



News from Gilbert House

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Message from the Chair

MLA Roger Edwards — Public Works

No Deal Brexit

“Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned” or could this be
“like the European Union with no deal” .

I was surprised by the headlines in many of the UK papers on Sunday 26th August stating that Britain is to invest something in the order of £100M to map out plans for a post Brexit UK satellite system.

Currently, in partnership with the European Union, the United Kingdom is involved with Galileo - (a navigation system), Aeolus - (a wind monitoring system) and Copernicus (an Earth observation programme involving climate change, atmosphere, crop production, Marine life and other natural sciences). To date the UK has committed some £1.2Billion on an EU alternative to the US GPS system we are all used to today. EU and Galileo should be fully operational by 2020 i.e. when the UK has left Europe.



We in the Falkland Islands play our part of the Galileo system with a small Earth Station (hut) behind Sappers Hill.

The European Commission is now saying that Britain will ‘damage security’ if they continue to access systems after Brexit and have begun to block the UK space industry from manufacturing the security elements of the critical encryption software.

The UK space industry is saying that the EU cannot ban the UK as they have produced much of the technology and the ESA (European Space Agency) sits apart from the EU and, in any case Britain would have to claw back some £875M which has already been spent.

Brexit with No Deal appears to be causing alarm across all industries as no one knows how they will be affected. Will we get all our EDF funding, which we were promised, if Britain fails to pay in outstanding instalments? What will we do with our little Galileo hut behind Sappers Hill?

Will Brexit turn out to be like the Millennium Bug when we were threatened with planes falling out of the sky, patients in hospital dying when the machines failed and all sorts of mayhem which of course never happened?

We are left with the basic questions. Will it be the European Commission or the UK space industry that wins in the end and what will be the future of our little Earth Station?

Members of the Legislative Assembly donated £300 to the Falkland Islands Hockey Association in celebration of their 4 gold victories in the recent tournament in Punta Arenas. This donation will go towards a social event to congratulate all those involved.



There have been many achievements for our community to celebrate in recent weeks.

The GCSE results of our Year 11 students which were announced recently were very pleasing. The results saw an increase from the previous year in the number of students that achieved good GCSE passes. 63% of all GCSEs taken achieved good pass grades and the pass rate for all GCSEs taken this year was 98.87%. An important aspect of the results was the Progress 8 score. This is the indicator used by secondary schools to measure progress by students and this year's score of 0.39 is the highest since the measure has been used by FICS. Well done to the students and to FICS staff for their achievements.

Whether the students now go to UK for college, undertake vocational studies or enter the work force we will all benefit from their skills in the future.

I was pleased to present some of the awards at the recent Infant and Junior School prize giving. It was a lovely occasion to mark the achievements of the school's children although it was tinged with sadness as farewells were said to departing members of staff and to the Year 6 cohort who now move to the Community School.

There have also been achievements on the sporting front with our hockey players doing us proud at the Punta Arenas Mega Patagonia ice hockey tournament. The progress the Hockey Club has made in recent years has been remarkable and the clean sweep of trophies at the tournament was their latest achievement. Staying with sport (although with a far lesser chance of achievement), I have begun training for next year's Stanley Marathon. I have to say that the thought of running a marathon is keeping me awake at night currently but hopefully in six months' time it will be slightly less terrifying.

Looking towards the next month, several meetings are planned to outline the upcoming childcare legislation and national minimum standards. At the end of the month MLA Pollard and I will be travelling to the UK to attend the Labour and Conservative Party Conferences. It will be a key opportunity to highlight Falklands issues, particularly regarding Brexit.

MLA Teslyn Barkman

Natural Resources

It was great to see other Members supporting a look at lowering the voting age. The vote to carry the Motion wasn't unanimous and those who do not support it in the community I hope you will tell me why.

One argument that cultivated online was that today's voters would have perhaps voted differently at a younger age. This may be true, they may be aligned a different way, but I also believe there is no magic age at which to say your voting preferences have matured to a constant. At any point you may become disillusioned with your government, at 40, 70 or 17.

Democracy is a funny old thing but I believe it kind of hangs on everyone getting a vote. It did get me thinking that the question should be what qualifies someone to get a vote, and not what is the risk they won't agree with me?

If accepted by the public, it would require constitutional amendment and single constituency is also on the table for consideration.

Hoping to be prepared for any result I'm keen to follow the Scottish example of protection for rural communities. Scots identified that their Islands' communities required different levels of protection, support and planning for prosperity. There were different aims in the bill including a national islands plan, and duties in relation to them by certain public authorities. The ambition to tie it all together is a refreshing way to look at protecting and inspiring rural communities at the same time. I believe this could be applied to Camp.

Arguably we are achieving the first example already with the Rural Development Scheme and Islands Plan's ambitions. But a legislative requirement to include Camp could also arguably strengthen the requirement for future governments to acknowledge?

The second example requires an impact assessment to be done on policy and strategy, and if there is likely to be an effect on an islands community which is different from its effect on others it should be improved or mitigated. This may be visible as a 'Rural Impact' section on an ExCo Paper; a small thing perhaps, but again a requirement for Camp prosperity.

Leona and I will bring this idea of having a 'Rural Bill' forward in a Motion to the House soon.



MLA Dr Barry Elsby

Development and Commercial Services



The Assembly had a 2 week recess period in August and Bernadette and I went to Peru for the first time. We had a great time despite the altitude and both commented that throughout our whole time there we didn't see a single Peruvian smoking. They have the same sort of rules as we have as to where you can and cannot smoke but the only smokers we saw standing outside pubs and restaurants smoking were obvious tourists.

I mention this because last week the Public Health Strategy Group met for the first time since Carol Morrison took over as our full time adviser. Her job is to produce a strategy as to where we should target our resources so as to best increase the health of our community.

She is at the beginning of a process of engaging with the public, shops, schools and Government etc but one of the things she raised was smoking. Our census data shows a fall from 22% smokers in 2012 to 16% in 2016, but there are signs now of an increase in loose tobacco and cigar sales.

One of the other things she raised was the worrying levels of overweight children we see in our school and how we might help. One part of the problem is how to eat healthily but also how to help everyone, but especially younger people, be more active.

I know many people have been following the hockey teams in Punta Arenas and it sounds like they have not only had a great time but have hugely over achieved. Hockey is a sport that has gripped the people of the Islands in a way that few sports have. They took 39 competitors to Punta, slightly more than FIOGA hope to take to the Island Games in Gibraltar. They ranged from the tiny peewees to rugged adults with both male and female competing. As for family support, then if you've never been, pop along to the leisure centre on a weekend when hockey is on and you will be amazed. As a country we need to recognise just how important hockey is and invest for its future.

MLA Ian Hansen

Health and Social Services

Things have been reasonably positive on the Health and Social Services front this month. We were pleased to welcome Jenny Cullen as new Head of Social Services a couple of weeks ago. Jenny is here on a two year contract. It was also pleasing to get an update at last weeks HMSC on the progress of the Public Health Strategy Group, and to hear that things are coming together satisfactorily on this important issue.

Other positives were that only one complaint was received during July and August, and that was a minor one. The budget position is good. Spend across each department is being monitored closely, and allowing for normal fluctuations we are on course to manage within the allocated budget.

A paper concerning the contract for the VPU is on its way to EXCO, for a decision on the preferred contractor. If this is agreed we should see groundworks beginning on site in January/February 2019, with an indicated construction period of 18 months taking completion to July 2020.

Although only deputy portfolio holder to MLA Barkman for Agriculture and Minerals, due to an administrative oversight at the beginning of this Assembly, I was signed on as Chair of the FLH Board of directors. Given the magnitude of MLA Barkman's portfolio we decided between ourselves that it would help ease her load if I remained as Chair.

I have been involved on the FLH Board as a director for 6 years, and if I remain as Chair for the life of this Assembly I will have been Chair for a further 10 years. I have worked with three General Managers as Chair, and six or seven Farm Managers.

Needless to say over that time I have seen several changes, and thankfully pretty much all of the for the better. When I first arrived on the Board we used to have to justify a subvention annually during the budget round. This gradually changed to an overdraft, and of course now FLH is in an extremely healthy financial state.

This is down to the dedication and perseverance of Board Members, Managers and last but certainly not least the staff of the FLH farms.



Why is it important to have a constitution?

How many of you have looked at the constitution? I mean taken some time to sit down and try to work out exactly what it is trying to achieve? I will try and put into words my views on how important the constitution is and in a future edition I will try to outline why I think it is time we reviewed it.

It seeks to limit the powers of the Falkland Islands Government and empower the people. It should be a key enabler for us to live the way we choose and have that right enshrined within it.

The very first thing in the constitution is our right to self-determination, specifically with regards to the Charter of the United Nations. This is one of the cornerstones of our argument when countering Argentina's false claim of our islands. We have the right to choose our future.

Our constitution is there to protect the individual freedoms of the people of the Falkland Islands. It serves to promote the freedoms of the individual. It protects against discrimination, enshrines the right to education, protects against inhumane treatment, protects from forced labour, protections of privacy and property and much more. It also states within, what it is that gives a Falkland Islander status.

It lays out the basic structure and framework of the Falkland Islands Government from the powers of the Legislature, the Executive, the Judiciary and the Governor as well. It states what powers these different entities have as well as the responsibilities and the relationships between them. It also seeks to define the limitations of power in order to restrict possible abuse.

It states who can vote, who can't and how. Who can stand for election, who can't. What constituencies exist and where. What measures can be taken to change the constituencies. Who has the power to make laws and how. The makeup of the Legislative Assembly and how they operate. What makes up the Executive, how they are elected, their tenure of office and how they operate.

How the consolidated fund is used. Who is authorised to make withdrawals. How public accounts are audited and defines the makeup of the Public Accounts Committee and its role and responsibilities.

It defines the makeup of the public service and the role of the Chief Executive. How public officers are appointed and removed from service. How justice is administered and appealed against as well as the functions of the complaints commissioner.

If you think any of this is important enough to want to know more, then I urge you to pick up a copy of the constitution and take a look.



Public Diplomacy Trips — UK

MLA Mark Pollard and MLA Stacy Bragger will be heading to the UK for Party Conferences (Conservative and Labour) from 18th September to early October.

Public Diplomacy Trips — Uruguay

The Prado is taking place in Montevideo, Uruguay in September to promote the Falkland Islands and its tourism and trade. The interactive stand will have representatives from the Falkland Islands Government Department of Agriculture, the Falkland Islands Tourist Board, the Chamber of Commerce, the Malvina House Hotel, the Waterfront and SAAS along with Julie Sloan, the Falkland Islands Government Tourism Development Specialist.



MLA Leona Roberts

Environment and Public Protection



This week we announced that a referendum will be held next November to establish the community's desire for a single constituency.

This question has been put to voters in the past, but has never received sufficient support and it may well be that this is the once again the result. I have heard it suggested that Stanley members will "keep asking the question until they get the result they want" and I really must stress that this is not the case.

The reality is that much has changed since the last referendum on this subject. One of the major differences is that MLAs are now full-time and in practical terms this means

that MLAs are required to spend more time in Stanley for meetings and to carry out Assembly business - and this is not always achievable for farmers without a major lifestyle change.

Personally, I favour a single constituency - I believe that we are one country and that our ultimate goal is the prosperity and wellbeing of all our residents - regardless of where they live. We must consider the impacts on the rural community in all our decision-making and I believe that Stanley residents will continue to value, protect and invest in Camp. Stanley MLAs outnumber Camp MLAs now, but we still support the rural community and that shows in the budget...

However, the most important thing for me is that this referendum will happen because it's what Campers have repeatedly told MLAs that it is what they want. There seems to be concern in the rural community about representation, about choice and about Camp residents continuing to feel that they have a voice on the Assembly.

The next year will feature a lot of conversation, questioning and information-sharing on this subject and we will see how the vote comes out. To avoid confusion or any muddying of the waters we will be posing a single question. No change will happen unless a two-thirds majority vote in favour in each constituency.

It will be a fascinating process, I think, and I very much look forward to the discussions to come.

MLA Roger Spink

Government Services

The Falkland Islands Government operating surplus of £38 million for 2017/18 was driven primarily by favourable Corporation Tax receipts. The original budgeted deficit in my view led the former Assembly to be over cautious in their demands leading to unnecessary thrift in some areas.

A great deal of effort has been taken to more accurately forecast our income in the 2018/19 year which has enabled this Assembly to have a more ambitious approach to the level of services we supply and capital projects we embark upon. When the main tax receipts are received towards

the middle of the financial year we will get an idea of how accurate our estimates have been and we should be able to refine our forecasting for future years.

A significant portion of the 17/18 capital programme is being carried over into the 18/19 financial year. It is likely with the length of time it takes to get major projects underway including the ability of the private sector to carry out the work, there will be a shortfall this year but if projects are at least commenced the funds will be in place for completion. As major projects get underway the rates of capital spend and activity in the economy will accelerate.

The Housing needs analysis is taking longer than expected following the release of plots on Sappers Hill we will be reviewing the Joint General Mortgage Scheme as suggested in the last paper in 2013 to see if this can assist further with encouraging home ownership.

The electricity unit price calculation prepared by PWD will be reported in the open section of Standing Finance Committee on a routine and timely quarterly basis. This will allow the public to see what costs are charged and we can be transparent in the treatment of some difficult issues such as the interim power generators which Members may feel should be treated in a different manner to previous capital additions.

In the Chief Minister of Gibraltar's budget address 2018 he mentioned the Gibraltar International Bank (GIB) which they created to deal with some of the retail banking challenges their community faced. He outlined that operating at arm's length from Government the GIB has grown beyond their expectations "And it is already spreading its wings beyond our shores and helping provide Banking Support to some businesses in the Falkland Islands that are struggling to obtain banking services and have approached GIB to assist. " We should explore further ways in which we could co-operate over a range of areas with our friends in Gibraltar to the benefit of both our communities.



Public Meeting	Monday 24 September 2018 – Court and Assembly Chamber – 17:00
Next sitting of ExCo	Wednesday 26th September 2018
Next sitting of Legislative Assembly	Thursday 27th September 2018
Public Holiday	Monday 1st October (Peat Cutting Monday)

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