



HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
MINISTRY FOR SPORTS, CULTURE, HERITAGE & YOUTH
310 Main Street
Gibraltar

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Budget Speech 2014
By the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage, Youth, Utilities, Postal Services, Fire and Rescue Services, Refuse Collection and Civil Contingencies
The Hon Steven Linares

Mr Speaker,

I have been a member of this House for fourteen years.

It is a great honour and privilege for me to deliver my third budget speech as the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage, Youth, Utilities, Postal Services, Fire and Rescue Services, Refuse Collection and Civil Contingencies.

I will commence with Culture and Heritage.

The House will recall that during my last budget speech and more recently in my contribution during the second reading of the repeal of the Gibraltar Culture and Heritage Agency Act in March I explained the mess that we inherited in relation to the Gibraltar Culture and Heritage Agency (GCHA).

I outlined, among other matters, the way in which the previous administration gave wage hikes to people just weeks before the last General Election. I cannot help but mention to the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition that when he mentions the fact that the Culture and Heritage budget has increased this year from £3.8m to £5m which represents a 31.6% increase he should consider the fact that the forming of the agency which was their doing it cost the taxpayer an increase of 100% ie from £1.9m to the £3.8m??

It has been a long process to undo the structure that we inherited. I need to say that the Government is conscious of the fact that it was not the fault of those who signed up to work for the Agency since I would have signed up too.

It is the previous Government that must take political responsibility for their actions.

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So undoing this mess took courage and goodwill from all parties. I am pleased to say that we will be signing contracts within the next few weeks, which will map out the future for Culture and Heritage in Gibraltar.

Heritage

The Heritage Division Parts of the repealed GCHA will be run by Knightsfield Holding Ltd as it has been for the past 20 years. The Ministry for Heritage will be responsible for other Heritage issues.

The Government is happy to say that we now have an archeologist employed in the Ministry to help us with our now well established heritage filter. I explained this last year. We will also count on the professional expertise at Knightsfield Holdings should we require it.

Since the Heritage filter on Government policy was established and given that the Development and Planning Commission (DPC) became an open forum, there was a need for an in-house archaeologist to advise us on these matters.

On a day-to-day basis the Ministry will also be charged with upholding the issues, that will arise after the coming into force of the new Gibraltar Heritage and Antiquities Act.

The indications are that this Act will be in our statute book some time this year. We have been working very closely with all stakeholders on this Act and it is very encouraging to see that at last there is light at the end of the tunnel. This is something that the Heritage Trust has been pushing for years before we came into office. They have been fully involved and consulted.

The Government's relationship with the Gibraltar Heritage Trust is a positive one. There is plenty of contact between my Ministry and the Trust. I regularly meet with the Chairman and with the CEO and they know that my door is always open for them.

We have been able to work closely on many projects. These include, Hardings Battery, the Giralda Gardens, Grand Battery and others.

The GHT can now also boast modern, state of the art offices and retail premises in the centre of town. The Main Guard has been restored with the contractor working very closely with the Trust throughout. I am happy to say that their new premises have been able to successfully blend the old with the new.

Our manifesto states:

HERITAGE TRUST

We will re-establish a relationship and co-operation between the Heritage Trust and the Government. We will not seek to interfere in the business of the trust at all.

We have delivered on this promise.

The restoration of a number of other sites have also taken place during the last financial year. These include:

Parts of the Charles V Wall,

The bunker at Eastern Beach, which is being put into good use by the Blue Fin Club,

The ARP Shelter opposite the Museum, which was totally abandoned. This Second World War Shelter had debris inside from when the King's Bastion Leisure Centre constructed. Little or no regard was had at the time of the Heritage value of this particular place. It has already been refurbishment.

The Montagu Bastion Chamber on Line Wall Road is yet another place of historical interest which was abandoned. Many people were not even aware that it existed.

By liaising closely with the Trust we have been able to, not only restore this wonderful place but also to house in it Gibraltar's Exhibition of Modern Art. (GEMA). It is currently holding the Little Constellation project.

Another project, which has already started is that of Wellington Front. This is yet another of our manifesto commitments that is well on its way. Wellington Front will be restored to its original glory. All outhouses that were constructed after the original period will be knocked down. Some of the Second World War features will remain. Work on its historical problem, which was flooding of the area, has now been completed. All the area will be beautified and the vaults will house some clubs, scouts premises, and other leisure amenities.

Our Manifesto stated:

WELLINGTON FRONT

Wellington Front needs to be entirely refurbished in order to make the most of the City Walls and provide premises for clubs and societies that need to be centrally located. This will also involve having to deal with the problems of flooding in very wet weather.

We are on the way to delivery of this promise.

The Northern Defences was put out to the public for expressions of interest. These have now been gathered and the Government is in the process of looking into the possibilities that this site can offer. Needless to say that the heritage value of this whole site will be taken into consideration together with its commercial potential as a tourist and leisure area.

As is now known my offices have moved to the City Hall. This iconic building which housed the housing Department is yet another building which had been left to deteriorate. It will now have to be restored.

The fact that my offices are now there is in line with our commitment to heritage and fulfils a Manifesto Commitment which states:

CITY HALL

We will move the housing department out of the City Hall and into purpose built offices. The City Hall will then be exclusively used for cultural and historical events.

We have delivered on this promise.

World Heritage bid

The bid for UNESCO World Heritage Status will be an important area of action during this financial year. The nomination will be put forward in January 2015 and the process of inspection and evaluation will follow.

We are currently engaged in the process of preparation of the nomination dossier, management plan and accompanying documentation.

The House will be aware that the nomination will be put forward, on our behalf by Her Majesty's United Kingdom Government and we are in close contact as partners in this bid.

UK advisers have been out to Gibraltar and form part of a Steering Committee, which we set up last year. The Steering Committee is made up of members from Government Departments and other stakeholders, including the MoD, GONHS and the Gibraltar Heritage Trust. It meets quarterly to evaluate progress with the bid – the next meeting being this Thursday 3rd July.

I should first tell the House that Government, following the recommendation of the Steering Committee, and taking into account comments made by the UK Technical Evaluation Panel, agreed earlier this year to an extension of the site's boundaries.

The site to be nominated now includes the cliffs above Gorham's Cave, right up to the peak at O'Hara's Battery, and the Catalan Bay Sand Dune. Put together this area represents an exceptional landscape, which has survived since the time of the Neanderthals.

We are working on stabilisation of the cliff areas directly above Gorham's Cave to ensure the safety of persons working in the caves.

We are removing all metal and other rubbish, which has accumulated on the beach as a result of winter storms and the old scaffolds have been removed and will be replaced. The steps leading down to the site are being repaired.

There are caves along this path, which have been vandalised over the years and we will be undertaking works to remove graffiti.

I sincerely hope that the importance of these caves comes to be appreciated by all.

It will be possible to view other areas of the site, from various vantage points on Sir Herbert Miles Road.

It is not intended to open Gorham's and Vanguard Caves to large numbers of visitors. These caves are too sensitive and would be adversely affected.

However, the Government will consider limited viewing by small groups with guides. In addition to this, the plan is to provide viewing platforms at the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Europa Advance Batteries so that visitors to Gibraltar can enjoy the site without causing damage.

Similar arrangements are in place in a number of existing World Heritage Sites. It is also part of our strategy to encourage tourist visits to the site by boat. The best view of the site is from the sea and it is from here that it is best understood. We will offer the possibility of small groups landing to see Gorham's Cave with professional guides.

During the course of this financial year we will be opening Parson's Lodge as an interpretation centre. Here we will offer interpretation for tourists who can then visit the caves either by road to the Europa Advance Batteries or by boat from a future refurbished Rosia Pier.

In addition to the Neanderthal story, Parson's Lodge will tell the story of the relationship of people and the limestone of the Rock – from caves to tunnels and batteries.

This financial Year will see a number of projects to restore and bring to life other sites and areas of Historical and Heritage interest. We will be announcing these as and when they are complete.

Culture

A new company has been formed by former employees of the Agency.

Gibraltar Cultural Services (GCS) is based on the same principles as the Environmental Agency Ltd and Land Properties Services Ltd.

They will be able to organise and maintain cultural services.

Properties such as:

- Ince's Hall Theatre
- Gustavo Bacarissas Galleries at Casemates
- Central Hall
- Fine Arts Gallery

- John Mackintosh Hall Complex (including the theatre, committee rooms, exhibition galleries, changing rooms, stores, cafeteria, ticket office, office suite and all common areas)
- John Mackintosh Hall Library
- Casemates Square
- The Mount (Bookings only.) at this stage
- Changing room vault at Casemates

will now be under the auspices of this company.

They will also be responsible for the administration of a number of committees, for the management of the art collection, and for the management of the premises held by clubs and associations.

GCS have been and will, be running, supervising and monitoring the events, which have traditionally been in our social and cultural calendar. These include

- New Year Celebrations & Fireworks
- Young Artists Art Competition & Exhibition
- Drama Festival (In which we now have international groups participating)
- Logo Competition for Spring Festival
- Short Story Competition
- Spring Art Competition & Exhibition
- Miss Gibraltar Pageant
- Spring Festival which has now been extended to 8 weeks
- Zarzuelas (x 4 maximum)
- Book Crossing Days (x 3)
- Summer Nights increased from (6 to 8 or 10)
- Supporting the SDGG on all celebrations to do with National Day and week.
- National Week Classical Concert (which will be reintroduced this coming January)
- International Art Competition & Exhibition
- Poetry Competition
- Autumn Cultural Programme
- Saturdays Arts & Crafts market at Casemates

They will also be responsible for the Calentita Night & Fireworks. The House will know that the date of the event was changed to a Saturday so that our Jewish community could also take part. The event was improved even further this year. It was extended into Market Place where a long table with benches was introduced for the first time.

The Government has received very positive feedback on the Calentita night.

All the above improvements to events fulfils the manifesto commitments which states:

CALENTITA

We will maintain and improve community events such as Calentita, which are already taking place.

Once again the Government has delivered.

GCS has during this time of change been involved in many new and exciting events and projects.

The Little Constellation project is proving a very useful forum with which to foster cultural links with other nations. The Ministry of Culture is fully participating in this event which comprises other comparatively small small countries such as Andorra, Cyprus, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro and San Marino.

It also includes European geo-cultural micro-areas including Canton Ticino Switzerland, Kaliningrad (Russ), Aland Islands (FIN), Faroe Islands (DK), Jersey (UK), Guernsey (UK) and Gibraltar (UK).

The project is based on an intensive dialogue between these two identities through the privileged eyes of contemporary art practice, by the Little Constellation Network. This is an international network of contemporary art - based in San Marino – which aims to organize and promote projects with a specific focus on current artistic research activity in these small states of Europe.

It networks with all these countries to find out how Modern Art is influenced by their size.

“Listen to the Sirens” which is the, current project underway here in Gibraltar, is of a cultural dialogue between two territories San Marino and Gibraltar that share a common path of research and interest in contemporary visual culture.

The Exhibition is currently open at Montagu Bastion which will now house Gibraltar’s Exhibitions of Modern Art (GEMA).

The GCS has also been involved in a number of other events such as:

- this year’s Holocaust Memorial Day;

- the Queen’s Baton Relay in May together with the Gibraltar Commonwealth Committee;

- the Literary Festival. Working closely with the Gibraltar Tourist Board that leads on the event;

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- through the good offices of members of the Gibraltar Tourist Board and the GCS it is now possible for local artists to participate in the Royal Academy Cultural Exchange that has seen local artists enter into competition for participation at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition 2014;
- Participation by local artists at the Biennial of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean (BJCEM) - Mediterranea 16 – Summer 2013
- Organising Festival of Lights, which will now include the switching on of the Christmas Lights that will now become an annual event
- the GCS will also be charged with supporting the Cavalcade Committee for the January event.
- Organising the Small Business Saturdays in December as they did in 2013 in conjunction with the Ministry for Tourism.

In all these events we strive to emphasize environmental awareness and more importantly to make all these events inclusive to all our community.

Very recently the Government was gifted by the MOD the entire content of the HMS Rooke Library. Soon these books will form part of the John Mackintosh Hall collection.

I would like to thank the MOD for this and I am sure that it will definitely add more value to the already vast collection at the John Mackintosh Hall.

I would also like to thank the John Mackintosh Trust who have funded books which students at GCSE, AS and A2 level can use.

This has been achieved by working closely with the Department of Education who were able to advise on the books that were required.

There has been a vast improvement in the facilities at the John Mackintosh Hall over the last couple of years.

All the Changing Rooms and dressing areas for the theatre have been refurbished.

All the Meeting Rooms have been transformed into bright and pleasant areas with the state of the art equipment.

The Charles Hunt Rooms is used to hold meetings of the DPC in public. It is also used by others as a conference room.

The reception area has been painted and new furniture has been purchased.

All the wooden and metal balustrades have been restored and painted.

The John Macintosh Hall celebrated its 50th Anniversary this year. It is therefore very fitting that all these refurbishments have been carried out at this time.

Mr Speaker, an exhibition took place in April to celebrate this occasion.

During this financial year we intend to continue to improve and maintain the John Mackintosh Hall.

There is in the estimates, waiting for the approval of the House, an amount specifically for purchasing Artwork. The Government was recently able to acquire 6 artworks by Gustavo Bacarisa which will now form part of its collection.

The Garrison Library has also been able to develop. The staff there have been able to secure a project called Bordering on Britishness. What it means to be a Gibraltarian.

They have been able to help in the organisation of many cultural and political events. Events such as the Literary Festival and the meeting of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

They are further involved in the digitisation of documents.

Mr Speaker, the reforms and changes that have been made were carried out in full consultation with the employees.

At all times we have been able to work together to unravel the great mess that was the Gibraltar Culture and Heritage Agency.

I wish to wholeheartedly thank all those at GCS, Knightsfields Holding Ltd and the Garrison Library for having engaged on this matter in such a positive manner.

Moving on now, Mr Speaker, to events, which have been organised by the Ministry for Culture.

It can see that our commitment to have an annual Mega concert is well and truly fulfilled.

This will be the third year in which the Ministry will be involved in the organising of what is easily the biggest event of our music calendar.

The Gibraltar Music Festival is attracting many top international artists to Gibraltar.

The brand name of the Gibraltar Music Festival, is attracting international attention. This year we have a lineup which is second to none.

They are:

The Script

Rita Ora

John Newman

Tony Hadley (from the very well-known Spandau Ballet)

James Arthur

Roger Hodgson (from the famous band Supertramp)

Clean Bandit

Maxi Priest (A legend in world of music.)

Plus our very own Adrian Pizzarello

Headwires, Georgia Thursting, and Orfila.

The Festival will run as it did last year from 12.00 midday to approximately 12 Midnight and it is geared for all ages.

This year again Children under the age of 13 will be able to go free when accompanied by their parents.

The Gibraltar Jazz Festival, which continues to attract people to Gibraltar, will now also go into its third year.

Last year we saw the Blues and TV Jazz star Jules Holland and his band perform in the Queen's Cinema. This year the production team is working to have a great lineup, which will be announced soon.

Mr Speaker, another event which is attracting a lot of interest abroad in that of the Gibraltar World Music Festival.

This is a festival that exposes music from around the World.

This year the Festival's theme was Chindia. The festival saw musicians from Japan and China who played eastern music with traditional instruments from the east, from Israel with musicians playing percussion instruments, and from the UK, which had a fusion of Hindi and modern music.

This Festival attracted interest from abroad and I would say that more than half of the audience that filled the Cave came specifically to Gibraltar to see this

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show. It also exposed the multi-cultural aspect to Gibraltar, of which we are so proud.

All the above and all the sport events which I will mention later are in line with the policy of the Government of Events Led Tourism.

We have been able to work closely with the Gibraltar Tourist Board so that all these events are marketed abroad through the GTB's network.

We also use social media websites and other marketing tools to be able to announce these events in order to attract people to Gibraltar.

So the above fulfills the following Manifesto Commitments:

JAZZ FESTIVAL

We will promote an annual jazz festival in which the Government will sponsor an international artist. This will also help to showcase more widely the great talent already available in Gibraltar in this field. The Gibraltar Jazz Festival will part of the Spring or Summer Events. The first festival will begin in 2012. This will be in addition to the Mega concert we will organise each year.

The only innovation to the manifesto is that we have decided with the Jazz Fraternity that the best time of year for this festival is in the autumn.

MEGA CONCERT

As we committed ourselves to doing in the last elections, a GSLP Liberal Government will sponsor an annual music Festival for our youth. The concert will be promoted internationally and will count with the use of Government facilities as well as financial backing. Again delivering on our commitment.

Sports and Leisure

Mr Speaker,

I move on now to my responsibilities for Sports and Leisure.

As Minister for Sport and Leisure and chairperson of the GSLA it gives me great pleasure to see more and more people taking part in sporting activities.

The reason could well be the success of the GFA in obtaining membership of UEFA.

This seems to have spilt over into other sports and to encourage greater participation.

Children are starting to get interested in Sport at a younger age.

It is incredible to see that in a population of 30,000 we have 40 registered sports.

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22 of these are internationally recognised in one way or another and there are approximately 8300 sportsmen and women registered in all sports associations.

This represents close to 30% of the population involved in sports. These figures do not include those who practice sport but are not registered under a specific association. For example, it does not cover those who do Batuka, Zumba attend Fitness classes etc.

For this reason facilities need to be adequate and maintained in a fit and proper state for our participants not only to enjoy their chosen sport but to be in a position to excel in it.

The fact that participation levels have increased and that standards are rising has increased the demand on the Ministry of Sport and on the GSLA.

For this we need to move The GSLA as an authority and institution to another level.

In relation to facilities, Mr Speaker, I am pleased to say that we have been able to refurbish many parts of the Bayside Sports Complex, which were in desperate need of repair.

The Old Victoria Sports Hall has seen a transformation.

The Hall has seen the refurbishment of all changing rooms and toilet facilities. The corridor areas have all been painted and the Hall has had all the roof girders and walls refurbished and painted. All the hot water that serves the changing rooms at the Tercentenary Hall is now heated via Solar Panels.

A monitor at the entrance to the Hall shows the amount that we are saving on electricity by using this system. The aim is to extend this to the whole complex.

The main pitch and pitch No2 have been resurfaced with a new FIFA Two Star astro-turf pitch.

This astro turf is also valid for International Rugby Matches and we have been able to see a number of them already.

The lighting system has been upgraded which has seen an increase in Lux from 200 to 1200 which means that it now complies with the proper standard to have events televised.

Some of the old turf has been recycled to the two 5-a-side areas at the complex.

The three Padel Tennis Courts have been resurfaced.

The boathouse area and the slipway is now been used by the Jet-skiing association. Jet-skiers can now place their Jet-skis in this area and use the slipway without affecting the day to day running of the complex.

Mr Speaker, during this financial year we will see a number of other facilities within the Bayside Complex, which will be built and/or refurbished.

This includes the stay and play areas, offices below the hockey stands, and new build within the area where the staff parking is now located.

This will include changing rooms for officials, press conference rooms, media rooms, VIP and new bars areas. The bar facilities will be changed and a purpose built cafeteria, Sports bar area will be located at the entrance to the Tercentenary Hall. This will replace the existing bar which is called "El Murga".

The Hockey Lights that I mentioned last year have already arrived and will be put in place during the summer.

We have now been able to work with the Education Department in order for the allocation of schools for community use to be extended beyond the 31May and we will also soon be able to make these facilities available during the summer period.

The Skate Park, which was situated in Landport, has also been relocated in the car park by the east entrance to the stadium.

We have been able to rearrange that whole area in order to provide bar facilities and more parking.

The GASA swimming pool, as I said last year, has been transferred to the GSLA.

It has been transformed to the extent that it is unrecognisable.

It was in a complete mess. There was, for example, no air treatment system and this was affecting the health of users. There were broken tiles in the changing room and main spectator area. There was no disabled access to the spectator stands, to highlight but a few of the problems.

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to announce that we have completely refurbished the whole building.

We have re-designed and improved the changing rooms for all.

We have provided a new accessible toilet.

We have built new offices for the staff and for GASA.

We have increased the space available for participants by the poolside by building an extension to the pool to accommodate swimmers in competition.

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And most importantly, Mr Speaker, the pool is now an example of how we can use sustainable energy and make vast savings in order to maintain the operation of all systems in the pool.

Mr Speaker, we have placed solar panels on the roof and installed a system that now powers and controls the temperature of the water in the pool, heats the water for the showers in the changing rooms, and powers the air treatment, pumps and filter systems.

The system is also producing more electricity than is needed for all this and we are therefore going to extend it to the other pool.

The savings are considerable. As an example the GSLA had to spend an average £2500 per month on Diesel to power the filter and the pump systems and now we spend zero.

Currently we have made savings to the tune of £104,000

A projection of the savings was done before the system was put in place and it was envisaged that the investment made would be paid for within 5 years.

It is working so efficiently that now this investment will be paid for in half that time ie 2.5years.

So not only have we got all these systems running for the pool, which was badly needed, but we are making savings of approximately 85% of the running cost of keeping the pool.

During this financial year we will continue to improve on other facilities within this complex namely the senior citizens pool next door.

Mr Speaker, we had a manifesto commitment that stated:

MID-HARBOUR BATHING

We will explore locating a bathing platform in front of the Mid-harbour so that people can swim.

After exploring this possibility and having had more professional advice about the location, the Government decided that the best place for this was the Bathing Pavilion next to the GSLA pools.

Mr Speaker, it is with great pride that I can announce that the Gibraltar Bathing Pavilion is nearing completion. My Ministry have led on this project which will be handed over to the Tourist Board for them to run in the same way as the beaches once it is complete.

I am also very grateful to the Project Manager Mr Chris Riddell.

The general public will be able to enjoy swimming and leisure facilities second to none in a short period of time.

A floating solution has been constructed which includes two 25m swimming pools Two toddlers pool. Recreational areas, Outdoor Bars, lifeguard and first aid post, exercise areas, Restrooms, showers, and Dressing rooms. and a number of other facilities which will make up the Bathing Pavilion.

All the above assessable to all.

Mr Speaker, on another matter, the House knows that the GSLA have been involved in constructing and maintaining all the parks in Gibraltar.

New parks and play areas have been constructed in:

Catalan Bay
Schomberg Estate
and Vineyards Estate

The construction of the Catalan Bay Park fulfils a manifesto commitment which states:

CATALAN BAY- THE PARK

A children's park has been provided but in a relatively unsafe area which is difficult to access with prams. We will re-provide it in a safer area in consultation with the residents.

A number of meetings took place on site with residents in order to ascertain their needs and now this new park is now ready.

In this year's estimates we have allocated funds to complete the manifesto commitment in relation to Catalan Bay which states:

CATALAN BAY – STREET LIGHTING

We will ensure that all areas in the village are well lit- in particular the areas giving access to the Caleta Hotel.

Mr Speaker, the GSLA has also refurbished a number of parks and ball playing areas in:

Laguna Estate
Edinburgh Estate
Europa Point
Varyl Begg Estate
Chilton Court
Park opposite Holy Trinity Cathedral

The refurbishment of this last park is yet another manifesto commitment that stated:

Duke of Kent House Park

We will Maintain and upgrade the park and playgrounds in the square opposite Duke of Kent House.

Mr Speaker fulfilled.

A number of other playgrounds are currently being refurbished and/or are under construction:

Sir William Jackson Grove
Harbour Views
Waterport Terraces

This is a manifesto commitment, which is ongoing.

We can now say that we have a team of three workers who are specifically charged with the maintenance of the Parks.

They have been provided with a workshop, vehicle, tools and resources to allow them to go around the parks and tackle issues of general maintenance.

Mr Speaker, our manifesto states:

CHILDREN'S PARKS

The Children's Parks have only been upgraded in an election year. Before that they were neglected. They have cost a massive amount of money. They must be looked after. We will ensure that existing children's parks are properly maintained and refurbished as necessary to ensure that the investment made using public money endures as much as possible.

There are more manifesto commitments in the field of sports and leisure that have been fulfilled or are ongoing these are:

ELITE ATHLETE ASSISTANCE

SPORT INJURY CLINIC

It will be seen in the estimates that on Page 188 Gibraltar Sports and Leisure Authority Appendix J Payments (28) an amount has been earmarked for both these items.

These items have also been discussed in Gibraltar Sports Advisory Council (GSAC) on a number of occasions.

The GSAC are in the process of defining who is an Elite Athlete in each sport since they all differ from each other.

Further we are currently working with stakeholders in order to see the best way in which we can have sportsmen and women tackle injuries in a way in which they can return as quickly as possible to continue practising their sport.

ASSISTANCE FOR NON-RECOGNISED SPORT

This is an ongoing item, which I can say we are currently engaged in delivering.

The sports concerned know that they have our full backing to be able to achieve their goals by being recognised internationally.

Our staff at the GSLA is there to help them by advising them on how to establish themselves in a manner which will be acceptable to the international organisation that they would like to join.

PAINT BALLING PARK

The paint ball park is ready and this amenity will be included as part for the sport summer programme. We are also awaiting for the paint balling fraternity to organise how they will be running it. This will enable them to organise competitions and at the same time allow the public to participate in this leisure activity.

CHESS

We continue to support the Chess tournament, which is a great event as we promised in our manifesto and further we have been able to support the local chess association as when they have needed our help.

The Gibraltar Chess Open has become the biggest open Chess tournament in the world and has been recognised as the best organised tournament in the world. HM GOG will continue to support this event.

We have also had the opportunity to support the 3rd Junior International Tournament, which is held in August in here in Gibraltar.

I would like to thank the organisers and sponsors for the way in which they have developed and supported this tournament.

Mr Speaker, works are well under way to relocate the Pistol Shooting Club from its present location to an area by the Retrenchment Block.

The GSLA are involved in the sponsoring and the facilitating of events such as the Thundercats British Championships, Backgammon international Tournament and Ten Pin Bowling Mediterranean Challenge Cup.

The Gibraltar Darts Trophy is an event which is organised by the Ministry for Sport.

When analyzing the value of organising and sponsoring these events it is important to understand what are the benefits to our economy. In doing this analysis which has been done using all sporting events and the well tested formula of expenditure by tourist we see that: Over 15,000 bed nights have been sold. Multiplied by an average of £100 minimum per bed nights means £15m, which the economy benefits. These figures are not inclusive of all the other events such as the GMF, Jazz Festival, World Music Festival, Literary Festival and others.

Mr Speaker

The deficit of the Kings' Bastion Leisure Centre continues but I am happy to say that we have been able to reduce this from the levels it reached under the previous administration.

This has been achieved by terminating the contract that the previous Administration gave to Kings' Bowls.

This was an OPEX + contract. It meant that the company running the Ten Pin bowling Facilities would do so by having all the costs paid for and on top of that a 30% markup was added on.

So we had a situation where the more the company spent on costs the more they would earn in profits. We have been able to terminate the contract and we have awarded it to the company running the catering in the Centre but this time with the cost greatly reduced and no 30% markup on costs.

Further we have been able to reduce by half the amount that used to be paid to the GSLA for the running of the centre. The centre will soon be run by the people who are currently managing it. We are hoping that during this current financial year we will be able to reduce the costs of the centre and at the same time provide an even better service to the general public.

Before I end my intervention in relation to Sport I would like to acknowledge the good work that has been done by the retiring CEO of the GSLA Mr Joe Hernandez.

He has been active in this field of work for over 25 years. He was involved with sports within the Government first and then in the GSLA. He has been a Civil servant for nearly 38 years. Thank you Joe.

Youth

In the past year the whole of the Gibraltar Youth Service has undergone a number of significant changes, most noticeably within its structure and staffing arrangements.

The administration role for the Gibraltar Youth Service has moved to the main offices of the Ministry for Culture where the staff continues to provide support for the Youth Service.

Through this support the burden on Youth Workers of having to do administrative work is greatly reduced which means that they can now concentrate on producing and running programmes for our young people.

The management and total complement of the youth workers in the service has increased and has been restructured.

What was the Team Leader's post is now that of a Principal Youth Officer.

The posts of two Senior Youth Officers to assist the Principal Youth Officer have been created and the complement of Youth Workers has increased from four to five.

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Therefore in total we have moved from having one team leader and four youth workers to eight in total to concentrate on direct youth work.

This has fulfilled numerous recommendations from the Gibraltar Youth Service Review of 2008, which had never been tackled by the administration of the members opposite.

Recommendation 11 of that report states:

“The Service should consider its staffing requirement and structure with the aim of:

- a) Making the post of Senior Worker more manageable, reducing the post holder’s operational responsibilities to enable more strategic development (ie the reform to the Administration)
- b) Allowing management responsibilities to be delegated to full time youth workers, consistent with their current grades (ie creating the two Senior Youth and Community Workers post)
- c) Increasing the part time paid establishment, with staff on appropriate permanent contracts to be negotiated, as the most cost effective way of increasing the direct delivery of youth work (ie increasing the complement of permanent youth workers to do this.)”

Recommendation 12, Mr Speaker, read as follows:

“Up-to-date job descriptions should be provided for all posts in the service.”

By renaming and creating the posts the job descriptions have been reevaluated and they are now clear as to the role they are to fulfill.

Mr Speaker, the interviews for four new Youth and Community Workers have already taken place and the ones selected are in the process of joining the team soon.

In relation to material resources, I am happy to tell the House that the Youth Centre has undergone some significant refurbishment and now, in addition to its new front entrance which is now visible from Line Wall Road, it boasts a new kitchen, complete paint redecoration and it also offers a separate project/resources room.

The Laguna Youth Club has received a new air-conditioning system and Plater Youth Club has received a fresh coat of paint. This year more funds have been made available to continue the refurbishment programme.

Since 18th January this year the Youth Centre has been open during the weekends. The Youth Service is analyzing this initiative to see how this is working with a view to opening all other youth clubs.

This fulfills another Manifesto commitment as follows:

YOUTH CLUBS

The resources will be made available for the youth clubs to be opened at weekend.

Mr Speaker, I am pleased that the Principal Youth Officer has also met with the newly established Unite the Union Youth Section.

During 2013/14 the Gibraltar Youth Service has offered young people a wide variety of personal development opportunities and fun activities. These include:

A Film project

An Easter Project

Spring Funday

Aquapark/Tivoli

Clean Up the World

Isla Magica

Halloween Events

Cycling Marathon to raise money for GBC Open day

Residential Weekend

Christmas & Cavalcade Events

Sierra Nevada

Mr Speaker, the Youth Service team has been very committed to continue operating the four youth clubs.

In addition to normal club opening hours the team have also worked closely together to offer young people the opportunity to take part in new community projects with outside organisations. These include the Luce Foundation project, PSHE and Personal Support with both Bayside and Westside Comprehensive Schools and the College of FE, Social Services training program safeguarding children, working closely with the Royal Gibraltar Police neighbourhood policing units in the areas of the four youth clubs.

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All four youth clubs combined resources under the Youth Service in order to provide a trip to Aventura Amazonia in Marbella during May and The Luce Foundation Summer Camp took place at the beginning of June.

The Youth Exchange project with a partner group from Wales is to take place in July and the Youth Service is supporting the Cheshire Home Group flag day this coming weekend.

A group of young people also took part in a Heritage Trust project to plant trees in the Upper Rock in March 2014.

It is obviously clear from all that has been done above that our manifesto commitment has been fulfilled.

This reads as follows:

THE YOUTH SERVICE

We will work with the Youth Service and Youth Workers to provide better facilities and more frequent events at Youth Clubs- Where the work being done keeps young people out of trouble.

Despite the fact that we have fulfilled our manifesto commitment, the Youth Service will continue to develop to deliver quality programmes for young people and more importantly programmes that they can identify with.

For this reason the Youth Advisory Council will be re-established as from September and a new Active Citizenship programme is currently being planned starting in the autumn of this year.

As Hon Members can see, the Youth Service is an extremely busy organisation and it has provided a wide range of activities for our young people.

With the new Youth and Community Workers in post in the next few weeks, we hope to continue our successes and look forward to an even busier and promising year ahead.

Gibelec Power Station etc

I now move on to my responsibilities as minister for Utilities. I will start with electricity.

The House will recall that the GSD Government had made arrangements to build a Power Station at Lathbury Barracks with a company called ETDE. ETDE was in a Joint Venture with Volker Stevin. The station was to cost £126m and was to be fuelled by diesel.

This project would have made us rely on diesel for the next 30 years. The price of diesel is increasing by the day.

It would have meant that electricity bills which are currently subsidised by

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Government to an average of 40% would have had to be increased by 5% to the consumer each year for 20 Years.

This would have been unsustainable. Talk about prudent management of the taxpayers money!

On top of that, as the House knows, diesel is far from environmentally friendly.

These are some of the untold truths before the last general election.

The power station planned by the Members opposite did not go through the planning process.

It was not subjected to press and public scrutiny.

Indeed, consumers were not even told about the increase to them in the cost of electricity.

The then GSD Government kept this a secret.

Even if this contract had gone ahead, the GSD's power station would not have been fully functional even now.

Generating capacity would have been diminished after the fire at Waterport Power Station. There would have been a real possibility that areas would have been cut off for certain times during the day on a permanent basis until the power station was complete.

It is for this reason that we took the decision to bring in the turbines and more recently the new skid generators.

Now we have 55.8MWe installed and 40.8MWe available at any given time which is enough capacity.

The 15.8MWe spare is used to be able to maintain the engines and have enough resilience.

As the Chief Minister announced on Monday, the contract for the construction of the new power station has now been awarded to Bouygues Energies & Services.

The cost of the contract will be £67,958,000 to construct an 81 megawatts power station in North Mole Road after the completion of the competitive tender process.

The power station will house 6 engines half of which will be gas only and the other 3 will be dual fuel.

This will include best available technology to deliver a more resilient and secure electrical generation supply to Gibraltar.

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The company that has been awarded the power station contract is the parent company of ETDE.

ETDE was the company who in a joint Venture with Volker Stevin was awarded the construction of the power station at Lathbury Barracks.

The power station at Lathbury would have supplied 65 megawatts of power and would have been, as mentioned above, single fuel ie diesel only.

This award not only provides Gibraltar with approximately 30 % more installed generating capacity but it does so at almost half the price than Gibraltar would have paid if the Lathbury power station would have been constructed using the same company.

So not only are we paying half the price with more capacity, but the new power station will operate using natural gas with diesel as a backup.

The use of natural gas as the main fuel reduces air borne emissions considerably and it also costs about a third of the price of what diesel currently costs.

This makes this option win-win for Gibraltar in financial, technical and environmental terms.

Mr Speaker, an added incentive which we are also considering is the fact that we could for a further £8.5m incorporate a heat recovery system which would produce more electricity or even produce water at no extra cost in consumption.

Water

Continuing As Minister for Utilities and therefore chairperson of AquaGib I can report that the Company has been able to maintain and improve on all levels of services.

A total of £11.3m has been undertaken to ensure that the infrastructure for the provision of potable and seawater supply and sewage is maintained to customers.

The RO Plants producing the water are also maintained despite the fact that the cost in electricity consumption is exorbitant. I will go on to explain a little on this later.

The service to clients is now greatly enhanced by the creation of a website.

Now customers can pay their bills and make applications for the supply of Water online.

This is another part of the E-Government initiative, which has been taken on by AquaGib and which was launched during this financial year.

In addition to the recurrent expenditure, AquaGib Ltd has continued to invest on capital projects as part of its asset replacement plan.

This aimed at maintaining and improving the water infrastructure assets as provided for in their contract with HMGoG.

During this period a total of £598,000 was spent on capital projects.

This has included two major projects to extend the AquaGib potable and seawater networks to areas of Gibraltar, which had previously been supplied by the Ministry of Defence's water distribution systems.

The fact that the MOD was responsible for the infrastructure and the customer was AquaGib has been a problem that has existed for many years and has never been tackled.

There were many customers who were within the MOD infrastructure but who complained to Aquagib when they had a problem which could not be solved in a timely manner.

The successful completion of the projects has enabled AquaGib to have a full control of and provide increased levels of service to customers in these areas.

The two projects of this nature include the building of a new potable water pumping station located within the Waterworks, and a new pumping main from that station to the AquaGib Middle Hill Potable Water Service Tank.

This has enabled AquaGib to provide its own potable water supply to customers in the Middle Hill area of the Upper Rock.

The other has been the extension of the AquaGib potable and seawater mains from the junction of Windmill Hill Road to the Europa Road/Lighthouse area.

This has enabled AquaGib to provide its own potable and seawater supply to customers in these areas.

Mr Speaker, I am pleased that in conjunction with this project technical services, with the same contractor, have been able to construct a pavement along the road leading from St Bernard's church to near the old 1772 Club.

Walking to the bus stop from Elliot's Battery, Europa Terraces and Europa Mews is now much safer.

The Multi Stage Flash (MSF) Desalination Plant, which was producing Fresh Water through a process of evaporation and condensation undertaken in Multiple Stages, was built in 1980.

This was operated by 15 employees. In 2008 it was decided to decommission the MSF Plant and replace it with the RO plants.

One would have thought that the employees currently operating the MSF would be redeployed to operate the RO plants.

No that was not the case what happened was that the previous administration agreed to have these men continue on shifts, fixed overtime and allowances despite the fact that there was no Distiller to operate.

Overhead and maintenance cost also continued. The fact is that from 2010 an approximate £1.2m per annum has been spent. The worse thing about this is that it was even agreed to maintain the manning levels. This meant that when one employee retired or moved on he had to be replaced by someone else to be employed to do nothing.

Further the company that set them up the RO plants were also contracted to operate them at an annual cost of approximately £400,000.

So we have a situation where 15 men are without work to do and being paid whilst the company pays two operators to run the RO plants.

The cost of this disaster has been an expenditure of £1.6m per annum.

This is what we have inherited from the Hon Members opposite.

I can now say that this issue is close to being resolved with the cooperation of the Union, and the management of Aquagib, but more importantly with the employees.

City Fire Brigade

I now move on to my responsibility as Minister for the City Fire Brigade.

During the past financial year a number of officers from the City Fire Brigade have attended various courses at the Fire Service College, UK.

These have included Fire Safety Engineering, Fire Safety Smoke Control for Inspecting Officers and Fire Safety Smoke Control design.

Numerous officers have also attended, The Incident Command Courses at levels 1, 2 and 3. There has also been a Heavy Goods vehicle rescue course and a Hazardous Material and Environmental protection course. 2 Recruit courses were also attended (May 2013, Feb 2014) where 5 firefighter recruits successfully passed their training.

11 members of the brigade attended a Breathing apparatus maintenance course provided by Dreager, in Newcastle UK, and two officers attended a Tunnel Safety Conference.

Additionally, various locally run courses were attended which include 2 officers completing the Blue Light Driving instructors course delivered through the Customs department, 4 officers attended the Maritime Casualty Handling and Survival at Sea course provided by the GHA/Port Authority, and all three watches have attended presentations on Security awareness delivered by the RGP.

During the year there have been 7 promotions within the City Fire Brigade, 1 Divisional Officer for Operations and Training, 1 Station Officer, 2 Sub Officers and 3 Leading Firefighters.

The brigade has provided Fire Safety Courses to 334 persons from 32 different companies and organisations, (for example GHA, Post office and Gibraltar Bus Company). 10 Fire Drills have been undertaken by the Brigade in different Government and Private buildings, and Community Fire Safety talks and advice has been delivered on 12 occasions to schools and other agencies.

The Fire Safety Department have also carried out 9 Fire Investigations into the cause of fire at various incidents, 438 Building applications have been processed and issued with fire safety requirements and 180 Building applications have been completed, inspected and approved.

A new initiative of focusing fire safety advice in areas which have recently experienced a fire has been introduced (known as Hot Targeting).

This provides residents of the affected area with booklets and advice, and has been well received by those affected.

Operationally, the brigade has responded to 1598 calls from 1 June 2013 to 18 June 2014.

These can be categorised as 369 Fire Calls, of which 100 were actual fires, 252 false alarms with good intent and 17 malicious calls.

The Brigade also attended 948 Special Services, 520 of which were emergencies, for example: 352 Lift Rescues, 6 Rescue of persons, 19 Road Traffic Collisions, amongst others, and a further 428 Special services classified as request, which include entry into locked premises, floodings and rescue of animals amongst others.

The City Fire Brigade Ambulance was dispatched on 281 occasions in its commitment to the Health Authority as the Third Ambulance, and the Brigade control room mobilised the GHA Ambulance on 4901 occasions.

One of the more notable fires during this period was the fire that occurred at the Waterport Generating Station on the 20th April.

This involved 3 appliances from the City Fire Brigade, the recall of 18 firefighters for the incident and to maintain fire cover for the rest of Gibraltar and assistance from the Defence fire Service.

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The incident impacted on the whole of Gibraltar due to the interruption of electrical supply, but what could have been a disastrous incident was dealt with by the brigade within a few hours. Electrical supply restored a few hours later without injury or loss of life.

Yesterday we had an unfortunate incident of a fire breaking out at the workers' hostel in Devil Tower Road. All workers were evacuated and have been housed temporarily at the Queen's Hotel.

It is due to the fact that the CFB are in the front line and are valued by the present government, the announcement made by the CM is recognition of this. This pay rise will mean a 5% increase plus the elimination of the 3% abatement 8% more in the wage package. We are at present still working at the Audit Report which includes terms and conditions with staff.

I would like to congratulate them all the essential services and in particular the Fire Brigade for the professional way in which again they tackled the situation and the exemplary service that they provided Gibraltar.

Civil Contingencies

Mr Speaker, I now I move to Civil Contingencies.

During the last financial year HM Government has invested substantially in the development and modernization of the command and control unit necessary for disaster management (£250,000).

This will increase the infrastructure available to the front line emergency services through the purchase of this command unit.

The state of the art Joint Command Unit is expected to arrive during October and user training will start immediately.

This year government is investing substantially in developing a modern C3 Coordination Centre as part of the major works currently taking place at No6 Convent Place.

Investing in both the Joint Command Unit and in the new facilities within No6 will ensure that we can adequately respond to any major incident in an efficient and coordinated manner.

Meetings of the Civil Contingencies Committee have taken place frequently.

There were 6 during 2013 and 3 during the current year. The last one took place last Wednesday.

There have also been a number of one- to- one meeting between me and the C3 coordinator.

In addition, I have attended C3 organized events such as security training for all government departments' security officers and specific presentations. Meetings of the C3 and exercises which are conducted now where virtually non-existent before Dec 2011.

Staff at the Civil Contingencies Office are engaged in updating response plans and in consultation with others, planning both table top and full scale exercises.

2 of these exercises have already been held involving all relevant responding agencies and where appropriate the MOD.

During 2014 -2015 the facilities available to the civil contingencies organization will be greatly enhanced, this without doubt is a far cry from the state I found the Civil Contingency when I was honoured by the CM to be its minister.

A bunker that was not fit for purpose that when we have a power cut all the power would cease and therefore communication to the outside world would not exist.

Refuse Collection

In relation to another of my Ministerial responsibility that of refuse collection we are in the process of working with the unions and their representatives on a number of issues which we hope to resolve amicably during the current financial year.

Postal Services

In relation to the postal services.

Mr Speaker, as I mentioned in last year's budget address we have had to implement an EU Directive will mean the liberalization of Postal Services.

We are working closely with all stakeholders on how we can achieve this without affecting employees and at the same time improving the service and making it cost effective.

Renegotiating the collective agreement, in full consultation with all affected parties, is one important part of this jigsaw.

We have also been able to re-grade the management post. We had 4 ML4 and now we will soon have 1ML3 and 3 ML4 .

This has been a long standing issue which I am glad to say has now been resolved with the unions, Staff and Management.

The postal service is yet another Ministry that is undergoing e-government changes.

A contract has been signed by the RGPO for an Electronic Point of Sale (EPOS) with Escher to install computers for our counter clerks at 104 Main Street.

After the refurbishment of the Main Street Post Office later this year, we will have electronic receipts, chip and pin, scanning and universal counters for all products, including Redirections and PO Boxes linked to the new ID card system.

The RGPO is now a member of .post which aims to integrate the physical, financial, and electronic dimensions of postal services to enable and facilitate e-post, e-finance, e-commerce and e-government services.

The UPU became the first United Nations organization to obtain a sponsored top-level domain from the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) in 2009.

.post uses the latest Internet security. It is the first sTLD to be 100% secured by Domain Name System Security Extensions (DNSSEC), a set of codes for securing the Domain Name System (DNS), the global database system that translates a computer's fully qualified domain name into an Internet Protocol (IP) address.

It is the most secure sTLD on the net right now. You can trust a .post domain is not taking you to a fake postal website.

The postal services have now got their own website.

They have introduced of a number of Customer Care improvements, including the new and improved Global Customer Service System run by the International Postal Corporation

Mr Speaker, as is the norm now with our New Dawn Government, our environmental filter means that we will soon be purchasing electric vehicles and three-wheeler concepts.

The electric DXP three-wheeler is a convincing response to a variety of postal delivery needs and is considered safe due to it having three wheels.

This vehicle has had very few accidents, when compared with the traditional ones.

It is tried and tested and low-maintenance with less emissions and quieter operation.

It is more responsive, easy to manoeuvre, high load (with trailer 270 kg plus driver), low running costs, significantly higher efficiency in postal deliveries & EU licence.

It also boasts a TÜV quality certificate.

Mr Speaker, soon we will introduce the new and improved definitive stamps that are self-adhesive.

There will be a Rebranding of Registered services between tracked services and countries that only receive a signature service, with new bar-coded labels.

We are working towards the introduction of a new and improved Express letter service (currently still negotiating with RM), that will have a new barcode.

Later this year, all going well, an Insured service within the EU for the Registered letter service will be introduced. There will be a new bag tracking system called CAPE Vision.

I am happy to say that the Postal Services organised a hugely successful CEO Postal Forum conference here in Gibraltar where issues such as sharing best practice were discussed.

All delegates thought it was great value for money, (not for profit).

Postal countries that attended were the Vatican, Seychelles, Mauritius, Tristan Da Cunha, Liechtenstein, Iceland, Greenland, Aland, Faroe Islands and all the Channel Islands.

A number of statutory requirements in relation to security arrangements will come into force on 1st July.

All staff who accept mail will have to be trained on issue of Dangerous Goods when declaring goods to be posted.

All in all the postal services will progress into the 21st Century

I'll like to thank all my staff in the ministry and all those who work for in all the Ministries that I am responsible for.

Mr Speaker with this all that is left for me to do is to support this Bill.

Thank you.