon. D J Bossino.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** How many applicants are currently on the “as is” category?

660 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University.

**Hon. P Orfila:** Madam Speaker, we do not have an As-Is category.

665 **Hon. D J Bossino:** So, well that is a very clear, albeit I would say surprising answer to 723. But is the Hon. Minister able to provide a response to 722?

670 **Hon. P Orfila:** Madam Speaker, the hon. Gentleman refers to an as-is scheme. We do not have a scheme as such.

675 **Hon. D J Bossino:** The hon. Lady, in her intervention, again during the course of the Appropriation Bill, made a reference not just to scheme, and described it as an as-is scheme, but indeed, I need to remind her, she may have forgotten, but she also referred to the introduction of an As-Is category, for goodness sakes. So, I think, you know, if the answer is that the Hon. Minister simply does not know what she is doing, that is a fair enough answer, but is one that is a subject of justifiable political criticism of her and the way she is running this particular area of policy. Is that the answer?

680 **Hon. P Orfila:** Madam Speaker, I take offence with the way that this Hon. Gentleman is referring to me, and I do not think it is funny, and I am not laughing about it. I think the hon. Gentleman should do better to keep his mouth shut. And not just that, I realise that what you want are your political points.

685 **Hon. D J Bossino:** That is what you want to do.

690 **Madam Speaker:** Just a minute, just a minute, just a minute. Just a minute, I will ask the Hon. Minister to take a seat, I will hear the Hon. Mr. Bossino.

695 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Madam Speaker, the point of order is, I withdrew the reference to hell, I think that was improper, and that was not a Parliamentary use of language. Can I invite the hon. Lady to withdraw the use of, or the expression, where she is asking me, commanding me to shut up.

700 **Hon. P Orfila:** Can I ask her to do that, because I think that is wholly and utterly unparliamentary and does not befit interventions in this House.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, I think that is appropriate. The Hon. Minister.

695 **Hon. P Orfila:** I withdraw the shut up.

700 **Madam Speaker:** Now, can we have a clean sheet, is there a question outstanding, a specific question? Does the Hon. Minister know the question?

705 **Hon. P Orfila:** Yes, yes, he's still asking about the as-is category, As-Is scheme, that obviously he has not understood.

**Madam Speaker:** Can we get to the answer?

705 **Hon. P Orfila:** No, I will not preamble as much as he does.

710 Actually, the As-Is refers to a house that is given, a house is brought in, keys are brought into the Department, and we take you to see the house. Do you like it? Yes. Would you rather the Government does it up for you, or would you rather have it As-Is? And then the person chooses whether he wishes the Government to fix it for him, or whether they would like to get the keys immediately, there and then, and start the refurbishment themselves. Which, in fact, is very good, because it saves Government a lot of money as we do refurbishments, and then people go in and change tiles and change paint and change everything.

So really, in effect, I am looking after the taxpayers' money, and to date, I think, since I came in, November 2023, to date I have given 98 houses As-Is. And I have saved the taxpayer, if we check, more

715 or less £15,000 per house, sometimes it is more, sometimes it is a little less. I have already saved the taxpayer in two years £1.5 million, almost.

720 **Hon. D J Bossino:** What is clear is that the hon. Member comes to this house and makes statements which she is then not able to justify. But be that as it may, the hon. Lady very clearly said, as she said in response to one of my, not supplementary questions, one of my questions in the Order Paper, that there is no such category in existence in her department.

725 But let me ask her this, so that we on this side of the House can fully understand how the policy works. In effect, what the hon. Lady is saying, that you, she refers to in her example, is presumably (Interjections), I am in the process of formulating the question.

730 **Madam Speaker:** I have not asked what the supplementary question is and the hon. Member should pay no heed to anybody else asking that. So can the hon. Member put his question and continue?

735 **Hon. D J Bossino:** The Hon. Speaker is absolutely right, I should not pay any heed to those Members opposite. The question was, very simply, a very simple question. Is it the case that when she is referring to the you in her example, it is somebody in the housing waiting list who they have determined as a result of the system in place, because of the points system, is entitled to Government housing?

740 And in effect, in effect, what the Department is doing by offering that individual the opportunity to fork out the cost of the refurbishment, his or herself, is to speed up the process and get the property which has been assigned to that individual or that individual's family as a result of the system which is currently in place. There is no extra system in place.

745 **Hon. P Orfila:** First of all, point of order, it is your Hon., not she. Secondly, the answer is yes.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

745  
**Q724/2025**  
**Alameda Estate –**  
**Rerouting of fresh and saltwater supply**

**Clerk:** Question 724, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

750 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** What progress has there been on the re-routing of fresh and saltwater supply within Alameda Estate to minimise the risk of burst pipes inside flats?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University.

755 **Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University (Hon. P A Orfila):** Madam Speaker, the rerouting of fresh and saltwater supply has been completed in Ross House. Governor's Meadow House is nearing completion. Victoria House, Red Sands House and Picton House are almost ready.

Kingsway House and Alameda House will be following shortly and will be completed in the very near future.

760 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I see. Does the Minister have some kind of timescale on when all these works will be ready? I mean, she will understand the concern which I am sure has been voiced to her by the Tenants Association about, you know, the necessity for these works to be done to minimise disruption

765 to tenants and, of course, loss that might occur when these things happen because of the decades long that the estate has been there.

**Hon. P Orfila:** Madam Speaker, I am glad the Leader of the Opposition refers to decades and not blaming this Government for it. Indeed, those houses have been there for decades. And I can tell the hon. Gentleman, the Leader of the Opposition, that Governor's Meadow is 95% ready.

770 I can give you percentages if that serves anything. Victoria House completed. Sorry, Ross House completed.

Victoria House, 85%. Red Sands House, 85%. Picton House, 85%.

Kingsway House, 35%. And Alameda House, 25%. So, we are working completely on all of them, hopefully.

775 And I would like to say here that it should be ready in the very near future with many of them. Most of them are almost there now.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

780

## EMPLOYMENT, EQUALITY, CULTURE AND TOURISM

### Q725/2025 Conversion therapy – Allegations

785 **Clerk:** Questions to the Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism. Question 725, the Hon. A Sanchez.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Can the Government clarify whether it is aware of any instances, reports, or allegations of conversion therapy having taken place in Gibraltar—whether formally or informally—at any time in the past or at present?

790

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism.

795 **Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker, I can confirm that our Ministry has not received any official or formal reports or allegations in the past or at present relating to conversion therapy taking place in Gibraltar.

800 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, I am grateful to the Hon. Minister for that answer. Some of the information that we have received, and I also believe that in a recent public interview that the Minister gave, the Hon. Minister stated that attempts at conversion therapy type practises had taken place among some demographics. Could the Minister specify precisely which those demographics were, what he was referring to, and the basis on which that assertion was made?

805 **Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Speaker, the question put to me was whether the Government can clarify whether it is aware of any instances, reports or allegations of conversion therapy having taken place in Gibraltar. My answer is that the Ministry has not received any official or formal complaints or reports. I myself, as a member of the LGBTQ community, am aware that there have been people that have been approached.

I do not feel that I should be giving any information on something that I have been made aware of before I was actually even a Minister, especially in a forum like Parliament.

810

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q726/2025**  
**Disability Act 2017 –**  
**Commencement**

815

**Clerk:** Question 726, the Hon. A Sanchez.

820 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Can the Government provide an update on the commencement of the remaining provisions of the Disability Act 2017 and the anticipated timetable for their implementation?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism.

825 **Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker, I have instructed my team that the remaining provisions of the Disability Act 2017 must be unlocked as soon as possible within the lifetime of this Parliament.

830 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, I am grateful for that answer. From Hansard, I can see that in 2022, the Government stated that the provisions had been paused to allow business owners of existing buildings at the time to prepare and noted that the 2019 tax relief initiative was a victim of COVID. Since that explanation in 2022, can the Minister outline what concrete steps have been taken during these three years to prepare the community and owners of buildings and what guidance, what plan compliance support has been put in place during these last three or four years?

835 **Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Speaker, since I came into Office, I can speak on what we have done. This is just a year after 2022. The details, the hon. Member has been speaking.

840 Last year, we launched the National Disability Strategy, but the public sector strand. We were meant to have completed the private sector strategy 2025, but it took us longer than we expected to work on the compliance of it in the public sector. We now have disability coordinators all around the public sector. We now have a Compliance Officer who is working towards aiding the unlocking of Sections 13 and 14.

845 I am now working with a working group that is meeting biweekly in order to see if there needs to be some slight changes in terminology from 2017 to now, especially on the part of reasonable and practicable, which is a part that is very undefined. It was very generic, so I am looking at and trying to make it very specific, adding the descriptions of what the terminology is.

850 The point is, for me, what we are working towards is exactly that, unlocking 13 and 14. Seeing if there needs to be any changes within the legislation in order to make it happen as fast as possible. We are also working concurrently to get the extension of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

855 We are constantly in touch with the UK office, and we are setting all the compliance tables and we are making sure that everything is compliant. That is where we are at now. Actually, my lunch break today was with the working group.

They are giving me different options on how we can activate and unlock Section 14, which is the most complicated one, which is the one about access in buildings.

855 **Hon. A Sanchez:** If the Hon. Minister can just clarify, my understanding is that the Hon. Minister set up a working group specifically in relation to Sections 13 and 14 to unlock Sections 13 and 14. Can he clarify when exactly this working group was set up and how often it has met in relation to this specifically?

860      **Hon. C P Santos:** The working group consists of the SNDO, GLO, Occupational Therapy, Health and Safety Inspector, a member of Town Planning and Building Control, Land Property Services and the Director for Business. We set this up in the last, I think after summer, and since December I think they have been meeting fortnightly every Monday.

865      **Hon. A Sanchez:** In relation to the private sector strand, is it now the position of the Government that it will be launched in 2026? And if the private sector strand is tied into Sections 13 and 14, so is it the position of the Government that until the private sector strand is not launched there is no progress on Sections 13 and 14?

870      **Hon. C P Santos:** We are doing both things concurrently. So the private sector strand will hopefully be launched at some point soon in 2026 and Sections 13 and 14 will not be stopped because of it. We are working on both things concurrently especially because Section 14 is about making the legislation, but the legislation as soon as we unlock it there will be a time for the private sector to be able to adapt to it as well.

875      So, we can work on unlocking that as soon as it is ready and then launching the private sector strand as soon as that is ready.

880      **Hon. A Sanchez:** And one final question Madam Speaker, is the Government planning to develop outreach presentations for the private sector in relation to the private sector strand and these particular sections?

885      **Hon. C P Santos:** Yes, our aim is to do the same as we did with the public sector which is calling different groups of people. We did it with the public sector, we did it with departments. Here we have to see it as a broader spectrum of people, it is a larger number of people, so yes the point is for us to be able to have some, we can call it an outreach programme to give those stakeholders the necessary information in order to be able to do this in an appropriate and adequate manner.

890      **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q727/2025**  
**Modernising family policies –**  
**Draft legislation**

**Clerk:** Question 727, the Hon. A Sanchez.

895      **Hon. A Sanchez:** Further to the Hon Minister for Equality's statement in his 2025 Budget Address that the Government 'continues to be committed to modernising family policies around parental leave,' can the Hon Minister confirm the current status of this work and whether any draft legislation has been prepared?

900      **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism.

905      **Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker, I can confirm that we are indeed committed to modernising family policies around parental leave and that work on this continues. This is a complex and intricate matter, and any changes will of course be accompanied by the necessary legislative changes.

**Madam Speaker:** Any supplementaries?

910      **Hon. A Sanchez:** Grateful for that answer Madam Speaker. I believe it was some time during September/October last year that the Hon. Minister announced that there would be an announcement on this made and that was an update or some legislation on this announced by the Government during the end of the year last year, evidently that has not happened. Could the Hon. Minister perhaps update as to why there has been a delay on this and perhaps write an answer as to the current status of this work and whether any draft legislation has been prepared?

915      **Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Speaker, I am not sure it was, do you mean September 25 or September 24 after summer? Where we are at the moment is at the beginning of 2025, there are two ways of doing this, doing it and ticking a box or doing it or finding the best solution for it.

920      After a lot of consultation we found a way that we could make it work but then just before summer we approached what was the agreement of Brexit and then we had to wait for that to see how that would work with regards to benefits and pensions and any type of benefit. After this was announced we had to go back to the, not back to the drawing board from scratch but look at how this would work for us and how we could make it work in a way that is positive for those that are entitled to it. We are 925 currently, I know it is a phrase that we might, that it is felt we say often, in the final stages of it.

I would say we are in very advanced stages because I thought it was in the final stages back in March and then the Brexit came. You get your microphone. But anyway, we have the opinion from the men from the Muppet show up there in the front.

930      Is that Parliamentary? Is that Unparliamentary? Do I need to apologise already?

I apologise I did not mean it.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Gentlemen ought to be withdrawing that if I may say as a Point of Order.

**Madam Speaker:** I am not sure.

935      **Hon. D J Bossino:** He's bothered that I am speaking to my colleagues as if that was an offence.

940      **Madam Speaker:** It may be a good opportunity to remind all hon. Members that they need not take account of anything that is said from a sedentary position under any hon. Member's breath. They should carry on asking or answering the question and if the mutterings get too loud then I shall direct that they be stopped. So, can we get back to the question is there anything else that needs to be added?

945      **Hon. C P Santos:** I agree Madam Speaker. It is just that if I were to explain it, it is like when you are on the beach and you are trying to have a conversation with your family and there is a fly and as much as you try and ignore it, it is very difficult. As long as you just say goodness me the fly.

Well this was my moment of goodness me the fly and I point of ordered myself so it was fine. I apologise before I was brought to Point of Order. Before this goes into full on comedy, I will continue to talk about it.

950      So, where we are at, I will continue answering the Hon. Ms Sanchez. So do you hear it?

**Madam Speaker:** No, I do not hear it and if I do not hear the answer, I am going to ask the hon. Member to move on.

955      **Hon. C P Santos:** The answer is that we are in the very advanced stages. We are now looking at drafting legislation. This has been appointed to someone already and as soon as we have the best possible option to offer, we will bring this to Parliament.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

960

**Q728/2025**  
**Airport's water mains –**  
**Last inspection**

**Clerk:** Question 728, the Hon. G Origo.

965 **Hon. G Origo:** What maintenance schedule was in place for the airport's water mains and related plumbing infrastructure, and when was the last inspection or refurbishment carried out on the high-pressure water main that burst?

970 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism.

975 **Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker, the high-pressure water mains pipework is systematically tested on a quarterly basis. In addition to visual inspection, the pipework is submitted to pressure testing and any anomalies detected are resolved with immediate effect. A pressure test and inspection were carried out on Monday 19th of May 2025 and no faults were reported.

Subsequent pressure testing and inspection of the high pressure water pipework system that were carried out on 16th of September and 10th of December 2025 proved positive with no loss in pressure.

980 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, if I may ask the Hon. Minister, given the frequency of the inspections which I believe he said takes place on a quarterly basis, were there not any prior warnings or indications to the vulnerabilities of the water pipe system that led to the burst which subsequently closed the airport and damaged both of the IT systems and the lot?

985 **Hon. C P Santos:** No, because there was an inspection in May and then as I said there is also additional visual inspections to the pipework. If there was any fault spotted, this would have been fixed at the time of noticing it.

990 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, can I ask the Hon. Minister who is responsible for carrying out these inspections and maintenance repairs, is it a government department or is it a private contractor?

**Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Speaker, I am unsure on who does the actual inspections, but I am sure it is someone who is qualified to do this.

995 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, the Hon. Minister says that these inspections have taken place on a quarterly basis. If I were to ask him for an inspection log with reports of these inspections, would he be able to?

1000 **Madam Speaker:** That is a hypothetical question. If the hon. Member wants to put that question in due course, he is free to.

**Hon. G Origo:** Can I ask the Hon. Minister whether he would be amenable to sharing the maintenance logs over the floor of the House with respect to these inspections?

1005 **Hon. C P Santos:** If the hon. Member would like these logs, he can request these as a question and then I will check whether this is something that we are able to share across the floor or not. By the way, I would like to take this chance to congratulate the team of the airport because they made sure that the air terminal was in full working order in no time. We are talking about 30,000 litres of water that they had to do.

Thank you very much to the team for making the airport work in record time.

1010 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, likewise, I would like to associate myself with the comments made by the Hon. Minister and congratulate the airport team on the excellent work that they did to bring the airport back into operation. If I may ask, because he has alluded to the 30,000 litres of water which flooded the airport. Can I ask, because I am trying to understand how a pipe that burst and spilled so much, thousands of litres of water, went unnoticed for many hours late at night. Is there not security or personnel manning the airport during these hours?

1015  
1020 **Hon. C P Santos:** The airport is closed. I do not think there is a security in-person there. I would need to check whether this is checked by cameras or not, but I would need notice of this to be able to get the correct answer.

1025 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q729/2025**  
**Air terminal –**  
**Damage endured by the building**

1025

**Clerk:** Question 729, the Hon. G Origo.

1030 **Hon. G Origo:** Following the major flooding incident at the Air Terminal, can the Government provide details on the extent of the damage endured by the building, together with the total or projected costs of carrying out the repairs?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism.

1035 **Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker, following the major flooding incident at the air terminal, the estimated repair costs are £27,000, which includes building fabric, which is plasterboard, damage to first and ground floor ceilings and walls across various areas and offices, floor polishing, doors, water damage, the swelling of various doors, and IT equipment. Limited equipment damage in the affected server room, including switches, UPS unit and a PC unit. All other cleaning and remedial works were carried out by our in-house teams, and the Government acted swiftly to ensure minimal disruption to airport operations.

1040  
1045 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, may I ask the Hon. Minister whether he is aware or not if the airport terminal is insured against risks such as flooding of this nature, and if so, what are the expected insurance payouts?

**Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Speaker, I would need notice of that question.

1050 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, with respect to the £27,000 he has just quoted for the damages and repairs, can the Hon. Minister confirm whether the Government, or indeed the taxpayers, are going to bear any brunt of the cost of the damages?

**Hon. C P Santos:** Yes, Madam Speaker, it depends on the insurance. I am unaware of who is paying for this now, but I would need notice of this question.

1055

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q730/2025**

**New D licence –  
Apprenticeship programme**

1060

**Clerk:** Question 730, the Hon. G Origo.

1065 **Hon. G Origo:** With regards to the New D Licence Apprenticeship programme, can the Minister advise what criteria informed the age limit of “at least 24 years of age” for eligibility for such a programme?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism.

1070 **Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker, the requirement that applicants for the Category D Licensed Apprenticeship Programme be at least 24 years old is based on Gibraltar's Traffic Act 2005, Section 31(1), that sets the minimum age for Categories D and DE licences at 24 years.

1075 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, if I may ask the Hon. Minister whether he, from a policy perspective, considered or assessed whether having this age restriction of 24 years and over would have a negative impact on jobseekers like NEETs, those not in training, education or employment. Does he think, in other words, that it is fair to have this age restriction? If individuals have a valid licence, they should be able to carry out this course, irrespective of their age?

1080 **Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Speaker, I am not even sure how to answer that. It is in legislation that is the age. Not everyone can just drive anything they wish for.

There must be reasons for it, but there are different licences. The D, DE, DE1, A, B, C and the conditions of that one are 24 years old, usually linked to the fact that insurances will only insure drivers from 24 and above for vehicles that carry over 16 persons. It depends on the type of vehicle that it is.

1085 It depends on the type of passenger carry that they have, whether it is under 8. It depends on what this is. It is the Law.

**Madam Speaker:** The Hon. Mr Origo then I will come back to the Hon. Mr Reyes.

1090 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, may I ask the Hon. Minister whether he has the information with him in respect to how many places the Government budgeted for these apprenticeships versus how many applicants actually submitted an application for these courses?

1095 **Hon. C P Santos:** I cannot give exact numbers of how many people applied. It is an approximation around 40. I do not know if it is 43, 44, 42.

It is in the 40s. There were 11 places for these apprenticeships for supply bus drivers.

1100 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, I am grateful for the Minister caveating that. It is a rough estimation. May I ask, because when the announcement was made, I believe in the statement, the Minister was quoted saying, and I quote,

Gibraltar needs more bus and coach drivers for its tourist product and our public transport network.

1105 Can I ask the Minister whether, in this context, is he implying that those who apply for this D licence course will also be eligible to apply as tour driver operators?

1110 **Hon. C P Santos:** This was a clearly stated apprenticeship working with the supply bus drivers. We had 11 places for people to get into the 11 slots in the bus drivers for public transport. We also do other apprenticeships directly linked to tourism, which we have done with two different tour operators.

Usually, we state very clearly who these are working for. For example, the 11 places were filled with 11 people who are going to slip into the 11 slots within this apprenticeship itself. There may be others.

1115 Anyway, the D licence is offered without it having to be linked as an apprenticeship. You can go and register in the ETB saying that you want to do a D licence so that you can get that as well as many other licences through employment.

**Madam Speaker:** The Hon. Mr Reyes.

1120 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I took note that the Minister was saying that the age limit of 24 was being applied because, in order to qualify for a D licence, it required an age of 24. That does not somehow coincide with the age in which to obtain a full A or B driving licence is 18, but yet one can undergo a learner's programme as from the age of 17.

1125 So, if you have a 23-year-old who, within the space of an academic year, is going to reach the age of 24, why has that person not been able to avail themselves of the apprenticeship programme given that logic says there will be 24 years of age by the time this programme is completed?

1130 **Hon. C P Santos:** That hypothesis is the same as me saying at 16, there are very mature 16-year-olds who could really feasibly go into being a learner because they could ride a bike. Legally, it is 17 when you can become a learner. A is 18, 24 is for D licence, 21 for C I do not know, but the Traffic Act was passed by the GSD, and he was the Minister at the time, so I am sure he must remember in 2005 why this was passed.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question. (interjection) No, next question.

1135

**Q731/2025**  
**NVQ courses –**  
**qualifications expected to be obtained**

1140 **Clerk:** Question 731, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1145 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can Government provide details in respect of all NVQ Courses currently being undertaken by Trainees at both Training Centres, indicating estimated completion dates of said courses and qualifications expected to be obtained?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism.

1150 **Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Speaker, the Gibraltar Training Centre is currently undertaking the following courses and qualifications. The EAL NVQ Level 3 Engineering Maintenance Electrical, estimated completion date is November 2027. The EAL NVQ Level 3 Engineering Maintenance Mechanical is estimated completion date November 2027.

City and Guilds NVQ Level 2 Diploma in Plumbing for Intake 40 and 41, two have completed and are awaiting IQA certification with remainder estimated to complete end of December or beginning of January. Estimated completion date for Intake 42 is June 2026. City and Guilds NVQ Level 2 Diploma

1155 in Building Maintenance Operations for Intake 37 and 241, two completed and awaiting IQA certification with remainder estimated to complete end of December 2025.

Estimated completion date for Intake 42 is June 2026. Additionally, the Gibraltar Training Centre took in a new intake end of November 2025 for the following courses. City and Guilds NVQ Level 1 Extended Certificate in Construction Skills, estimated completion end of March 2026.

1160 EAL NVQ Level 2 Performing Electrical Engineering Operations, estimated completion date end of September 2026.

1165 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you Madam Speaker. I note, and it may not be the Minister's fault and this question was filed way back in September and in his answer, he said that one of the courses was estimated to be completed by December 2025.

Can we have, given that we are now in 2026, does the Minister have an update or perhaps can obtain an update whether the course did complete on time and in the same as he said now that certain successes have been able to note that to his credit, perhaps we can have an update on that.

1170 I also note whilst I am on my feet, Madam Speaker, he is talking of some completion dates of 2027. Can you just confirm for me to the section that completion of 2027 is because it is a two-year course rather than those, especially Level 1s and so on tend to be much shorter ones.

Just for clarification for the record.

1175 **Hon. C P Santos:** Yes, for clarification, it is a two-year course because it is the Level 3 both electrical and mechanical engineering. So those will be completed in two years' time. Yes, of course, I will make sure that I get the information regarding completion, whether they have completed end of December or now beginning of January.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

1180

**Q732/2025**  
**Elite Scholarship Scheme –**  
**Estimated cost**

**Clerk:** Question 732, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1185

**Hon. E J Reyes:** How many applications have been received and how many Grants have been awarded under the Elite Scholarship Scheme, giving the criteria used to make these awards, and what is the total estimated cost of these Grants?

1190

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism.

1195

**Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker, to date, we have spent £9,750 on the Elite Funding Scheme as approved at the Budget Session under Head 20, Culture, Subhead 2, 14, Elite Funding. We have received 16 applications for the Elite Funding Programme, of which 13 have been successful. The criteria for the granting of these awards were already provided with my answer to Questions 728 of 2024.

1200

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am trying to find out if there is a parallel system. When I discuss things with the Minister for Education and he has explained to me how the scholarship systems work and so on, those unsuccessful applicants who wish to somehow appeal, the Minister for Education has confirmed that there is a process and a separate board that does that.

The three, and I know that the number is only three, but the three unsuccessful applicants, is there a process similar to the education one where they may launch an appeal?

1205 **Hon. C P Santos:** Currently, there has not been a process because everyone who has applied, who has fulfilled the criteria, has received funding. For example, the people who have been unsuccessful have been because they have applied without being able to fulfil the criteria, which is going to a vocational school or having a performance course. For example, someone applied not to go to a performance course, so it does not meet the criteria.

1210 The other two people were not accredited schools in the list that were stated in the criteria, so they would not really be able to appeal. They are unable to apply, essentially.

1215 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yes, that certainly does clarify matters. In fact, it is unfortunate that those three have not met the criteria, but should they have met the criteria and their application not been successful, is there a mechanism in place similar to the education one where there is an appeals board?

1220 **Hon. C P Santos:** Well, I would need to check because off the cuff I am not quite sure if there is a process, but as I said, usually everyone who has applied and meets the criteria has received some form of funding. This is not a scholarship, though. This is extra funding.

1225 This is like a bursary, like an extra top-up for anyone who may need extra support that the scholarship programme does not meet the demands financially.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

1225

**Q733/2025**  
**Employment Tribunal –**  
**Claims filed**

**Clerk:** Question 733, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1230 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can Government provide an update in respect of what stage all claims filed with the Employment Tribunal are at and when were those claims first filed?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism.

1235 **Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker, the claims filed with the Employment Tribunal are currently at four different stages, awaiting response, mediator, chairperson and undergoing hearings. The filing months for the claims at each stage are as follows. Those awaiting response were filed in November 2025 and December 2025. Mediator May 2025, June 2025, July 2025, August 2025, September 2025, October 2025, November 2025 and December 2025.

1240 The chairperson stage is February 2025, May 2025, June 2025 and July 2025. And those already undergoing hearings, July 2019, February 2020, April 2020, June 2020, December 2020, February 2022, March 2022, May 2022, July 2022, August 2022, September 2022, November 2022, December 2022, February 2023, May 2023, June 2023, August 2023, November 2023, December 2023, January 2024, April 2024, June 2024, September 2024, October 2024, November 2024, December 2024, March 2025 and July 2025.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you Madam Speaker.

1250 Yes, the Minister has given an update. I asked for an update because in previous answers the Minister has been able to give details of how many cases pertain to each. The Minister has given me

a whole list of dates and the calculations and so on, but it does not refer to any number, either globally, the grand total or broken down.

But if he does have that information Madam Speaker, you know, can we have it for the record?

1255 **Hon. C P Santos:** In the past, the questions related to the Employment Tribunal have always been about what are the number of people, how many people are waiting for the appointment of a chairperson. And the question has been very specific as to the number. But this one I have tried to answer as appropriately as the question came in, which is can the Government provide an update in respect of what stage all claims are filed with the Employment Tribunal and when those claims are first filed.

1260 1265 If we want specific numbers, they have absolutely no issue, but I think we need to table that question in order for me to have the correct answer.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, Madam Speaker, the Minister addressed the question that way. Do I have your leave, Madam Speaker, to be able to ask for the figures, because obviously the Minister, the way the question was read by them. I thought by asking for an update, they were going to look at the last answer and just update those figures, but I took it for granted wrongly.

1270 **Madam Speaker:** The hon. Member does not need my leave to file any question that he may feel is appropriate for the next session.

1275 **Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Speaker, I must say that I have never been asked this question before. I have always been asked questions on the appointment of chairpersons. This is the first time I have had it.

1280 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** But now that the Minister has given us that information, some of it is quite illuminating in terms of the stages at which the claims are. He read out a whole list, but I did see that, for example, in the appointment of mediator or the appointment of chairperson, you are seeing cases that have been filed and do not see an appointment of a mediator for some months or an appointment of a chairperson for a significant period of months, and that there are claims that have not yet come to hearing that have been filed six years ago, and quite a long list of four years ago, of 2022 dates.

1285 Does not the Minister agree with me that it is extraordinary that we are still in a situation where people who have got claims of unfair dismissal find it more difficult to get to a conclusion of a hearing than other people who file claims in court. So if you have money, you can get your case decided, but in the Employment Tribunal, somehow, there is still endemic delay.

1290 **Hon. C P Santos:** I must correct the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition because for mediator state, awaiting the appointment of a mediator or awaiting mediation outcome and chairperson, they are all in 2025 as from May. The earliest is February 2025 which is already with a chairperson and all the others are undergoing hearings. No-one is waiting before 2025 to go in any stage other than already undergoing hearings. We said this during the budget address, that we were going to make sure that we were appointing everyone who was waiting at the time for a chairperson, and those awaiting response were literally filed in December 2025. Those in mediator stage already, the last one was May 2025.

1295 Those who have been waiting for a longer period of time, which is the backlog, are already undergoing hearings.

1300 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I had understood. I said months, by the way, in terms of the appointment of chairpersons and mediators. Hansard will reflect that I said months, but I said years in relation to people who have filed claims, who are at the hearing stage, who have not yet had a determination.

Is the Minister saying that that is incorrect? Because I had understood that in the list that he read, there are claims filed in 2020, claims filed in 2022 that have not been determined. Is that correct?

1305 **Hon. C P Santos:** Yes, I will be checking Hansard as soon as it comes up tomorrow, at least the video, because I am 100% sure that you said years awaiting for a mediator and chairperson. I will check, and if I am incorrect, I will put a motion here for us to discuss. I will check and apologise if I am incorrect.

Undergoing hearings, we have people who have waited since February 2020, but they are currently undergoing hearings right now. What has he said that I misunderstand?

1310 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I look forward to the apology, because I was very precise. But undergoing hearings, does he mean that all that list that he gave, which seems inconceivable by the way, they are all being heard right now as we speak? Because that is presumably not what he meant.

1315 He must have meant that these cases are still ongoing, they are within the course of litigation, they may or may not be in a final hearing right now today, but they still have not been determined. And if my understanding is correct, there is a rather long list of cases not being determined that have been filed four to six years ago. And if that is correct, then what does the Minister say about that, about how that backlog is going to be dealt with?

1320 **Hon. C P Santos:** As I say every time we answer questions on the Employment Tribunal, there are different stages. You are awaiting response, awaiting the appointment of a mediator, awaiting mediation outcome, awaiting appointment of chairpersons. There was a backlog for the past two years, we have been discussing the backlog, awaiting the appointment of chairpersons.

1325 We have been working very diligently to make sure that the backlog is taken care of. So, we have people who have been waiting, yes, but we have people who are currently undergoing hearings. I am unsure whether the 30 or 40 or 10 or however many cases there are have been heard today or at what point they are, but they are undergoing hearings, which is something which has moved from the process of where we are at on the backlog of waiting for the appointment of chairpersons.

1330 I feel that this is a positive move and hopefully they will be determined sooner rather than later but considering that all the early stages of the Employment Tribunal are all new cases filed, I think the fact that everyone else has already passed the appointment of a chairperson and undergoing a hearing.

1335 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** My final, if I may. When there was someone else who held that brief in the previous Parliament, I remember asking questions and there was a statistic of around 50 odd cases that were pending determination in those days and subsequently one of his predecessors announced the appointment of a number of chairpersons on the basis that that would deal with the backlog. It seems to me that what we are seeing is a continuation of rolling backlog and that the appointment of those chairpersons does not seem to be having the effect that it was said to hope to have several years ago.

1340 So will the Minister therefore take on board that the backlog continues, that the numbers are statistically more or less the same, he's talked about 40 in his latest answer to his supplementary, and that therefore the Government needs to consider what else it can do to facilitate the more swift determination of these cases.

1345 **Hon. C P Santos:** I said 40, 30, 10, I said three different numbers, I am unsure of what the actual number is. It is not rolling on the backlog, what we are doing is that there are different stages and people need to move across the stages. There will always be a number because when we move everyone from the different stages, we will have new cases being brought forward.

1350 As I said, in the early stages when I came into Office two years ago, we had these cases in 2019 and 2020 waiting for mediators, waiting for a chairperson, and now these are undergoing hearings. We are hopefully going to deal with that backlog because it is been moving, the numbers have been shifting, and I think that what we have been doing has been very successful and has been working because now all the numbers are moving out. All we have now is from 2025 in the early stages, before it was much more of a mix because it was a backlog.

1355 Now, all those that were in a backlog before are now undergoing hearings.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

1360

**Q734/2025**  
**Government's plans Casemates renovation –**  
**Update**

**Q735/2025**  
**Government's refurbishments of Main Street plans renovation –**  
**Update**

**Q736/2025**  
**Government's refurbishments of Chatham Counterguard –**  
**Update**

1365 **Clerk:** Question 734, the Hon. C Sacarello.

**Hon. C Sacarello:** Would the honourable Minister kindly provide the House with an update on the Government's planned Casemates renovation?

1370 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism.

**Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 735 and 736. Question 735.

1375 **Clerk:** Question 735, the Hon. C Sacarello.

**Hon. C Sacarello:** Would the honourable Minister kindly provide the House with an update on the Government's refurbishment of Main St and its arteries?

1380 **Clerk:** Question 736, the Hon. C Sacarello.

**Hon. C Sacarello:** Would the honourable Minister kindly provide the House with an update on the Government's refurbishment of Chatham Counterguard?

1385 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism.

**Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Speaker, as replied in Question 796 in October 2024, we are treating the refurbishment and renovation of Casemates Square, Chatham Counterguard and Main Street as one project with a unified approach. The project will be dealt with in phases.

1390 An initial meeting with the Retailers Board took place at the end of September, and the structured stakeholder consultation process by the architects have already been completed for Casemates Square and have commenced for Chatham Counterguard. Consultations will be made with authorities and committees to identify constraints as regards to safety, heritage, planning and upkeep. Costings will then need to be finalised after the consultations.

1395

**Hon. C Sacarello:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the Hon. Minister for his reply, scant information as it is, and I would like to ask supplementaries question by question, so I would like to start with 734. Does the Hon. Minister have a timeframe for delivery?

1400 **Hon. C P Santos:** During the lifetime of this Parliament.

**Hon. C Sacarello:** I understand that the (interjections) Sooner rather than later. Indeed, as my hon. Colleague.

1405 Madam Speaker, I understand, obviously, that the plans are still in progress, being formulated, that nothing would have been filed at the Department of Planning. Is the intention to submit an application?

1410 **Hon. C P Santos:** Yes, we have to file an application at DPC, and hopefully the lifetime of this Parliament is much longer than they would wish, especially seeing what we have got opposite, I am sure that we will be here for quite a long time.

**Hon. C Sacarello:** And still on the same question, Madam Speaker, does the Hon. Minister have a budget for this? I know they are deliberating on costings, but is there a specified budget? And could he elaborate on the source of funding, please?

1415 **Hon. C P Santos:** At the moment, we did initial consultations, so we had initial concept designs, and we had some figures of budget and costings made. Now we are going into the nitty-gritty and the actual detail of it, so I am unsure of what the final number is, but I am sure this will probably be something from the IDF fund, how projects are usually, of this nature, are usually funded.

1420 **Hon. C Sacarello:** My understanding, Madam Speaker, in relation to the development of Casemates in particular, as this question is referred to, that the Government has gone cap in hand as to at least one of the tenants within Casemate Square. Is that their intention, to seek contributions from leaseholders in the area?

1425 **Hon. C P Santos:** Well, I would not describe it as cap in hand. We have discussed with them, because there are parts of the refurbishment that are for the Government to fund, but we are here to support businesses, not subsidise them, so it is not up to us to subsidise their furniture. There are areas that they will need to subsidise for themselves in keeping with the design, so there is infrastructure works and there are areas that are part of the Government's expenses and there are areas that your friend, or the person who is involved in casemates, will have to fund out of their own business, because it is their business.

1435 **Hon. C Sacarello:** So still on this question, Madam Speaker, would the Hon. Minister like to elaborate and provide a little bit more detail as to what elements will be publicly funded and what elements will be privately?

1440 **Hon. C P Santos:** Without going into all the details that I cannot go into right now, because I am unsure of the exact details. I can tell you we are not going to ask the members of Casemates to pay for the infrastructure of sewage or public highway or lighting, but if it is something which is to do with their business and the look of their infrastructure of their restaurant or their shop, this is something that is what we are consulting them on right now, on designs and what they would like to see and that is something that is to do with their business.

1445 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

1450 **Hon. C Sacarello:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have asked the supplementary on slide 734, like you asked me to do it one by one, the Hon. Minister group them together and I have asked Questions on 734.

So now... Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. And I apologise if I seemed a little earnest.

1455 My take and apologies. So, regarding the refurbishment of Main Street and its arteries, I understand that there are, and I have seen and congratulate, the carts that we have seen and flowers, it does add a little bit of colour. Perhaps your colleague next to you deserves the praise, but congratulations on that.

The Manifesto refers to landscaping though, which in most people's interpretation, they would think it is far more elaborate than what there has been done so far. Would the Hon. Minister be able to explain what their version of landscaping requires in this instance?

1460 **Hon. C P Santos:** The carts are a very welcome addition, but they are not part of the landscaping programme. They are decorations and they are beautiful and I wish I could take all credit for them, but I cannot. So, on behalf of my colleague, I am going to say, you are welcome.

Basically, landscaping will be as much as we are able to provide within a concrete area. And as soon as we have concept designs, we will publish these. But we would be talking about hypothetic concept design at the moment as opposed to a finalised design.

1465 A lot of it will be amongst seated furniture and as well as other areas where we are able to add more landscaping. But no, the carts do not fall part of that.

1470 **Hon. C Sacarello:** And, Madam Speaker, now my supplementary is on the next question, 736, please. Madam Speaker, it has come to our notice that the Government has asked the leaseholders or tenants, I am not too sure, for contributions to the development of Chatham Counterguard. Would the Hon. Minister be able to elaborate on the exact details of how much and what is expected of them in relation to Chatham Counterguard?

1475 **Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Speaker, this is the same as with Casemates. All infrastructural works and all main works within the area of Chatham Counterguard will be funded by Government, but the areas that pertain to the beautification of the restaurants' area will be up to the restaurants to fund. So that is why we are consulting with them.

These are the designs we are thinking about. What do you want? What are your needs?

1480 What can we do? How can we provide the facility to be able to do this? So it is been very much a give and take.

These business owners, I am sure, do not expect the Government to pay for their furnishings and their furniture and their pergolas and those areas that belong to them in particular, I am sure.

1485 **Hon. C Sacarello:** That is fair enough, Madam Speaker. But page 47 of their Manifesto specifically says that the Government will look into consulting and then beautifying these areas. There is no indication at all as to how this would be costed, so therefore I suppose in the absence of the fact that you would or would not approach the local businesses is ambiguous in that sense.

1490 But it does imply that Governments would be carrying out these works. So, there is many businesses there who may have cast a vote in their favour who now feel somewhat misled. Can the Government reassure them that they will not be forced to dip into their pockets for more than just their furniture?

**Hon. C P Santos:** Well, beautifying the area is exactly that. We can beautify the area. We can beautify our area.

1495 And then we consult with them and they can tell us, oh, we would actually like to extend our terraces. Fine. I do not think anyone would expect the taxpayer to have to fund a private business' choice of wanting to extend that.

1500 We will beautify the area. We will beautify all the areas of the public highway that belong to us, the toilets, the paving, everything that belongs to the Government of Gibraltar. However, we are obviously not going to fund, or the taxpayer is certainly not going to fund a private business' choice of furniture or furnishings as a whole.

So, what the businesses have been asked is, okay, you would want this in the area, but this is up to you to fund. And we can provide it so that it is a unified approach to the area. But the taxpayer should not really pay for that.

1505

**Madam Speaker:** Next question. On which one?

**Hon. D J Bossino:** The last one, Madam Speaker, but actually it applies across the board.

1510 **Madam Speaker:** Across the board we have had five, six, eight questions. It is a brief question and it is not a repetition of what is been asked already. I appreciate that the hon. Member might want to amplify it, but go on.

1515 **Hon. D J Bossino:** I am very grateful for, Madam Speaker, for her patience. I think we have got to a place in the Hon. Minister's answers which suggests, in fact expressly states, that the Government will be responsible not just for all the infrastructure works but also the paving and that type of thing in terms of the beautification of these areas, cited by my hon. Friend's questions. So is it a correct understanding to say that what the Government will be expecting licensees of these areas and tenants of these areas, these businesses, to fork out in terms of their own expenditure is the furnishings?

1520 Should they wish to refurbish that aspect of their business? Or is it a question that, as part of the refurbishment programme with respect to which there has been consultation, there is an expectation, driven by the Government, that they do have to, by force almost, change the furnishings, if he understands the point that I am making?

1525 **Hon. C P Santos:** No one is forced to do anything. That is why we are consulting. If they were to be forced, we would not have consulted and would have just done whatever we thought and expected them to pay.

1530 Right now, we are consulting them and we are saying, this is what we are going to do. They are giving us their ideas on what they would like. We have then started designing around what their needs are.

But their needs are theirs. So, it is not our responsibility to add a pergola because they want a covered area. We can give them floor space under the Tables and Chairs legislation.

1535 We can do that. But it is not up to the Government to then pay for what they are going to put to decorate. What we are going to do, and that is why we are consulting, is we need to beautify the area so it is one seamless design.

And this is why everyone is involved in it. So, we are providing them with a design that is unified and cohesive for an area in the public highway, because we cannot forget that this is a public highway, and making it, consulting with them whether they agree or disagree with the choice of designs. If they choose not to pay, then we just do not do that part of the designs and we just do our part.

1540 But it is all about having one unified design, which is what they are all clamouring for. This is what every time we have consulted, everyone has said, we need to beautify the areas and we need to make them look the same. We have listened to them as to what they feel they want.

We have designed it for them, but it is not up to the taxpayer to pay for the decorations of your part.

1545

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q737/2025**  
**National Day –**  
**Drone display**

1550

**Clerk:** Question 737, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** What was the cost of the drone display on National Day evening?  
1555

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism.

**Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker, even though the SDGG provides this, it is the Government who funds this, and this year the drone display came to a total of £41,611.50.  
1560

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Does the Minister consider that it was value for money, given the widespread criticism of the performance on the day?

**Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Speaker, I would define widespread. There was a vast amount of people that thought it was excellent, not just visually, but there was no noise, there was no environmental impact.  
1565

You have two different factions, people who will enjoy it and people who will prefer fireworks. And this will happen all the time. That is why I feel we do not need to get married to one thing all the time.

1570 That is why we stopped doing fireworks in New Year's and we felt that the need was this year, maybe next year we do not do it. We just have to try new things, because life is about change. We cannot always be doing the same thing.

We tried it, maybe next year we do the drone display, maybe differently, maybe we do a drone display. This is up for discussion. But widespread I do not think is necessarily a fair terminology.  
1575

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I indeed agree that life is about change and hopefully change comes to Gibraltar soon (banging on desks). Madam Speaker, in that spirit, will there be a change this year and will we revert to fireworks that I think most people prefer?

**Hon. C P Santos:** Firstly, maybe the change will be in the leadership of the Opposition. Who knows? That is up to them.  
1580

Who knows? So, that is how I think. And I am not quite sure what is going to happen this year.

We need to decide, as with every event, we do it on an event-per-event basis. Because I still do not feel that we can push the narrative that everyone hated it, because not everyone hated it. So, a lot of people loved it, the same as when we had fireworks during the Festival of Lights.  
1585

We have not had it before. We had it this year. Who knows?

We have to decide what works best according to how the event is designed. And I must say, Madam Speaker, I am very glad to be back on the mic. I thought it was getting a bit rusty and it is great to be able to interact with you again other than with the word yes, which is what I have been doing for the past six months.  
1590

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

1595

**JUSTICE, TRADE AND INDUSTRY**

**Q778/2025**

**Royal Gibraltar Police –  
Individuals aged under 18**

**Q779/2025**

**Royal Gibraltar Police –  
Individuals aged under 18 detained**

1600

**Q780/2025**

**Royal Gibraltar Police –  
Individuals aged under 18 detained more than one occasion**

**Clerk:** Questions to the Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

Question 778, the Hon. A Sanchez.

1605 **Hon. A Sanchez:** For each month from the 1st of April 2022 to date, how many individuals aged under 18 have been detained by, or otherwise engaged with, the Royal Gibraltar Police in circumstances requiring the attendance of an Appropriate Adult, with figures broken down by category (e.g. detention, interview under caution, witness statement, etc.)?

1610 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

**Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 779 and 780.

1615 **Clerk:** Question 779, the Hon. A Sanchez.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Can the Government, for each month since the 1st of April 2022, provide a breakdown of the Appropriate Adults who attended in cases where a person under the age of 18 was detained by the Royal Gibraltar Police, indicating how many were:

1620

- (a) a parent, family member or guardian;
- (b) a Social Services officer or care agency representative;
- (c) a Childline representative; and
- (d) any other category, if applicable?

1625 **Clerk:** Question 780, the Hon. A Sanchez.

1630 **Hon. A Sanchez:** For the period since 1st of April 2022, can the Government indicate how many individuals under the age of 18 have been detained by the Royal Gibraltar Police on more than one occasion?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

1635 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, in response to question 778, I now hand over a schedule showing the number of times a juvenile was detained in police custody having been arrested. The RGP records management system does not currently allow for such specific search queries. This would require a manual search of all crime records.

**ANSWER TO QUESTION 780**

**ANSWER TO QUESTION 778**

These numbers could include multiple custody detentions for the same individual.

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>January</b>	9	6	16	7
<b>February</b>	6	8	5	22
<b>March</b>	16	13	5	7
<b>April</b>	8	11	12	3
<b>May</b>	20	7	5	7
<b>June</b>	14	3	4	4
<b>July</b>	18	6	6	10
<b>August</b>	18	9	6	6
<b>September</b>	16	16	11	6
<b>October*</b>	20	1	11	5
<b>November</b>	5	2	8	
<b>December</b>	6	8	7	

\*October 2025 runs up until 1600 hours on 28/10/25

1640

In response to question 779, this information is recorded in a free text format on the individual custody record for each detainee. The system does not currently allow for an automated search on all relevant records to ascertain the types of appropriate adults that attended for the detainee. I am advised that in line with the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act and codes of practise, the first preference is always a parent, guardian or family member not connected with the investigation.

1645

Only if this option is not available or appropriate, will the services of Childline or Social Services or the Care Agency be engaged. Finally, in response to Question 780, there has been a total of 67 juveniles which have been arrested and detained on more than one occasion at New Mole House Police Station between April 2022 and 28 October 2025.

1650

**Madam Speaker:** We will take supplementaries to 779-780 and if the hon. Member wants some time to look at the schedule we can revert to that unless the hon. Member is in a position to ask supplementaries on that.

1655

**Hon. A Sanchez:** I am grateful for that answer, Madam Speaker. In relation to 778, is the Hon. Minister saying that the RGP has no way to track the information as to record the amount of times that an appropriate adult is in attendance in the station or that the RGP has no way to track this information or to log it?

1660

**Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, I refer the hon. Member to the answer to the previous question. I have said that this would require a manual search of all crime records and that the information is not held centrally within an automated system.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything else on 778? 779? 780? Next question.

1665

**Q781/2025**

**Royal Gibraltar Police –  
His Majesty's Prison, Windmill Hill**

**Q782/2025**

**Royal Gibraltar Police –  
His Majesty's Prison, Windmill Hill, transferring individuals**

1670 **Clerk:** Question 781, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** For what reasons are the Royal Gibraltar Police responsible for the transfer to Court of individuals on remand or serving a prison sentence at His Majesty's Prison Windmill Hill?

1675 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

**Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 782.

1680 **Clerk:** Question 782, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** How many hours per week, on average are RGP officers engaged in transferring individuals on remand or serving a prison sentence at HMP Windmill Hill to Court?

1685 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

**Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, responsibility for the transfer of prisoners rests with HMP Prison Service. The Royal Gibraltar Police now only transfer individuals to prison following their initial remand into custody. The position has been in effect since 1 January 2026.

1690 The Royal Gibraltar Police are therefore no longer responsible for any other transfer to the courts of individuals on remand or serving custodial sentences at His Majesty's Prison. In answer to Question 782, as the new arrangements have only been in place for a short period, the Royal Gibraltar Police do not yet hold sufficient data to provide an average weekly figure for the officer hours engaged in such transfers under the current system.

1695 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, I am grateful and I am glad to see that the responsibility has now shifted because obviously we have seen that there is been a shortage of police officers and they have been under-resourced for some time. Now, I just ask, does the answer to which...

1700 **Madam Speaker:** Are you on 781?

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** For what reason was the Royal Gibraltar Police responsible for the transfer of prisoners from Windmill Hill to court?

1705 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, I understand that this has been the historical position. I really do not have background information that allows me to answer the question, but if you give me notice of the question, I will endeavour to respond or indeed write to me and I will respond accordingly.

1710 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, I will just move on to supplementaries on 782. Does the Hon. Minister have any figures as to the averages for, say, the last few months so that we can see and we can then compare in future when I ask the question again?

**Hon. N Feetham:** No, ma'am.

1715      **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q783/2025**  
**Royal Gibraltar Police –**  
**Public Protection Unit**

1720      **Clerk:** Question 783, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Is the Public Protection Unit (“the PPU”) of the Royal Gibraltar Police (“the RGP”) still comprised of the following four teams:

1725      (i) Domestic Abuse;  
(ii) Victim Support;  
(iii) Safeguarding; and  
(iv) Designated Risk Management?

1730      If so, what are their operating hours and, if the PPU is no longer comprised of the four teams outlined, please provide the reasons why. Are there any immediate plans to restructure the PPU?

1735      **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

1740      **Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham):** Madam Speaker, the Public Protection Unit of the Royal Gibraltar Police is no longer comprised of four separate teams previously identified as Domestic Abuse, Victim Support, Safeguarding and Designated Risk Management. The PPU has now been restructured into two teams. The Safeguarding team, encompassing all safeguarding matters, including domestic abuse.

The Digital Safety and Offender Management team, responsible for investigations into online child sexual exploitation and sex offender management. This restructuring has brought several benefits, including improved coordination, streamlined communication and greater flexibility in resource deployment.

1745      The new structure also promotes a more cohesive approach to protecting vulnerable individuals and managing offenders, ensuring a more efficient and effective response to public protection matters. Both teams operate between 0800 and 1600 hours, Monday to Friday. In addition, officers within these teams form part of an on-call router for the Crime Division during weekends, responding to serious offences as required.

1750      There are plans to increase staffing within the DSOM team by a further two resources, which will enhance its capacity to manage complex investigations and offender monitoring. There are no immediate plans for further structural changes to the PPU at this time.

1755      **Hon. J Ladislaus:** I am grateful. Madam Speaker, I note that the hours are between 8 and 4 and that there are still on call during the weekend. Is it the case that they are also on-call after 4pm on weekdays?

**Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, I understand that to be the position, but again, for the avoidance of doubt, if the hon. Member writes to me, I will endeavour to give her a reply. Thank you.

1760      **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q784/2025**  
**Royal Gibraltar Police –**  
**Public Protection Unit, individual teams**

1765 **Clerk:** Question 784, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** How many officers comprise the individual teams which make up the RGP's Public Protection Unit?

1770 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

**Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham):** Madam Speaker, the Public Protection Unit consists of two teams, Safeguarding and the DSOM, Digital Safety and Offender Management Team. The Safeguarding Team is responsible for all safeguarding matters, including domestic abuse. The team is made up of one Detective Sergeant and six Detective Constables.

1775 The DSOM Team focusses on investigations relating to online child sexual exploitation and sex offender management. This team comprises one Detective Sergeant and three Detective Constables. Together, both teams work collaboratively to ensure the effective management of safeguarding and public protection responsibilities within the PPU.

1780 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q785/2025**  
**Royal Gibraltar Police –**  
**Civilian control room staff**

1785 **Clerk:** Question 785, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Do RGP civilian control room staff receive specific training in respect of:

1790 (i) Domestic abuse and how to deal with calls relating to potential domestic abuse scenarios; and  
(ii) Safeguarding and how to deal with calls relating to potential scenarios in respect of children and vulnerable adults?

1795 If training is given:

(i) Who delivers the training;  
(ii) How long does the training take; and  
(iii) How frequently is training updated and refreshed?

1800 **Madam Speaker:** Is that the end of the question?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

**Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham):** Madam Speaker, the RGP civilian control room staff do receive specific training in respect of domestic abuse and how to deal with calls relating to potential domestic abuse scenarios. This forms part of the command and dispatch manual, class-based training and e-learning modules.

1810 Civilian CAD officers also participate in mock scenarios including those involving calls related to domestic abuse and violence to ensure they are equipped to respond appropriately and sensitively. Safeguarding and how to deal with calls relating to potential scenarios in respect of children and vulnerable adults. In part, safeguarding encompasses a wide range of scenarios from potential suicide and self-harm to lower level welfare checks.

1815 Civilian control room staff receive specific training in relation to the THRIVE model, signposting and the handling of mental health related calls. The THRIVE training module is delivered over a 1.5 hour session training. In relation to domestic abuse, this is delivered in-house by the recruitment training and performance department.

1820 While the SAFE Lives training is not specifically tailored to call handling, it contributes to the broader understanding of domestic abuse and is delivered in partnership with the GHA. Training on safeguarding including scenarios involving children and vulnerable adults is also delivered in-house. However, this is supplemented by linked modules and sessions provided by partner agencies, ensuring a multi-agency approach to understanding and responding to safeguarding concerns.

1825 Training programme overview for civilian command and dispatch staff. The full training programme spans a duration of six weeks. I am advised that it is challenging to provide a precise breakdown of time allocated to each topic as the recruitment training and performance department considers the overall knowledge and skills imparted throughout the course to be essential for effectively handling calls.

1830 However, the below topics are most relevant to the questions asked along with the scheduled time allocated to each within the training timetable. Please note that timings for practical assessments and any resits are not specifically recorded.

Trainer-led sessions: Communication and customer care, one hour; Communication, an hour and a half; Thrive, an hour and a half; National decision module, two hours; Mental health caller, one hour; Abandoned 999 calls, 30 minutes; Signposting, one hour; Domestic abuse, four hours; Safe-lives, seven hours; Clubhouse training, three hours; Mental Health, Bleak House, two hours;

E-learning modules: Child abuse, 15 minutes; Mental Health Awareness, 15 minutes; Communication of customer care, 10 minutes; Domestic abuse, 20 minutes; DNDM, 10 minutes;

Effectively answering calls and being able to seek process and act upon information to deploy appropriate resources requires a foundation of knowledge and skills.

The civilian command and dispatch training package was developed during the first half of 2025. To date, no formal decisions have been made regarding the frequency of future updates to the package.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Thank you. I am grateful for that answer. Just to unpack some of it again, we can go to first I am going to deal with 785.

1845 **Madam Speaker:** That is the only question before the House.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** [Inaudible]

**Madam Speaker:** That is down to the hon. Member.

1850 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Sorry. So, the question is if the model for training that is being used in Gibraltar an accredited model? So who does the quality checks, for example?

1855 **Hon. N Feetham:** I do not have the answer to that question. If you give the House notice, I will endeavour to respond accordingly.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** My understanding is that in the UK, training spans over a number of months because, of course, we are dealing with very high-pressured and high critical scenarios here when

1860 somebody calls an emergency line. Is it the case, perhaps, that six weeks is not appropriate in view of what we are talking about here and the role that these individuals are being tasked with? Thank you.

1865 **Hon. N Feetham:** That is a hypothetical question. I am not in a position to be able to answer that question because I am not an expert in this particular area, so therefore, I am not going to answer the question. But what I will do, Madam Speaker, is if the Hon. member writes to me, I will certainly raise any concerns that she might have with the Commissioner of Police, and then perhaps I will invite her to come to my office and we can discuss it.

1870 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, is the Hon. Minister, does he perhaps have information as to whether after those six weeks these individuals go straight on to receiving calls by themselves, or is it a phased-in introduction to receiving the calls? Does he have any information as to how that happens?

**Hon. N Feetham:** I do not, Madam Speaker. If you give me notice of the question, I will answer it. Should you wish to write to me again, I will respond accordingly.

1875 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q786/2025**  
**Royal Gibraltar Police –**  
**Safeguarding concerns**

1880 **Clerk:** Question 786, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

1885 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** What procedure does the Royal Gibraltar Police follow when they receive reports of safeguarding concerns and does that procedure differ depending on the time of day the reports are received?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

1890 **Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham):** Madam Speaker, the Royal Gibraltar Police follows a structured multi-agency approach when responding to safeguarding concerns, whether they arise during regular hours or out of hours, in terms of procedure per se, the matter does not differ depending on the time of the day the report is received. For example, the majority of safeguarding matters come through the response team first and foremost and will be dealt with initially by them. Depending on the incident, the safeguarding team will take over the investigation there, and then if during normal working hours, outside of normal hours of work, on-call crime detectives will be instructed to return to work.

1900 If the offences are of a serious indictable nature, the safeguarding concerns yield a high probability of public interest, or the incident is of a highly sensitive nature, and outside of the capability of the RT to handle. However, where there is no immediacy for the safeguarding team to intervene, then the usual procedure is to obtain the facts of the incident. If there is any requirement for medical attention, then this will be prioritised.

1905 The Care Agency will be contacted, and a strategy discussion held to discuss the concerns and actions. A detailed report is then generated and sent to the safeguarding team. This will be reviewed by the team during the office hours, and referrals to the Care Agency will then be commenced, along with offering advice to the RT officer handling the matter.

Any incidents relating to children will be referred without the consent of parents or children. However, any reports relating solely to adults, with no involvement of children, will require their

consent to share with the Care Agency. For example, this can include reports generated in relation to their living conditions, substance abuse, or mental health crisis.

1910      Their consent will not be necessary if there is a genuine concern that failure to intervene will result in threat to life, allowing consent to be overridden. Furthermore, if there is a belief that the adult has no capacity to provide consent, consideration will be given to share the report with the intention of providing extra support to that individual. Finally, any safeguarding matter that is reported and requires the immediate involvement of the Care Agency but is outside of office hours, will result in liaising with the on-call Social Worker, and depending on the incident, if available, on-call Crime Detectives.

1915      Safeguarding matters such as this are often child-related, a common example being Section 98 of the Children's Act 2009, which allows emergency protection powers being enacted by a police officer. If there is no requirement for safeguarding officers to be immediately involved in the investigation, outside of office hours, the report generated will be handled by the safeguarding team during the next available working day.

1920      **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, I just have some concerns as to the fact that the Hon. Minister says that depending on the immediacy of, and whether a safeguarding issue is immediately urgent or not, it may well be that it is taken during working hours only. But I ask this question, are not all safeguarding issues an immediate concern, especially when it involves children?

1925      **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, I am sure that the relevant agencies and the RGP will prioritise matters accordingly. I refer the hon. Member to my previous reply.

1930      **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q787/2025**  
**Confirmed suicides –**  
**Past 24 months**

1935      **Clerk:** Question 787, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

1940      **Hon. J Ladislaus:** How many confirmed suicides have there been in Gibraltar over the course of the past 24 months?

1945      **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

**Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, the number of such deaths recorded, following an inquest by HM Coroner for the past 24 months are 2.

1950      **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker if I may ask a somewhat sensitive question. Are any of those related to minors.

1955      **Hon. N Feetham:** I do not believe so Madam Speaker. Can I ask the hon. Member opposite that perhaps we can have a conversation about this behind the Speaker's chair in case she has information that I do not have. Certainly, I have here supplementary information, the ages, but I just want to make absolutely sure that the hon. Member does not have information that I do not. Sorry, I am giving way. My hon. Colleague the Minister for Health, with specific responsibility for this, has informed me that she has questions that she is answering tomorrow that are relevant to this, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q788/2025**  
**Income Tax Office –**  
**Crown Council vacancy**

1960

**Clerk:** Question 788, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

1965 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Has the Crown Counsel vacancy at the Income Tax Office now been filled? If so, when was it filled and, if not, why and when is it expected that the post will be filled?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

1970 **Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham):** No. The Crown Council vacancy has not been filled. Following the appointment of Ms Wendy Cumming to the Office of the Ombudsman, the post of Crown Council in the Income Tax Office became vacant.

1975 During the preparation of the Estimates of Expenditure for the Financial Year 2025-2026, a staffing review was undertaken to assess ongoing requirements. The outcome of this process was that, in the light of operational developments and efficiencies, this position was no longer required. Consequently, this post was removed from the approved establishment in the 2025-2026 Estimate of Expenditure and there are therefore no plans to reintroduce such a post.

1980 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, my understanding is that that post included dealing with the Central Arrears Unit. Presumably, I am going to ask whether the Central Arrears Unit has had to outsource that work or does it now come under a different role?

If the Hon. Minister could maybe clarify that.

1985 **Hon. N Feetham:** I do know the answer to that question, even though it is probably not a valid supplementary, given that the question relates to the Income Tax Office and the Central Arrears Unit is not part of the Income Tax Office. However, I did mention in my address in relation to the Principal Auditor's motion that I did touch upon some aspects relating to the Central Arrears Unit and I may have pointed out then that any legal advice relating to outstanding litigation or recovery of arrears involving the Central Arrears Unit is outsourced to a local law firm.

The Hon. Member is absolutely correct.

1990

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, would the Hon. the Minister be able to clarify which firm it is that this work is outsourced to?

1995 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, I want to be absolutely certain in the answer that I give that I can say that it is neither the firm that the Hon. Member used to work for nor the firm that Hon. Members on this side of the House are on sabbatical. Perhaps you considered that that would be the answer to the question. That is not the answer to the question.

2000 However, if you write to me, I will give you the name of the firm. I know the individual involved and I must say that I have met him in relation to some of the outstanding cases and he is doing sterling work for the Government of Gibraltar in relation to this particular area.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q789/2025**  
**Gibraltar Day London 2024 –**  
**Business attracted**

2005

**Clerk:** Question 789, the Hon. C Sacarello.

2010 **Hon. C Sacarello:** Can the Minister please provide information on the amount of business generated by Gibraltar Day London 2024, relating to any new business attracted as a direct result of the conference?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

2015 **Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham):** Madam Speaker, as the GSD used to say when they were in office, it is not possible to categorically attribute a licence application, pre-application or a related meeting with the GFSC solely and directly to any single event, including Gibraltar Day London 2024. As is typical in financial services, licencing decisions also follow extended engagement with the regulator. However, if we use licence applications and pre-applications as a proxy metric, I am advised that there have been 18 such submissions in the financial services sector since the event.

2020 2025 I am also advised that eight new financial services licences were issued by the GFSC over this period. In addition, there have been 20 private fund registrations, five EIF registrations, five VASP registrations. These figures do not capture business generated by private sector professionals, including lawyers, corporate service providers and trust and fiduciary firms arising from networking events and meetings held during that week.

Such information is not publicly available. Additionally, as hon. Members should know, the events are now paid for by the private sector and not the taxpayer.

2030 **Hon. C Sacarello:** I thank the hon. Member for his answer, which is actually quite interesting and there is some information there to go on. Of course, we understand that, as in marketing, branding is an exercise which is not always quantifiable, particularly in the long term.

2035 Of course, there are long-term benefits to these sessions. The reason I pose this question in Parliament is because I have received comments that the event was becoming a little bit staid and formulaic, notwithstanding the changes this year. Perhaps you could do with jazzing up.

Are there any intentions to perhaps change it, perhaps focussing more on deliverables and outcomes which would benefit the local economy, and look for some quantifiable measures where possible?

2040 **Hon. N Feetham:** Usually, the Gibraltar Day in London week, as it is called, is comprised of five events. You have got the lunch and then you have sectorial events. You have a private client event; you have the insurance event and two others that are relevant to the sectors in question.

2045 This year, we had nine events. In other words, we had more events than in any other previous year since Gibraltar Day in London was actually started over 20 years ago by the hon. Members opposite so to that extent, the Government is doing precisely what the hon. Member is intimating we should be doing, but perhaps he is not aware of it. I am happy to share this information across the floor of the House, although I must say, for the benefit of the hon. Member, that this information is in the public domain because we have explained this both publicly in answer to GBC questions and indeed in press releases.

2050 I can see the Hon. Mr Bossino wants to intervene.

**Hon D J Bossino:** I was just stretching my legs Madam Speaker.

2055 **Hon. C Sacarello:** I am grateful for the reply. Of course, I am fully aware of what goes on and of this year's change format, including the fireside chat, which I thought was an interesting addition, although there were competing camps on the Government side at the same time. The question comes more in the way of looking for more bang for their buck.

2060 People find that this event has become a whole load of Gibraltar businessmen with UK contacts and their contacts and coming down, rather than generative, rather than looking for new business. This is the information I have been given. It is not my personal view.

I am literally passing on information that I have been told from people there. Would the Minister consider looking at elements which would look to attract more new business to Gibraltar in that event?

2065 **Hon. N Feetham:** Let me say that I welcome questions by the hon. Member in this particular field. I do not get enough questions on financial services.

2070 I do appreciate the fact that the hon. Member is asking these questions, but I am afraid that his sources are wrong. In other words, perhaps he is speaking to the wrong people with all due respect to the hon. Member opposite. When we set up these events in London, it takes us the better part of six months to put the event together. This is not done on the whim by a Minister.

2075 In other words, we sit down with the entire sector and industry in Gibraltar and we ask the industry themselves to come forward with proposals on what they think we should be doing, what events are the ones that we should be focussing on. Indeed, the subjects for each of the events that are done in London are actually recommended to us by the industry themselves. I must correct myself, Madam Speaker, because I said in answer to the previous question that we had ten events in the Gibraltar Day Week in London last year.

2080 Actually, thank you for correcting me, although that was not your intention, by saying that the hon. Minister with responsibility for Business did a fantastic event in London, which was very well attended and therefore the number of events was not ten but eleven from the previous five. So, a record number of eleven events, very well attended.

2085 The large majority of attendance were actually persons who wanted to learn about Gibraltar and its financial services. I would say that was a resounding success, both for the event that was co-hosted by the Hon. Minister for Business and the Chief Minister, and the events that we did, which included the main event of the week, which was the lunch, which was co-hosted by the Chief Minister and myself.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

2090

**Q790/2025**  
**Financial Services Commission –**  
**Community Credit Union Co-operative Limited**

**Clerk:** Question 790, the Hon. R M Clinton.

2095 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Can the Government advise if the Gibraltar Financial Services Commission have consented to Community Credit Union Co-operative Limited using the word 'credit' in its name, and if so the date of such consent?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

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**Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham):** Madam Speaker, yes. The Gibraltar Financial Services Commission consented to the use of the word credit in the name Community Credit Union Co-operative Limited on 16 January 2023.

2105 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q791/2025**  
**Treaty –**  
**Impact on law enforcement**

2110 **Clerk:** Question 791, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** What impact on law enforcement is expected when the Treaty with the EU is concluded?

2115 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

2120 **Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham):** Madam Speaker, discussions with law enforcement agencies are ongoing. In particular, we await recommendations from the RGP on matters relating to operational capabilities, and the Government will ensure they have the necessary support once the Treaty is implemented.

2125 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Presumably, these discussions have been going on for some time, because this year is 10 years from the Brexit referendum and several years from the start of the negotiations, and while the detail may not have been fine-tuned, the principles of a deal and what was being the objective was marked in the New Year's Eve agreement several years ago. So, in light of that, has there been a scoping of the technical and human resources that may be required by the RGP if a treaty is concluded, and can the Minister give us a bit more detail about that.

2130 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, primary responsibility for the engagement between the RGP's operational needs as a result of the Treaty and the Government is for the Chief Minister's Office.

The Chief Minister continues to engage with the new Commissioner of Police, and I therefore refer the hon. Leader of the Opposition to the answer to my previous question.

2135 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, I have not chosen who answered this question. If all I am going to get is that the primary responsibility is with the Chief Minister, then the Government has chosen that the Minister for Justice has answered this question, so presumably they have chosen the appropriate person unless they decided to pass it on so I could get a stonewalling answer. I do not think that that is what they intended, so I will ask it again.

2140 As Minister for Justice, I assume that he is aware of discussions on the impact on the RGP in terms of the human and technical resources they need. I am not talking about operational issues because operational matters are matters for the police, but I am talking about the police will have resource needs. They may have advised the Government what those are in terms of the numbers of police officers they require, the technology they require to monitor the border, for example, because there 2145 may be security concerns when you have a free-flow border, or if there are other issues, what are they and what are the financial implications of it and what are the human resource implications for it, and what is the Government planning? The Government announced that the political agreement had been reached in June, that the negotiations had now closed, and that I assume we are going to get a

ratification debate soon, we are going to go into implementation stage. We are away very soon, we  
2150 may be in the implementation stage, so presumably they have answers to all these questions.

**Hon. N Feetham:** The Hon. Leader of the Opposition will be pleased to learn that the Cabinet has been meeting both this week and last week to do a text review of the Treaty. The Treaty obviously raises very complex issues. The Government will be in a position to make a statement in relation to  
2155 that aspect of the Treaty and the timing around it very shortly, but specifically in answer to the supplementary that the Leader of the Opposition has made, which repeats the original question, I refer him to my original answer.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** So is he referring me to the original answer or the answer to the  
2160 supplementary? The answer to the supplementary is that he was referring me to his colleague, the Chief Minister, but...

**Hon. N Feetham:** Thank you to the hon. Member for giving way. I am saying, Madam Speaker, apologies to the Leader of the Opposition, I am saying that the primary discussions in relation to the  
2165 Treaty aspects that relate to resourcing of the RGP, for example, Madam Speaker, things such as what police resourcing will we need at the airport in order to deal with some of the concerns that have been raised publicly and the Chief Minister has in answer to questions, I think both in this House and also in answer to questions from the media and GBC, he has addressed some of these issues talking about, you know, that there will be certain assets of the RGP that will be located in that area of  
2170 Gibraltar for obvious reasons, but those discussions are primarily with the Chief Minister.

They are not with me as the Minister for Justice for obvious reasons, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I am sorry to labour the point Madam Speaker, but the Government has chosen to answer this question through the Minister for Justice. It cannot surely then lie for the  
2175 Minister to rise, purporting to answer my question, to simply say it is not for me. I have not asked the Minister for Justice.

I have drafted a question that says what impact on law enforcement is expected when the treaty with the EU is concluded. I do not mind who answers my questions as long as I get an answer, but for  
2180 him to stand up and say I am not going to answer because it is not within my remit to the remit of the Chief Minister is not, with all due respect, an acceptable answer. I am not asking him to just simply refer me to the fact that the Chief Minister has previously had broad interventions in this House about the fact that there will be resource implications.

I recall those. I am asking a more precise question, which is we are now presumably weeks or months away from, should they get the ratification motion passed in this House, the implementation  
2185 stage of a possible treaty. Surely, they know what resources the RGP need to put into effect this treaty.

Are we talking about the recruitment of 20 or 30 or 50 officers or none at all? Or are we talking about an investment of a million or 2 million in technology or none at all? Surely, they must have that information.

**Hon. N Feetham:** I did say in answer to the original question that we await recommendations from the RGP. In other words, we are waiting for the RGP to come back to the Government with detailed  
2190 recommendations. These are complex subjects.

You would not expect the RGP at this stage necessarily to themselves have all the answers to the questions. The Hon. Leader of the Opposition has made a comment, and he says should the Treaty be ratified by this House. I remind the Hon. Leader of the Opposition that we have a majority in this House.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question. Does the Deputy Chief Minister want to intervene?

2200      **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Obviously there is engagement between the Government, the Attorney General and the law enforcement agencies with regard to the Treaty. But in terms of the exact detail of numbers and resources, which the Supplementary hon. Member asked, we would need to have notice of that question.

2205      **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER**

**Q792/2025**  
**Gibraltar House in Brussels –**  
**Post-treaty**

2210      **Clerk:** Questions to the Hon. Deputy Chief Minister.  
Question 792, the Hon. D J Bossino.

2215      **Hon. D J Bossino:** Does the Government have plans to boost the resources of Gibraltar House in Brussels in light of the Deputy Chief Minister's remarks about its significance in a post-Treaty landscape?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Deputy Chief Minister.

2220      **Deputy Chief Minister (Hon. Dr J J Garcia):** Madam Speaker, the matter is under active consideration.

2225      **Hon. D J Bossino:** May I ask the Hon. Deputy Chief Minister what are the factors which are influencing the consideration of these matters?

2230      **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** There needs to be an analysis of the volume of work the Treaty will generate. Secondly, there is also the staffing issue at Gibraltar House in Brussels. As I said at the time of the Budget, one of the members of staff there was a Belgian national who has been there for decades, retired, so there will need to be a replacement but an assessment of the kind of work that will be required in the event of a treaty being ratified and going forward.

2235      **Hon. D J Bossino:** Presumably, given that we have had a revelation by a member of the Cabinet, by the Hon. Minister Feetham, that the Hon. Members are already poring over the Treaty text, not just at the hon. Member opposite's individual level as the Deputy Chief Minister, who I know has had a very significant contribution to make in relation to these negotiations, but at Cabinet level.

Can I ask him this? Can he at least say that he is at an advanced and mature stage in terms of that analysis that he referred us to, so that once the Treaty is somehow made public, whatever that process is, that he will be able to implement the measures as required immediately?

2240      **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** So Madam Speaker, I want to make sure we are both talking about the same thing. The question is about Gibraltar House in Brussels and whether there will be additional resources there or not. I have said that matter is under active consideration, so that means there is internal discussion going on in the Department and in Gibraltar House in Brussels as to how we should best do that.

2245 I do not know if that answers the Member's question. In terms of the treaty, there is no agreed treaty text as yet, in the sense that, as you know, there is a legal scrub going on and the legal scrub has not been completed. So, what is being looked at, as the hon. Member referred to, is a draft.

2250 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can you give me some clarification? Because as I understood it, Madam Speaker, what was influencing the decision-making process as far as the resources question, which I asked in the context of the Gibraltar House in Brussels, was in fact the arrangements which we will all benefit from, from the Treaty. I thought there was a direct connection between the two, and hence my follow-up question to the hon. Member.

2255 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Only, Madam Speaker, in terms of the nature of the work that will be required of the individual or individuals.

2260 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Oh, I see. So when the hon. Member says the nature of the work of the individual, what he is saying, just by way of clarification, is that it will not have any impact whatsoever and by it I mean the Treaty, on the resources required for that particular venture?

2265 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** No, Madam Speaker, that is not what I meant. The individual who is retired was largely an administrative role, so things to do with the building and with the administration. The individual who may come into the role may be somebody who has a kind of legal background or political interest because the nature of the work might be different in the context of the Treaty.

That is what I meant.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

2270

**Q793/2025**  
**Reform Party conference –**  
**Presence**

2275 **Clerk:** Question 793, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Did the Government send a presence to the Reform Party Conference this month?

2280 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Deputy Chief Minister.

**Deputy Chief Minister (Hon. Dr J J Garcia):** Madam Speaker, yes. The policy of the Government as previously set out to this House remains to have a presence at the conferences of the main UK political parties, and that includes the Reform Party.

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**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, that is interesting. Can I ask what level of presence it was? Was it a ministerial presence or was it a more official's presence?

Because as has hitherto been the case, normally the Government issues statements when it attends certain conferences, but I did not spot that they had said so on this occasion.

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**Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, we do not issue statements every time we attend one of the party conferences or every time the Government is represented at one of them. We tend

to go, as I said, to two of the main ones. In this particular instance, there was no permanent Gibraltar stand or exhibition, but there was a reception hosted by a Minister.

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**Madam Speaker:** All right. I think that marks the end of the questions to the Deputy Chief Minister.

### **Adjournment**

2300 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I have the honour to move that this House do now adjourn to tomorrow, Wednesday, 14th January, at 9.30 a.m.

**Madam Speaker:** I now propose the question, which is that this House do now adjourn to tomorrow at 9.30 a.m. I now put the question, which is that this House do now adjourn to tomorrow at 9.30 a.m. Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye) Those against? Passed.

2305

This House will now adjourn to tomorrow at 9.30 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 5.44 p.m.*

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