



**RECORD OF THE MEETING
OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**HELD AT THE
TOWN HALL
STANLEY**

09 JUNE 2020

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HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, STANLEY
THURSDAY 09 JUNE 2020**

Speaker of the House
(Mr Keith Biles JP)

MEMBERS (Ex-Officio)

The Honourable Chief Executive
(Mr Barry Rowland)

The Honourable Financial Secretary
(Mr Timothy Waggott)

Elected

The Honourable Teslyn Siobhan Barkman
(Elected Member for Camp Constituency)

The Honourable Stacy John Bragger
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

The Honourable Roger Anthony Edwards
(Elected Member for Camp Constituency)

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

The Honourable Ian Hansen
(Elected Member for Camp Constituency)

The Honourable Mark John Pollard
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

The Honourable Roger Kenneth Spink
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

The Honourable Lucila Leona Vidal Roberts (Leona Roberts)
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

PERSONS ENTITLED TO ATTEND

The Attorney General
(Mr Simon Young)

CLERK OF THE ASSEMBLY: Cherie Clifford

PRAYERS: Rev. Ian Faulds.

APOLOGIES:

Commander British Forces, South Atlantic Islands
(Brigadier Nick Sawyer)

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**Record of the Meeting of the Legislative Assembly
Tuesday 09 June 2020**

Prayers

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members, please be seated.

Your Excellency, I invite you to address the Assembly.

His Excellency the Governor

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members.

I am pleased to stand before you today to deliver the Governor's Annual Address, which comes as the third Budget of the current Legislative Assembly is put before the House.

In these unprecedented times, one cannot deliver such an address without taking note of the acute global uncertainty and upheaval resulting from the global COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the crisis this Government has responded with the health and welfare of residents as its key priority.

Going forward, the Government is determined not to allow the pandemic to stand in the way of the bold, ambitious social and economic development agenda of the Falkland Islands; nor will it allow it to obscure the significant progress already made in the term of the current Legislative Assembly.

Indeed, the Budget being presented today is evidence of the resolve of this Government to overcome challenges that may present themselves, in the delivery of the Islands Plan and the pursuit of long-term progress, health and wellbeing, opportunity and prosperity for the people of the Falkland Islands.

My address today is an opportunity to highlight the steady progress of these islands, the solid foundations on which their future is built, and the optimism that the Falklands has in terms of fostering social and economic progress in order to improve the quality of life for all residents.

Mr. Speaker, as the Government chart its course towards our future the need for financial stability is, of course, ever more important. Through careful financial management, and despite the recent upheaval, the Government is again targeting an excess of income over expenditure this year.

Corporation tax receipts from the fishing industry and other businesses, sale of fishing licences and income from investments, managed as part of the Consolidated Fund, continue to represent the primary contribution to government revenues. Other sectors such as tourism, agriculture and the retail and service sectors also made valuable contributions.

Government finances remain in robust shape, fortified by strong reserves and a prudent fiscal approach to spending.

It is these reserves which have provided the Government the flexibility to not only invest in a range of support measures to address the urgent needs of Falkland Island residents and businesses during the COVID-19 crisis, but also to enable further investment in our capital and service delivery programmes.

This coming year - 2020/21 - will see an operating budget of £81.7 million and a transfer to the Capital Equalization Fund of £29.1 million in support of Capital investments.

Mr. Speaker: the capacity of the Government to plan and execute capital projects is increasing. The projected capital expenditure for 2019/20 is £26 million compared to £23.3m in the previous year: an increase of 11.5%.

At this point I would like to note the efforts of our former Financial Secretary, James Wilson for his prudent and considered approach to financial management that helped contribute to the strong financial position of the Falkland Islands. I would also like to acknowledge his work that resulted in providing local businesses access to international banking facilities – including card-based financial transactions – and to opening up the world of e-commerce.

Internationally, there have been many changes over the course of the year. There is now a newly elected Parliament in the United Kingdom, and closer to our shores new Governments in Argentina and Uruguay.

Changes resulting from Brexit may also affect the way in which the Falkland Islands trade not only with Europe but also the world more broadly.

However, something that has not changed is the support of the government of the United Kingdom for these Islands – including the defence of its sovereignty and the right to self-determination. As pointed out by Prime Minister Boris Johnson in his 2019 Christmas address, UK support for the rights of Falkland Islanders to determine their own political status is not going to change.

This ongoing support has been significantly enhanced during the COVID-19 pandemic. The additional support provided by the UK Government has helped safeguard our community, and I know I speak for all when I acknowledge that contribution.

With respect to Brexit, I can assure you that the Falkland Islands Government will continue to work closely with the UK Government to ensure that the interests of the Falkland Islands are fully understood in the United Kingdom.

To that end this government will continue, whilst safeguarding our sovereignty, to develop productive and constructive relationships with South America and across the globe to benefit the community.

An excellent example of international outreach was the Assembly's hosting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Women's Conference for the British Islands and Mediterranean Region. Delegates came from Cyprus, Gibraltar, Guernsey, Jersey, Malta,

Scotland, St Helena, England and Wales. Invitations had also been accepted by senators from both Chile and Uruguay but business in their parliaments meant they could not attend.

The conference theme was challenging stereotypes, and attendees heard in particular from female leaders from the Falkland Islands and their experiences.

The Government has also been vigorously engaged in its overseas responsibilities - with MLAs attending the C24 Committee meeting at the UN, OAS, CPA events, engaging with UKOTA and OCTA, and of course, supporting engagement with the UK and others on Brexit.

Constructive relationships between countries are not just about institutional engagement. They are fundamentally about relationships between people and with that in mind humanitarian work has continued with Argentina.

Early in 2020 the Falkland Islands welcomed Mrs. Elmer Pelozo, the first person to agree to DNA sampling for the Argentine Cemetery Humanitarian project. Mrs. Pelozo visited her son's grave for the first time in March, and I hope this provided a level of closure to Mrs. Pelozo and her family.

The Humanitarian project started in 2017 and continues to highlight the community's compassion and kindness across the world.

This last year has seen significant progress in many initiatives described in the Islands Plan. A very active Public Diplomacy programme season was completed. Delivered in partnership with FCO, there have now been 32 inbound Public Diplomacy missions since January 2018 with a total of 84 influencers visiting the Falkland Islands. Countries of origin included India, Canada, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, Peru, UK, and France.

November saw the inauguration of the Sao Paulo to Falklands air route. This long-awaited second commercial air link was already starting to build in popularity before its temporary suspension due to the pandemic. Its value for the economy is wide ranging, will prove substantial, and we all look forward to its resumption at a later date.

Richard Hyslop took up his new role as the Falkland Islands Government Representative to the UK and Europe in November, following the retirement of Sukey Cameron after 30 years of dedicated work as the Representative.

In furtherance of this Government's objective to raise the profile of the Falklands in the United Kingdom, Richard and the wider FIGO team, have been incredibly busy ensuring that the interests of the Falkland Islands Government and the Islands are heard in media, parliament, elsewhere in the United Kingdom and beyond.

I have been especially pleased to see the focus in representing the wider Island interests. This includes highlighting tourism, promoting Falkland Island products, and helping to secure inward investment into the Islands. There is also work on a Falkland Islander diaspora network in the UK.

I must note the 50th anniversary of the SS Great Britain's return to Bristol from the Falkland Islands. Alongside the Falkland Islands Association, FIG have been working closely with the

SS Great Britain Museum to create an outdoor photographic exhibition telling the modern Falkland Islands story – along with other supporting events.

The Government has also continued to work toward strengthening our commercial and social relationships in South America and to that end the Government has extended the full-time Falkland Islands Adviser position for a further two years after a successful first year of activity. The position, which is based in Montevideo, improves our awareness of opportunity and access to markets in the region and strengthens our economic and social ties.

This Budget remains committed to delivering a number of major capital projects, with £29.07 million in new funds allocated in 2020-21, as part of a capital programme valued at £120 million between 2019 and 2024.

These investments include new housing developments, the Tussac House long-term care facility, and the King Edward Memorial Hospital extension.

A new port is set to be the largest single development in the five years up to 2024– moving on the commitment set out in the Islands Plan.

After a rigorous procurement process, FIG announced in February 2020 its intention to contract BAM Nuttall Ltd to design and build the port. The contract was signed in April.

This Budget includes provision for the design development work to begin in July, with extensive local engagement with port users and the wider community including partners such as the British Antarctic Survey and the International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators.

Our Public Works Department continues to deliver our commitment to upgrade the arterial link to MPA. Another 4 miles of the MPA road has been completed, and next season should see an asphalt surface all the way to the south side of Fitzroy ridge.

Works have continued on the Camp roads and an ambitious season is planned for next summer on both East and West Falklands.

The next phase of housing infrastructure development will begin in June and will deliver in total over 100 additional serviced plots. The Government expects to develop around 40 plots, with the rest released to the public.

The Falkland Islands Government housing project on Sapper Hill is also progressing at pace with 8 new houses and 14 more to follow. The next phase of 50 houses will be tendered soon after a slight delay.

Private Sector housing provision has grown at pace in a sector that clearly needs extra capacity.

The interim power station has been delivered with three high-speed engines to support the existing system. Detailed design of the new power station is due to be completed by the end of this year.

In realising this plan, the Government is reaping the benefits of work done to identify and tackle resource constraints, such as workforce and accommodation. Our planning is improved, and we have made significant investments in equipment and plant at the quarry.

Aviation Services have had another busy 12 months. Investment in the service continues, with the avionics and engine replacement programme near to completion and a new pilot joining the team after finishing her training.

The first of two new aircraft is expected to be in the islands around September – ready for the new season with the second following in December.

FIGAS unveiled in March the colours of the new plane, named Sir Miles Clifford, in honour of the Governor who was instrumental in its formation in 1948.

The capital programme recognises the need to strengthen linkages within Camp. The Public Works Department has therefore, alongside the work programme already mentioned, embarked upon a five year programme of investment in upgrades to ramps and jetties at various locations across the whole of the Falkland Islands.

The Government continues to work with Sure to support much needed improvements to the Camp network. A new VHF 2m Radio network is due to be completed by August and a comprehensive national radio infrastructure survey was carried out to inform future investment decisions.

In addition to improving the quality of life for residents in Camp, such investments have the added benefit of improving the capacity and growth of tourism businesses outside Stanley.

Agriculture remains of key importance not only to the economy but also to society across the entire Falkland Islands. Agriculture is so important to the identity and the culture of the Falkland Islands. As such the Government will continue to support and help grow our agricultural industry.

Last year I noted a buoyant market for our wool. But in the last two months we have seen how dramatically COVID-19 has collapsed global wool demand. I therefore commend the Government for acting decisively in implementing a Wool Producers Assistance Programme. This generous government sponsored wool purchase programme will provide revenue replacement for wool producers in the Falkland Islands at a time of great uncertainty in global wool markets. In so doing it will help preserve the ongoing viability of this important sector.

In anticipation of the wool markets recovery, the Falklands will continue to work with partners to provide advice and support to farmers.

In the last two years the Farm Improvement Programme has been reviewed, a Director of Wool Innovation has been hired and the Falkland Islands Development Corporation, the Agricultural Service and other stakeholders continue to work together to provide support for businesses in the light of challenging market conditions.

Work has also been undertaken in relation to participation in international organisations and forums that promote awareness and trade of agricultural commodities, largely based around the newly established relationship with the International Wool Textile Association.

Fisheries remains a backbone of our economy, and a particularly important step was the signing of an Accord between the Government and the Falkland Islands Fishing Companies Association.

The Accord delivers on a commitment made in the Islands Plan for the Government to work in partnership with fishing companies for a responsibly managed fishery, underpinned by improving understanding of the ecosystem.

The Government has also approved the opportunity of early renewal of ITQ quota, enabling longer term security for businesses.

The industry enjoyed a successful squid season in early 2020 - total catches of *Illex* squid reached 62,000 tonnes, above the average in the last 4 years. 30,000 tonnes of *Loligo* were harvested as well and a second season is planned to open at the end of July. The government's desire to protect the environment was evidenced by the fact that seabird and marine mammals' bycatch were negligible, thanks to the hard work put into mitigation measures.

Although the effects of COVID 19 on overall demand remain to be fully understood, prices for squid remain reasonably buoyant.

Separately the Government will investigate whether aquaculture of salmon in inshore waters is feasible from an environmental, social, and economic perspective. It is understood that the current proposal presented to the Government is at a very early stage and that we need, over the next few years, to improve our understanding of the industry before potentially deciding on a commitment to proceed further.

The Government has recently updated and modernised our key maritime legislation as it works towards the external International Maritime Organization audit that the UK and her associated Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies will undergo in September.

This long-term commitment started in 2015. The designation of a Maritime Authority in 2018 was a key element and the Government is now working to strengthen it with implementation of our ordinances and ensuring their consistent enforcement.

The Falklands successfully hosted and co-chaired the Red Ensign Group (REG) conference in February which further validated our commitment to all things maritime and raised our international profile as a maritime centre in the South Atlantic.

The Government continues to work towards meeting our international obligations as a Flag, Coastal and Port State and in October this year it will finally commence with a locally-developed and staffed Port State Control regime to ensure safety of foreign-flagged merchant ships visiting our ports.

Mr Speaker, the last year has been a rather turbulent one in the oil industry. Since the beginning of 2020, the global economic downturn resulting from COVID-19 has led to the oil price declining sharply, and the Sea Lion project has been paused for the time being. However, considerable work has been done in the Department of Mineral Resources, and across government, that will ensure that the Falkland Islands is fully prepared for such development, when it makes economic sense for the project to proceed, from a legal, regulatory, fiscal and socio-economic perspective.

This work has been supported by the relevant specialists within the UK Government, and a new approach to project management has been introduced to provide greater focus on the essential elements required to deliver a well informed decision.

The technical and environmental work to inform the necessary applications for project consent is already substantially complete and a revised Environmental Impact Assessment was accepted by Executive Council following public consultation earlier in the year.

As further evidence of its commitment to sound planning, the Government also completed a report on the Socio-Economic Impact of Oil and Gas Development which also involved looking at public infrastructure projects. This report that was considered by ExCo in October provided an encouraging assessment of the effects of growth resulting from private sector developments in the oil sector. In so doing the report considered a wide range of issues including not only oil development but also population growth, national infrastructure and the effects on the labour force in sectors such as agriculture, fisheries and tourism, potential social impacts, public revenues and both overall public and private sector employment.

In terms of overall economic development, the Government has continued to work with businesses and key stakeholders such as the Falkland Islands Development Corporation, the Chamber of Commerce, the Falkland Island Tourist Board and the Falkland Islands Tourism Association, the Rural Business Association and the Falkland Islands Fishing Companies Association to better inform its policies and ongoing economic development policy initiatives.

A significant initiative currently underway that will greatly assist in the economic development of the Islands is a project in relation to a Doppler LIDAR solution to help better manage the Mount Pleasant airfield during and around Rotor wind events. This project, being undertaken in conjunction with the Met Office, is the result of a significant financial commitment from this Government and this project will soon proceed to the next stage.

Blessed as we are to live in the Falkland Islands, the Government is conscious that there is much to be done to preserve and protect the environment we have.

Both locally, and globally, people have increasingly high expectations that the Falkland Islands Government will proactively and effectively manage its unique and diverse ecosystems in a manner that protects our environment for future generations as well as allowing for sustainable human activity and economic development for the present generation.

To further that, the Government has committed to establishing a new Environment Department with a new Head of Environment position to strengthen its ability to manage and

conserve the natural environment in a sustainable and balanced manner for the benefit of all Islanders.

In the meantime, work is continuing on the modernisation of environmental legislation such as the Conservation of Wildlife and Nature Ordinance (1999); the completion of the Falkland Island's Biodiversity Framework; implementation of the Stanley Commons Management Plan; detailed policy work to help support further consideration of new Pollution Prevention Control legislation and regulations; and the completion and implementation of a comprehensive environmental strategy.

I am pleased to note that these sorts of initiatives are starting to have a positive effect. For example, the 2018 Waste Management Strategy is now bearing fruit, with 2019's successful glass recycling scheme now being followed by a can and tin collection programme. Further projects are in train, including a new landfill and waste transfer station, and a modern incinerator plant.

The Government also continues to focus on invasive species and biosecurity to protect our agriculture industry and to protect our biodiversity.

In regard to pest control, a highly successful Calafate control programme has now treated over 500 hectares of land.

Elsewhere, our Biosecurity service has inspected 156 flights and 24 boat arrivals and stopped high-risk materials entering our environment.

The Government will also continue to represent the Falkland Islands internationally. The voice of the Falkland Islands was to have been heard on climate change at COP26, but this has now been rescheduled for November 2021 and representatives will be in attendance to highlight and promote the role of the Falkland Islands people as stewards of their environment.

The Government will also continue to encourage and promote the Falkland Islands as a hub for environmental research in the South Atlantic. Research into the Falkland Islands environment is continuously being encouraged with the South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute providing a key link with various research organisations in over 20 different countries.

Mr Speaker, in talking of our tourism industry, there is no way of avoiding the very abrupt punctuation mark of COVID-19 that occurred near the end of what was a record breaking tourism season in the Falkland Islands; some 72,836 cruise passengers arriving, up 16.5 per cent on the previous season. The expedition cruise market grew significantly, up 30 per cent to 16,931 arrivals. Tourists arriving by air also increased, numbering 1,648 between October and March, up 6.7 per cent.

However as we are all aware, public health related containment measures adopted both locally and globally, as a result of the pandemic, resulted in near cessation of international travel and have had a consequent effect on both the global and the local tourism industry.

Although the effects of the pandemic were felt near to the end of what had been an exceptionally good land-based and cruise tourism season for the Falklands, the effects will be most keenly felt next year.

The Government will work with the tourism sector to help forecast and manage the potential short, medium and long term impacts of COVID-19.

In furtherance of this objective, the Government will continue to combine a variety of resources including not only its ongoing funding support for high-level awareness marketing initiatives but also its strategic use of the Public Diplomacy Programme; the ongoing engagement activities of the Falkland Islands Advisor in Uruguay with the South American tourism industry; and the ability of the Falkland Islands Government Office in London to engage with tourism industry stakeholders in the United Kingdom.

Travel is of course two-way, something we again saw enthusiastically embraced by our sports people. With considerable support from the Government, Islanders competed across the world – from China, New Zealand, Europe, to Brazil and the United States. They covered marathons, sheep shearing, badminton, ice hockey to table tennis, squash and even short mat bowls.

The Islands also hosted the International Island Games Committee this year, with fantastic feedback.

When international sporting events begin again the Falklands will continue to impress with our determination, skills, and sportsmanship.

Mr. Speaker I would now like to turn to Health and Wellbeing with a focus initially on investments made in this budget and progress to date on some important initiatives. I will refer to COVID-19 specific issues later in my address.

The guiding principle for the government remains the same - improving the health and wellbeing of our community and ensuring that people can enjoy the best possible quality of life, with our support where and when it is needed.

The Budget continues to make health and wellbeing a priority, investing £25m for further service improvements in health and social services.

Work has continued on the improvements to the hospital infrastructure - for example work on the Mammography Suite is due for completion by the end of June and further preparatory work for the installation of the CT scanner has also continued.

Work on Mental Health services has proceeded, and the final draft of the Mental Health Strategy will be ready this month for consideration.

Progress meanwhile has been made in relation to the Vulnerable Persons Unit, or Tussac House, with groundworks commencing in 2019 and the project ready for the next stage.

I referred last year to the establishment of a new Public Health Unit. Earlier this year it surveyed nearly 600 residents, resulting in a major and valuable snapshot of health and lifestyle in the Falklands.

This is just the sort of baseline work that can guide us in making better decisions about how to support the health and wellbeing of our people, both in the short and long term.

Mr Speaker, beyond the physical health and wellbeing of the nation, the future will be shaped by how we nurture our youngest generations. I am delighted to report a year of progress for our Education Department.

I was able last year to note the strong educational outcomes for our secondary school, and the groundworks being laid for Falkland College.

Falkland College and the Christie Community Library are now open: an impressive new building that widens access to academic programmes, both on and off island, and lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Other foundations laid down in education in the past year are also paying dividends. The success and progress of both primary and secondary schools was recognised during an external review in March of this year.

It verified that the schools offer a standard that is above the average and highlighted the rapid, progress that the Falkland Islands Community School has made in the past 12 months by raising aspirations for students and staff, and developing focused leadership and management at all levels.

In our schools, we now have a manager specifically for Camp Education, a new leadership structure, and a quality and performance manager.

Progress measures in 2019 remained good, with the Falkland Islands Community School achieving a positive score for the third year in a row, placing it in the “above average” band of all UK schools for progress.

Students who study overseas continue to be great ambassadors. Numbers have remained stable with 20 students in Further Education and 38 in Higher Education. Of the eight students who completed University in 2019, 5 achieved 1st class degrees and 3 achieved 2nd class degrees in the upper division. This is the highest performing cohort in the last 5 years.

We have invested strongly in our Early Years sector. The Falklands’ first Early Years conference in January gave prominence to this crucial stage in child development. The first inspections against the standards from the recent Child Minding and Day Care regulations were positive. This has exemplified the engagement of providers in key learning from the conference and from training courses. There have been 50 enrolments from the sector on local courses with Falkland College; and 14 are now qualified in caring for children.

The Early Years development project has now seen the first capital grants awarded, amounting to over £500,000 in investment. Private childcare providers can now build and maintain premises that offer a safe environment; are fit for purpose and enable the sector to continue to develop the quality of their provision.

Mr Speaker, I would now like to address the topic of public safety and island security.

Our police have continued to embed good practice and professional development to build on the positive 2019 review of the Royal Falkland Islands Police Service. Community policing is at the heart of all the RFIP does and in February, a public perception survey was undertaken to further inform its work. There is a growing confidence in the police and there is a high level of intelligence sharing between the Police, MOD and Customs in support of protecting the Falklands.

Further work on refining career progression for local staff continues as the RFIP seeks to provide a workplace that rewards hard work and talent. Among a larger complement of dedicated staff, there are now five local police officers, a local station enquiry officer and three local reserve constables.

In addition the RFIP continues to develop its capabilities to tackle a range of complex policing demands, including protection and safeguarding of children.

Turning to the Falkland Islands Defence Force, it has continued to make good progress modernising training and equipment. Significant progress has been made in relation to ensuring consistency between FIDF training standards and those of the Ministry of Defence with an independently verified training regime to UK military standards and joint exercises taking place with the Resident Infantry Company. The FIDF played a full and active part in the BFSAI capability day in late 2019.

Our Fire and Rescue service maintains a strong complement of retained fire officers, which is a credit to both the service and the Islands. One example of their professionalism and courage that I observed personally was demonstrated with the significant gorse fire earlier this year, where swift action in the early hours of the morning prevented loss of life and serious damage.

The Service has also received its new fire appliance, a significant investment of government.

Our capacity as a government to prepare for and manage emergencies was bolstered this year, with an Emergency Planning Manager coming into post just prior to the pandemic, bringing a wealth of experience and knowledge that has served us well in 2020.

Customs and Immigration is also part of our security – and its work has included rolling out an electronic ship’s reporting system for certain vessels, assisting exporters registering with the European Union’s Registered Export Scheme, and revising the registration procedures of ships in the Falkland Islands.

Work continues on implementing the Immigration Ordinance and modernising practices and procedures. Such work is essential to the economic development of the Islands which needs ready access to a pool of qualified workers. I am pleased to report that during the past year, a large number of persons successfully sought Permanent Residence Permits and Falkland Islands Status, bolstering our permanent population.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that the Falkland Islands are now in sight of the final stages of the Demining project.

While it is wonderful that the Islands will soon be mine free - it will be with a sad heart that we say farewell to so many brave men, many of whom have spent a decade dedicated to safeguarding future generations of Falkland Islanders.

I would also like to highlight the work of our Legal and Legislative teams which supports so much of Government and helps provide an enabling legislative and regulatory environment for social and economic development on the Islands. It has indeed been an extraordinarily busy year further complicated by changes brought upon by COVID-19.

The teams have worked across government to improve awareness of the policy-to-legislation process and in this regard a new Legal Policy Advisor post has been approved.

Going forward, the Government will progress proposals to provide for registers of beneficial ownership of companies, to comply with international good practice.

Further amendments to tax legislation will seek to ensure that the Falkland Islands remains a competitive jurisdiction in which to do business.

And further improvements are proposed to the laws governing the maritime sector, and fisheries licensing.

Our statutes database has been successfully maintained, ensuring access to the law for all. A large package of maritime sector legislation was approved, including greater protection for the environment and for the safety of all those working in the sector.

Further improvements were made in telecommunications law and a Spectrum Management Framework was also published this year, ensuring this critical national service will be properly managed.

A comprehensive strategic review of broadband resulted in FIG's decision to invest £3m over three years to increase broadband provision for residents, in many cases doubling data allowances.

The Regulator continues to work with Sure to ensure it complies with its licence obligations, and responds to specific issues and concerns, including those raised by the public.

Regulations were put in place to update the arrangements for air accident investigation to comply with international standards, while the International Civil Aviation Organisation and Air Safety Support International successfully audited the Falkland Islands Civil Aviation Department.

This work is part of the assurance and compliance framework that ensures that all civil aviation operators based in or who visit the Islands keep people as safe as possible.

Turning to our civil service, it remains dedicated to delivering on the Islands Plan.

The value of the work, the professionalism and the dedication of government staff has surely been exemplified during the pandemic response where the Civil Service has performed to an exceptionally high standard, developing and implementing important policy measures and new operational procedures in a very short space of time, and under extreme pressure brought

about by remote working and social distancing. The ability of our officers to go above and beyond has been extraordinarily reassuring, with many examples of inspiring leadership. But above all, it has been a fantastic example of teamwork.

Going forward the Government will continue efforts to recruit and retain talented individuals in order to maintain and improve upon these high standards. The Government will continue to encourage Falkland Islanders to enter the Public Service and to take up key positions and leadership roles.

Attracting talent requires modern, equitable human resource practices and procedures. To that end a refreshed management code has been completed.

The Government will continue to invest in and develop the Public Service, helping to retain existing staff, and encouraging prospective employees to consider the Falkland Islands Government as a progressive, ambitious career choice.

Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out in last year's address to this Assembly, the Government could not fulfil its aims and ambitions without the input and support of partner organizations.

Partnerships enable the Falkland Island Government to build upon its resources and capabilities by leveraging those of others and, by working together, achieve so much more. Such partnerships are in evidence across a wide range of routine day-to-day government activities.

However, let me take a few moments now to talk about something that was definitely not routine: namely the COVID-19 pandemic. In so doing I hope to be able to touch upon a few of the many examples of how partnerships and team work have helped the Falkland Islands navigate their way through the global crisis to date.

The response by Falkland Islands residents and the Falkland Islands Government together with partners and colleagues at BFSAI, the United Kingdom Government and the private sector has been an impressive example of how organizations and people can achieve so much when working as a team.

Members recognised that confidence in the government and its processes was crucial in carrying the support from public for measures enacted. To that end, the Government's Infectious Diseases Plan was refreshed, and importantly made public at a very early stage.

The response has been tremendous. People have followed public health guidance and responded to measures that represented significant disruption to normal life.

There has been – understandably – a great deal of focus on our medical resources and capabilities over the last few months and I would like to acknowledge that our hospital has done a tremendous job in reconfiguring to handle a potentially large number of patients who might need intensive care while at the same time maintaining core services.

Since the outbreak of the global pandemic, KEMH has successfully augmented its capacity with new equipment, and further drugs and medical supplies, bolstered by a British Army medical team. Partnerships...

The Government thanks the United Kingdom for rapidly testing more than 400 samples via the South Atlantic Airbridge during the initial stages of the response. Critically, in May the Falkland Islands was able to shift to testing for COVID-19 on island, with the UK Government donating a testing platform. This was a crucial step: the ability to process tests here is a game changer. The King Edward Memorial Hospital now has the capability to test suspect cases and get results in as little as 24 hours, speeding up public health measures. Partnerships...

As the crisis unfolded, 651 cruise ship passengers on four vessels found themselves stranded by the closure of their planned ports.

Together the Falkland Islands Government, the tour operators, local businesses, Air Safety Support International, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and BFSAI worked to arrange humanitarian charter flights to repatriate the stranded passengers and ensuring that it could happen while ensuring no risk to the population. Partnerships...

Of course, the COVID-19 response has been broad ranging across every government department on the Islands while in the United Kingdom FIGO has played an important COVID-19 role liaising with UK politicians and officials and helping to facilitate travel needed by Islanders, especially our students and medical patients. Partnerships...

The machinery of government has also proved flexible, with Executive Council meeting far more often, deliberating on what must seem like a year's worth of normal policy in a very compressed timescale. Teamwork...

The Government has also worked closely with the private sector throughout the crisis engaging with the Chamber of Commerce, the Falkland Islands Tourist Board, the Falkland Islands Tourism Association and FIFCA to ensure that their perspectives are fully understood in order to better inform government policy responses. Partnerships...

The Government and the Falkland Islands Development Corporation have also worked together to deliver various private sector support packages designed to help workers and businesses weather the storm. Partnerships...

I would like to close by emphasising how well the Falkland Islands has done in the past year. The Government continues to make tangible progress on The Islands Plan.

The Government continues with this Budget to deliver a stable and prudent fiscal approach with an eye to our long-term future.

The Government continues to work with our people to realise their ambitions, and with our partners here and internationally. And we have seen the value of all this in the past few months, in rising admirably to the challenges of COVID-19.

I would like to close with a few words about an event in February which I think says so much about this country. On February 16th there was a huge turnout for the Port Louis to Stanley 175th birthday celebrations. Falkland Islanders joined a cavalcade.

It was a journey not without mishap. Vehicles became bogged.

As I experienced myself, there was always someone on hand to drag clear the less fortunate. This is the Falklands' way – a community honouring its past but with an eye on making steady progress into the future.

I am sure that will never change.

Thank you.

Mr Speaker

Your Excellency, I invite you to remain in the Chamber for the Motion of Thanks.

Clerk of the Assembly

Motion number 4 of 2020 by the Honourable Stacy Bragger.

This House notes with thanks the address by His Excellency the Governor and believes that this is an appropriate point for the Government to consider its agenda priorities for the forthcoming year.

The Honourable Stacy Bragger

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members,

I would like to begin by thanking His Excellency the Governor for his address. It was a very good summary of the progress that has been made in the last year and the current issues that we face.

We, of course, live in a very interesting time for the Falkland Islands with a number of very significant challenges on the horizon. As His Excellency outlines, COVID 19 has dominated everyone's thoughts over recent months and that will not change for the foreseeable future. We have navigated the many challenges of the current situation well so far and we thank all who have helped us to date. It has been a team effort, and it is easy to lose track of the many things that have happened so far to get us to this enviable position, where we have not had a positive case since 24th April. That has not happened by accident, and we are grateful to all who have worked incredibly hard to get us to this point whether they be Falkland Islands Government staff, the Falklands private sector, the MoD, the UK Government or the community in general who have followed the advice given so well. As we all know, we are not out of the woods yet, and we still face the same challenge, but if we continue to face it head on and continue to respond in a way that is calm and measured, then we will get through to the other side together.

Moving on, the nagging headache that is Brexit has not gone away despite it slipping out of the headlines. It remains a serious concern for the Falkland Islands, but please be assured that efforts continue behind the scenes to ensure that the Falklands voice is not lost amongst the noise of more high profile Brexit issues.

As we've heard, the Assembly's sole focus in the last year has been on delivering the objectives laid out in the Islands Plan. When you take a step back and look at the work that has happened I believe we have made very good progress in a number of key areas.

The capital programme has seen a very significant ramping up during this Assembly in order to address the failing of our critical infrastructure. Today we see progress being made in a number of areas, whether that be large new housing developments, entering a new phase of port development, ground work for Tussac House, acceleration in the black-topping of the MPA Road, new aircraft for FIGAS – these are just a handful of the areas that we have moved on. Nothing happens as fast as you would like and there remain obstacles that need to be overcome, but we are moving in the right direction.

One area that I do think we need to do more on in regards to the capital programme is to keep the public more up to date on the current status of the very many different projects that are being worked on. I raised this recently with the Chief Executive and we should be seeing a quarterly update to the public, so that we can keep them more up to date on what is happening.

I hope that in the last 15 months or so of this Assembly that we will see real progress being on our approach to the environment and that the hard work that has been happening in the last couple of years will begin to bear fruit with things such as the development of a new purpose built landfill site and incinerator plant and the closure of Eliza Cove, which will be a day to celebrate.

There remains several key pieces of policy work that require completion, such as the work on labour force development and the housing strategy, and we look forward to those pieces of work being brought forward.

I'll touch on my main portfolio area of education; we have seen excellent progress, as His Excellency laid out, in the last year. As was noted, in the last 12 months we have seen an extremely positive external review of our schools, significant investment in our early years sector, the completion and opening of Falkland College and a new leadership structure implemented with the new roles of Executive Head and Camp Education Manager being created. We are only now up to full strength with the recent arrival of our new Director of Education, Marie Horton, and I am sure we will see the value in the next year of this new structure. So, there is much to be pleased with, but as ever, with everything, there is still a great deal more work to be done.

I would just finish with passing on my thanks to everyone in my portfolio area for all their work in the past year.

I would also like to thank our partners in the Ministry of Defence, the Foreign Office and the private sector amongst others. We don't always agree and we have the occasional falling out, but we always value their collaboration and their input. We look forward to continuing to work with them all.

I look forward to hearing any thoughts and observations from my colleagues on the Governor's address.

So, once again, thank you to His Excellency.

Mr Speaker, I propose the motion.

The Honourable Roger Edwards

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am rising to second the Motion of thanks.

I, too, would like to thank the Governor for his very wide ranging and very positive State of the Nation address.

However, it cannot be ignored that we live in strange times, where the global pandemic of Covid 19 remain a threat to both our population, and the economy of our Islands. We are here today to consider our budget for the financial year 20/21, but I am certain that later in the year, we will be back in the Assembly to see what effects this virus will have on our future economy.

We have seen recently several Supplementary Appropriation Bills being brought to the House, so that we can provide assistance to our pubs, our building industry, and our agricultural sector and going forwards, we don't know what else may need assistance.

The wool markets, as we all know, have recently totally collapsed. Our fish markets are currently still standing up fairly well, but the future of that without restaurants and other outlets for our fish remain uncertain. Our tourism income is anyone's guess; whether there will be cruise industry at all this season – we have yet to see.

We as an Assembly, along with the various Government Officers have had many meetings trying to forecast what might happen in this circumstance or that circumstance. Last Friday we spent four hours looking at that, we're spending another three hours today and there will be many, many more hours spent in the future looking at what might be going wrong and how we can support it.

On the positive side though, I must say that I have been incredibly impressed by the dedication and the stamina of our workforce – and I mean that right from the very top to the very bottom. I have seen for myself my own family, where people have been putting in 18 hour days – everyday – and as the Governor says “this is the Falklands way”.

Our lights have remained on, our water has been coming through the taps, our roads have maintained to a standard where we can still use them – despite all the restrictions, lockdown and everything else – our workforce has been out there keeping the lights on, water flowing and our communications intact.

I would like to personally thank everyone right across Government for all the work they have done. And indeed the private sector, it is not only Government who does these things, but as we've seen; our pubs have been shut, the building industry was brought to a halt and our agricultural sector has been suffering. We have done a little to help all these sectors and no doubt going forward we will be doing a lot more. That is our way of supporting our Islands.

So, Mr Speaker, I second the Motion.

Thank you.

The Honourable Roger Spink

Your Excellency, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members,

In rising to support this motion, I would like to comment on the broad scope and pace at which a whole range of issues for the Islands have been addressed.

We struggled with a lack of resources in many areas when we started on our Islands Plan, for too long a lack of investment and shortage of people held back progress in many areas. I am pleased that having listened to our community, we have been able and will continue to deliver in many of the areas that are of importance to them.

The progress made to date would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication shown by the Civil Service, our private sector and the people of these wonderful Islands, backed by Her Majesty's Government and British Forces.

We face many challenges in the coming year and by everyone working together I have no doubt we will rise to those challenges and ultimately overcome them.

In the words of Winston Churchill "attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference".

Thank you.

The Honourable Leona Roberts

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I, too, would like to thank His Excellency the Governor for his annual address. I think it gave a very useful and comprehensive overview of what was, indeed, a big year for the Falklands, in so many ways, but with many important decisions and substantial commitments made.

For me, significant highlights include, but are certainly not limited to: - much-needed progress on the port; the landing of the Sao Paolo flight; housing developments including the purchase of Bennett's Paddock; the completion of the Falkland College and the Christie Community Library; progress on the MPA road; and improvements to internet capacity, which I am sure actually many people were very grateful for in recent months and I was pleased to hear the high-speed generators were operational at the Power Station and doing their bit.

Also, our commitment to improve ramps and jetties and the greater spend on Camp roads, as well as the investment in FIGAS should see real benefits in the future for our Camp population. I also greatly welcome the signing of the Fisheries Accord and progress with our maritime legislation, alongside a number of other policy developments this year.

There have been considerable improvements, as has been mentioned several times, in Education and that too is incredibly pleasing and has been quite hard won, but I think we will see and reap the benefits of that work in future years. So, as always, there's always more to be done and we will continue to do all that we can in fairly uncertain times, as has been pointed out.

I don't doubt that in the coming year we will see more of our goals achieved and many others substantially progressed – I very much look forward to that.

I will touch briefly on some highlights from my portfolio, if I may, starting with the Public Protection element. This has been an extremely busy year and seen meaningful operational improvements right across the sections, as well as the progress with training, implementing a number of policy areas and investment in much-needed equipment. Generally, I am confident in saying that this portfolio is in a much better position to meet its commitments than it has been for many years.

A great deal of effort, of course, went into preparations and planning for the Sao Paolo flight and, of course, in this calendar year, a great deal of time has been consumed by response to the global Covid-19 pandemic – the work on which has been largely led by the Director of Emergency Services with vital input from our Emergency Planning Officer, whose, as you mentioned Your Excellency, timely arrival in the Islands has been a blessing.

Turning to the Environment aspect of my portfolio, I am delighted that this Assembly has recognised the importance of the environment and proved willing to invest in it.

We have taken a big step forward with Waste Management and I very much look forward to the day when the Eliza Cove tip is replaced by the new waste transfer facility, modern landfill and incinerator solution. We have progressed with glass crushing and are now collecting tins and cans – as was mentioned – I believe although this has its critics, it is a really good step forward. We have had years of public outcry over the way we handle our rubbish here in the Falklands, and this government has committed to providing the facilities for proper waste management. For that to succeed, it is down to each one of us to take some responsibility for the amount that goes into the dump and I sincerely hope that the community will support this initiative and those that will follow.

I'm also very pleased that we will be developing the Environment Department. While this too as its detractors, I'm sure, we should remember that all our lives and livelihoods depend, at least to some extent, on the wellbeing and good management of our natural environment and in this too; we all individually have a part to play.

The future holds many challenges, I think, in this area too and we should remember before Covid-19 took over the world we were having some interesting and challenging conversations about the feasibility and possible implications of salmon farming in the Falklands. There are many more of those discussions, I'm sure, to be had in the future.

As Honourable Colleagues have highlighted, I think there is uncertainty about what lies ahead as we and the rest of the world watch and wait to see how this global pandemic plays out, but I think we need to remember that we are in a more fortunate position than many, and there is confidence that we will be able to take this country and this Government forward in the future, always with the wellbeing and security of our people very firmly in mind.

So, this coming budget I think is very much a steady as she goes sort of situation. We have said, should the need arise, we will look at a mini budget later in the year, but I think it is a wise approach, and I very much look forward to seeing how we progress with this.

So anyway that is it for now from me. Thank you again, Your Excellency, for your address, and I too would take the opportunity to thank all our Government officers and indeed our partners right across the Islands and worldwide for the progress that we have made in the past 12 months.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Honourable Ian Hansen

Mr Speaker, Your Excellency, Honourable Members,

I too, would add my thanks to Your Excellency for your address, as my Honourable Colleagues who have spoken before me have said, it was very comprehensive and covered all the issues that the Falklands face in the future and what we got through last year. I would mainly like to speak about my portfolio: Health and Social Services – both to reflect on the past year and the challenges we face going forward into the next financial year, and possibly years to come.

When I was first elected in 2003, I suspected or indeed knew that some budgets would be more difficult than others - low wool prices, lack of Illex stock and worldwide economic recessions, for example, would play a part – and they happened. I do not think for one moment any one of the 22 individuals that I have served on the Assembly with, so far, would have ever thought that a global pandemic would feature in our budgetary deliberations.

A lot of thought went into the Health and Social Services budget this year with many more of the KEMH and Social Services personnel managers being involved in its preparation than usual, and to that end I would like to think the Director of Health and Social Services has produced a much tidier budget than perhaps we have seen in the past.

Unfortunately, due to the unwelcome introduction of Covid-19 earlier this year, many of our bigger projects in the KEMH have slowed down to some extent. Refurbishment of infrastructure and maintenance issues will still go ahead, but at a slower pace. It is, as you mentioned, Your Excellency, good news that we are continuing with the CT scanner installation and the Mammography unit. Also, the Mental Health Strategy has progressed significantly. The Adult Safeguarding legislation is being discussed next week, I believe, as to where we are on presenting this to the Assembly – hopefully that will happen in the near future.

I won't comment on Tussac House in any great detail, because at the moment the work being achieved and tenders being offered are, probably, more the remit of Public Works rather than Health and Social Services. Nevertheless, I can assure the public that staffing and services to be potentially supplied within the responsibility of my portfolio directorate are constantly monitored, as the amount of people who use or who may need this facility could change on an annual basis.

It is a great shame that the plans to utilise an orthodontic service has had to be put on hold for now, which is very disappointing after the amount of work our dental team and the Director have put into this, with many hours of contact and negotiation with Chilean counterparts.

Another downside to the Covid-19 invasion is that we are unlikely to be able to source specialists from the UK, as we normally do on a regular basis, and it will almost certainly take many months before we can revert to where we were previously. This will have a knock on effect to NHS referrals and I totally sympathise with those who need hip replacements, for example, and other treatments, of the like, that would have made their quality of life much better. We will be doing all we can to make sure these treatments happen as soon as possible.

Mr Speaker, all Government Departments, of course, have been affected and have adapted with great responsibility to the Coronavirus in several ways. I would like to take this opportunity though, in particular, to thank all of our Health Department staff who had to act quickly and indeed did so, and were effective in preparing for a possible outbreak of Covid-19, all while trying to maintain a high standard of medical and dental treatment across the Falklands. I believe that was achieved to the best of their ability.

The amount of work done – in conjunction with our medical counterparts at MPC – has been tremendous. I believe we are now best prepared as we can be for the eventuality if or when Covid-19 rears its ugly head again in the Falklands.

Mr Speaker, Your Excellency. I, too, would like to congratulate and thank those within our Government who, in my view, have done a sterling job to get us to this point of safety and the state of readiness we find ourselves in. I believe it would be remiss of me not to take this opportunity to publicly thank our Chief Executive, Director of Health and Social Services, Chief Medical Officer, who has performed a difficult task and made it look easy, Director of Emergency Services and, of course, BFSAI – they along with their teams deserve huge credit.

Mr Speaker, I support the Motion of Thanks.

The Honourable Mark Pollard

Thank you, Mr Speaker; I am rising to support the Motion.

I would also like to thank the Governor for his most comprehensive address – thank you very much.

On the wider economic measures around Covid-19, for me it is all about jobs, businesses, people and trying to support our economy as much as possible. As you've seen, we have committed £13.8 million, so far - £9 million this year towards this. Hopefully we won't need it all, but it does show our support for businesses during this time.

I think it is also vital that we push ahead with the capital programme, it could be put on hold, I guess, but I think it is vital to push ahead so we continue to stimulate our economy and provide better infrastructure for our future, as well – I think that is an area we can't stop.

On tourism, I feel it is unlikely any of us are going to Disneyland anytime soon, so perhaps bearing that in mind, we may want to think a little bit about domestic tourism; we live in a beautiful country, perhaps if we try and see a bit more of it, we may actually end up supporting some of the businesses that are really struggling at this time.

Lastly, there are way too many people to thank individually; although, I think one person does merit that and I personally like to thank our Chief Executive for all his leadership of the Civil Service during these difficult times.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby

Your Excellency, Mr Speaker. I, too, would like to thank His Excellency for his address – wide ranging, as other Honourable Members have said.

I support all of what my Honourable Colleagues have said, and the thanks that go out to everyone in the Civil Service, everyone within Government, but also, everyone within the Islands because everyone has pulled together and made it possible for us to be where we are at this time.

I would just like to pick out a couple of things, His Excellency touched on the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference – The Women’s Conference – we held here. Many people came down from the BIMR region, but also I think it is important, as he stated, that politicians in the regions, Senators from both Chile and Uruguay accepted an invitation to come and be here and speak at that conference. I can’t emphasise how important that was because these are two countries that we have close relationships with, whose politicians are prepared to come to the Falkland Islands and engage with us. I think we should always take the opportunity of any meeting we have here that has people from the United Kingdom and elsewhere, to think about how we can engage with people in the region because I think that is part of Public Diplomacy and it is something we should aim to do whenever possible.

His Excellency touched on Mrs Pelozo, the last Argentine relative to visit her son in the Argentine Cemetery. The Falkland Islands has been very supportive of the DNA process that enabled so many of those soldiers who had labelled “known only to God” on their crosses, to finally be identified and I think it is a very good thing we have done there. I think the visit by Mrs Pelozo was difficult, she was very infirm, she was in ill health herself and after she left, she asked whether it would be possible for her son to be buried closer to home because it was probably the only way she would ever see his grave again. I hope that the ICRC will take that forward because it was part of the commitment they made when we started the DNA process – that anyone wishing their relatives to be moved closer to home, they would work to ensure that happened.

I would just like to echo the thoughts people have had on the need for capital projects to go forward. Again, His Excellency touched on the amount of money that we have invested in FIGAS and we hope as soon as Covid eases, we can get the first of those new planes down. But also, on the Port, some people have asked whether the port is essential now because of the economic problems that we face and the answer is: it remains as essential as it did before and in some ways, more so. So, no, the Port project will go ahead. How we stage that and how we get people from BAM down here to start the process that we have, engagement of stakeholders and to start the surveys and all sorts of other things that need to be done, that is proving difficult, clearly, because of the immigration and quarantine regulations, but it will happen in the coming months, and I think it will be a very good step as the Falklands moves to that important project.

Mr Speaker, I support the motion.

The Honourable Teslyn Barkman

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I, too, would like to thank His Excellency the Governor for his wonderful address and I also support my Honourable Colleagues' views on the great progress that has been made over the past year. There is a lot to reflect upon this year and I would like to congratulate every single person in the community for helping us to navigate the global pandemic – whether it has been preparing or taking up those schemes that have been offered, but also those who have helped us design that programme and fed into that process and given their feedback. I won't speak too much about the great progress made as I think a lot of it has been covered, hopefully, throughout the year in the way that we have been trying to be a more transparent government.

Notably, we now have a Waste Management strategy, recycling and a new landfill that won't be one more hole in the ground for rubbish to fly out of.

We have marine science and positions such as: Marine Mammal Observers that will help champion the environment in a new way. We have done this for a few seasons now, but we have now adopted that within the budget in a more robust way.

We have a bolstered Environmental Department because saying “nature is still in charge” shouldn't mean that we just hope it fixes itself, and we don't continue to throw plastic bags in a hole and hope the wind will take charge of blowing them into the sea; we need to take better ownership and this budget that we will be presenting later is a continuation of that waste management strategy to introduce those next necessary steps such as: incineration, that will help us to deal with what we can't recycle or reuse.

Even though the Town Hall clock is still showing the wrong time, which is a bit distracting when we're sat here in so many meetings these days, the MPA road is coming along at great steam and yes, a white line for it is coming too. I would like to reassure people. I have had a few people mention that already.

We have a solution to FIPASS and we enter into the design phase in this next budget and vastly useful technology as my Honourable Colleague, MLA Roberts, has mentioned in FIGAS, the Quarry, and Power Station that is helping to keep the Islands more connected and prospering - not to mention that Sao Paolo link which we hope will return soon.

The extensive work within my portfolio does include an utterly revolutionary ITQ review and an Accord that will help the Islands through what will be the next few decades of Natural Resources. This includes a scientific review that was conducted this year into the fin fishery.

A former MLA, actually, asked me recently how we're providing housing and he offered his apologies for the previous Assemblies that he was on that hadn't got ahead on the issue. There were great steps taken, don't get me wrong, and Sapper Hill is one of them, but there is still much more to do and moving with the needs of the country needs action and attitude as my Honourable Colleague, MLA Spink, pointed to as a very important element.

In all areas this is needed and not least, pandemic response, we must prepare for what is ahead or we will always be on the back foot. And future generations will suffer when they are forced to make up the difference. And if we fail to ensure sustainability and prosper now there is a great chance they will have less resource to succeed with, and fail to achieve the progress that they need to catch up.

For today, we have the benefit of improved quality of life for the people of the Falkland Islands, a global reputation that proudly shows that self-determination and democracy is the only way we should be living. We are modernising and we have children who want to stay and return to this home we have made for them.

Sometimes we'll get it wrong, but if the alternative is standing still, not trying to improve and grow our country, I know I would rather have a government that tries. We won't settle to leave them with the failing infrastructure that my Honourable Colleague, MLA Bragger, has pointed to – so often a problem in this country.

We aren't here today to congratulate ourselves too much though on what has been a successful year despite the worst of challenges. We present today a robust budget that invests in people. This is only my third budget, but I'll reiterate that the process needs still need more transparency too.

There will always be the odd plan that doesn't work out, but still we have achieved and we shall continue to as best we can. We don't live outside our means; we sustain and anticipate our needs. Running a country means fixing the road ahead, even if you're thrown off the track you shouldn't suffer potholes and hope that they fix themselves.

We are not standing still.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members, that Motion of Thanks is therefore carried.

Can I ask you please to be standing for the departure of the Governor?

Please be seated.

Clerk of the Assembly

Confirmation of the record of the Legislative Assembly held on the 14th May 2020.

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members, I have before me a record of our last meeting. Is it your wish that I sign this as a true record?

Honourable Members

Aye.

Mr Speaker

Thank you.

Clerk of the Assembly

Papers to be laid on the Table by The Honourable Chief Executive.

In accordance with Section 80 of the Constitution the reports of the Public Accounts Committee in respect of audited accounts:

- Falklands Landholdings Corporation Financial Statements Year Ended 30th June 2019
- Falkland Islands Development Corporation Financial Statements Year Ended 30th June 2018
- Falkland Islands Museum & National Trust Financial Statements Year Ended 30th June 2019
- Falklands Conservation Financial Statements Year Ended 30th June 2019

In accordance with Section 80 (2) of the Constitution the update from the Public Accounts Committee in respect of internal audit reports:

- 2/19 Corporate Governance – Satisfactory Rating
- Follow Up Report 13/20 Cash Handling in Customs & Immigration – Substantial Implementation Rating
- Follow Up Report 14/20 Pensions 2nd Follow Up – Substantial Implementation Rating
- Follow Up Report 15/20 FIGAS cash handling – Substantial Implementation Rating

In accordance with Section 80 (5) of the Constitution from the Public Accounts Committee in respect of public account reports:

- Letter to the Media Trust and Bluegrass Accounting in respect of Media Trust Audited Accounts for the years 2017, 2018 and 2019.
- Response to the letter to the Media Trust from the Chair of the Media Trust.

The Honourable Chief Executive

Mr Speaker, I hereby lay the aforementioned Papers on the Table.

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsbey

Mr Speaker, the Public Accounts Committee examined the accounts as a matter of routine and I would like to report the following to the House, as have being approved, as the Clerk referred to:

- The Falklands Landholdings Corporation Financial Statements Year Ended 30th June 2019;
- The Falkland Islands Development Corporation Financial Statements Year Ended 30th June 2018;
- The Falkland Islands Museum & National Trust Financial Statements Year Ended 30th June 2019;

And finally;

- The Falklands Conservation Financial Statements Year End 30th June 2019.

Mr Speaker, the Chief Internal Auditor also presented to the PAC a number of internal audits. We are content with the following audits were acceptable and the internal audit recommendations are being actioned and if not completed.

The Corporate Governance has a Satisfactory Rating;

The Cash Handling in Customs & Immigration shows Substantial Implementation of the PAC recommendations;

The Pensions 2nd Follow Up by the Auditor shows Substantial Implementation;

And FIGAS cash handling also shows Substantial Implementation of the recommendations.

Finally, Mr Speaker, the PAC had cause to write to the Chair of the Media Trust as audited accounts for the years ending 30th June 2018 and June 2019 have not been presented. I am pleased to say we have received the 2018 accounts and we look forward to receiving the promised 2019 in the very near future.

The Honourable Leona Roberts

Mr Speaker, I second the motion.

Also, if I may make some comments at this stage?

I am pleased also to see that, upon inspection by the PAC, that the accounts from nearly all of our subvention bodies have been found to have no significant issues, and also that good progress is being made on other recommendations relating to procedures across FIG.

However, it is very troubling that we have reached a situation whereby the PAC feels it necessary to write to the Media Trust regarding their accounts. FIG has provided an annual subsidy to the Media Trust for a great many years and I would suggest that we all consider it money very well spent – the organisations overseen by the Media Trust provide a valuable

and vital service to the community. But these funds do come from the public purse and so, it is important that the accounts can be properly scrutinised.

That the finalised and signed accounts from both 2018 and 2019, and the Audit Completion reports from those years and from 2017, have not been submitted is extremely worrying – these are legal requirements. FIG has been patient, I would say, over recent years and continued to provide the funds for the Media Trust to operate, but this clearly puts us in a difficult situation.

I note that in responding to the PAC, the Media Trust letter recognises that there is an issue here and that the 2018 accounts should be signed off in the coming week, with 2019 accounts to be finalised shortly thereafter, as my Honourable Colleague, MLA Elsby has said.

Could I ask either my Honourable Colleague or the Honourable Financial Secretary to advise what the next steps are to address this if these accounts are not forthcoming?

Thank you.

The Honourable Financial Secretary

I thank the Honourable Leona Roberts for her question.

Clearly, we received the 2017/18 accounts only recently, and have been told we can expect the 2018/19 accounts shortly.

I would hope with today being the 9th June, we should be capable of being in receipt of those accounts before the current year end and new subventions become due. I would suggest in accordance with legislation, that we don't pay over subvention monies until we have actually received those accounts. It may be a prudent thing to do.

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members,

I concur with everything my Honourable Colleagues have said. I think it is vitally important, and any subvention body has to present accounts, and that is part of the deal, if you like, if you want to get money from the Government - you have to show that you are using it correctly.

And, clearly, I think the Media Trust has been slow to respond to what is clearly a problem within their accountancy service and I think if I just quote from the last paragraph of their reply to the PAC “additionally, we would like to inform you that we are undertaking a review of the accountancy services provided for the Media Trust and assessing our options”. I think that is the way to go forward with the problems that the Media Trust are facing.

Mr Speaker

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak to that Motion?

The Motion before the House is that the Public Accounts Committee Audit reports as listed by the Clerk are noted.

Is there any objection to passing that Motion?

There is no objection; those reports are noted.

Clerk of the Assembly

Questions for Oral Answer.

Question Number 08/20 by Honourable Teslyn Barkman:

The Honourable Teslyn Barkman

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Can the Honourable Dr Barry Elsby please update the House on the Capital Programme and any changes to planned works as a result of the effect of Covid-19?

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby

Mr Speaker, I would like to thank my Honourable Friend for her question.

As she has heard during the discussions this morning, the Government has prepared an updated Capital Programme with Covid-19 impacts included and that will be shared with Members next week, but I can summarise things, as follows:

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic we have identified some risks that can potentially increase costs and cause the delay to the delivery of the capital programme going forward and some of these are:

The restrictions on passenger numbers on the Airbridge, since its restriction during the Covid crisis, professional consultants and labour that can arrive and deliver our projects will be affected;

The number of flights to the Falkland Islands has been reduced to one flight, and that also limits the way contractors can arrive;

Quarantine provisions on arrival, which are vital to the way we provide safety to our community, have nevertheless resulted in delayed start dates and increased costs to the projects;

Limited availability of accommodation for quarantine purposes could mean higher accommodation costs;

Similarly, limited availability of materials from source countries could delay projects or have a premium cost due to the scarcity. Delays in manufacturing materials due to social distancing measures in factories could also create a supply shortage;

Work opportunities may increase in other countries resulting in reduced availability of labour supply;

The pandemic is still affecting many countries globally and the impact on the Falkland Islands is not fully understood yet.

FIG continues to monitor and model potential impacts on our capital programme and possible changes to planned works are being presented to my Honourable Colleagues next week.

The delivery of the capital programme is critical to supporting the economic well-being of the Falkland Islands and provides confidence for local businesses to invest in the local economy. We must continue pushing forward with the delivery of our approved capital programme.

The Honourable Teslyn Barkman

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I would like to thank my Honourable Friend for his answer to my question.

I think it is fair to say that we did predict that the answer would be additional cost and addition time to a lot of these particular projects, but I think it is still an ambitious capital programme that we have put ahead. We are going to propose later today. It is useful to have that update and I look forward to that more comprehensive update next week.

Thank you.

Mr Speaker

Is there any supplementary questions?

Clerk of the Assembly

Question Number 09/20 by Honourable Teslyn Barkman

The Honourable Teslyn Barkman

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Can the Honourable Mark Pollard please update the House on changes at the Falkland Islands Meat Company – locally known as FIMCo - specifically whether steps have been taken to ensure robust management and development of the abattoir; what changes businesses supplying the abattoir can expect; and whether supply to the local market, Ecolog contract or export season will be different this year?

The Honourable Mark Pollard

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I would like to thank my Honourable Colleague for her question. Please bear with me; there's an awful lot to this.

So, what steps have been taken to ensure robust management and development of the abattoir?

Mr Keith Heslop has recently been appointed to the position of Managing Director of FIMCo to replace Mr Michael Ledwith who resigned unexpectedly in late 2019.

Mr Heslop has a long history of senior management experience overseeing business planning, procurement, operations, sales and marketing as well as risk management activities for globally significant companies.

The Board of FIMCo welcomes the appointment of Keith and looks forward to him bringing a wealth of business experience, leadership and business acumen to FIMCo.

The task facing FIMCo is quite clear; to ensure that the business is operating as efficiently and effectively as possible given local and external macro-economic and environmental conditions, but also with high standards of business ethics, business process and legal accountability.

The development of a sustainable long-term business plan for FIMCo is an immediate priority of the position of Managing Director. Work on this task has already begun.

It is expected that FIMCo employees, farm suppliers, Falklands Islands Government, as well as local and export customers will be consulted as work progresses on the FIMCo Business Plan.

So, the second part of the question is: what changes businesses supplying the abattoir can expect?

It is too early to be discussing changes at FIMCo and hence potential impact on suppliers. Indeed, this is the very purpose of the development of a five-year business plan for the business. This said, the ambition of the Board of FIMCo is to work with the Managing Director and the broader FIMCo team to shape a business that is financially stronger, more resilient to seasonal change, and collaborative in approach.

The task is to work with suppliers and consumers to shape a lean and efficient business able to function to the highest standards given the constraints of the Falkland Islands farming system and weather conditions.

So, the third part of the question is: will supply to the local market, Ecolog contract or export season will be different this year?

Production for the export season, local market supply and Ecolog contract are all continuing.

Export season production continues for sheep and cattle at FIMCo albeit at reduced throughput rates reflecting the changed workforce resulting from Covid-19 enforced departures.

It is expected that the export sheep season and processing of additional beef will run through until late June. High quality beef, lamb, and sheep meat products are all readily available at local supermarkets during this time.

The expectations are that local supply will continue as normal throughout the year. Production for the Ecolog contract also remains in place with fit-for-purpose supply and production occurring at FIMCo balanced with imports as required.

In terms of arrangements for next season; these will become clear as the FIMCo Business Plan evolves, however, the expectation is that the supply of high quality locally grown meat products to local consumers will remain a key component of the FIMCo business into the future.

Export production will be shaped to best fit the FIMCo operating environment and market realities of supply and demand.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I hope that answers the question.

The Honourable Teslyn Barkman

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I would like to thank my Honourable Colleague for his response to what was a rather broad question.

I've been after some answers, as other Members of the Assembly, have been for some time, and I will admit I am a little deflated by part of his response, though I recognise it isn't necessarily MLA Pollard's ability to change too much of what has been happening at FIMCo. We have heard a little bit about macro-economic changes, which, yes, we understand the global pandemic has caused few different issues, and certainly, too, how the cutting team have had to leave early and end the season early. It is a little disappointing to hear that it is too early to discuss changes and that a plan is to be re-worked again to get FIMCO into basic operation.

At FLH Board on Friday there were warnings of what can happen if you don't learn from the past and sell too many assets to keep yourself buoyant – when in the long run it costs you more to get them back. I've also heard my Honourable Colleague refer to the fact that prime beef and sheep are readily available in the supermarket; in reality, they are readily available and waiting to go. The board heard how disillusioning it is to be waiting for delayed payment on the animals they've sent in, but also, how scores of 60-80, prime livestock are sitting ready to go in for months – months after they were timed to be sent in to the abattoir - at loss to the business and a loss to the enthusiasm to keep supplying beef to the abattoir. This is a more common issue that heard more widely too – that the efforts made to improve meat stock are not valued or taken when they should be at their prime value.

The FLH General Manager described FIMCo as stuck in 'cycles of failure to deliver for over 10-15 years'. That is incredibly disappointing to hear from someone who also sits at as Director but, it almost refreshing honesty behind what is really happening behind the scenes at FIMCo.

It was recognised by the Board that at the moment they have staffing problems, but every year it would seem there is a new problem, even without a Covid-19 pandemic.

In short, it is my belief, we need FIMCo to pull up its bootstraps, design a plan and continue honestly and not use business talk to distract or dress up sustained losses as anything else. This is taxpayer's money and it needs transparency. There are livelihoods that depend on it so let's be upfront and let's break the cycles of failure.

I look forward to this all be sorting out under the new management structure that my Honourable Colleague has referred to.

The Honourable Roger Edwards

Mr Speaker, Honourable Colleagues, thank you.

I heard my Honourable Colleague, Mark Pollard, say that the export season is still ongoing; we are in June, I don't know where the animals are coming from, so I would like to ask the question – what are the quality of these animals that are coming in for export in both sheep and lamb? I know with Covid, we have got rid of some of our seasonal workers early in the season, but I understand we still have seasonal workers – are they still being employed by FIMCo full time, or are they being furloughed and being sponsored by Government? And for what is the plan for these seasonal workers to leave the Islands once they have completed the work in FIMCo?

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Honourable Mark Pollard

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

There are an awful lot of questions there to try and tackle.

For a start, the reason it's too early is because they are working on a business plan and consultation with the Industry. I would also like to add that the General Manager of FLH is the Chair of the Board of FIMCo now, so perhaps he could take these comments and turn those into actions and move FIMCo forward. I really hope to see that.

Regarding my colleague, the Honourable Roger Edwards' questions - on the quality, I think, of the animals being supplied and exactly what is being supplied. Perhaps having the question earlier might have been useful, and I could've prepared some information, so perhaps I could get back to the House with that.

In terms of the seasonal staff, there are currently 20 seasonal staff left at FIMCo, still working and as I said, the season will finish at the end of June. I think it is important to recognise that all of these people have been working away from their families, I know this isn't the question I was asked, but I would just like to thank them for staying on and continuing with the production of the product. So, 6 of these 20 seasonal staff will fly back this week, back to Chile, I believe, leaving 14 and they will continue working and I believe the plans are to repatriate the others at a later flight, so there are plans in place to do that. At the moment, absolutely none are furloughed, I believe, they are all working at the plant on a daily basis, so

again, I would like to thank them for continuing with that working miles away from their family, having no idea of when they may be able to return.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

The Honourable Roger Edwards

Mr Speaker, it concerns me to think that we have 20 seasonal staff still working at the abattoir in June for the level of export that I know not. So perhaps, we can have some figures when he investigates the quality, also some of the numbers that these 20 seasonal staff are actually putting through the abattoir on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.

Mr Speaker

Can I suggest we treat that as a Question for a Written Response and if you would like to do your research and then the Clerk have that and we can put that within the record of this meeting.

The Honourable Mark Pollard

Absolutely, thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Honourable Teslyn Barkman

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I was going to suggest that this also be, potentially, a question for written response. My Honourable Colleague pointed to the work that has undertaken to get a new management plan and a new direction for FIMCo, and he discussed consultation with stakeholders and the industry, so I was just curious as to what timeline that should be? I hope we'd not be sitting in the same position in a few months asking for another update on a plan that is still ongoing, so perhaps that could be put together for a written response so that this Assembly has a clear way forward. This is something that has continued to be an issue for a lot of the different Members here.

Mr Speaker

The Honourable Mark Pollard, are you happy with that?

The Honourable Mark Pollard

Perhaps, if I may address a part of that at the moment, Mr Speaker?

Thank you to my Honourable Colleague for her question, again.

So, I've seen a draft of the business plan so far that has gone to the Board, the Board will approve that and hopefully, it will go to discussion with the different stakeholders. An exact timeline I can't give – I am sorry; I don't know what that would be – but I can certainly try and find that out.

I would say that also, along with discussion with the relevant stakeholders, part of the board is also made up of lay members from the industry, as well, so hopefully, the input will all come together and we will see a much better business plan for the future.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

The Honourable Roger Spink

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members,

I, too, look forward to the revised business plan from FIMCo, they are obviously some real issues within it but, I think within that we mustn't lose sight of the important role that FIMCo plays for the farming community – particularly, when wool prices are down- and that we have driven farmers to supply animals to that abattoir and therefore, we have a duty to make sure that it runs in the most efficient and best possible way to support the farming community.

Thank you.

Mr Speaker

Does any other any Member wish to raise a supplementary question?

Clerk of the Assembly

Question Number 10/20 by Honourable Teslyn Barkman

The Honourable Teslyn Barkman

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

My third and final one for the day: Can the Honourable Roger Edwards please update the House on planned works for the Roads programmes for 2020/21?

The Honourable Roger Edwards

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank the Honourable Teslyn Barkman for her question.

PWD are currently planning for a full programme for the 2020/21 season.

There is a three year contract in place with the Falkland Islands Company for the west road improvements. This will start in the Hill Cove area with base course and capping. Preparations are already underway for these works with plant and materials ordered.

The culvert contract is also on going. The Warrah works are to be completed before moving on to Poncho stream, Green Hill and the Sound at West Lagoons. Both Poncho Hill and Green Hill works include a road re-alignment.

The cattle grid works will also continue with three to be completed on the road to Fitzroy and one at Goose Green. There is also a proposal to add a further two in the Douglas area.

The East road improvement contract will be released for tender during June and the first year works include further re-alignment works to the San Carlos road.

Capping works are also expected to proceed with the PWD team continuing from Malo Bridge towards Teal Inlet while the successful contractor will carry out works from the Goose Green Turn off heading towards San Carlos.

Capping works will also be completed between Green Patch and Estancia Triangle and then from the Estancia Triangle to the Malo Bridge.

The cattle grid cleaning and maintenance is ongoing.

A formal submission for the allocation of funds, if approved during this budget which we will shortly be considering, will be submitted firstly to the TAC and then on hopefully, to the July ExCo for approval by Members.

The Honourable Teslyn Barkman

I would like to thank my Honourable Colleague, Roger Edwards, for his response.

Understanding that so much of that work is obviously dependent on the Budget that we are yet to present, there is still a great opportunity to get the roads programme into a good place for next year – even with Covid-19 distracting and delaying some of the other works they have planned.

The Honourable Mark Pollard

Mr Speaker, could I ask my Honourable Colleague, MLA Edwards, whether or not the money allocated to West roads will be spent on the West and has this actually been the case over the past two years, or was the money spent elsewhere?

The Honourable Roger Edwards

Mr Speaker, Honourable Colleagues,

My Honourable Friend will know that indeed some of the money allocated by the TAC for distribution for the roads on the West was used in other areas, but going forward, we have to make use of the funds available and use them in the best place possible.

Going forward, one would hope that if money is allocated for West road works, then indeed it supports West road works, so I hope that goes some way to answering your question.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby

Mr Speaker, I wonder if I can move onto Teaberry Way Estate.

I had an email from a resident of the Teaberry Estate just a wee while ago now, and it is perhaps easier if I just read the email I got:

“Since I moved into my Government cabin in 2017, there have never been drains or a decent road. Is there anything you can suggest I can do before I take this further?”

I love my cabin as it is cheap to run and the perfect home for me. There is no drainage system at all; when it rains, not only myself, but a number of the cabins on the east side are flooded to the extent of having to place pallets, rocks and even a child’s small outside trampoline to be able to get into my cabin without getting my feet wet.

A long time ago, there was word of the road being tarmacked. That seems to have failed. I can only guess the Training Centre got the tarmac. The road is very narrow on the corner and there have been a lot of near misses. Even a lamp-post has been knocked down and only half of the pole is left standing.

I feel, and a number of residents who I have spoken to feel the same, because we are out of sight, then we are out of mind”

Mr Speaker, I wonder if the Honourable Roger Edwards can tell this House if the residents of the Teaberry Estate are indeed out of sight and thus out of mind? And what could be done to help the residents?

The Honourable Roger Edwards

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members,

Indeed, the residents are not out of sight or out of mind. It is, however, very upsetting to hear that some of the problems that they have when the weather is particularly nasty.

My Honourable Colleague will remember, although it does seem a considerable period of time ago, but we were given a full brief on the happenings of road works in and around Stanley. The current publish start date for the mobile home park upgrade works is June 2021. PWD have taken advantage of the recent shut down to get some of the survey works updated and it is hoped that the design work will be completed by the end of June/July 2020. However, the commencement of the works is still a year away and may push further dependent on availability of resources.

Currently, the priority for the works is to ensure the delivery of additional housing infrastructure, the continuation of Philomel Hill and Dean Street to allow drainage works to progress, completion of the Training Centre refurbishment, KEMH refurbishment and the water storage upgrade works. As my Honourable Colleague will remember, that was the outline of the briefing we received at the beginning of this year.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby

Mr Speaker, I would like to thank my Honourable Colleague for his reply.

Clearly, it is a matter of priority and if he casts his mind further back, he'll remember that the road at Teaberry Way was supposed to be done this year, but what happened was the priorities were changed, as he's indicated now. Those priorities have changed without reference to MLAs and so we are faced with a *fait-accomplis*, almost, that this matter has been pushed back so we hope the road works up at Teaberry Way may be started in June 2021, but as he said, they may be pushed further back. I'm afraid I feel they will be pushed further back for all the reasons and all the priorities we've been hearing from him today.

But it cannot be right that people who pay service tax and are tax payers have to put up with the sort of conditions that the constituent writes to me about. I am not sure how we can prioritise this in a different way because as soon as we say we want to do them next year, yes okay, but what are you going to give up?

Now, I think we need to have that discussion again and we are almost coming up to the quarterly review of the roads priority list; I, for one, would wish to sacrifice something else to ensure that the residents of Teaberry Way no longer have to wear wellingtons to get out of their front door or to use a child's trampoline to get in without having their feet get wet.

The Honourable Roger Edwards

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members,

It was indeed the basis of the briefing that we received from both the Director and Deputy Director of Public Works; that if you want to bring the work on the mobile home road forward, then we would have to give up something else. But, I would be delighted, on leaving here this morning, to contact both the Director and Deputy Director and ask them to come with a briefing with possible options for us, so that we can look to bring that work forward.

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby

Mr Speaker, I would like to thank him for that and I think it is up to MLAs to finally make that decision, but also encourage MLAs to actually go up to the estate and see how they find it on a wet day, because I think it is a very telling story.

Mr Speaker

Does any other Member wish to raise a supplementary question?

Clerk of the Assembly

Motion No 5 of 2020 by the Honourable Roger Spink:

That this House agrees to suspend Standing Order 65(1) and (2) for this sitting of the Legislative Assembly to enable the Assembly to take the Appropriation Bill 2020 without further reference to a Select Committee.

The Honourable Roger Spink

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members,

I propose the Motion that this House agrees to suspend Standing Order 65(1) and (2) for this sitting of the Legislative Assembly to enable the Assembly to take the Appropriation Bill 2020 without further reference to a Select Committee.

Mr Speaker

Thank you.

The Honourable Roger Edwards

Mr Speaker, I second the Motion.

Mr Speaker

Does any Member wish to speak to that Motion?

Is there any objection to passing that Motion?

There is no objection; that Motion is carried and the Standing Order 65(1) and (2) are suspended for this sitting of the Assembly.

Clerk of the Assembly

Orders of the Day: Bills

Supplementary Appropriation (2019-2020) (No 2) Bill 2020, this Bill has not been gazetted and we go to the first reading.

The Honourable Financial Secretary

Mr Speaker, I beg to move the first reading of the Bill.

The Honourable Roger Spink

Mr Speaker, I second the Motion.

Mr Speaker

The Motion is that the Bill be read a first time – any objection to the Motion? There is no objection the Bill will be read a first time

Clerk of the Assembly

Supplementary Appropriation (2019-2020) (No 2) Bill 2020

The Honourable Financial Secretary

Mr Speaker, this Bill is the fifth Supplementary Appropriation Bill to be presented for the current financial year and the second for this calendar year.

The purpose of the Bill is to authorise the withdrawal £178,027 from the Consolidated Fund to pay for additional costs within the Courts budget. These costs reflect the number of complex civil and criminal cases during the year. This expenditure was approved by the Standing Finance Committee on the 29th April 2020. The expenditure required for 2019/20 is higher than budgeted. The budget itself was set on the basis of historic information which was been insufficient to deal with recent activity.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

The Honourable Roger Spink

Mr Speaker, I second the Motion.

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members, the Motion is that the Bill be read a second time – does any Honourable Member wish to speak to this Motion?

Is there any objection to taking this Bill by the short procedure?

There is no objection.

Does any Member wish to propose an amendment to the wording of the Bill?

There are no amendments; I declare the Bill will be read a third time and do pass.

Clerk of the Assembly

Supplementary Appropriation (2019-2020) (No 2) Bill 2020

The report back of the proceedings of the Select Committee on the Estimates.

Mr Speaker

The Honourable Financial Secretary, I invite you to report back.

The Honourable Financial Secretary

Mr Speaker, thank you.

The Committee held five meetings between 6 February 2020 and 18 March 2020. Unfortunately, not all planned meetings were possible due to Covid-19 restrictions thus delaying and truncating the budget process to the end of April.

The meetings which did take place covered:

Subventions – or grants – to outside bodies such as FIDC;

Income Projections;

presentations by FIG Directors who, in Legislation, are defined as the Accounting Officers with responsibility for budgets.

identifying the priorities in operating budgets and reviewing and recommending investment decisions on capital priorities, also making sure that this was in line with the Islands Plan.

Mr Speaker,

The Treasury has prepared a budget based on the deliberations of the Select Committee on the Estimates.

On 20 May 2020 a paper was submitted to Executive Council. This paper was called “Draft Budget and Financial Plans for 2020/21 and beyond”. At this Executive Council meeting of 20 May 2020, Honourable Members approved the investment and policy decisions as part of the Falkland Islands Government 2020/21 Estimates.

Following approval by the Executive Council, two Bills have now been prepared:

the Appropriation Bill 2020 and;

the Capital Appropriation Bill 2020.

I will give some more information later this morning on what is contained in the Appropriation Bill and the Capital Appropriation Bill. First though, some background that informed the decisions of the Budget Select Committee and the budget report.

Firstly, the 27 November 2019 Executive Council approved a number of budget principles as part of the “Budget Planning - 2020/21 Onwards” paper. The Budget Select Committee has continued to keep to these principles.

Secondly, a forecast operating budget surplus in the current 2019/20 financial year of £11.1m; compared to a budgeted surplus of £5.6 million. This financial forecast was reported to the Standing Finance Committee meeting in April 2020.

Overall revenue for Falkland Islands Government for this current financial year is forecast at £98.0 million.

Of this forecast 2019/20 revenue, £25.5 million relates to Corporation Tax; £26.1 million relates to Fishing Licence revenues; £8.7 million to Investment Income and £4.0 million to Customs fees.

A Consolidated Fund balance of £220.4 million is forecast for the beginning of financial year 2020/21 prior to capital transfers. It is the Consolidated Fund that represents the unrestricted funds belonging to Falkland Islands Government that are not allocated to other purposes.

There are other reserve funds including the Retirement Pensions Fund and the Insurance Fund.

There is, of course, always the risk of an unforeseen reduction in one or more of the main revenue streams that Falkland Islands Government has, so a protected reserve of two and a

half-times operating costs has been maintained and this was renewed as a budget principle during the current year.

With a strong economy and the contribution made in particular by the fishing industry, along with farming and tourism, the finances of Falkland Islands Government remain stable.

We do, however, remain mindful of the challenges of the moment.

There will be a further review of the principles to inform next year's budget and we are planning a paper for the October 2020 ExCo on this matter. But in addition, ExCo will also consider early outturns in Government finances for 2020/21.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this concludes my report on the proceedings of the Select Committee on the Estimates.

The Honourable Roger Spink

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the report be accepted.

The Honourable Roger Edwards

Mr Speaker, I second the motion.

Mr Speaker

The report from the Select Committee on the Estimates is accepted.

Clerk of the Assembly

Appropriation Bill 2020

The Honourable Financial Secretary

Mr Speaker, I propose the first reading of the Bill

The Honourable Roger Spink

Mr Speaker, I second the Motion.

Mr Speaker

The Motion is that the Bill be read a first time.

Is there any objection to the Motion?

There is no objection; the Bill will be read a first time.

Clerk of the Assembly

A Bill for an Ordinance to authorise the withdrawal from the Consolidated Fund of money for the financial year ending 30 June 2021.

The Honourable Financial Secretary

Mr Speaker,

The proposed Appropriation Bill is for £110,799,265.

The purpose of the Appropriation Bill is to authorise the appropriation of funds from the Consolidated Fund for the next financial year in accordance with Section 8 of the Finance and Audit Ordinance 1988.

The draft estimates for 2020/21 comprise proposed budgeted operating expenditure and pension fund transfers totalling £83.0 million before internal recharges.

The total income budgeted for 2020/21 is £92.8 million. Revenue budgeted pays for the expenditure budgeted in the year.

This means that there is a budgeted surplus in the operating budget. This will be used for investment in capital projects and maintaining a reasonable level of reserves.

Such surpluses remain critical to the future aspirations for major capital investments.

The second component of the Appropriation Bill is a proposed transfer from the Consolidated Fund to the Capital Equalisation Fund. The Capital Equalisation Fund is where funds are set aside in advance of the actual invoice and payments to suppliers for capital projects that have been committed to.

I will provide further details on the ongoing capital programme as part of the Capital Appropriation Bill.

The total Appropriation Bill proposed for 2020/21 is £110.8 million. The total amount of money that Falkland Islands Government plans to spend in 2020/21 is the total of the operating budget plus the amount that is needed to top up the Capital Equalisation Fund to ensure that funds are set aside to pay for the actual costs of capital projects when the bills do come in.

I can now break down the Appropriation Bill 2020 to show what it covers in different expenditure categories:

Departmental operating expenditure - £68.9 million;

Islands Plan investments - £10.2 million;

Oil development - £0.3 million

Transfers to Pension Funds - £2.3 million;

Transfer to the Capital Equalisation Fund - £29.1 million

Firstly, departmental operating expenditure.

Departmental expenditure covers the budgets of Commercial Services, which includes FIGAS, Human Resources, Health & Social Services, Education, Public Works, Natural Resources, Legal & Regulatory, Emergency Services, Executive Management, Policy and Economic Development, Mineral Resources and the Treasury.

The total net operating expenditure for the departments mentioned above for 2020/21 is budgeted at £68.9 million.

This is largely unchanged from last year as the Budget Select Committee clearly sought to defer any major amendments. There are some contract increases that FIG has to pay; a very small number of new posts, a 1.5% pay award and other minor amendments to operational requirements.

The delivery of effective public services has never been more vital to the security, development, cohesion and health of the Falkland Islands. We may have a number of posts and budgets, but we need to be acutely aware of the challenges that the present climate may play in recruitment as our ambitious plans do need people doing the actual work. Against this backdrop I salute my Treasury and other colleagues for their enormous efforts in preparing this year's budget.

Mr Speaker,

I now move on to the Islands Plan part of the budget.

The Islands Plan budget has been agreed at £10.2 million for 2020/21. This budget provides grant assistance to non-government organisations, social payments and funding for other programmes.

A substantial sum of £2.6 million is budgeted to provide ongoing Covid-19 support.

In terms of the main subvention bodies, the following allocations were agreed:

£700,000 as a contribution to the Tourist Board

£450,000 as an operating subsidy to Falkland Islands Meat Company;

£272,000 to support Falklands Radio and Media;

up to £847,740 to be made available to the Falkland Islands Development Corporation;

£210,000 to Falklands Conservation;

and £122,667 to SAERI as they continue to develop their longer-term plans.

As previously agreed, Falkland Islands Museum and National Trust will receive a payment from Government, based on part of the passenger levy and the number of cruise ship

passengers. We acknowledge that this could be under threat due to present tourism constraints.

In line with last year, an allocation of the Islands Plan budget is for the continued operation of the ferry service and also for route development costs associated with the second flight.

An allocation of £0.3 million has been made available to the oil development budget. This budget covers potential legal and regulatory costs associated with the ongoing aim to achieve suitable oil development in the Falkland Islands.

Transfers to Pension Funds are made to preserve the long-term financial security of the Falkland Islands. Lump sum payments totalling £2.3 million will be paid in total into the Retirement Pensions Scheme and the Pensions (Old) Scheme Fund.

Both pension funds have recently undergone actuarial reviews, so that Falkland Islands Government can keep a close watch on the liabilities compared to the value of assets, payments coming in and payments out. This year's transfers reflect these reviews. If need be, further corrective action can be taken as part of the budget process in future years.

As I mentioned previously, there will be a transfer to the Capital Equalisation fund of £29.1 million for investment in capital projects.

More information will be provided shortly.

As stated, Falkland Islands Government is targeting a budget surplus for 2020/21. This is not guaranteed of course, and requires careful ongoing monitoring.

Turning now to Government revenue sources:

Corporation Tax and Income Tax rates will remain the same.

In terms of fishing licence income, the budget reflects previous expectations in financial projections across the next five years. This will continue to be carefully monitored in conjunction with the industry.

As a result of Covid-19 it was decided there should be no inflationary increases in fees and charges beyond those previously committed and I will provide some more details in the Finance Bill later.

Not all price increases are currently subject to legislation, so not all will be in the Finance Bill.

Electricity prices will continue to be reviewed each quarter but, this budget assumes they will remain at 23 pence a unit when the current temporary reduction is withdrawn.

Welfare and social payments will increase by 1.5% this includes Family Allowances which continue to be tax free.

Weekly retirement pensions will also be increased by 1.5%, from £161 to £163.

The Travel Credit Scheme will continue into 2020/21.

The minimum wage will increase from £7.03 an hour to £7.13 an hour.

Treasury will once again publish a list of key budget highlights which will include the details that I have just mentioned.

Mr Speaker, this concludes my presentation of the Appropriation Bill to this House and I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

The Honourable Roger Spink

Mr Speaker, I second the Motion.

Mr Speaker

The Motion is that the Bill be read a second time – does any Honourable Member wish to speak to the Motion?

The Honourable Teslyn Barkman

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I would like to thank the Honourable Financial Secretary for taking us through what is also his first budget and I failed to welcome to this House in the last Assembly but, thank you Honourable Member for his explanation.

Just to give a quick insight into some key areas of my own portfolio area that are within this budget:

Over £6 million of that £68.9 million operating expenditure for departments, which was mentioned by the Honourable Financial Secretary, is for the Department of Natural Resources. This however is the first budget to see the movement of Maritime Operating expenditure from Department of Natural Resources to into the Department of Emergency Services and Internal Security. This is the first step in the movement of Maritime from DNR to Regulatory in Emergency Services.

Of that DNR budget, £1.7 million is also towards fisheries scientific research, which is an important element for the sustainability of our zones.

In other environmental budgets, over £500,000 is also suggested for approval to bolster our environmental section and also to support for conservational NGOs in their operating expenditure.

Also, within my portfolio, it is one of the two largest Government revenue providers; Natural Resources are also projected to take revenue higher than previous year – over £29 million. We also have a stake to drive support to the nation's greatest employer after Government services, which is Agriculture, as His Excellency said in his address to this House earlier today, the wool purchasing programme is helped gives support in uncertain times and this budget continues that support through the programme but also through the farm improvement

programme of the departments and also, the advice that can be accessed through that department in these uncertain times.

Work continues overseas too in the Falkland Islands Government Office to secure the most prosperous deal we can for our two main exporting sectors; Falkland Islands Fisheries and Meat Products are working to secure tariff and quota free access to the EU market. As unpopular a theme it may be talk about Brexit, it is still very important. It is also assisting Falkland Islands businesses that are the corner stone of our economy but also, helping Falkland Islands Government to mitigate loss in Corporation Tax, of which the Fisheries sector does provide a large amount.

There also lies the potential to unlock hydrocarbons in the future and although oil prices are currently low there is need to finance work for the forthcoming year to create a new and prosperous revenue stream for the Islands. The Oil Development Fund also, within in this budget, allows us to continue this work.

That is a very brief look, but thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker

Does any other Member wish to speak to that Motion?

The Motion is that the Bill be read a second time – is there any objection to the Motion?

There is no objection; the Bill will be read a second time.

Clerk of the Assembly

A Bill for an Ordinance to authorise the withdrawal from the Consolidated Fund of money for the financial year ending 30 June 2021.

The Honourable Financial Secretary

Mr Speaker, I beg to move the Bill be read a third time and do pass.

The Honourable Roger Spink

Mr Speaker, I second the Motion.

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members, the Motion is that the Bill be read a third time and do pass – is there any objection to the Motion?

There is no objection; the Bill will be read a third time and do pass.

Clerk of the Assembly

A Bill for an Ordinance to authorise the withdrawal from the Consolidated Fund of money for the financial year ending 30 June 2021.

Report on the proceedings of the Select Committee on the Estimates.

Capital Appropriation Bill.

Mr Speaker

I invite the Honourable Financial Secretary reports on the proceedings of that Select Committee.

The Honourable Financial Secretary

Mr Speaker, thank you.

This report clearly reflects the deliberations of the Select Committee on the Estimates, in relation to the capital programme and capital expenditure.

A five-year capital programme was agreed by the Legislative Assembly in 2019/20 as part of the Capital Appropriation Bill for that year - 2019.

The five-year programme includes investment in roads, housing, quarry capacity, utilities, air services and public buildings, amongst others.

This capital programme now continues as previously identified with the addition of just one new project, for the swimming pool. Some changes have been made to the financial allocation and/or timing of these projects as required.

Sometimes the full budgeted amounts for individual projects are not made public for procurement reasons, but the 2020/21 capital spending plans as part of the capital programme include all the major projects previously identified by my predecessor as Financial Secretary, James Wilson, in his report last year, and as mentioned by His Excellency the Governor today. I do not propose to repeat those details now.

It is however incumbent upon me to mention, as a matter of significant interest to many, that the capital plan as amended does include the previously approved purchase of the unsold wool clip.

The budget therefore incorporates an ongoing capital programme through to 2024/25.

The timing of expenditure within this five-year capital programme has been reviewed. It is, of course, possible that the start date and completion date of some of the projects will change in timing terms. It is further acknowledged that there is a limit on the supply of labour and capacity available to progress all projects at the same time, and hence Government intends to focus considerable effort this year, and beyond, in building a ten-year capital programme to support delivery of the Islands Plan.

A key consideration is that there is funding allocated for the capital projects committed to, which form part of this ongoing programme of work.

It should be noted that the forecast 2019/20 capital expenditure now stands at £26.0 million. The full year revised projected capital budget for 2020/21 amounts to £52.7 million, and there continues to be regular reporting on progress to the Standing Finance Committee.

A review has been undertaken of the phasing of existing and proposed capital projects, there remains a weighting towards the early part of the five-year capital programme, but any variations in timing will be met through the funds that have been allocated to the Capital Equalisation Fund.

The budgeted capital programme excludes the financing of major infrastructure projects such as the potential for a new port or the replacement power station, although it does, of course, include provision for further detailed design work in both cases.

These projects have so far not been included in the medium-term financial plan until their scope is clarified and the financing sources confirmed.

Investment plans for a new port and a replacement power station require review of income levels in future years. In addition, Government are assessing assumptions of the extent to which major capital investments remain fully funded by FIG, or with contributions from users, other partners, or alternative funding arrangements.

Mr Speaker, Falkland Islands Government needs to continue to deliver prudent financial management and surpluses so that such large capital infrastructure investments can take place.

For each of the five years of this medium-term financial plan, budgeted income still exceeds budgeted operating expenditure.

Some of the accumulated reserves are used to pay for investments in the capital programme.

At the end of the five-year programme in June 2025 the ratio of maintaining 2.5 times operating expenditure in reserves is still met.

To continue to maintain oversight, close scrutiny of finances is supported by the provision of regular forecast reports to the Standing Finance Committee. A close watch is kept on areas of risk and volatility within both income and spending. They will clearly receive even greater scrutiny in the current climate.

The annual budget process itself provides an opportunity to review and revise, where necessary, the capital plan if necessary.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this concludes my report on the proceedings of the Select Committee on the Estimates.

The Honourable Roger Spink

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the report be accepted.

The Honourable Roger Edwards

Mr Speaker, I second the Motion.

Mr Speaker

Does any Member wish to speak to that Motion?

Is there any objection to passing that Motion?

No objection; that report from the Select Committee on the Estimates is accepted.

Clerk of the Assembly

Capital Appropriation Bill 2020.

The Honourable Financial Secretary

Mr Speaker, I propose the first reading of the Bill.

The Honourable Roger Spink

Mr Speaker, I second the Bill.

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members, the Motion is that the Bill be read for a first time – is there any objection to the Motion?

There is no objection; the Bill will be read for a first time.

Clerk of the Assembly

A Bill for an Ordinance to authorise the withdrawal from the Capital Equalisation Fund of money for capital projects.

The Honourable Financial Secretary

Mr Speaker, thank you.

The purpose of the Bill before you today is to authorise the appropriation of monies from the Capital Equalisation Fund for capital projects. I have described the ongoing capital programme.

The Bill is for £24,457,734. This is the funding that is required in 2020/21, calculated as follows:

The full 2020/21 capital programme is £52.7 million. There is £2.7 million budgeted for capital receipts in the year, so this reduces the amount of money needed to pay for the capital projects to £50.0 million.

However, there is an estimated £34.7 million that was approved in 2019/20 that was not spent in that year and so that is carried forwards into 2020/21. Legislative permission is not needed to spend that money again.

During the course of 2019/20, approval was given through some of the Supplementary Appropriation Bills for additional capital expenditure of £9.2 million. Legislative permission needs to be obtained to actually spend this on capital projects because the Supplementary Appropriation Bill was just for the transfer from the Consolidated Fund to the Capital Equalisation Fund. So, in summary, £50.0 million less £34.7 million carried forward from last year, plus the addition of £9.2 million in the current year approvals, totals £24.5 million.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this concludes my presentation of the Capital Appropriation Bill to this House and I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

The Honourable Roger Spink

Mr Speaker, I second the Motion.

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members, the Motion is that the Bill be read a second time – does anyone wish to speak to the Motion?

The Honourable Teslyn Barkman

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Noting as the Honourable Financial Secretary did point to - the needs for sensitivities on contracts to be tendered. There is also a balance to be found with public input and oversight on ongoing work that is a significant part of our future.

In his Motion of Thanks my Honourable Colleague, MLA Bragger, put forward a suggestion for quarterly Capital Programme updates for the public; I think this is a great idea to help improve transparency. So, not necessarily a debate; but more a points to pick out that even though the Capital Programme is approved, we hope to take more people with it in future.

Mr Speaker

Does any other Member wish to speak to the Motion?

The Motion is that the Bill be read a second time – is there any objection to the Motion?

There is no objection; the Bill will be read a second time.

Clerk of the Assembly

A Bill for an Ordinance to authorise the withdrawal from the Capital Equalisation Fund of money for capital projects.

The Honourable Financial Secretary

Mr Speaker I beg to move the Bill be read a third time and do pass.

The Honourable Roger Spink

Mr Speaker, I second the Motion.

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members, the Motion is that the Bill be read a third time and do pass – any objection to the Motion?

There is no objection; the Bill will be read a third time and do pass.

Clerk of the Assembly

A Bill for an Ordinance to authorise the withdrawal from the Capital Equalisation Fund of money for capital projects.

Report on the proceedings of the Select Committee on the Estimates.

The Finance Bill.

Mr Speaker

The Honourable Financial Secretary, if you would like to report on those proceedings please.

The Honourable Financial Secretary

Mr Speaker,

I am reporting back on the Estimates in relation to the Finance Bill and the work of the Select Committee.

You will already have heard that prices charged by Government in general will not be increasing, but also that pensions will increase and there will be a cost of living pay award for FIG workers.

Some of the things that Falkland Islands Government charges for exist in legislation and others do not, but Government seeks to be as transparent as possible in the basis for the prices charged. Prices charged should be the result of a policy decision, informed by the financial ambitions and constraints that the Government has, as well as considerations of fairness.

The changes proposed within the Finance Bill 2020 form part of the overall 2020/21 budget and the ongoing financial plan.

As part of the budget and legislative drafting process this year current fees charged have been reviewed. There are some areas identified in the Stanley Rates Ordinance 1973 where the fee charged is at a rate other than that prescribed under law and the Finance Bill will seek to correct these.

Mr Speaker, this concludes my report on the proceedings of the Select Committee on the Estimates in relation to the Finance Bill.

The Honourable Roger Spink

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the report be accepted.

The Assembly in our last budget emphasised its foundation as being the well-being of people across the Falkland Islands, that is why we committed to local services of most importance to Falkland Islanders. We did not wish to see this commitment undermined in the budget for 2020/21 and thus have continued to invest in our people with upward adjustments in wages, welfare payments and no rises in fees and charges. We continue to invest in our industry and infrastructure; two ingredients for long term sustainable growth in our economy.

Our Government has recognised already the first impact of Covid-19 and provided support for workers and businesses and the heavily affected wool sector. This has been possible, in part, because of the policy of past budgets to have an excess of income over expenditure and the building of substantial reserves. We have not moved away from our careful approach and have signalled the impact of the pandemic will continue to be closely monitored.

This budget does not seek to make substantial additional commitments and demands for additional growth in operating costs; it leaves headroom in the operating budget to respond to future challenges.

Our long term social vision of giving our children and young people the best possible start is unchanged and this budget supports this through family support, school investment and our new Falkland College.

We have seen the value of our investments in Health in recent months, with the excellent response of our hospital and staff to the pandemic. We continue to invest in new capabilities for KEMH so we can provide more diagnostic and medical procedures in the Falkland Islands.

I would like to thank Tim Waggott, James Wilson and their team in the Treasury for their work at this difficult time in putting these budgets together.

Thank you.

The Honourable Roger Edwards

Mr Speaker, I second the Motion.

Mr Speaker

Does any Member wish to speak to the Motion on the report?

The Honourable Teslyn Barkman

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I too wish to commend the increases here proposed for the support of families as well as the 10p on the minimum wage, which is still in line with the living wage again.

At the Agricultural Advisory Committee, earlier in the year, we discussed veterinary charges and I'm pleased to see considerations of the committee were taken into account. Last year this Assembly was asked why the Budget is a *fait accompli* and we had tasked the then Financial Secretary to address this issue and work out a programme of public engagement to look at ways that we could engage the public on priorities - through committees - and how that this could be achieved.

While Covid-19 has distracted from a lot of work in this year, it is also true that no start was made towards a public engagement programme despite me reminding this House of this commitment, as well as Budget Select Committee.

We, like other governments around the world, should be working to the good governance principles adopted by the Commonwealth as best as we can. I hope to see progress and a plan before this House's final budget next year.

But I support this Motion, thank you.

Mr Speaker

Any other Member wish to speak?

The Honourable Mark Pollard

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

With the comments from my Honourable Colleague, the Honourable Teslyn Barkman, I completely agree with the process of going down that road.

I would also like to say that whilst 5 meetings may seem like an awful lot on the Budget; it is far fewer than we have and I commend the Treasury and all the work they've done, so I would like to thank them publicly.

I would hope that we would look for more transparency in the budget process next year as well. Obviously, laying no blame at the door of anyone this year, it is exceptional circumstances and we would have preferred that.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker

Does any other Member wish to speak?

The Honourable Roger Edwards

Mr Speaker, I am sure my Members are actually responding to the second reading of the Bill, are they not?

Mr Speaker

They are, indeed, but the report on the Estimates that everyone was involved with so, they can comment at this stage, should they wish.

Any further comment?

Is there any objection to accepting that report?

There is no objection; the report is accepted.

Clerk of the Assembly

Finance Bill 2020.

The Honourable Financial Secretary

Mr Speaker, I beg to move the first reading of the Bill.

The Honourable Roger Spink

Mr Speaker, I second the Motion.

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members, the Motion is that the Bill be read a first time – is there any objection to passing the Motion?

There is no objection; the Bill will be read a first time.

Clerk of the Assembly

A Bill for an Ordinance to increase licence fee, family allowance, retirement pension benefits and, contributions provided for under the laws of the Falkland Islands; to provide for the validation of charges collected contrary to legislative provisions and to provide for connected matters.

The Honourable Financial Secretary

Mr Speaker, thank you.

The purpose of this Bill is to give effect to the changes in various allowances, charges and fees provided for under the laws of the Falkland Islands. It also makes new provisions in relation to certain fees and charges.

Please note that unless otherwise stated, the clauses refer to increases of approximately 1.5% and will take effect from 1 July 2020.

There are, however, a number of areas identified where the fees charged are different to those that have been set out in legislation. Passing this Finance Bill into law means that these discrepancies will now be resolved – a process known as ‘validation’ – and will not be an issue going forward.

In the majority of cases, the discrepancies have very minimal financial impact both to the individual’s concerned or Falkland Islands Government as a whole. There was one area where the impact was slightly more significant. This is to do with the fees charged in relation to service charges, under the Stanley Rates Ordinance 1973. The legislation states that the charge should be Gazetted; however, the fee that was charged was increased to £438.60 from 1 July 2019 with the last Gazetted amount being £426 back in 2011.

The fee was increased to better reflect the actual cost for providing the services to a property. Customers have received the service relating to the fee and the charge is not excessive in relation to the cost incurred by the Falkland Islands Government in providing that service. It should be noted that service charges have also been waived in May and June 2020.

This Finance Bill validates all fees that have been identified as being charged at a rate higher than the rate that had previously been set in legislation.

Mr Speaker, going on to the clauses in the Finance Bill 2020, they can be summarised as follows:

- Clause 3 increases the fees under the Banking Regulations Order 1989. This means that the price of a banking licence to operate in the Falkland Islands increases from £11,000 to £12,000 from 1 January 2021. The price here is based upon an Executive Council decision in July 2010;
- Clause 4 increases the Family Allowance under the Family Allowances Ordinance 1960 from £77.00 to £78.00 per month;
- Clause 5 increases the fees under the Minimum Wage Ordinance 2013. The minimum wage increase is from £7.03 an hour to £7.13 per hour from 1 January 2021;
- Clause 6 increases the fees under the Retirement Pensions (Prescribed Rates) Regulations 1996. Changes to pensions paid out will take effect from 1 July 2020. The changes to contributions come into effect on 1 January 2021. Pensions paid out will increase by 1.5%, but employee and employer contributions will increase by 5.6% which is in line with a policy of reducing the deficit in the Pension Equalisation Fund;
- Finally, Clause 7 validates charges collected or demanded contrary to legislation under the Stanley Rates Ordinance 1973 during the period between May 2011 and the date of publication of the new charges.

I believe that covers all the changes to legislation required for the items that have been included in the budget workings.

Before concluding my rather lengthy presentation today, I should like to consider the budget planning and budget setting process overall.

Against a challenging backdrop, two weeks isolation for myself, as well on arrival in the Falkland Islands, and a compressed timeframe, I consider the overall process to have delivered a pragmatic and sensible example of decision making.

I would to thank colleagues in all Government departments for the time that they have spent preparing the budgets and accepting that a truncated process was the correct approach. Within a tight timescale, I congratulate colleagues in Legal for drafting the Bills, offer my appreciation to the Attorney General for his personal support, thank the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and colleagues in Gilbert House for their good humour in supporting multiple iterations of the paperwork, and celebrate the entire Treasury team for their work completing the budget in particular, Debbie Ferriby, Mark Rutherford and of course James Wilson himself. All this at a time when the Treasury team are also administering a significant range of support schemes for the community as a whole.

Of course, I cannot conclude without thanking the Honourable Chief Executive and Honourable Members of the Legislative Assembly for their warm welcome to the Islands, and their support and encouragement throughout this process.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move the Bill be read a second time.

The Honourable Roger Spink

Mr Speaker, I second the Motion.

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members, the Motion is that the Bill be read a second time – does any Member wish to speak to the Motion?

The Honourable Teslyn Barkman

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Just to comment on what were the Honourable Financial Secretary closing words there, I think a few months ago we weren't sure that this budget was going to happen, and I think the fact that was a suspected outcome is absolutely outstanding, but it has taken a sincere amount dedication and commitment to get us to this point so, I would too, like to thank the Treasury team for all their commitment during this time to get what is a usual annual process, actually, up and running again from what was a standing start. That also, goes across Government because it took some serious adjustment to reset the process a little bit as well. And also, to our own Clerk, Cherie Clifford, who kept the office running at the toughest of times to keep these processes and so many meetings happening – even when we were all isolating ourselves off with our families at the most inconvenient of times.

But we are here and I would only reiterate my comments earlier around the importance of transparency and hopefully even if we are adjusting to what is a new set of Government operations and the threat of global pandemics, we will find a way to make this budget process more revolutionary and more open to public scrutiny.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I support the Motion.

Mr Speaker

Does any other Member wish to speak to the Motion?

The Motion before the House is that the Bill be read a second time – is there any objection to the Motion?

There is no objection; the Bill will be read a second time.

Clerk of the Assembly

A Bill for an Ordinance to increase licence fee, family allowance, retirement pension benefits and, contributions provided for under the laws of the Falkland Islands; to provide for the validation of charges collected contrary to legislative provisions and to provide for connected matters.

The Honourable Financial Secretary

Mr Speaker, I beg to move the Bill be read a third time and do pass.

The Honourable Roger Spink

Mr Speaker, I second the Motion.

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members, the Motion is that the Bill be read for a third time and do pass – is there any objection to that Motion?

There is no objection; the Bill will be read a third time and do pass.

Clerk of the Assembly

A Bill for an Ordinance to increase licence fee, family allowance, retirement pension benefits and, contributions provided for under the laws of the Falkland Islands; to provide for the validation of charges collected contrary to legislative provisions and to provide for connected matters.

The Motion for Adjournment

The Honourable Chief Executive

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this House stands adjourned *sine die*.

The Honourable Mark Pollard

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, in rising to support the Motion, I will keep it fairly short.

I just ask that people please continue to follow the advice and guidance of the Government and help each other. In these times, if you are lonely, please reach out and talk. If you think someone else may be struggling then please reach out to them.

Perhaps, it is best summed up by two words that we hear quite often these days and that's "be kind". I believe together we will make it through this and hopefully we will see an end to these times.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members,

I have a few points I jotted down in no particular order last night.

Covid has clearly dominated much of our work in the Islands and clearly, around the world over recent months. We are in a fortunate position; it has been, as the Honourable Stacy Bragger said, over six weeks now since there was a case at MPA. We're very fortunate to be in that position when you look at what happened to some of the ships that were calling in here, like the *Zaandam*, who then got lots of cases on-board and have difficulties unloading everything. We have used that time very sensibly to prepare and that again has been talked about today, how all the departments have worked together to prepare for the possible arrival of Covid into the Islands, again. We are continuing to lift restrictions, we see some people around the table here who have been locked away for some time and it is good to realise that we can do that because isolation is a difficulty for people, it does increase the chances of mental health problems and so, I am pleased we are able to do that.

People will also have probably have heard about New Zealand; yesterday, they effectively said everything, all the restrictions are off – people can go into hotels, into bars, have restaurants, cinemas are open and there are no restrictions on the amount of people that can gather in public, social distancing is advised but not compulsory – so I think, with luck, we will soon emulate what is happening in New Zealand. I think it is worth just pointing out what Jacinta Arden, the Prime Minister, said when she was asked about the quarantine restrictions and she said, and I quote, "there is no timeline for opening them, as they are the country's best line of defence" and when people asked about the tourist problems and the tourist industry would be harmed she said "it is about time New Zealanders got used to looking to home for their holidays and get to know their homeland and rather than travel overseas"- I think it is something we should consider here.

I think the Honourable Leona Roberts in the last Assembly meeting said that there are many places in the Falklands she has never been, and now is perhaps that opportunity that we can do. A little bit controversial, we have a travel scheme where the Government contributes to enable people to travel and when we set that up, that was very clear that we only wanted to use it to pay for flights or for passages on vessels, and things like that around the Islands. I think we need to give consideration as to whether the extreme situation of Covid that we are facing at the moment and the effect that is likely to have on our tourism industry, whether we could, or should, consider as a one off – just for one year – saying that that scheme and the money that people money hold in that scheme can also be used to pay for accommodation in lodges and bed and breakfast establishments around the Falklands. That would certainly help

those businesses at this time and it might ease the amount of money Government has to give to support that industry. It is a thought and I think it is something we'll discuss as we go on.

As the Prime Minister of New Zealand said "quarantine is vital". I, for one, believe that the quarantine of the Falklands, as we say at the moment people arriving in the Falkland Islands have to quarantine for two weeks, up till now, we have sort of left that in the Medical Department, the Chief Medical Officer and other Doctors to say whether someone should quarantine, I think last week Members discussed this with the Attorney General and the Chief Executive and we were quite clear that in retrospect it perhaps something we shouldn't be asking the Medical Department to do; it should be brought into legislation and regulation to mandate compulsory quarantine on arrival and I know the Attorney General is looking to bring regulations to us and I hope within the next few days, those regulations will come. It won't change to what is going on at the moment, people will then still be expected to isolate for two weeks, it's just takes it away from the Medical Department when they have a lot more things to do.

Covid disease is a very strange disease and it's some people, clearly, not referring to anyone around the table here; young people sometimes don't even know they've had it and they only find out when they having a routine swab test and they find out they've got the virus, or they have an antibody test and say gosh, you've had Covid, and they never had any symptoms and that is what makes it very difficult in patrolling this because it is thought that maybe 25% of all cases are asymptomatic – in other words, they honestly don't have any symptoms. Others though unfortunately, particularly those people with ongoing illnesses or the more elderly in our community, if they get Covid they can die within days, or they could find themselves on a ventilator, half way between life and death for many weeks. But, the amount of people who survive having being ventilated is relatively small. So, it is so important to protect our society, to protect our community and to protect our vulnerable people that we continue to insist that we reduce any chance of Covid getting in here.

In the United Kingdom, it is clear that some members of society there and I refer to the BAME, so that is the Black, the Asian and the Ethnic Minorities seem in some way to have a hugely higher incidence of death from Covid, and so black men for instance, they have almost 2 times the chance of dying of their equivalent white person if they get Covid. Bangladeshi men and people from Asia, again, have a chance of almost 1.75 times the chance of dying and similarly for women from BAME community, they have 1.6 times the chance of dying if they get Covid. Fifty percent of all pregnant ladies who have been admitted to hospital have become from the BAME community, even though they are a relatively small part of the overall population of the UK.

So, why are people in those communities dying more than white people? Well it is not entirely clear yet, but certainly the doyen of social inequality, Professor Michael Marmot, who wrote a very influential report, just over 10 years ago now, saying that people from deprived areas - and perhaps the areas where the Chief Executive comes from – Northern England, North West, North East die much earlier than people from the more affluent South and the South East of England, and made very clear that is because of social deprivation. It is people with lower incomes, lower standards within the household, perhaps increases occupancy of their houses and there is a clear correlation between when people died and their level of social deprivation.

It is unfortunate to realise, and I think I spoke in the House some time ago about this, that over that decade of austerity that followed with 2008 economic crisis, those inequalities have risen and instead of the usual slow but steady increase in how long people live, there has actually been a turn around and because of that period of time after the crash, people are dying earlier - even without Covid.

I think Professor Marmot was interviewed on the BBC a couple of weeks ago and asked why he thought the BAME society were suffering so much from Covid, and he was quite clear that his view was almost certainly is because of this increasing health inequalities because of social deprivation - I think society needs to look at that. Clearly, there can be other causes, it could be genetic, and there is certainly an enquiry been promised into trying to find out exactly why that society is more badly affected than the equivalent white population.

Mr Speaker, I am sure you'll agree with me that blacks within America have for so long been second class citizens in their own country and have suffered severe disadvantage - economically and socially – and in so many different ways. United States has followed a policy of high incarceration of criminals and they have a huge prison population, but it is interesting to note that in that prison population, the average across the states, there is five times more black people in prison than whites and in some States, it is even higher than that. Again, the UK isn't free from this; if we look at the populations of prisons in the United Kingdom, again, they show an increased prevalence of people from the BAME community.

But, I think, Mr Speaker, I am leading up to talking about what happened about just over two weeks ago now on the 25th May, when the world watched on their TV news whilst a white, American policeman casually killed a black American on the TV. I say “casually” because in the almost nine minutes that he was kneeling on the man's neck, he had his hands in his pockets and three other policeman were surrounding didn't try to interfere. His name was George Floyd. Yes, he had a criminal record, but he was also, and more importantly, a human being and since his death there have been huge demonstrations in the United States focusing around the “Black Lives Matter” banner and “I cannot breathe”. Some of those have become violent and clearly no one would want to support violence, but we would want to support peaceful demonstrations - they are ongoing.

It is not just in the United States, what people saw on the television that day has stimulated so many other people in many other countries to demonstrate against that sort of inequality. That murder that has so often a feature of the police in the case of black people, it has also had demonstrations in the United Kingdom and some people turned to violence and again, we would condemn that, but in Bristol, perhaps the more highlighted event, there was the pulling down of a statue that has stood there for many years celebrating the life of one of those Bristol businessmen, who was basically, his wealth came from the slave trade – he was a slaver – and yet, there was a statue standing in Bristol to celebrate his life. There were many petitions brought forward over the years in Bristol to try and get the council to take it down but they refused. So, I think the people took it into their own hands and no one supports violence, but no one should support the putting up of a statue of someone who was a slaver.

Mr Speaker, if you'll permit me, I just want to briefly touch on things and how things have developed in the United States where race has become such an issue and focuses again on George Floyd. Slavery in the United Kingdom was abolished in 1833, it wasn't abolished until 1865 in the States and by that time, huge numbers of slaves had been taken to work on plantations and other places within America.

The issue of race continues from that day and in 1956, not that long ago - I was one – 1956, the United States did a survey of the population and less than half of people - white and black – felt that white schools should admit black students.

1957, over a thousand Paratroopers of the 101st Airborne Division – made famous because of the Band of Brothers series – over 1,000 of those Paratroopers were needed to escort nine black students who wanted to attend a white only school.

1958, somebody got married in the State of Virginia, but were sentenced to prison. Were they gay? Was this a gay marriage? No, of course it wasn't; it was just that one was white and one was black, so they were sentenced to prison. That case wasn't overturned until 1967.

1963, we will know about the big march on Washington where 200,000 blacks, but also whites, and other people marched on Washington and demanded equal rights. It was the famous speech by Martin Luther King of "I have a dream".

Eventually, the Civil Rights Bill did come into the States in 1964 and tried to overturn that engrained segregation, discrimination that faced so many people in the States, but it only did so much.

It is surprising to realise that in 1973, the Supreme Court over the States ruled that education was not a fundamental right and that States within America could disproportionately harm the education of the blacks with funding; more money to white schools, less money to blacks.

In 2002, the Harvard Civil Rights Organisation reckoned that segregation in schools was almost as bad as it was in the 1960s.

Mr Speaker, the United Kingdom has its own history of racism and we look at the Enoch Powell Rivers of Blood speech. We look at the Stop and Search, or the SoS, laws that unfairly targeted black populations in the UK. We look at Theresa May when she was Home Secretary and her hostile environment that she tried to implement where immigrants were illegally deported and, of course, the Windrush scandal which has been highlighted on the Sitting in Limbo film from the BBC - those were all racist acts.

At such times, Mr Speaker, as going on in the States at the moment, it's vitally important that the Prime Minister or the President - whoever rules the country – sets the tone for the nation and leads the country in that situation. I'm afraid that hasn't been the case in America and I'm afraid Donald Trump has not led the country, he has not tried to sort out the problems; in fact, he's tried to inflame the situation by his "tweets" that he has put out. He made a speech five days ago announcing that there were good things to celebrate - that the unemployment figures were actually better than they thought. This on TV and I just want to read you a small part of the speech he made, he said, and this is on just employment issues:

"Hopefully George – George Floyd – is looking down right now and saying this is a great thing that has happened for our country. This is a great day for him. It's a great day for everyone"

That is a speech from the President of the United States.

So, Mr Speaker, demonstrations continue – I hope they will and I hope they will be peaceful. I am sure that this House and the Falklands as a whole will join me when I say: Black Lives Do Matter.

Mr Speaker, I support the Motion.

The Honourable Ian Hansen

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in rising to support the Motion I will be very brief, I have a couple of things to mention.

First of all, of course, I would like to thank the Financial Secretary and all his team at the Secretariat for all the work they have done, which is obviously fairly difficult under the circumstances.

It was mentioned earlier on about the generous Government offer to buy wool from farmers who had wool left on their farms and wool remaining they couldn't sell, I totally agree; it was a generous offer. It is also good to know that all farmers that were contacted have taken up the offer and I am just waiting to have it signed off – the contracts etc. I would just like to clarify because a few people have mentioned to me “why are FLH included in this?”

I would like to clarify that FLH are not included in this Government buying wool; FLH are managing still, trickling their own wool into the market and the FLH Board meeting we had the other day, it was made clear to us, Board Members, that while our budget will be very prudent this year, which the Managers are working hard at and have done a good job, we will be okay for this season and for, hopefully, the foreseeable future if we can continue to trickle our wool into the market – albeit, at a much lower price than last year.

The only difference at FLH you'll find, we are not laying people off, as I have heard the rumour, we are perhaps not filling some vacant posts for now, but apart from that, it is business as usual.

And finally, Mr Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank Liberty Lodge for their very generous offer to take some of our patients and people from KEMH and put down in Liberty Lodge because the people that have been down there think it is the most wonderful thing. I think it was a great gesture.

Mr Speaker, I support the Motion.

The Honourable Leona Roberts

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, I would like to start by saying how pleased I am, actually, that my Honourable Colleague, Barry Elsbey, has raised this incredibly topical and difficult issue in the House here today – the Black Lives Matter campaign, the protests that were seeing – and of course, I would absolutely, heartedly agree with a great deal of what he says, including, of course, that we do not condone violence and I hate to see the images of looting and that kind of thing going on. This is something that is incredible, to be honest, to believe is still an issue today; I remember being at Senior School in those days studying Martin Luther King's great speech

and feeling the abhorrence that this kind of thing was still around in the 1980s and to know it is still around today is appalling. I completely agree with everything that was said.

Also, I am very pleased to see actually that Penguin News have chosen to tackle this issue – the issue of racism and racial and social inequality in the Falklands. I very much look forward to reading that article in this week’s paper. It will be challenging, I’m sure, and give us all pause for thought, but because something is difficult doesn’t mean it should be shied away from. I congratulate them on that.

I wasn’t going to talk about Covid or Coronavirus at all, but I feel I must, I really want to echo again the comments made by MLA Elsby on the Travel Credit Scheme. I do think that there is potential for this to be adjusted in a short term way, I think it would have to be time bound to continue to fit in with the original purpose of the scheme, but I think it could help Islanders who will not be travelling overseas so much probably in the next year or so, and also, our tourism business and our lodges, self-catering places around the islands. So, I very much look forward to us exploring that – bearing in mind, of course, the difficulty is going to come in the administration of this; it’s not as easy as it may look from the outside. Nothing is ever simple is it, and we already have a Treasury team, which as has been recognised today are already dealing with a great deal of extra work so, if this is going to happen, we need to find a way not to put too much of a burden on them.

The main thing that I actually wanted to say today was nothing to with Coronavirus, as I say, or the bits I’ve just talked about.

I would like to highlight the fact, Mr Speaker; this is always a special but a fairly difficult time of year for many Falkland Islanders as we work through a series of anniversaries, culminating in the commemorations on 14th June. Although 38 years have passed, there is no denying that the events of 1982 continue to cast a long shadow.

This year, because of Covid-19 and events entirely beyond anyone’s control, we have been unable to mark the anniversaries in the way we normally would and I know that has been difficult for many people and has added an additional layer of stress to what is a difficult situation anyway.

Landing Day, the liberation of Goose Green, the anniversaries of battles, of lives lost on ships and aircraft, and of course the tragic events at Fitzroy, which were marked yesterday, have all been lower-key this year. Liberation Day, which is undoubtedly the most significant day in the Falklands’ calendar, will, of course, be different too. However, we will continue to pay our respects, to remember with love those who gave their lives for our freedom and those who still bear the scars, and as well their families – who we now think of as Falkland’s families.

Because of social distancing, we know that numbers have to be limited at Christ Church Cathedral for the annual service there and that there will be many who will not be able to come, or feel they are unable to come to the Liberation Monument as they normally would on Liberation Day. However, we know they will be there in spirit and I do hope that those who are not able to attend in person are able to express what I know is our unwavering gratitude in other ways.

Personally, I would like to see Union and Falkland Island flags around the town and lighting up our Facebook profiles and groups. Although I'm not one for hash tags – that is a bit too modern for me, I'm afraid, I don't really quite work with those things – it would feel appropriate on this occasion if we do to say #WeWillRememberThem or the other phrase that is very much related with our veterans and the events of 1982; #FromTheSeaFreedom. I hope people will think about those things on Liberation Day.

I know also that Falklands Radio is planning a day of special programming and so while we may not be able to gather together to raise a toast as we normally would, perhaps we can do that within our social bubbles, over the airwaves and even virtually, as I've said. We should remember that there are those who are in isolation still for their own safety – although, all being well, that is not for much longer – and there are also those who are separated from their families and their loved ones on this day, as well, and so this is an opportunity for us to reach out to whatever we might be doing.

I would, finally, take the opportunity to thank again our military personnel whose presence here in the Islands safeguards our current and future security and does so much more besides. The majority of BFSAI personnel and families will not be able to join us either on Liberation Day as they normally would, but I hope that they will see and feel our continued support and gratitude.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I support the Motion.

The Honourable Roger Edwards

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in rising to support the Motion for Adjournment,

I, too, would like to add my thanks to all in the Treasury for the hard work that they've put in producing this particular Budget. This Budget started off very well with lots of meetings – I think someone mentioned we had five meetings and then Covid got in the way – and to continue the budget under extreme conditions, I think they have done remarkably well to get where we are today, so very well done to current, past and other members of the Treasury, who have brought us to today.

Last year, I was not present Budget session; I was away. I was planning to go on to – and did go on to – New York for the Committee of 24. I noticed this year it had been delayed, it hasn't yet been cancelled, but they have to get the report back to the Committee before October. I don't see anything being lifted before October so, it might as well be cancelled otherwise I would probably be there with my Honourable Colleague, Ian Hansen, partaking in that theatre.

My Honourable Colleague, Roger Spink, mentioned earlier on what the Budget is in support of the Islands, the work we've done for Covid in supporting our industries, our economy, it is for the people, which is why we have 2.5x our operating budget in unrestricted reserves and long may it be that way. We need it there for a rainy day. Covid-19 is that rainy day and going forward how long it will last, we have no idea.

The one thing I will please ask of the Financial Secretary and others is that, I have recently had calls to seek some information and I discovered we no longer produce budget books in print; it is available electronically and the Archives, for instance, have not had a printed copy

of the budget book since 2000 – so 20 years they have only had electronic copies. So, please can I ask the budget book is printed and we have one copy placed in the Library? Because it is not only the figures on the budget like how much we give towards to FIGAS operations or what have you, it is also pay rates, grades and indeed, it is the only book that I am aware of that gives you the establishment in one precise area. There are about 5 or 6 pages where you can see what the establishment of Government is.

So, can I ask that we have a printed copy placed in the Library, so people can actually have easy access to it?

The Governor in his address made reference to the Port and several of my colleagues made reference to the Port earlier on, I would like to clarify one thing – we've agreed Phase 1 & 2 of the Port project, which is detailed design and pricing of that project. We have provided funding for those phases, we have not given final agreement to this ambitious venture and we've yet to see details of how we will actually finance such a large construction project, which is why it is not currently in the 5 year capital plan, it is not in the £120 million five year plan that the Governor mentioned in his speech, nor is it in the sums of money that the Financial Secretary mentioned in the Capital Appropriation Bill 2020. So, there is still a lot of work to do before final approval of the Port project.

It is close to the 14th June when the Islands once again came under the flag that it desired. I remember the times very well. It was the 15th June that Fox Bay was relieved by Captain Hugo White and I will be going to Fox Bay and laying a wreath at their memorial on Monday. But I do hope that people are in a position to celebrate, because I think that is what we do commemorate and celebrate our Islands being returned to its rightful population. So I hope people are able to commemorate and celebrate properly, but please, please remember that we have this awful Covid-19 and it does affect everything we do.

Mr Speaker, I support the Motion.

The Honourable Stacy Bragger

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

My Honourable Colleagues have already covered a number of areas and spoken very eloquently on areas I was planning to cover so, I won't repeat those topics.

Just on a couple of issues I wish to speak about briefly, the Honourable Financial Secretary spoke about the Swimming Pool, which has had a chequered history, shall we say, in recent years and anyone who has walked past it and sneaked a peek into the fire exit doors, will see it is still looking in a bit of a sorry state at the moment, but it is a sign of progress as it has been stripped down and renovation work that has been long needed has taken place onto painting the roof work and other pieces of work. So, it might not look great at the moment, but it is moving in the right direction and, as the Honourable Financial Secretary said, it is included in the Budget for next year, and I know it is a very valued community resource and people miss it. Hopefully, we will get moving on that as soon as we can and get it back as soon as possible into running.

On a Covid-19 related matter, a recent editorial in the Penguin News by Roddy Corderio really struck a chord with me. In it, Roddy noted that during our recent lockdown we had

relied upon many people who have come to the Islands to work in some of our key sectors such as, retailing. Those immigrants were deemed to be essential workers and that's what they are – they're essential. I see and hear occasionally from some who should know better, that they're to blame for some of the issues that we deal as a community. I also hear that immigrants from some countries are acceptable, while some other countries of origin are not deemed to be acceptable. That is not something that I could ever agree with.

Covid-19 and the potential dangers that it poses have brought us together as a community and have really shown what a caring and compassionate place the Falkland is. I hope moving into the future we can continue to show the best of our community and work together as I believe every single person in this community has a role to play in our continued success.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Honourable Roger Spink

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members,

In rising to support the Motion, I would also like to point out that as we approach Liberation Day, I would like to thank the Deminers who've been in the Islands for several years in their efforts to liberate us from the mines that were left from 1982. We are all very grateful for the work they have done and I think this is my opportunity to give a vote of thanks for them, for the work they have done on behalf of the community.

Thank you.

The Honourable Teslyn Barkman

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I am mindful again that we are here to approve the Budget for 2020/21; the truth is if we don't invest we are standing still and we aren't moving with the needs of the country if we do that – we would be settling for that failing infrastructure rather than addressing it. This is something we mentioned in the Motion of Thanks to His Excellency's address.

As MLA Edwards notes, we are in the design phase and stakeholder engagement phase of the new port. That stakeholder engagement is important to be sought before moving to the next financing stage of the port development.

I am not going to speak for long, but I would echo the words spoken on the importance of community cohesion and recognising the role that everyone has to play in our community. I was contacted last night by someone who was after quarantine advice and it transpired that they would prefer to work for two weeks than to stay at home and stick to the rules too rigidly. I may be being unfair to the individual, but that was certainly the impression that I got, and I implored with them: please do not think this way, you may be willing to take the risk yourself, but think of the risk that poses to others. Realise, you'll have to live with that choice and the risk that there could be long term health implications and death for those people in our community, some of whom you may know. If nothing else, the chance that the job you value so highly, you'd be unable to go employment with the lockdown that is imposed by people behaving irresponsibly.

There is support packages out there, so please do get in touch with the relevant Government Departments. The Treasury has extensive employer and employee support packages there, and if you need advice on what quarantine measures are needed, contact the KEMH.

I would only say that community cohesion is important so, please in the words of one of my favourite philosophers, Jeremy Bentham, “greatest good for the greatest number”. Utilitarianism is the concept but, put others before yourself – particularly at this time.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I support the Motion.

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members, that concludes the business for today.

The House stands adjourned accordingly.