



HM Government of Gibraltar

Ministry of Sports, Culture,
Heritage and Youth

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Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth The Hon Steven Linares MP Budget Speech 2015/2016

Mr Speaker

This is my 16th budget speech to this house, my 4th as a Minister and my last before the next general election.

My responsibilities cover Sports, Culture, Heritage, Youth; Civil Rights the Ombudsman and Citizens Advise Bureau and Drug Rehabilitation.

CULTURE

The Ministry for Culture has been very active during the past four years since we have been in Government and especially during the last Financial Year.

Not only have we increased cultural grants and improved many of our facilities; we have supported and organised many events in conjunction with Gibraltar Cultural Services (GCS). I will not repeat the mess we inherited from the previous GSD administration where wage hikes were given weeks before the last general election.

Suffice to say that it has now been replaced by GCS on the cultural side together with the Ministry of Culture.

The GCS is a private company which is owned by former Agency officers now manage all the cultural facilities, organise or tender out traditional events such as the Drama Festival which has seen a growing number of extra nights of plays with more of an international profile, the Spring Festival and all the art, story competitions and exhibitions.



An event that was done this year and produced by GCS is that of the Retrospective Exhibition paying tribute to Mario Finlayson's artistic life.

GCS also oversee Calentita which is tendered out and has become bigger and better as promised, Miss Gibraltar, New Year's event and the re-introduction of the New Year's Classical Concerts to name but a few.

There are new events they now organise such as the Festival of Lights, Gib Talks that started in January this year and the workshops for school children in conjunction with the Young Shakespeare Company.

All these events have proved to be of great success.

No one can argue the great improvements that have been seen in the John Mackintosh Hall that is managed by GCS.

They have invested in new chairs, new tables, TV and audio equipment, projectors, Internet services, blackout blinds, air-conditioning and many other things.

The public toilets in the hall are being refurbished and will include tiles to floors and walls and new LED lighting.

They have refurbished most of our meeting rooms, changing rooms, exhibition rooms and communal areas. New windows have been installed as well as new flooring, painting and decorating the Hall in general.

The Library has gone through a total transformation.

A large selection of military books, fiction, nonfiction and children's books was donated by the MOD library last year as well as library furniture and library supplies. Some of this has been added to our current collection the rest will be added once we extend the library further.

There are two more computers for public use with free Wi-Fi and an extra one for the administration reception desk.

The Mackintosh Trust kindly donated 3 more computers for the reference section and the subscription fee to University Journals for student's research.

One of our manifesto commitments was to have Homework Support Groups. GCS together with the Department of Education are working closely to provide both Homework and research assistance to students at the Mackintosh Hall Library.

A pilot scheme was launched last year, which has proved to be a total success. Now GCSE and even A level students are taking advantage of this service that has qualified teachers from the college and schools at the library to help students in their research.



A digital project is underway with the introduction of Mandarin Online Public Access Catalogue. This will not only make the process of borrowing books more efficient, but library members will be able to look at books on offer and pre-book them via an online service.

The library facilities has also had new air-conditioning installed as well as LED lighting and new Children's' furniture.

Works to the courtyard to extend the cafeteria and install a new gutter system has been approved by the DPC. These works will commence very soon.

A substantial amount of money will be spent to replace the roof of the theatre which had not seen maintenance for years and with the high winds this winter parts of it blew away.

GCS also manages the Ince's Hall. I can announce that whilst the conversion of the Gibraltar International Bank took place the theatre benefitted from having a new mezzanine floor with extra toilets and changing room facilities and a scissor lift has been installed to help with heavy props from the ground floor to backstage.

We have improved both the Mackintosh and Ince's Hall theatre technical infrastructure.

We have invested in new sound consoles; talk back communication system, microphones, projectors, and other technical accessories.

We will soon be investing in both theatres on new PA systems, new lighting systems, translation equipment and other theatre enhancements.

The Gustavo Bacarisas Gallery now has a new CCTV and security alarm system installed as well as new Internet facilities. Made to measure glass cabinets are also available for displaying secure items.

I'm happy to announce that GCS now has in-house technicians who will manage all technical infrastructures of all the Facilities that now also include the Open Air Theatre at the Alameda Botanical Gardens.

The Central Hall another of the facility managed by GCS has had a new commercial kitchen installed, new curtains have been bought which has enhanced the place for users.

GCS has been tasked to manage the Mario Finlayson National Art Gallery that was inaugurated at the beginning of this month.

Another manifesto commitment completed and one that we should all be proud of. The City Hall is now under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture. The Mario Finlayson National Art Gallery. I will mention a little more the City Hall later in relation to Heritage.

Montagu Bastion is now the Gibraltar Exhibition of Modern Art Gallery GEMA. This Gallery has been housing The Little Constellation Network Exhibition that will end in August. The project is part and parcel of our policy of exporting our Art work and learning from other small countries about their culture.



Ramps and user-friendly installations are being installed in all Cultural venues and a portable platform is now available for outdoor events.

A Performing Arts Academy will soon start in Flat Bastion Magazine. This will fulfill three of our manifesto commitments. Learn an instrument. Having an Academy of Performing Arts and establishing an Orchestra. Works to the premises will commence within the next few weeks.

In October we will see the European Show Dance Championships hosted at the Tercentenary Hall. Many will travel to compete which will fill our hotels and forms part of our policy of events lead tourism.

A total of 22 Clubs, Associations, Bands, NGO's and others have benefitted of having been allocated premises as promised in our manifesto and we will continue to identify places which we can allocate more. I am happy to state that all these have been allocated using the system that was used by LPS. Before we came into government this was ignored by the previous GSD administration who allocated directly to whoever they wanted not having any regard to those who had been waiting for premises some for up to ten years.

New premises have been given to the Taekwondo Association at North Jumpers Bastion. This is part and parcel of converting this area into a hub of martial arts groups that is the Martial Art Centre to which we committed in our manifesto.

We are currently working closely together with the Department of Education in order to provide and extend the community use of schools for cultural purposes. To date the Bayside School drama studio will be available for this purpose.

Events

Since we came into Government our goal of creating events which attract many to come and enjoy them with us has seen the creation of festivals such as:

The Jazz Festival

The Gibraltar Music Festival

The Literary Festival

The Jazz Festival and The Gibraltar Music Festival were two of our manifesto commitments. Both are being run under the auspices of the Ministry for Culture.

The Ministry for Culture has also supported

The Gibraltar World Music Festival

The Gibraltar International Song Festival

The Fringe Festival

The Wine Festival

The Calentita is our Gastronomical Festival that has become bigger and better every year since we have been in Government as we said we would in our manifesto.



All the events mentioned above are part of our Government's policy of events lead tourism. This includes the sporting events that I will mention later we support. Events Lead Tourism is attracting people to our shores and this brings money to our economy.

SPORT

On the Sporting front a great deal has been happening since we came into Government and also since the GFA achieved its International recognition as the 54th member of UEFA.

- A new building is being constructed that will address certain UEFA requirements, but these will benefit all sports. The new building will accommodate. Facilities such as:
- Changing Room area (Officials/Delegates/Teams)
- Doping Control Centre
- 2 TV Studios
- One media centre
- Press conference room
- 2 additional bars
- Additional public toilets
- Reception area
- Increased storage
- Press Boxes
- VIP Hospitality area

(all the above fully accessible to all)

All this will enhance the use of the area for International events and provide much needed upgrades in the general facility and spectator stands.

Mr Speaker

It is with great pride and joy that within the overall sporting upgrade of facilities we have built a state of the art Stay and Play Building. The GSLA's Stay and Play programme for children with special needs was previously done in one of the Boathouse Vaults.

Now this building has:

- Purpose built toilets and changing areas
- Kitchenette
- Cleaning areas for activities
- Perimeter padding
- Easy access ramp
- Inclusive playground equipment
- Safe play surface

This summer's programme will use this facility, as it will be handed over to the GSLA shortly.



The installation of an extra floor in the empty space above the Hockey Stand changing rooms complete with accessible external access walkway will enhance the Bayside Complex and will provide much needed office and storage space for Sports Associations.

Within the Tercentenary Hall, the old ground-floor lecture rooms have been re-provided on the first floor and will be kitted out to allow use by the general community. In addition, an extra small store and lecture room have been provided.

The GSLA can now make use of a new Boardroom to hold meetings and use for other things, as this was not previously available. In addition, the new reception area has improved the first impression that users to the facility get when walking in to the facility and will enhance operations.

Both the existing Bar and Cafeteria will be relocated and amalgamated as one offering extra services to the general public and freeing up space for the GSLA to utilize and expand its services for other sporting projects.

Both GSLA 5-a-side pitches were replaced as they had become unsafe. The Tennis court required replacing as the turf pile height was affecting the actual playing of the sport in this facility.

The Hockey Pitch has been limited in its use for years, due to the fact that lights was not provided and once it got dark in winter approximately 6.30pm no more training could be practiced and this meant that the pitch was only being used barely two hours daily.

This was significantly hampering the development of the sport whose league programme was limited to weekends. After long discussions with the M.O.D, NATs, and other stakeholders and to mitigate their concerns collapsible pylons have been installed on the Northern Side of the field with shorter fixed pylons installed on the southern side of the facility. Extra floodlights under the canopy will supplement the extra lux levels needed. The GSLA has entered into an agreement with the M.O.D to facilitate the use of these floodlights. The works are now complete. Another Manifesto Commitment complete.

The management of the GSLA will continue to improve facilities that have been neglected for years. This is the case with the Squash Court and the offices. Further changes and refurbishment will take place in order to maximise space.

Relocation of cricket nets to maximise use and provide more centralised point for our Special Olympians.

More studio area will be made available once the relocation of the Bar takes place.

Bin stores will be constructed on Bayside Road, which is a legal requirement, an Overhaul of hockey pitch sprinkler system plus the refurbishment of the Squash Court will also be done soon.



GSLA will continue with improvements/maintenance to equipment as and when needed. The GSLA took over the running of the swimming pools during our term in office and this has seen a great deal of improvements.

Two months after we came into government the whole of the ducts of the air treatment system collapsed. The air treatment system had not been working for years and this meant that users were exposed to high levels of chemicals that are normally used to purify the pool water. Further diesel-generated engines ran the filter and pump system. The cost of this was exorbitant.

The installation of the photovoltaic system and dehumidifier replaced the previous not fit for purpose system. The pump and filter system together with the heating of the pool and the hot water in the changing rooms now work with the solar panel system.

In the last financial year a total of £85,000 in running cost has been saved from this system. All changing rooms, spectator and poolside facilities have also been refurbished. All this has been done on the 25m pool.

I am happy to announce that major refurbishment works has already commenced that will include the installation of a photovoltaic system and dehumidifier that will replace the previous system, which was getting close to a complete shut down and was beyond economical repair. It had not received any sort of maintenance since the facilities opened. The new systems will:

- Improve air quality and water temperature maintenance that were bordering on inadequate
- Provide savings in terms of water/ electricity/fuel
- Conform to HM GoG environmental policies regarding carbon footprints etc.
- Reduce overall maintenance costs.

In addition, the interior of the facility will undergo a much needed refurbishment that will include:

- Essential attention to poolside issues
- Refurbishing of changing rooms
- Reconfiguration of easy access/family changing rooms
- Replacement of flooring
- General facelift
- Tackling of issues with plumbing problems.

This project will mirror that undertaken in the 25m pool and will mean that both pools will have received attention during the current administration's term in office. Contractors have been given very strict time frames so that the works do not impinge on the peak summer months. This facility is one of the GSLA's busiest so there is no good time to shut it down so a period when the least amount of users would be affected was identified. In addition, continued use could have possibly meant extensive equipment malfunction and an extended closure.



The state in which we inherited these pools goes to show the lack of commitment of the Previous GSD Administration to things that matter to our community.

The Gibraltar Bathing Pavilion's Phase Two has been completed and the pool is now open to the general public. The issues regarding the main pools have been solved with the main contractors absorbing the costs and maintenance will now be easier. Improvements have now been made in terms of accessibility to the sea and pools and the general public will now be able to enjoy a fantastic facility.

The GSLA has and will continue with the highly successful and ever popular Summer Sports and Stay and Play programmes. The new facility mentioned before will enhance the Stay and Play programme this year. Nat West are once again sponsors and activities have been extended to include older age groups with the diversity of activities increasing year on year with the collaboration from other agencies and Departments such as the Royal Gibraltar Police, Dept. of the Environment, Dept. for Social Services, St John's Ambulance to name a few as well as a wide cross section of the local voluntary sports associations.

The Sports Development Unit has continued to promote and offer coaching courses and opportunities for volunteers delivering several workshops that include child protection.

I would like to at this stage to thank all those volunteers for their hard work and dedication they put. They give a lot of their own time and without them all sports will just not be able to function. The SDU is also working closely with the GHA and the Physical Activities Association for Mature and Older Adults to increase and promote partnerships in terms of exercise prescription and cardiac rehab. These are at an early stage but very much active.

Given the stumbling blocks constantly experienced with accreditation through UK entities the GSLA has made initial contacts with the University of Gibraltar about investigating the possibility of getting these accredited locally. The GSLA will continue with its courses but having them backed by the University would be a major step. Quality assurance etc. needs to be considered. Discussions are at a very embryonic stage but look positive.

A new GSAC committee was elected in September and HM GoG through the GSLA once again supported locally registered Sports Associations with participation at International Events/Improvements to Facilities and Sports Development projects the financial support breakdown is as follows.

This past year GSAC has also been asked to advise Government on matters not related to funding. The wealth of knowledge and experience held by the members of the Council was in the GSLA's opinion not been maximised and several contentious issues have been solved amicably and satisfactorily after the advice of the council was sought. Other issues are still pending. This advice has also included to oversee for the GSLA that sporting association are run in a manner that is acceptable to the international bodies they belong to and for those that don't yet to make sure that they are equipped to be able to form part for their international bodies.



GSAC is also the body that decides the level of funding that each association gets once they have applied for this.

The Government has this year committed £500,000 for this purpose.

In addition, financial support has also been given to both the Commonwealth Games Association who participated in Glasgow 2014 and to the Island Games Association for Team Gibraltar's participation in Jersey 2015 to be held next week.

Our government values our participation in international competition since those who compete are ambassadors flying our flag and now even advertise the tourism brand of visitgibraltar.gi
The GSLA has also hosted or assisted and will continue to do so events such as:

UEFA Futsal Friendlies

FIBA C Division under 18 Men and Women Championships

Champions League and Europa League qualifiers

Gibraltar Darts Trophy

Junior Chess Open

Various International Gibraltar Chess Open

International Rugby friendlies

Squash-International Open

Gibraltar Regatta

Rock Master Ten Pin bowling this year will see a revamped competition:

The GSLA also have and will continue to support

Non Sport's Events include:

Song Festival

Various Music Festivals-Summer Months

Classic Car Rally

Harley Davidson Rally

International Dog Shows

IDO European Dance Championships

As per every year the GSLA's facilities including those offered through the Schools Community Use programme have once again been oversubscribed and the GSLA's facilities team have worked very closely with the Dept. of Education in compiling a user audit analysing use of facilities that has led to underused slots been re-allocated to those on a waiting list.

Due to Gibraltar's limited land mass and the increase of the participation levels of our people in sporting as well as cultural activities coupled with the fact that we are organising more and more events creates a problem, but we are constantly trying to identify areas where these can be done. We have recently introduced a new pricing policy that whilst offering the GSLA the opportunity to collect revenue from foreign groups and private entities wanting to use our facilities it has also



curtailed abuse by tour operators who were putting unacceptable pressure on local volunteer associations to fulfil their company's commercial obligations at times without prior notice.

The HMGOG continues to welcome the visit of many groups that promotes the development of local sport and privately organised events above revenue collection (although they can go hand in hand) however this abuse needed to be stopped.

The GSLA is undergoing a general management restructure the first steps of which should be visible soon and will provide the Authority with the tools to modernise its practices and policies. The integration into the HM GoG's I.T. system is well under way and an online booking system is being designed that will form part of the e-Gov portal and will provide online booking services to those with access to the portal. Counter and telephone services will still continue but the system should increase the efficiency of the service and curtail abuse. This will allow the department to develop and release staff to deal with items, which at the moment are left "pending."

The GSLA is also undergoing a re-branding exercise with the design of a new logo (designed by staff) and the relevant paraphernalia that goes with it. In addition, the old website has been revamped and should be ready for launch soon providing a "one stop shop" for information and contacts on current events/news and relevant documents.

Within this rebranding the GSLA will go live on social media keeping the general public updated with news and events!!

King's Bastion Leisure Centre

King's Bastion Leisure Centre was managed by the GSLA before March of this year.

On carrying out a cost effective exercise in the centre that was costing the tax payer around £2.6m per annum we have now moved to reducing this substantially without affecting in anyway the service provided. We have now moved to making this place work on a commercial way without increasing the costs to users.

Ending the contracts that were entered into by the previous GSD administration in which there was no incentive to make it work commercially has done this.

It meant that the operators would spend say £100,000 in cost and make an income of £50,000. Then KBLC Ltd would pay them the shortfall of £50,000 plus 30%. The incentive therefore was to spend more and earn less.

Now most operators have moved to pay rent and to make their business work as any other commercial entity. Therefore making huge savings.

Further we are looking at ways in which we can reduce the cost of electricity that the ice rink consumes by seeing if solar panels can be placed on the roof to produce electricity and at the same



time have air conditioning for the whole of the centre since the one that was originally place there was not fit for purpose and broke down soon after the centre opened.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the management staff of the centre that has taken the brave decision to run the whole of the centre themselves.

Further to thank some of the users of the rooms at the centre who have had to at short notice made alternative arrangements to give way to the IT department to use these rooms to introduce the new ID card system.

Suffice to say that once this is complete they will be able to return to using these facilities.

YOUTH SERVICE

In the past year the Gibraltar Youth Service has undergone a number of significant changes, most noticeably within its structure and staffing arrangements. This has led to an increase in face-to-face work as we are reaching out to more young people.

The administration role for the Gibraltar Youth Service is now based at the main offices of the Ministry for Sport, Culture, Heritage and Youth at the City Hall where the staff continues to provide support for the Youth Service.

The professional compliment at the Youth Service has been restructured to consist of a Principal Youth Officer, two Senior Youth Workers and five Youth and Community Workers.

In September 2014 four new Youth and Community Workers joined the Youth Work team.

The youth work team is complimented by supply Youth Support Workers who provide support to the full time Youth and Community Work team. The Gibraltar Youth Service has been working with Human Resources Department in regularising the employment status and proper contracts are being issued. This will correct a longstanding issue affecting this group of workers.

In addition to support the work carried out at the Youth clubs we have once again offered the locally recognised and assessed course in 'Understanding Youth Work to volunteers and prospective Youth Support Workers. This year Trainees were able to select the assessed or non-assessed route (the non-assessed route offered the trainee a certificate of attendance along with the chance to volunteer their services to various youth work projects).

The Youth Service is committed to personal professional development and it has set up a skills audit of all its employees.

The Youth Clubs have undergone significant refurbishment and now, in addition to its current facilities, they have all received new air-conditioning systems and Multi Media Stations with surround systems. The Youth Centre has been upgraded and it now enjoys new equipment for photography and media projects, DJ booth and new modern lighting equipment.



The Youth Service team has been very committed to continue operating the four youth clubs. In addition to normal club opening hours the team has also worked very hard to reach out to more young people and offer more weekend work of high value and quality youth work projects. The Youth Centre began opening its doors during the weekend as from the 18th January 2014.

The Youth Work team has been able to offer young people the opportunity to take part in new community projects with outside organisations.

They have participated in Charity work by helping the Cheshire Home Group with their Flag Day and manning the stand on the Mental Health Week to name but two.

The Luce Foundation project leading to a residential week in Spain, 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, organising Treasure Hunts, Halloween Events, Easter projects that provided food hampers to vulnerable adults in the Community.

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

Trips to Isla Magica, La Finca, Alcaidesa, Aventura Amazonia, Tivoli Benalmadena, Sierra Nevada Granada and more that help young people develop person skills.

Young people from the Youth Centre hosted a group from Wales and returned with them visiting Wales for two week. This trip saw them do many fundraising activities to pay for the trip.

A group of young people from Sweden visited the Youth Centre and both groups cooked local/national dishes for each other. Their Leader had previously been involved in a Youth Exchange with the Gibraltar Youth Service in the late nineties.

All in all a great variety of events that empowers the young to develop their person skills and to become caring people in our society.

A Youth Forum has been formed to give young people the opportunity to share their views and opinions on issues that affect them and our community. The members have had meeting with me were they had the chance to put their views forward and make positive contributions to our community's development.

Young people have been involved in a project to create a short movie on what the youth clubs offer as a way of attracting more young people to participate in activities organised by the Youth Services. The movie called My Opinion Matters has come about as a consequence of the fact that they know that we listen to them and value their opinions and to this end I intend to meet with them as regularly as they deem necessary.

The Youth Advisory Council has been re-established and will also meet regularly.



As can be seen the Youth Service is an extremely busy organisation and has been providing and successfully achieving these projects during the last few years. With the new Youth and Community Workers in post, we hope to continue our successes and look forward to an even busier and promising year ahead.

HERITAGE

This year has also been a busy one for heritage and the coming year promises to be equally exciting.

As I stated above we have now completely undone the mess created By the GSD administration in relation to the Culture and Heritage Agency by replacing the cultural side by GCS. The Heritage side is replaced by the Museum team under the tenure of Knightsfield Holdings Ltd, together with the Ministry of Heritage that did not really exist.

Insofar as the Gibraltar Museum is concerned it is now functioning under the terms of a management contract signed with government and I am pleased to report that the sense of having moved away from an agency system is palpable already. Among the improvements to the museum this coming year, the 85th anniversary of its foundation will be the complete reinstallation of its climate control system, important for the proper care of the collections and also for the comfort of visitors. The last financial year saw the repainting of the building that is looking like a property of significant, which is deserving of a Museum.

The entrance will be relocated to its original place; now that the building has been refurbished it makes sense to have this entrance at the northeastern corner of the building. As part of these changes, new displays will be opened as part of the museum's on-going programme of renewal. The recent open day was, yet again, an unqualified success.

In relation to the involvement of the Ministry we now have a governmental oversight of our tangible heritage and archaeology that has been augmented and retained in-house by the appointment last October of our own archaeological officer. Here as well the change has been great and much for the better. Our heritage filter is now stronger than ever with direct liaising between the government, the Gibraltar Heritage Trust, the Museum Team and private developers to iron out as many heritage concerns as possible before DPC.

Our new heritage filter also provides expert advice to DPC itself as well as to different government departments and important stakeholders such as the Gibraltar Heritage Trust. This will streamline any heritage concerns that may arise. Already the system is being put into place where developer-funded archaeology will be the norm rather than the exception making Gibraltar increasingly compliant with our international obligations and current archaeological best practice in the UK.

To this end, I am happy to report that the Gibraltar Heritage & Antiquities Bill is now in its final draft. A highly complex and encompassing legislation that will enshrine many of our heritage and archaeological concerns providing a higher level of protection for buildings, sites and conservation



areas than has existed to date. The bar will be set high, thereby providing the necessary baseline from which to seriously protect and preserve our unique heritage for future generations. The mantra throughout has been heritage protection that save-guards development; continued construction tempered by measured heritage mitigation. Needless to say, it has taken us four years to get right what it took the opposition sixteen years to fail on. This has been achieved with the participation of all stakeholders.

The Ministry of Heritage has been instrumental in a large number of projects big and small across the whole of Gibraltar including minor works on the Dockyard Clock, Trafalgar Cemetery, St. Jago's Arch, King's Bastion, Eastern Beach Bunker, Giralda Gardens and others. Plus major works on Montagu Bastion and Main Guard – the Gibraltar Heritage Trust offices, the Old Mole Head

While in many cases these projects commenced last year we can now report the satisfactory completion or near completion of all of these.

In the case of Wellington Front we are now well under way to opening the whole of the promenade linking Line Wall Road at the level with the John Mackintosh Hall to the King's Bastion Leisure Centre. This is a first phase that we hope to eventually link southwards to Rosia Road and north to the American War Memorial.

The Northern Defences, long abandoned and derelict, is now getting the attention that it deserves and the contractor on site will continue to work on this unique site with a view to open it up to the public and allow private entities to consider expressions of interest on the whole or part of the site.

The City Hall is now exclusively for the use of cultural, leisure and historical events as we promised in our manifesto we would do. As mentioned above the Mario Finlayson National Art Gallery is now opened to the public. The Mario Finlayson National Art Gallery, took only five months after it was first announced by the Chief Minister to complete. Not only does this speak volumes about the professionalism, commitment and dedication to work of my staff and the Gibraltar Cultural Services but also this Government's profound respect, appreciation and ethos of preservation of our culture, architectural heritage and identity as a people.

This is only the first phase of bringing back this iconic building to its former glory.

As most of you know the Mayor's Parlour is situated on the first floor of the building and guests to receptions hosted by the Mayor were either not able to attend or had to be carried by people of goodwill up the stairs. Our government's policy is to make places accessible to all.

Therefore the second phase will be done in this financial year and will see a much-needed lift, which will go, all the way up the top floor. This will be followed by the refurbishment of the exterior of the building in order to cure the historic problem of dampness. Thereafter the rest of the building will be refurbished.

As for the future, we can look forward to a number of exciting heritage restoration and refurbishment projects including the façade facelift of the Ince's Hall to complement the excellent job done on the Gibraltar International Bank; the repair and restoration of Grand Battery to



continue from works on the Northern Defences; and the active rediscovery and reuse of abandoned heritage assets such as military magazines, bunkers and buildings for use by Clubs, Associations, NGO's and others.

The Performing Arts Academy mentioned above is yet another example how places of heritage can be restored in a sensible manner for our current needs.

This past year has seen intense activity with regards to the World Heritage Bid for the site that has been named "Gibraltar Neanderthal Caves and Environments".

The Department for Culture Media and Sport of Her Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom is presenting this bid on behalf of the HM Government of Gibraltar as their sole nomination for 2016. This speaks volumes for the quality and potential of the site and its outstanding universal values.

The nomination dossier was completed and submitted on time and it is now in the process of evaluation by UNESCO. In addition to the preparation of the dossier, which has been carried out by the Gibraltar Museum after wide consultation with stakeholders in a formal Steering Committee, works have been carried out to the site and some are in the process of completion.

These works have included cliff stabilisation and protection of the cliff above Gorham's Cave, removal of old scaffolds and debris accumulated on the beach over the years, repair of the steps leading down to Gorham's Cave and erection of new access into the caves themselves. Other works have included the beautification of the approaches to the site, particularly along Europa Advance Road.

The assistance of other Gibraltar Government Ministries and Departments and NGO's should also go on record as all have pulled together in order to be able to deliver on what has been and continues to be a major project with international recognition. We are pleased with the outcome so far but are not resting here.

A five-year management plan has been produced for the site and has the approval of stakeholders and the government. In order to continue this process we will introduce interpretation of the site and we will promote the site as a new tourist product.

I hasten to add that the site's sensitivity means that access to the caves will be strictly controlled but there will be viewing platforms at the Europa Advance Batteries from where the caves can be seen and understood. As part of the process I am pleased that we have been able to work together with the Gibraltar Clay Target Shooting Association in the beautification of the site that they currently occupy at the 3rd Europa Advance Battery. It is a good example of how the community can come together and rally round a cause with everyone winning in the process.

In order to ensure a balance between excavation and protection of the site a five-year research and conservation strategy has also been prepared and this will run in parallel with the management plan. Recognising the importance of this aspect an international committee was appointed headed by a former deputy director of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, to oversee the strategy. The excavations have now resumed in these important sites during June and July. To



this end, extra staff is being recruited, amongst them archaeologists, research and technical assistants as well as and administration personnel.

Together with this bid, works have also been undertaken at the old Moorish Castle Prison site. A feasibility study is currently being carried out with a view to providing office accommodation, laboratory facilities and storage space for the UNESCO project. An added bonus is that the historic sections of the old castle walls and prison will also be opened to the public for guided tours, eventually linking to the Northern Defences area through Road to the Lines.

I am also pleased to report that this year's Calpe Conference will focus on the Neanderthals, appropriate in a year of nomination, and that an impressive line-up of top world speakers has been prepared. The conference will take place in the brand new premises of the University of Gibraltar between the 24th and 27th of September, a fitting tribute to the academic and learned nature of the conference. I am happy to have collaborated with my colleague in Education in making this possible.

In fact, by working in the collegiate approach that our government have instilled, has meant that collaboration between departments has worked in many areas linked to heritage. The opportunity of the refurbishment of the museum building was taken to install new entrances into the attic, including new swift and bat boxes in key locations and this was done in collaboration with the Ministry for the Environment. I am pleased to announce here that the swifts have taken immediately to these new nest sites so we are making a contribution here to the conservation of these birds.

Finally and continuing with this government's commitment to research I can announce two important pilot research projects.

The first is in collaboration with the University of Cambridge in studying the human remains uncovered at the Old St. Bernard Hospital site, constituting a uniquely large and historically significant sample. The study of which provides an important historical snapshot into the development of health in Gibraltar during the 17th and 18th Century.

A second research project is being organised with University College London. This project looks into recovering for posterity through the use of Texture Mapping the important 18th Century graffiti from the Gibraltar under Siege buildings. Some of this graffiti includes text by Lieutenant Ince, of Great Siege fame and a founder member of the Soldier Artificer Company, the precursor to the Royal Engineers. Military graffiti of this age and importance is very rare and provides yet another example, of Gibraltar's unique place in history.

Drug rehabilitation

Since assuming responsibility for Bruce's Farm this administration has worked tirelessly to ensure that those who suffer from the consequences of addiction are able access this service and be dealt with in an expeditious manner. For the last three years we have seen year upon year increases in the occupancy Bruce's Farm. In fact, the average occupancy during this year tells us that we may yet have our busiest year since Bruce's Farm was opened in 1999.



Over the past year we have established a partnership with Broadway Lodge, one of the most respected and longest established drug rehabilitation centres in the UK. Already we have a rolling programme with them to oversee the continued improvement in the services we provide. Some of our members of staff have been able to undertake training attachments with them, and one of their senior managers has spent three months with us as part of a review of the service we provide. This has allowed us to benchmark our service and implement a series of improvements that are still ongoing.

As was announced in my predecessor's budget speech last year, we have now employed an additional counsellor who now provides a further source of support for those who, for a variety of reasons, cannot commit to a residential programme. This has enabled many persons who in the past would have not received any help, to undertake a programme that mirrors that which is undertaken at Bruce's Farm, but within the community. Additionally, we have extended this service to the prison. The link between drugs and crime is well documented. For the first time we are able to undertake real, tangible work with inmates, and if necessary, either refer them to Bruce's Farm upon completion of their sentences or continue to provide support upon release. The take up of this service is encouraging and over the past six months we have increased this service from one to three days a week.

We also continue to work very closely with voluntary groups such as Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous. We have facilitated their increased input within the prison where they perform some very effective work with inmates, that compliments that undertaken by our counsellors in this establishment.

An important development has been the establishment of a halfway house for those who complete treatment at Bruce's Farm. We were finding that one of the major issues faced by those finishing residential treatment was that they faced being homeless, this invariably contributed towards their relapse. We now have a specifically designated flat that has been constantly in use for the past five months. This is going a long way towards ensuring that vulnerable persons are afforded an opportunity to reintegrate themselves back into society in a planned and supported way.

At a strategic level, we have now re-established the Drugs Advisory Council that had lost all focus and was allowed to lapse by the previous administration, despite its statutory nature. We know that drug misuse is an issue of concern to many of us as evidenced in the recent Police Authority survey. We risk not making a real impact unless all the stakeholders, from health, law enforcement, education to rehabilitation pool resources and ideas to formulate initiatives to address the threat that drugs pose to our community and individuals alike. This council has now been re-launched and it has been tasked with formulating a revised drug strategy.

The fact that the Drug Rehabilitation services now fall under the remit of my ministry opens up many exciting opportunities in terms of taking the anti-drugs message to the wider community. Already the drugs team is in discussion with the other constituent teams within my ministry to explore how we can achieve this in such diverse areas such as, Sport, Culture, Heritage and Youth and at other public events.



The Ombudsman

Several meetings have been held in relation to my responsibility for civil rights that include the Ombudsman and Citizens Advice Bureau. As we all know these entities run in an independent manner and our government will not interfere in the way they run only to give financial support and general encouragement.

The only change that I would like to announce at this stage is that the Ombudsman's office is now charged with the complaints received by users of the GHA another manifesto commitment completed.

In Conclusion

In this last year we have seen the culmination of some the work that we started in 2011 and the continuation of others. All the ministries that I have been responsible for and the ones that I have now have seen a vast improvement of service and a great deal of investment.

We promised Change and change we have and will continue to deliver.

Whether in Sport, Culture, Heritage, Youth or Drugs Rehabilitation the improvements are there to be seen. Investing in our people is what we, as a Government, have as our first priority.

Mr Speaker

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of staff under my responsibility who have worked hard to fulfill all the manifesto commitments that we promised in the general election in 2011.