



PRESS RELEASE

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Government correcting chaos Opposition left behind

The Opposition has chosen to draw attention to the Principal Auditor's comments on the Ministry of Culture, which were previously reproduced in Panorama. Their statement shows how little the Opposition know about these procedures or about how they have operated in the past.

The Opposition should know, for example, that the Auditor's Certificate on the Accounts of the Culture and Heritage Agency up to 31 March 2012 makes interesting reading and reflects the chaotic manner in which this was set up by the then GSD Government. This covers the period largely when the GSD were in office.

The Auditor says:

- that he had not received all of the information and explanations which were necessary for the purposes of the audit;
- that the Gibraltar Culture and Heritage Agency had not kept proper books of account;
- that the Agency had not discharged its financial duty in accordance with the law;
- and that financial statements were not in agreement with accounting records.

The Opposition clearly have no idea that the peculiarities of this particular Ministry reflects the sphere in which they operate.

The very nature of organising events means that some invoices come in incomplete, some late, and others have to be paid in advance. Furthermore, revenue often comes in at different points during the financial year. Sponsors sometimes take time to send in the money that they promised.

In certain events, tickets sales are available online and therefore the total amount is recorded even later. In order to secure acts for concerts, payments are sometimes made quickly and up front and this is done via a system which is approved by the Treasury and is later balanced by them. Therefore Payment Vouchers are sometimes readjusted at a later stage.

In the financial year 14/15 the officer keeping the cash book was using a different methodology. The information required is all available but not on one single excel sheet, for



ease of reference as recommended by the Auditor. This officer was transferred urgently and the person taking over had to balance the cashbook.

The anomalies recorded by the Audit can in the majority of cases be put down to new staff in the process of learning the procedures. Misallocations in most cases sometimes come about as a result of individual interpretations which may differ from person to person. For example a blocked toilet during the Jazz event was debited to the Jazz Festival head and not to Repairs and Maintenance head as recommended by the Auditor.

Therefore the Opposition are the last people who can complain about this situation because all that the Government is doing in these areas is correct the chaotic situation that they left behind.