



PRESS RELEASE

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MR HAMMOND HAS PLUMBED THE DEPTHS IN HIS CRITICISM OF THE UPPER ROCK

The GSD, the Party that had totally abandoned the Upper Rock, has shown how it has plumbed the depths by skimming what it picks up in social media and, as usual, not researching its statements.

The Government has improved the Upper Rock almost beyond recognition. It does accept that the current cleaning regime, set by the GSD administration in its arrangements with Master Service, is unsatisfactory. However, from 1st September the contract with the new operator will provide an extended cleaning regime aimed at improving the removal of litter, particularly from tourist hotspots, which are the areas of most concern.

It is interesting to note Trevor Hammond's apparent concern for water for the macaques. For decades, with the exception of one pond at Apes' Den, water for them was provided in plastic containers - or not at all. Several years ago, this Government established the whole network of ponds. Ponds are a challenge in our climate in the summer. The growth of green algae, however, is perfectly natural and does not adversely affect water quality for wildlife: wild macaques in North Africa drink safely from much murkier natural water sources. Despite this, and because perception is important, the Upper Rock ponds are all equipped with pumps and filters, which usually do the job effectively, especially in the cooler months.

As Mr Hammond picked up from social media, the pump in one pond has broken down. Whilst the Government expects a replacement pump to arrive imminently, in the meantime the water is being changed more frequently but, as is to be expected, still looks green. Environmental experts do not recommend the use of anti-algal chemicals, used in swimming pools, for use in wildlife ponds. In other words, a pond that may look unattractive to humans will in fact be better for wildlife than one that is clear and full of chlorine, anti-algal and other chemicals. Nevertheless, once the pump is replaced the situation will improve, as can be seen from other ponds on the Upper Rock.

Posts on social media are linking the fact that the pump in the Prince Phillip's Arch pond has broken down with the macaques roaming about into urbanised areas seeking water. Indeed, there have been a few posts of photos of macaques drinking from swimming pools. The Government would like to clarify that although the macaques roam more in the summer months, it is not necessarily due to



them setting out in search of water, at least not exclusively, and the macaques are simply being opportunistic, drinking whenever they come across water.

What the GSD cannot get away with are wider implications about the Upper Rock. The number of improvements in the past few years is tremendous, even leaving aside the major new features: the Skywalk and Windsor Bridge. Paths - including the Footpath to Town - have been refurbished, picnic tables have been installed in different locations, Princess Caroline's Battery and Genoese Battery have been opened to the public, the exhibitions at O'Hara's Battery have been improved, the World War II Tunnels Experience is enhanced, wildlife has been restored by the re-introduction of Barbary Partridges and wild rabbits, and both Lower and Upper St Michael's Cave have been improved.

The Minister for Environment, the Hon Prof John Cortes commented: "The Upper Rock is a much better place than it was just a few years ago. Once the new cleaning contract has dealt with the litter hotspots and we put into effect a number of other planned changes, it will be even better."

Note to Editors:

Links to Press Releases giving details of improvements to the Upper Rock are below:

<http://gibraltar.gov.gi/new/sites/default/files/press/2018/Press%20Releases/343-2018.pdf> -
Environment urges the public to drive carefully in the Upper Rock

<http://gibraltar.gov.gi/new/sites/default/files/press/2018/Press%20Releases/341-2018.pdf> -
Upper Rock Sites Extended Hours

<http://gibraltar.gov.gi/new/sites/default/files/press/2018/Press%20Releases/338-2018.pdf> -
Improvements to Sites Around the Rock

<http://gibraltar.gov.gi/new/sites/default/files/press/2018/Press%20Releases/87-2018.pdf> -
Nature Reserve improvement works