



## PRESS RELEASE

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### THE HON GILBERT LICUDI QC MP

#### BUDGET SPEECH

23 June 2015

Mr Speaker, I have the honour to report to the House on the areas that form part of my Ministerial portfolio, starting with Education

#### EDUCATION

*'Finance and Works' 27/05/15*

The Estimates reflect that the amount required in the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 for salaries, wages and expenses is £44,767,000. The forecast outturn for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 of £42,168,000. There is a proposed increase this year of £2,599,000.

A significant part of the increase relates to Personal Emoluments and Scholarships. Honourable Members will note a provision for 2015/16 of £15,707,000 compared to the forecast outturn in 2014/15 of £14,135,000; an increase of £1,572,000.

Records confirm that 2014/15 saw 363 Mandatory Scholarships (This figure includes school leavers and students on MSc, PhD (and other postgraduate courses) and 23 Discretionary awards; a total of 386 additional individuals who are benefiting from higher education). As I have explained in a recent press release, nearly 900 students are now being funded to study an enormous number of courses in universities across the UK – indeed, some are also being sponsored to study in other countries such as Malta and Ireland.

Mr Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to report that the Washington Internship programme is now in its third year. This has been a resounding success and continues to be in demand. 33 internships have already been awarded over the last two years, with a further intake of 27 graduates taking up their internships in September 2015.



An additional £500,000 was also invested in training requirements for both the public and private sector. Twenty-seven Government Departments, Authorities and Agencies have benefited from courses in their field of work and all essential training bids for the public sector were met. £60,000 was also invested in a number of Distance Learning courses for Government Employees. I am happy to say that a further £65,000 was spent on the provision of training for, primarily, staff at the Government's Human Resources Department who were able to obtain an industry standard qualification from the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD). The primary demand for funding for courses from individuals from the private sector continues to be in relation to Accountancy qualifications (AAT AND ACCA) as well as Maritime and port operation courses such as Safety Training. The Department of Education also continues to support the Gibraltar Insurance Association with provision for training and with their professional Chartered Insurance Institute examinations. The Department of Education continues to fund IT courses for Senior Citizens.

#### *Minor Works and refurbishment in Schools*

Mr Speaker, financial year 2014-2015 saw a number of refurbishment projects undertaken to extend and preserve the life of several of the older buildings servicing educational needs. These include:

1. The installation of a high-quality water-proof membrane to the flat roof of the original (old) building at St Anne's School to prevent water ingress, at a total cost of £112,000.
2. Waterproofing works and internal and external repairs were carried out at St Bernard's Nursery at a total cost of £64,000.
3. The south-west sea-facing facade and fire escape of Bleak House was refurbished at a total cost of £76,000. The works undertaken include a full window replacement, which is sympathetic to the building's heritage and suited to the exposure of inclement weather.
4. Waterproofing works were also undertaken on the roof of the Assembly Hall at Bishop Fitzgerald School whilst repairs were also carried out on the elevated fire escapes routes of both Governor's Meadow and Bishop Fitzgerald School at a total cost of £119,000.
5. The construction of steel staircase to create a new fire escape route at St Mary's School that exits via Prince Edwards Road for the total cost of £25,000.
6. A covered walkway to protect children when travelling from the Main Building to the Lunch Hall Annexe, at St Joseph's First School, for a total cost of £52,000.
7. The replacement of the Drama Studio flooring and painting works, at Bayside School, for a total of £96,000.
8. Resurfacing the playground of St Martin's School to rubber crumb flooring at a total cost of £75,000.
9. Maintenance and refurbishment works to all exposed timber supports at St Paul's School plus additional refurbishment works to the Lunch Hall and the installation of fencing in the perimeter wall for the sum of £62,000
10. £10,000 was invested in the purchasing of new drinking fountains for all schools.

Additionally, Mr Speaker, a further £50,000 was expended in response to emergencies arising from extreme weather conditions; St Mary's School (£15,000), St Joseph's School (£5,000) and John Mackintosh Hall Annexe (£8,000) suffered severe flooding due to rainwater ingress during



the severe rainstorm in February, whilst the roof/façade of Bishop Fitzgerald School (£27,000) was damaged during the high winds.

The minor works programme for the current financial year will include:

1. The reconfiguration and refurbishment of multiple rooms within St Martin's School to create an extra classroom with the corresponding sanitary facilities.
2. Internal refurbishment of Varyl Begg Nursery and the installation of mechanical ventilation/extraction systems to improve airflow and prevent recurrent damp issues.
3. Shading canopies will be installed over the 'rubber crumb' playgrounds of both Varyl Begg Nursery and St Mary's School to protect children from direct exposure to the sun and the excessive heat caused by the black surfaces.
4. Replacement of the Assembly/Sports Hall flooring at Notre Dame School.
5. General overhaul of the workshop facilities and extraction system at Bayside School.
6. Replacement of old and malfunctioning freshwater mains supply pipes at Westside School.
7. The replacement of non-slip linoleum in schools, which is part of an on-going programme of works.

#### *Major Projects*

Mr Speaker, I am happy to report that the building of the new St Bernard's First and Middle Schools is on target and will be finished in time for September 2015.

As I have outlined in the past, the conversion of the old hospital site into two new schools is part of the Government's 2011 General Election Manifesto and it is something that we are very proud of.

The schools will also provide facilities for community sports and activities and will go a long way towards providing much needed facilities in the upper-town area. Worthy of mention is the central hall in the Middle School, which has a glass roof atrium and will be available for students and teachers to carry out social and education activities.

Both schools will also boast cutting-edge technology for teaching and learning with several educational technology initiatives being piloted at the site as from September.

Mr Speaker, I am equally proud to be able to state that the construction of our new University of Gibraltar core campus is also on time and will be ready for a September start. Again, the University will also boast cutting-edge technology and a robust, managed Wi-Fi system to ensure that all parts of the campus have access to broadband internet and networking facilities: a necessity if we are to embark on the collaborative, multi-site educational projects that are planned with other Universities and providers.

As I have outlined elsewhere, Mr Speaker, there will be four faculties at the University:

- Health Studies and Sports Science
- Business which will include specialisms in Accounting and Finance, Law as well as ICT
- Life and Earth Sciences and Gibraltar/Mediterranean Studies
- Tourism and Hospitality



The four faculties will provide a series of undergraduate and post-graduate programmes in collaboration with internationally recognised universities as well as locally developed courses including courses for qualifications in Gibraltar Tax and in Gibraltar Law. The University will also be a centre for research in key areas associated with Gibraltar's culture, environment and heritage. Prospective students and interested parties will be able to find out more about the full range of courses available from the University website which was launched last week. In the first 24 hours after going live, there were 6,000 visits to the website from different parts of the world.

The core administrative team has already been recruited to service the needs of faculty and students. The executive team is currently completing the process to procure furniture and all the necessary equipment for the University.

I also wish to emphasise the fact that the University is designed to serve the needs of the community and the economy. With this in mind, we have created the Institute of Professional Development and Continuing Education. This will provide courses leading to professional qualifications, public and private sector continuing professional development and courses developed to meet industry needs in Gibraltar. The Institute will be a proactive and forward-looking enterprise and the aim is to provide wide-ranging professional training opportunities in Gibraltar.

A further component of the University will be a language centre for the teaching of English as a professional language. Ever more, English is being seen not only as a useful everyday language but as the international language of business. There is a huge demand for this and the University of Gibraltar and its Institute of Professional Development and Continuing Education are ideally placed to service these needs and, indeed, become a centre of excellence.

#### *Technology as an adjunct to learning:*

Mr Speaker, interactive-whiteboards continue to be the most widely used hardware for teaching and learning through technology. Over the years our teachers have become adept at using interactive boards and these are now predominant in all our schools. This technology was first introduced locally some eight years ago and numbers have steadily risen to over 300 units. It is expected that they will continue to serve this purpose for several more years. As with everything, however, constant technological development in the field of education means that there are now newer devices coming onto the market and the Department of Education is looking into all possible options.

During the course of the year a team composed of the Director of Education, a Head teacher, and a senior teacher visited several schools in England. These schools have received nationwide recognition of their excellent use of technology and the Department of Education hopes that some of the very exciting uses of technology they witnessed can be adapted for use in our schools, particularly, given that emphasis now seems to be moving towards the development of interactive hand-held devices for use by teachers and children. In looking to develop the use of interactive hand-held devices such as tablets, a group of science teachers from the Middle and Secondary sectors attended work-shops in the UK to further look into the potential of these devices.



#### *Coding and Computer programming:*

Mr Speaker, There is a strong emphasis on developing the coding and programming skills of our pupils and some schools have introduced coding as early as the Reception year. First and Middle Schools have used web-based programmes such as 'Tynker', 'Code.org' and 'Scratch' to introduce the coding elements of the Computer Science curriculum. A working group composed of teachers leading this subject area have continued to meet regularly and host workshops with a view to sharing good practice.

A subject specialist from the Secondary Sector also attended a conference in London to receive advice on how to incorporate the changes and transition from ICT to Computer Science in this sector.

#### *Using the Internet safely*

Mr Speaker, the Department of Education continues to work in conjunction with the Gibraltar Regulatory Authority, the Royal Gibraltar Police and the Citizen's Advice Bureau. These bodies have fed into a "Control Your Privacy" Campaign directed at both teachers and pupils. Presentations with Question and Answer sessions have been held at Bayside School for Years 9 and 11, Westside School Year 11, The Gibraltar College (2 presentations for different cohorts) and for children in Year 7. This year's campaign has more than doubled the number of pupils being addressed.

#### *Nurseries*

Applications for nursery placements are slightly higher in comparison to last year. There will, however, again be a nursery place available for every application should parents wish to take up the offer they receive.

#### *Special Educational Needs (SEN)*

Mr Speaker, the new SEN Code of Practice in the UK now includes Mental Health for the first time. This is as a result of the recognition that has been an increase in the number of children and young people being diagnosed with mental health issues. To keep abreast with such issues, the Department of Education sent two senior secondary teachers to a conference in the UK concentrating on 'Promoting Positive Mental Health in Schools' in November. They had an opportunity to attend some of the following workshops that were on offer: self-harm, body image, depression, exam stress, anxiety, low self-esteem and behaviour.

In March, a small number of teachers attended a conference organised by Childline on the issue of self-harm. The aims of the conference were to increase awareness about the topic and how to deal with a disclosure and to explore ways of supporting young people in our community.

In January, the Occupational Therapists from the GHA delivered a presentation of a Fine Motor Skills Programme to a group of First School teachers, which could be used to support pupils who were experiencing difficulties in this area.



In April, the Educational Psychologists offered an 'Early Birds Plus Course' for parents of children aged 5 to 8 years diagnosed as falling within the Autistic Spectrum (ASD). The programme consists of eight group sessions and a series of home visits by the psychologists. The course aims to provide training, insight and, where necessary, reassurance to parents and carers with a view to building adult confidence, encourage joint working with professionals across all relevant agencies as well as establishing sound working relationships.

This is a new course and in the future the Educational Psychology Department will offer this course at least twice a year.

#### *Continuing Professional Development for Teachers*

Mr Speaker, The Advisory Service has facilitated in-service courses in the following areas:

1. Safeguarding Children Tier 1 Training – This multi-agency team has continued to offer training. Individuals from different schools attend along with individuals from other agencies. In addition to this, two of our schools have set aside a whole school in service day and invited individual teachers from other schools to attend.
2. Dignified Care and Responsibility Training - Restraining children should always be a last resort strategy. DCRT is commended for its focus on de-escalation techniques and serve to reduce the need to physically restrain children. This course includes both the theoretical aspects such as understanding aggression and aggression cycles, triggers, self-awareness and risk assessments, as well as the practical skills needed to safely restrain children.
3. Train the Trainer – In previous years, this training has been offered by an outside agency to our schools in the form of an in service day. This year the Department offered a 3 day Train the Trainer Course. Eleven teachers were trained and they are now in a position to offer the one day training to our schools. Three schools have already received training.
4. Assessment and Reporting – In a response to the recent changes in the National Curriculum the Advisory Service is working on an Assessment and Reporting Policy for schools. The National Curriculum working groups for the core subjects at primary level are also meeting in relation to the changes and assessment and reporting.
5. Literacy – A small number of teachers have been on courses for Literacy in the UK, in areas related to changes or increased emphasis within the new National Curriculum. The focus has been on Guided Reading which gives pupils the chance to apply strategies they already know to new texts and; Talk for Writing which enables children to imitate the key language they need for a particular topic orally before they try reading and analysing it.
6. Language, Learning and Play – In-service on Language, Learning and Play through core texts in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the Power of the Picture book for teaching Mathematics is also been given by one of our teachers to the Early years Co-ordinators.
7. First Aid Courses in schools – this is a part of a rolling programme facilitated by the Advisory Service.

#### *The Advisory Service*

Mr Speaker, this academic year the Advisory Service has started delivering twilight sessions to schools on self-evaluation. The underlying concept is that schools must think and learn from themselves as organisations. Therefore, teachers have been encouraged to tell us what they think, where their priorities lie, what things they do well, where they need help to improve. Furthermore,



we have also started delivering a new revised Code of Conduct to teachers. This is a document designed to assist teachers to better understand what is expected from them and serves as a guide and code of ethics for teachers.

We have also taken on board the changes occurring within the primary and secondary sectors in the UK such as the abolition of National Curriculum levels, increased allocated time for some subjects as well as new content. As such, we are distilling new assessment protocols to be used to track children's progress and ensure a value added approach to teaching and learning. The new breadth and depth of the changed GCSE and A-Level curricula and specifications has meant that our schools, under guidance from the Department, are working hard to reorganise the curriculum and the time allocated to subjects: this is an on-going exercise. The

The Department of Education will be introducing Spanish lessons earlier in the curriculum. This follows a number of requests from parents as well as from professionals. Spanish will now be delivered in First Schools with introductory programmes starting as from September. A final decision as to the actual programmes of study, format and mode of delivery will be taken during that academic year.

Mr Speaker, I am particularly proud of the fact that the Department of Education and a group of teachers are working in collaboration with the Heritage Trust, other stake-holders and experts to produce materials that will be used for the formal introduction of a programme on local history in our schools. Initially, the first core textbook along with its online materials and web-based content will cover the Great Siege.

I am happy to say that the Advisory Service has set up a flourishing homework club at the John Macintosh Hall with the invaluable help and support from a group of dedicated teachers from the Gibraltar College assisting students with GCSE and A-level study. Students are given the opportunity to attend and be able to work in a calm and controlled environment and be supported by a monitoring teacher.

These clubs have been taking place for the better part of this academic year and comprise of three, two-hour sessions a week. The popularity was such that although the club started off with two teachers, a third had to be recruited to assist in January as well as extra rooms having to be made available: the initiative has been a resounding success.

The Advisory Service is actively involved in the push to raise standards in literacy and numeracy and to awaken in children a love of reading; it further wants to make mathematics relevant to their lives, to link the teaching and learning of mathematics to situations where children can see the relevance in sports, the arts, music and economics. We want children to enjoy their learning, and we want teachers to make their lessons additive, so that children want to learn and find out more. Throughout this year, the Department will be delivering a series of master classes to teachers with a view to improving the delivery of quality lessons.

Mr Speaker, we must not of course forget those children who struggle, or who perhaps have not done as well as they should have done. I am happy to report that the repeat provision afforded at



both Bayside and Westside Schools has given these students a second opportunity. Furthermore, both our secondary schools are now firmly committed to offering an alternative vocational provision. The ASDAN (Award Scheme Development & Accreditation Network) which offers a more vocational, life-skill based pathway, has worked extremely well in Bayside School and is now being taken up by Westside. These alternative programmes and qualifications are well established in the UK and offer flexible ways to accredit skills for learning, skills for employment and skills for life. Key staff at Westside and Bayside are studying other alternative programmes. The schools will shortly receive inservice training from an established qualifications provider and awarding body, with a view to introducing an alternative BTEC (Business and Technology Educational Council) pathway into our two secondary schools. BTECs are work-related qualifications for learners who are taking their first steps into employment, progressing through their careers, or planning to enter university. They are a highly valued qualification to help to build core employability and life skills in young people who may prefer a more practical, competency-based approach to learning.

Mr Speaker, all of our children continue to enjoy a range of fascinating science and mathematics activities and experiments prepared by outreach teams from the British Science Museum and Cambridge University. These initiatives continue to be sponsored by the Kusuma Trust and serve to give children different perspectives of what science and mathematics are all about. Furthermore, the Young Enterprise scheme continues to thrive and clearly enjoys the support of the business community and is now firmly rooted in both secondary schools. Furthermore, other initiatives such as English and Drama through Shakespeare and the 'Young Shakespeare Company' from the UK, Holocaust Memorial Day, the Interfaith Competition, the International Letter Writing Competition amongst many other initiatives continue to add value and an extra dimension to the quality of the educational provision available to children.

## JUSTICE

Mr Speaker, Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar again congratulates Michael Llamas QC on his appointment as Attorney General for Gibraltar. Mr Llamas is the first Gibraltarian Attorney General of modern times. Since he was appointed Chief Legal Adviser to the Government by the previous Administration, Mr Llamas has been shouldering the burden of much of the advisory work done for the Government in civil matters. This appointment is appropriate recognition of his legal talent and hard work. There can be no doubt that he will be an excellent Attorney General for Gibraltar who takes over from Ricky Rhoda CBE QC.

In the same breath Mr Speaker, Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar would like to thank Mr Rhoda, who has served for 20 years making him the longest serving Attorney General in Gibraltar, for the excellent and important work he has done over many years. His time in office has seen considerable change, especially since the 2006 Constitution.





I am very glad that Mr Rhoda, although stepping down as Attorney General, has nevertheless agreed to stay on to assist with the work of the Attorney General's Chambers. Chambers therefore continues to benefit from the vast experience and expertise which Mr Rhoda has.

Mr Speaker, I now turn to matters regarding legislation and I highlight some of the issues we have dealt with and are currently working on.

### *Legislation*

#### *JHA*

Mr Speaker, following the UK's so-called "opt-in", 2014 proved to be a particularly busy year with regard to implementing legislation in the area of European police and judicial co-operation, also known as Justice and Home Affairs.

As a result of this, a raft of legislation was commenced on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014 including measures in areas which until that date had not applied in Gibraltar.

The transposition of this legislation provides new and further opportunities for enhancing the participation of our police and judicial authorities in tackling cross border crime and serves to once again demonstrate Gibraltar's positive approach and commitment to the implementation of EU measures and full transparency with all of our EU partners.

The measures cover a wide ambit, from strengthening our legislation on the European Arrest Warrant and combatting child pornography to allowing for formal co-operation between law enforcement agencies. Other measures include asset recovery, exchange of intelligence and information, the mutual recognition of criminal freezing orders, confiscation orders, financial penalties, previous convictions and bail conditions. These new important measures are already being used and tie into other administrative changes that have been negotiated with the UK. As an example, only last month, Gibraltar was able to effect the surrender of a person subject to an European Arrest Warrant to Poland by transiting the prisoner via the UK.

### *European Protection Orders*

In January of this year, the Government implemented new legislation in order to ensure EU wide protection for victims of violence. These regulations, which cater for both civil and criminal orders, mean that persons who have been the victims of violence, and particularly those who have suffered domestic violence or stalking, can be assured that orders made in one EU Member State for their protection can and will be recognisable and effective in other EU Member States. This not only implements an important EU obligation, but also builds upon the work reported on in my address last year to strengthen domestic legislation by creating new stalking offences.

### *Legal Aid*

Mr Speaker, the Government included in its manifesto a commitment in relation to legal aid and assistance. On the 25<sup>th</sup> September 2014, the Government published the Legal Aid (Fees and Expenses) Rules 2014, which replaced the previous 2012 rules. This was completed following extensive consultations with the Bar Council, the Registrar of the Supreme Court and the Chief



Justice. The 2014 rules (a) substantially increase the rates payable under legal aid across the board, (b) allow for where a case is of exceptional difficulty or complexity, regardless of whether it is a fraud case or any other form of criminal case, for it to be certified so as to increase the remuneration payable and (c) ensures that outside counsel are paid no more for their work under the scheme than local counsel would be paid. This new system properly balances the need to ensure that persons receive adequate representation before the criminal courts with the need to provide value for money for the tax-payer.

#### *Barristers and Solicitors*

Further legislation in the area of the local legal system is being introduced in this session as the Supreme Court (Amendment) Bill 2015. The Bill will amend the Supreme Court Act so as to set new training requirements for barristers and solicitors who wish to commence practice in Gibraltar after the 1st July 2015. This regime follows consultations with the Bar Council and the Chief Justice and will ensure that persons who wish to practice law in Gibraltar as Barristers or Solicitors are on an equal footing. Barristers and Solicitors will have to complete a practical training requirement at a local firm for a period of no less than 12 months, a part time academic course in Gibraltar law that will be taught at the University of Gibraltar by senior local practitioners, and a professional skills course.

#### *Companies*

Mr Speaker, the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2014 saw the commencement of the new Companies Act and new Insolvency Act (together with related regulations). These pieces of legislation are enormously important to the sector and their commencements complete the Government's manifesto commitment in this area.

#### *POCA*

Mr Speaker, the Government is in the process of introducing proceeds of crime legislation, which, among other things, will allow the forfeiture or confiscation of assets arising from criminal conduct even in the absence of a criminal conviction. This important piece of legislation also seeks to prevent the abuse of our financial system and terrorist financing.

A Bill to consolidate Gibraltar's money laundering laws and provide for the confiscation of the proceeds of criminal conduct, its value and the civil recovery of the proceeds of unlawful conduct together with the necessary investigatory powers was published on the 4th June. It is expected that the legislation should be enacted by July of this year.

Mr Speaker, I now turn to matters linked with the Gibraltar Law Courts.

#### *Gibraltar Law Courts*

In April this year and on advice of the Public Service Commission, Ms Hazel Cumbo was appointed Chief Executive of the Gibraltar Courts Service after having been substituting for the post since 2013 following the departure of her predecessor, Mr Alan Davies. Mr Speaker this is a welcomed appointment and I wish Ms Cumbo every success in her role.



Mr Speaker, the Gibraltar Courts Service is constantly looking at ways in which to improve their services, especially through the on-going training and professional development of all staff members. In addition, the management team and staff work hard to establish a solid administrative structure through which the public can have access to the justice system.

In June last year, the first meeting of the Court Users Committee chaired by Mrs Justice Prescott took place. The Committee provides a very useful interface between the various stakeholders involved in the administration of Justice. Its role is to discuss matters of mutual interest in order to improve the use of the Courts and the service provided to its users. The Gibraltar Courts Service fully supports this initiative.

During this past year, the Gibraltar Law Courts have continued to maintain a high level of performance and the services they provide have been further enhanced.

The Magistrates' Court continues to hold 2<sup>nd</sup> Court sittings on at least 2 days per week, resulting in dates being offered for hearings that are 6-8 weeks from the date of request.

Mr Speaker, in the Supreme Court, the judicial complement of the Chief Justice and three Puisne Judges has proved to be a success. As reported last year, the vast majority of applications received at the Supreme Court, continue to receive notice of first hearing dates within five days of application and there continues to be no backlog of civil and family applications waiting for first hearing dates. Furthermore, the dates of those first hearings in respect of non-urgent applications are now typically within 2 months of the date of the application to the Court.

In respect of criminal trials, I am happy to report that the small backlog created during October 2013 and July 2014 was dealt with and Court dates provided for criminal trials are now within 2 to 4 months of a request for a trial date.

In October last year, the electronic diary system for the Supreme Court became fully operational. In addition to the formal Listing Notice, the new system assists court staff in dealing with enquiries relating to pending hearings as well as providing law firms with quick notification emails with dates set down for court appearances.

Mr Speaker, the Gibraltar Courts Service website continues to be updated and developed. General forms for both the Magistrates' and Supreme Courts, which previously could only be obtained at the Law Courts counters, are now available for download in pdf format from the website. Lists of Legal Practitioners, Commissioners for Oaths and Public Notaries are also available. Judgments for both the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal, from 2012 to 2015 (inclusive) are now available for download. Divorce, Dissolution & Matrimonial jurisdiction judgments are not uploaded unless they raise matters of general principle and have been anonymised. Furthermore, in order to make the website more user friendly, a search facility has been incorporated enabling users to conduct searches of the contents of the website, including judgments by case name.



All reported Judgments for the period 1812 to 2012 (inclusive) are now available from the Judgments website and future reported judgments will be uploaded subsequent to their publication in the Gibraltar Law Reports volumes.

During last year, the court recording facilities were improved with the total replacement and installation of new software and some additional hardware. This new system has proved to be much more reliable and has greater functionality than the previous one.

All in all, Mr Speaker, the modern, responsive and up-to-date service provided by the Gibraltar Courts Service is a far cry from the system we inherited in 2011. I wish to thank everyone at the Courts Service, in particular the new Chief Executive, Hazel Cumbo, and the Registrar, Liam Yeats, for their efforts and leadership in making this possible.

Mr Speaker, I now turn to HM Prison matters.

#### *HM Prison*

Mr Speaker, I am glad to report that generally it has been an uneventful year for the Prison Service. The Prison Board has characterised life in prison as 'relaxed and positive'.

In respect of population figures, the first four months of 2015 show similar figures when compared to 2014. Daily average inmate population figures for January 2015 stood at 48 prisoners, down from 50 prisoners in January 2014. April 2015 saw an average of 64 prisoners, up from 58 in April 2014. The average population for the last financial year stood at 53 prisoners, up from 49 for 2013/14.

Between June 2014 and May 2015 there have been a total of 16 female admissions and 12 juvenile admissions.

This year, there have been on average 2.5 cases of indiscipline reported per month. Most of these are in respect of minor disciplinary offences, such as disobeying instructions from Prison Officers or using abusive or improper language.

This year has seen further improvements to the rehabilitation and vocational programmes on offer to prisoners. A new woodwork instructor offers classes in the afternoons. There is also a new drug addiction counsellor who attends several times each week and offers the '12 Step' programme. These additions compliment what is now a comprehensive array of services that aid in the rehabilitation of offenders.

In April and May 2014, His Excellency the Governor presented a number of Prison Officers with Overseas Territories – Long Service and Good Conduct medals and clasps. These are very deserving awards and I congratulate and thank these officers for providing many years of loyal and exemplary public service.



Mr Speaker, I now turn to Policing matters.

#### *Gibraltar Police Authority – Annual Report*

Mr Speaker, the Government has outlined a number of strategic priorities, which have been taken into account by the Gibraltar Police Authority (GPA) in the annual policing plan, namely to:

- agree fresh targets in the efficient use of resources and additional road safety measures.
- continually review its strategies to combat drug related crime.
- review how it delivers its services to the community, with continued emphasis on public communication and neighbourhood policing
- maintain Gibraltar's reputation as a secure and safe place for its inhabitants, work force and visitors

Mr Speaker, last year I informed this House that the Gibraltar Police Authority had approved the re-establishment of the post of Chief Superintendent; a position which has now been filled by Richard Mifsud. This has lead to further promotions, most notable are Richard Ullger and Cathal Yeats who have both achieved the rank of Superintendent.

#### *Royal Gibraltar Police (RGP)*

Mr Speaker, we are fortunate to have exceedingly high calibre officers in the RGP. They do excellent work for our Community dealing with both major and minor crime and security matters. This can be evidenced not only in Gibraltar. Our current Commissioner, Mr Eddie Yome is presently the President of the European Association of Airports & Seaports Police and Vice President International Association of Airports & Seaports Police. We should be very proud and thankful to have a professional like Mr Yome not only managing our policing affairs locally but also at the helm of these important and influential associations.

Mr Speaker, to the Government there is no doubt that the RGP are worthy of esteemed recognition. The RGP, like our other emergency services, ensure that we are protected day and night. The RGP are often on the front line of matters affecting the security of our community. In many respects, they are our protectors, keeping us safe and well at all times. The Chief Minister has announced that we will start a process of recognition and of bestowing honour on our emergency services, starting with the RGP.

#### *Cases and Incidents of Interest*

In Police work, no two days are the same and the RGP has to be extremely versatile in order to cope with the different challenges that our officers have to deal with on a daily basis. Just to highlight a few examples:

#### *Sea Rescue*

On Sunday 6th April an RGP marine crew, whilst out on patrol in the area off Europa Point, overheard a report by Spanish Maritime Rescue Service concerning a search and rescue operation in progress. The report concerned a white 6-metre vessel, with two persons on-board, which was drifting 5nm East of Europa Point.



The RGP vessel, with the assistance of Windmill Hill Signal Station, located the vessel approximately 6nm South West of Europa Point and proceeded to ensure that the crew, consisting of two Spanish nationals, were safe and sound. The Spanish Maritime Service was contacted and the vessel was then towed by them to the Port of Algeciras.

#### *Power Station Fire*

A generator caught fire and exploded at Waterport Power Station on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2015. Although there was no need to evacuate residents in the area and no one was injured, the RGP were very active in speaking to, advising and reassuring residents as thick black smoke was billowing from the power station.

#### *Stalking*

On 15<sup>th</sup> July 2014, a local man was arrested for the offence of Stalking. A Search Warrant was executed at his residence where a number of electronic devices and computer equipment were seized. During the course of the search a piece of cannabis resin weighing approximately 1.9 grams was also seized for which he was further arrested. This was the first time that someone was arrested under the new offence of Stalking.

#### *Serious Road Traffic Collision*

On Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2014, following numerous calls from members of the public, RGP officers responded to a road traffic collision by the multi storey car park on Devil's Tower Road. Two local males aged 23 and 24 believed to be travelling in the vehicle were conveyed to St Bernard's Hospital suffering from serious injuries. A 27 year old local man, the driver of a second vehicle, also in the area at the time and believed to be travelling in the same direction, was arrested on suspicion of dangerous driving.

#### *European Arrest Warrant*

A 59 year old Spanish national, was extradited to Spain, following the execution of a European Arrest Warrant. This follows a request for extradition by Spanish judicial authorities who sought to prosecute the man in relation to an allegation of rape and sexual assault on a minor. The alleged offences took place in early December of 2014, in Spain. Shortly after midday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January 2015, he was handed over to officers of the Spanish Policía Nacional at the frontier.

#### *Indecency involving Children*

In the early hours of Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2015, following an extensive investigation by officers of the RGP Safeguarding Unit, in conjunction with Interpol USA, a British National was arrested by RGP officers on suspicion of the following offences:

- Possession of Indecent Photographs of Children
- Distribution of Indecent Photographs of Children
- Taking & Publishing of Indecent Photographs of Children
- Voyeurism

He was subsequently charged with being in possession of indecent photographs of children and Voyeurism.



Mr Speaker, I am thankful to the RGP for the work that they do, day in and day out. To them, it is just another day at work. To me, I am truly glad that they have the courage, dedication and professionalism to be there in the front line doing the things they do to keep our children, friends, family and visitors safe all year around.

To achieve this, the RGP is required to have strategies, resources and assets in place.

#### *New Premises at Casemates*

HM Government of Gibraltar has made available to the RGP new premises at Watergate House. The site will house a new RGP substation in the heart of town. The existing RGP office at City Hall will relocate to Casemates this summer.

#### *New Marine Base*

The RGP relocated from its marine base at Coaling Island to a new purpose built facility at Gun Wharf. The new Gibraltar Government Marine Station provides berthing facilities for all RGP vessels and a crane to service the fleet.

Mr Speaker, the assets of the RGP at sea have been considerably increased during our time in office, with the addition of two interceptor vessels, two large patrol boats and several jet-skis.

The RGP's new 26 metre patrol vessel "Sir Adrian Johns" was named and became operational in November 2014. The vessel, which was constructed in Croatia, has substantially increased the RGP's marine capability.

#### *Extended CCTV Infrastructure*

The installation of CCTV has served as a successful deterrent and is a useful mechanism to prevent and detect crime. The continued future deployment of cameras will further strengthen the RGP's capabilities to combat crime and gather evidence.

#### *New Dogs – RGP Dog Section*

Two new General Purpose Police Dogs have been acquired by the RGP. Funding was also made available for the continued dog handler training required in order to properly deploy the dogs.

#### *New Body Armour*

Following the request by officers for the issue and use of police body armour vests, the RGP has invested considerably in the purchase of this specialist protective equipment, which is now being used by most front line officers.

#### *New Body Worn Cameras*

The RGP will this year be launching a pilot scheme in the use of Body Worn Video Cameras with the aim of fighting crime whilst demonstrating transparency and accountability.

The pilot scheme will allow for the RGP to establish the benefit of the cameras, which are already widely used by many forces in the UK. All footage recorded will be subject to legal safeguards and adhere to RGP internal policies and guidelines for the proper use of the cameras.



### *New Fingerprint Scanner*

The Government will this financial year be making available funding for the acquisition of a “LiveScan” digital fingerprint scanning system. The system allows for the capturing of fingerprints electronically therefore removing the need for cards/paper forms and making the current process faster, cleaner and more accurate.

Mr Speaker, as can be seen, this Government, when necessary and appropriate, continues to invest responsibly, every financial year on all fronts. The RGP is no exception.

Mr Speaker, the work of the Probation Service is to protect the public by the effective rehabilitation of offenders. This is achieved by tackling the causes of offending and enabling offenders to turn their lives around. To this end, the Probation Service will be seeking to further develop its links with other stakeholders such as the Police, Prison and Courts Service. The intention is to create a more responsive, integrated and seamless Service that will manage offenders in a more effective way to reduce serious crime.

Probation Officers provide a crucial service in assisting the various Courts in determining the risk that offenders pose and how these can be best dealt with at the time of sentencing. In this respect, during 2014, the Probation Service, at the request of the Courts, was asked to provide pre-sentence reports in 134 of the more serious criminal cases. The vast majority of these were completed within the 3-week period agreed with Court Service.

Following sentencing some of these offenders are placed by the Courts on Unpaid Work Requirements (formerly known as Community Service Orders) and are required to undertake work under the direction of the Community Service Officer who is an integral part of the Probation Service. During 2014, the Court made a total of 22 such orders, and so far this year, we have already surpassed that figure. The tasks these offenders have undertaken enable them to make a positive contribution back to society and bolster their rehabilitation. They currently work with various community groups and public services on a wide range of projects. One such venture has been the complete refurbishment of the Garrison Library, in particular its grounds and gardens that have seen a complete transformation.

In April of this year, all the Probation Officers undertook a 2-week course in connection with the assessment and management of sex offenders. They are now fully qualified and accredited to UK standards to undertake these tasks. This work is undertaken jointly with the Royal Gibraltar Police.

The Probation Service also works closely with the Prison Service and provides the Parole Board with assessments for inmates eligible to be considered for Parole. During 2014, the service provided 56 such reports, which resulted in 24 inmates being released on Parole under licence all of whom remained under the supervision of the Probation Service.





Mr Speaker, I now turn to Civil Contingency.

#### *Civil Contingency*

Mr Speaker, in Gibraltar we need to be ready and able to deal with potential emergencies and disruptive events; these can range from an epidemic to deliberate acts or attacks. Crises can happen suddenly (e.g. an explosion or a plane crash) or develop gradually (e.g. a flu epidemic or a large fire).

Over the last twelve months, the Civil Contingencies Department has engaged with front line emergency and essential services in order to ensure that in a major incident they are not only able to communicate and coordinate effectively between them but, where necessary and appropriate, under the management of the Civil Contingency Committee (C3).

Gibraltar is not immune from the rest of the world. The recent threat of the Ebola virus spreading to Gibraltar was real and steps were taken to ensure that we were able to meet this threat by being prepared.

The work of the Civil Contingency Department is based on 3 main actions:

- risk assessment
- preparation and planning
- response and recovery

Using the Ebola threat as an example, the Pandemic Plan was put into action. The Civil Contingency Department coordinated the departments and organisations that had direct responsibility under the Plan. This involved continued assessment of the threat, updating preparedness and the provision of equipment that would enable St. Bernard's Hospital to manage any possible case of Ebola. This process was monitored throughout the threat period during which the C3 met twice to monitor the situation and act as necessary.

In March this year, we had an Air Crash Disaster Exercise, which went extremely well with all aims and objectives being met. The new inter-agency major incident Command Support Unit vehicle was utilised for the first time. The exercise followed from lessons learnt during a previous exercise, which was held in December 2014. I highlight this issue because I think it is important to carry out regular exercises in order to ensure that when mistakes are made they happen during an exercise and not during a real event.

Civil Contingency staff members are currently engaged in commissioning the telecommunication systems within the new coordinating complex at No.6 Convent Place, colloquially known as 'the bunker'. This modern and state of the art facility will allow Ministers and Senior Officers to efficiently manage any incident using the latest technology and operating from an excellent working environment.



Mr Speaker, I am also happy to report that the Government has provided funds this financial year under the I&DF for the purchase of emergency equipment to be used within Evacuation Centres. This is the first phase of a 3-year program aimed at building up stocks of essential equipment and resources to be used if it were necessary to deploy a large number of people to areas of safety during a major incident.

Mr Speaker, I now turn to the Gibraltar Fire and Rescue Service.

#### *Gibraltar Fire and Rescue Service*

Mr Speaker, this is an important year for the Gibraltar Fire and Rescue Service as it celebrates the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the formation of a Fire Service in Gibraltar. It was on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November of 1865 that an Order in Council established the Sanitary Commissioners of Gibraltar (the forerunners of the City Council) whose responsibility was to ensure that adequate resources to prevent and fight fires were provided in Gibraltar.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> June 1976, the Fire Service Ordinance was passed in the Gibraltar House of Assembly. The Ordinance set out the constitution, duties and powers of the Gibraltar Fire Service

On the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2014, the City Fire Brigade was renamed the Gibraltar Fire and Rescue Service, a change that truly represents the modern and progressive role carried out by the Service.

The start of the celebrations commenced with the launch of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary stamps on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February. This was followed by group photos on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March, a talk at the John Mackintosh Hall on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April entitled Bucket To Pumps (History of the Fire Service) and the 23<sup>rd</sup> July will see the launch of the book – A Tradition of Service. Other functions are expected to follow during the course of the year.

The GFRS does a fantastic job for the community. It is an organisation composed of people that dedicate their lives to protecting others and we are all very proud of the work and level of service that they provide. Their training and professionalism really does make the difference between life and death in situations where those precious first few minutes are vital for measured success.

During the financial year 2014/15, various officers attended a number of courses in the UK (mainly at the Fire Service College and other UK institutions) and in Gibraltar at various institutions and venues as required by the course in question (ranging from Management to Coxswain courses).

Furthermore, with regards to operational incidents as a whole, the GFRS responded to 1,403 calls of which 116 were actual fires and 714 were other forms of emergencies. The balance comprised of other requests including 180 false alarms with good intent.

In addition to call outs that appertain solely and directly to GFRS resources, the Fire Control Operators have also mobilised the GHA Ambulance on 4,655 occasions.



The GFRS is also involved in numerous statutory processes that require the issue of licences (Building Applications, Certificate of Fitness, Petroleum Licences, etc). A total of 872 licences were processed in 2014/15.

The Service is involved in many other processes focusing on fire safety at home, work and in the community. This is comprised of talks, courses, drills, investigations and the distribution of booklets and leaflets.

Much is owed to our brave firemen who deal with high-risk situations, and when they are not, they are constantly training for it. Thankfully, in Gibraltar we do not have many major incidences of fire. Our firemen nevertheless need to be trained to the highest standards, because in any major fire the danger to loss of life is potentially high and there is usually a real need to make quick and informed decisions.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014 and 18<sup>th</sup> March 2015, the GFRS was involved and played a major role in two major incident exercises carried out within the Gibraltar Airport, and has contributed significantly to the creation of the Gibraltar Aircrash Response Plan.

Throughout the year, the GFRS has attended numerous incidents of varying nature, some placing considerable demands on the Department's resources. On the 28<sup>th</sup> December 2014, a fire broke out within a storage compartment adjacent to and owned by the Sunborn Hotel. Given the operational requirements of such an incident, a recall of 8 firefighters was implemented in order to cover for any other eventuality. In order to guarantee the safety of any persons in close proximity to the incident, an evacuation of the Sunborn Hotel and surrounding structures was carried out. Thankfully, the blaze was brought under control without incident or further disruption.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2015, the GFRS was requested to attend a cave rescue at Lower St. Michael's Cave. Even though the incident did not escalate in terms of resource requirements, it was nevertheless prolonged due to the difficulties encountered by our rescuers in the extrication process and the environment in which they had to work.

A project management team has been established composed of Senior and Sub Officers from the GFRS and a Government representative to plan the construction of the new fire station. A separate training area suitable for conducting fire and rescue simulations has also been identified. The project management team has carried out a familiarisation visit to a number of UK Fire and Rescue Service stations and training facilities as well as bringing back invaluable information in respect of different hosing and breathing apparatus equipment. The visit proved invaluable as it provided first hand experience of what is required from a purpose built training facility, its design and layout, quality of construction, etc together with an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages and lessons learnt on building and operating a training facility.

Mr Speaker, I now turn to International Exchange of Information.



## INTERNATIONAL COMPLIANCE

### *Exchange of Information on Request (EOIR)*

We have tax information exchange agreements signed with 27 partner countries, 13 of which have actively requested information. All agreements have entered into force with the exception of Greece, Italy and Turkey. Italy has now ratified the TIEA with Gibraltar and we are expecting reciprocal notification for entry into force at any moment.

Three further TIEAs are in the final stages of being concluded and signed.

Over one hundred requests have been received and fulfilled by the Exchange of Information on Request Unit (EOIR) of Gibraltar Finance to date with a further 50 or so received and processed by the Income Tax Office (the latter relating only to requests from Spain).

The processes put in place by EOIR were reviewed by the OECD Global Forum and published in the Phase 2 report 'Implementation of the OECD standard in practice' in October 2014. The 120-page Phase 2 report examined ten essential elements of Gibraltar's record in exchange of information on request and individually rated Gibraltar as 'Compliant' in seven of the elements and 'Largely Compliant' in the remaining three. Importantly, Gibraltar was not judged to be 'Partially Compliant' or 'Non-Compliant' in any of the essential elements reviewed.

No requests for information have yet been received under the multilateral convention.

Gibraltar has established a network of over 130 tax information exchange mechanisms to the OECD standard with some 77 countries; of which around 100 have entered into force. These comprise:

- 1) Bilateral tax information exchange agreements;
- 2) Directive 2011 / 16 / EU on Administrative Cooperation in the Field of Taxation;
- 3) OECD and Council of Europe Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters

Council Directive 2011 / 16 / EU on Administrative Cooperation in the Field of Taxation is due to be amended by the end of this year by Council Directive 2014 / 107 / EU to provide for mandatory automatic exchange of information in the field of taxation. This will implement the Common Reporting Standard or so-called 'Global FATCA', enabling automatic exchange of information with EU member states and extending coverage worldwide to over 100 signatories of the Multilateral Competent Authority Agreement on Automatic Exchange of Financial Account Information. The MCAA was signed by the Chief Minister on behalf of Gibraltar in Berlin on 29 October 2014.

As a consequence of the above efforts, Gibraltar continues its progress of removal from the so called "tax haven" lists. Poland has become the latest Jurisdiction to update its schedule of countries and territories that it considers to be non-cooperative and thus discriminates against. Over the last six months or so, Canada, Estonia and Italy have also removed Gibraltar from similar lists.



Mr Speaker, before I end my address I would like to refer to a matter that I have Ministerial responsibility for – the small boats marina.

Last year I informed the House that works on the marina had started. This year, I am happy to report that works on the marina are well advanced with an estimated project completion date towards the end of the summer.

The project encompasses a 700-berth facility a promenade for public use as well as an outer wharf of around 600 metres for commercial use principally aimed at the super and mega yacht market.

This is a much-awaited and anticipated project.

Mr Speaker, I would like to thank my staff and all those that work in the various departments, which form part of my ministerial responsibilities. Much has been accomplished over these past four years and I am grateful to them for their support, hard work and dedication, but in particular, for rising up to the many challenges that we have faced together.

Thank you.