



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Sacramento looks back on the importance of Gibraltar's beach culture to this Government**

Beaches and public swimming pools have been improved beyond recognition since 2012, underlining this Government's political commitment to support what is widely considered as Gibraltar's preferred summer family pastime.

Remarkably, and unusually in the lifetime of a Government, the current administration has also been able to unveil a completely new beach – Sandy Bay – which had virtually been wiped out by wave action, restoring it to its former glory as one of the Rock's favourite beaches in times gone by.

The major coastal protection and regeneration works, was a spectacular engineering feat in its own right, involving the construction of two curved groynes and a frontal breakwater to protect the beach from erosion and trap shifting sand.

It included the construction of a submerged structure connecting the ends of both groynes. Approximately 50,000 tons of sand were also imported from the Western Sahara to enlarge the new Sandy Bay.

#### **SWIMMING POOLS**

Over the past term of office, all local beaches and swimming pools including those for toddlers at Little Bay and Camp Bay have undergone a massive refurbishment programme to upgrade and modernise bathing facilities and amenities throughout the Rock.

Additionally, in keeping with the Government's equality and accessibility programme, the main Camp Bay pool, whose depth has been increased, also had a ramp and wider steps constructed to facilitate access to people with mobility difficulties.

As part of the refurbishment programme a fully automated water chlorination system to ensure standards of cleanliness, was installed at the swimming pool.

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## BATHING PAVILION

A new sea water bathing pavilion was built at GASA. These facilities include swimming pools, exercise facilities, a play area for children and shaded areas with attractive greenery and hardwood decking. In addition to this there are changing places, full shower and changing room facilities as well as an outdoor bar in the upper deck zone.

## BEACHES

All bathing areas have been equipped with popular inflatable recreational waterparks and purpose built jellyfish booms. Improved toilet, changing room and shower facilities have also been provided. Toilets will also remain open during the winter months at all beaches with recreational facilities for the public.

The lifeguard beach service has been extended to weekends as from Easter, and resourced with new vessels, engines and an increased complement.

At Eastern Beach, Catalan Bay, Western Beach and Sandy Bay, new permanent, concrete walkways have been provided replacing the temporary wooden structures which were annually removed after each bathing season.

At Camp Bay three brand new stainless steel stairs have been installed leading from the concrete concourse and quays promenade down to the sea.

## BEACH ACCESSIBILITY

Moreover, much needed beach accessibility units have been introduced at Camp Bay, Western Beach, Eastern Beach Catalan Bay and Bathing Pavilion, in addition to the ramps and other accessibility features, to ensure wholly user-friendly beaches in Gibraltar for everyone regardless of their physical condition. These units are manned by trained Accessible Unit Attendants.

This free service has been in demand during the summer by users who had been unable to enjoy the seaside with their families prior to this initiative.

Adapted changing rooms fitted with accessible toilets, showers with electronic adult changing beds, and electrical overhead mobile hoists with tracking systems, have also been provided.

The accessibility plan was introduced in stages; ramps were constructed and physical barriers impeding wheelchair access were eliminated from the seafront. This was followed by the provision of the specialised equipment.



# HM Government of Gibraltar

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Ministry of Tourism, Equality,  
Social Services and Housing

The Gibraltar Tourist Board has also produced a colour brochure on the beach accessibility service available at the four locations and the GASA bathing pavilion.

Minister for Tourism Samantha Sacramento said the improvements to bathing facilities reflected the Government's commitment to a continuous review of services and facilities at local beaches as well as the Government's wider programme to make Gibraltar more accessible.

Ms. Sacramento said: "The Ministry of Tourism and the Gibraltar Tourist Board, recognise that going to the beach is part and parcel of local family life and leisure during the summer. We are very conscious that our bathing areas have to be maintained all the year round and that the facilities have to be carefully monitored because the public expect high standards. "We will continue to invest human and financial resources to ensure that these are in top condition to be enjoyed by all in the community and we will continue to emphasise accessibility as never before. The unfairness of the past, before we came into office, when people with impaired mobility could not enjoy the seaside because there were no facilities for them, has been consigned to the past.

"This has changed thanks to the enhanced beach accessibility service introduced by our administration. Now all citizens regardless of their individual circumstances can gain unimpeded access to our bathing areas, something which makes us feel tremendously satisfied."