

Chief Minister's Speaking Notes at Heads of Department event – Sunday 9 September

I want to start tonight by thanking you for your work which enables us to do great things

When at the Referendum in 2016, said it was a time for extraordinary people to come to the fore to do extraordinary things.

Well, extraordinary things are being done

We are progressing discussions for a Gibraltar formula process of withdrawal from the EU

And the future relationship

We are developing new sporting facilities for the Island Games next year.

We are developing new services in the Gibraltar Health Authority

We are developing new homes for our people.

The plans and prices for the flats will be issued well before Christmas.

And we are developing great new schools to British standards.

The day after National Day, the 11th September, we will have handed over from the contractor to the Department of Education, the first complete newly-built school in Gibraltar in 30 years.

Some naysayers thought it couldn't be done.

And we hadn't reckoned with record rainfall this year.

But they hadn't reckoned with the excellent work ethic of GJBS.

They hadn't reckoned with the excellent standard of work of GJBS.

And they hadn't reckoned with the tenacity and ingenuity of Michael Estella, George Federico, Gino Catania and Stephen Valarino.

On Tuesday, we start snagging and the process of migration to open the school in coming weeks.

The kids, the teachers and their parents are rightly looking forward to the new opening.



Thank you GJBS for always being there, delivering a better Gibraltar.

From the magnificent offices of the Gibraltar International Bank, to the small boats Marina and the many other projects which you have delivered on time and to the highest standard.

And thank you also Hector Montado and your technical team.

You are in control of the Government's projects and you also don't let us down.

This year we deliver not just new schools, new sporting facilities and the sale off plan of new homes.

We will also deliver the sale of ex-Mod properties which will be handed over to new purchasers before we meet again here next year.

We will also hand over to the MoD the complete Project Euston package

And we will see the start of operations of a new, non-polluting power station and its attendant LNG facility.

In all of that, I rely on Hector Montado and Albert Mena to ensure my Ministerial team and I can deliver in keeping with our commitments.

It would be a challenging agenda at the best of times

Of course these are not the best of times.

These are politically also the most challenging times.

And this year is undoubtedly the most challenging of the past three very challenging years.

After all has been said and done, after all the bluster and all the papers have turned to chip paper.

After all the promises and fears

This year, we will leave the European Union with the United Kingdom

In negotiating that withdrawal, we have been genuinely, fully involved in the process insofar as it relates to Gibraltar.

We have worked and are working closely with colleagues in the United Kingdom across Whitehall



From the Foreign Office to the Department for exiting the European Union to the Cabinet Office and Downing Street, there is a deep understanding of what matters to Gibraltar

There is an understanding of the need for Gibraltar to have the application of the UK/EU arrangements on withdrawal and transition as well as for the future

There is also a deep understanding of the importance that the application of those arrangements will need to be nuanced and differentiated for us

With us tonight is Sir Alan Duncan, who as Minister for Europe has demonstrated that his childhood in Gibraltar gave him a deep love for this Rock of ours

He has been an immeasurable help in the work we have done and are doing

We have secured our single market with the UK in services

And we have secured agreements with departments across the UK government in areas that matter to our people

Thank you Sir Alan

And thank you Bob Neill also for the work you and the rest of the Gibraltar Group in Parliament do

And that includes representatives of all the political parties

Thanks Bob for always being there to help

This is a year when we will once again celebrate together.

At the same time as we face many challenges we also have many things to celebrate

The first thing we must celebrate is that this is the second year a UK Minister is with us for the celebrations

That shows that this celebration of our identity is now better understood in London - Not as a challenge to our Britishness but as a manifestation of it as Gibraltar asserts itself as one of the British family of nations.

Tomorrow, the flag of Gibraltar will fly over the Foreign Office as it has done for some years now as the United Kingdom joins us in celebrating National Day

And this year we celebrate Sir Joe Bossano's knighthood

A recognition of his 46 years as a parliamentarian and even longer in the selfless service of Gibraltar



Tomorrow, one of the highlights for me of the day will be the ceremony when our Mayor bestows the Freedom of the City and the Gibraltar Medallion of Honour on Sir Joe - the ultimate recognition from the People of Gibraltar

We also celebrate the 25th Official National Day.

It's the 26 birthday of the SDGG, who got the ball rolling in 1992.

And this year we also celebrate that 20 years ago a then young Michael Llamas delivered a victory for the SDGG in the European Court of Human Rights when Gibraltar was granted the right to vote in elections to the European Parliament.

Thank you also to all those who have served as our MEPs in these past 20 years

Julia, Clare you are the last of our kind for Gibraltar

At least for now.

Whatever party they have been from, all our MEPs have had the best interests of Gibraltar at heart and have fought for Gibraltar

So then it's down now to my very talented and able ministers, to my Attorney General and my Financial Secretary

And to my dear friend, colleague and ally the Deputy Chief Minister Joseph Garcia

To now bring home the bacon on Brexit

We won't let you down

And Gibraltar has the depth of experience to make a success of this challenge as we do of all others

The Evacuation generation had the courage and the resourcefulness to survive a vicious war away from home.

To fight to return to the Rock

And to start again in 1945

The Referendum generation of 1967 stood up to a dictator



They chose the right path although it was the harder path

They secured the future of our homeland

The Closed Frontier generation knew it would be hard to have all land links to Europe cut off by the fascists then in power in Madrid

But they did not cower, they did not fall like a ripe fruit - they strengthened their resolve and the resolve of every future generation of Gibraltarian

And now we, the Brexit generation, will lead our people through this time of flux and change

We will lead our people with the determination of those who came before

And with the vision of those of us who know that our future is brighter than our past

That Gibraltarian talent can take on the best in the world

And that in or out of the European Union, we are a hard working people of peace, of goodwill and who will ensure that our Rock is always first, foremost and forever

The homeland of the Gibraltarians!

And I can think of no one better to reply on behalf of our guests tonight than a man who is very much in the news today

Most news organisations would love to hear him speak tonight

Ladies and gentlemen

The Minister for Europe, Sir Alan Duncan