



**RECORD OF THE MEETING
OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**HELD IN STANLEY
ON 24 JULY 2009**

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HELD IN STANLEY ON FRIDAY 24 JULY 2009**

THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE
(Mr Keith Biles, JP, B.Sc., ACIB)

MEMBERS (Ex-Officio)

The Honourable Director of Finance
(Mr Keith Padgett)

Elected

The Honourable Dr Andrea Patricia Clausen
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

The Honourable Richard Cockwell
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

The Honourable Ian Hansen
(Elected Member for Camp Constituency)

The Honourable Mike Rendell
(Elected Member for Camp Constituency)

The Honourable Janet Robertson
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

The Honourable Michael Victor Summers OBE
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

PERSONS ENTITLED TO ATTEND

The Attorney General
(David Pickup)

Chief of Staff, British Forces South Atlantic Islands
(Group Captain Simon Hindmarsh RAF)

ACTING CLERK: Anton Livermore CPM

PRAYERS: Reverend Kathy Biles

APOLOGIES

The Honourable John Birmingham
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

The Honourable Richard James Stevens
(Elected Member for Camp Constituency)

The Honourable Chief Executive
(Dr Timothy Rupert Thorogood)

The Commander British Forces South Atlantic Islands
(Air Commodore Gordon Moulds MBE)

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**The Record of the meeting of Legislative Assembly
held on Friday 24 July 2009**

Prayers

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members, I bid you Good Morning and before we start, a timely reminder, mobile phones to be turned off if you would, thank you.

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Confirmation of the record that the meeting of Legislative Assembly held on 26 and 28 May 2009.

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members I have before me a record of that meeting and before we start I am sure you would recall that in the debate on the Supplementary Appropriation Bill a question was raised by the Honourable Janet Robertson of the Honourable Director of Finance and/or the Honourable Chief Executive, which at the time could not be answered and was going to be answered in writing. The response is appended to the record on page 60 and since the Honourable Member didn't have a chance during that debate to ask any supplementary questions or indeed anybody else could raise any question on it, I would ask if please to confirm that that matter has now been resolved to your satisfaction.

The Honourable Janet Robertson

I confirm that that's the case.

Mr Speaker

Thank you. In that case is there any objection to me signing this document as a record of that meeting, thank you?

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Papers to be laid on the table by the Honourable the Director of Finance.

Copies of Subsidiary Legislation published in the Falkland Islands Gazette since the last sitting of the Legislative Assembly and laid on the table pursuant to section 34 subsection 1 of the Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance 1977.

Falkland Islands Status (Application Fee) (Amendment) Regulation 2007 (Correction)

Immigration (Fees) Regulation 2009

Retirement Pensions (Contributions) (Exemption) Order 2009

Air Navigation (Fees) Regulations 2009

Prison (Declaration) Order 2009

Family Allowances (Amendment) Regulations 2009

Customs (Import Prohibitions) (Fees) Regulations 2009

The Honourable Director of Finance

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members I hereby lay on the table the aforementioned papers.

Mr Speaker

Thank you.

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Questions for Oral Answer

Question Number 7 of 2009 by the Honourable Ian Hansen

The Honourable Ian Hansen

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in the absence of the Honourable John Birmingham could the Honourable Richard Cockwell please inform this house on the progress and cost to date on the improvements to airstrips on Beaver Island, West Point Island and New Island, and since the cessation of FIGAS operations to these locations what has been the total cost to FIGAS in providing or supporting this service? And furthermore, since the cessation, how many passengers have been transported to and from said locations, and how does this compare with the number previously transported over a similar period?

Mr Speaker

The Honourable Richard Cockwell

Honourable Members, the initial surveys were carried out at three airstrips by the assessment team, who were officers from Stanley Airport, FIGAS, Civil Aviation Departments and the PWD Highways and also the Design Office.

The potential to lengthen each of the airstrips was identified. However, in each case, a considerable amount of earth works will be necessary. The PWD now needs to make a more detailed assessment of each airstrip with the aid of earth-moving equipment in order to be able to provide a reasonably accurate cost for completing the work to lengthen these strips. Public Works visited New Island in June and carried out some assessment digs that will now allow them to estimate the cost of the job to improve the airstrip.

It is planned to visit Beaver Island to carry out similar exploratory work shortly. And after the visit to Beaver Island a similar exercise will be planned for West Point Island.

Once completed and the assessments are carried out, it will then be possible to estimate the costs of the required works to lengthen the airstrips. Elected Members will then have to decide if FIG is going to pay for this work or not.

The number of passengers flown on to these three airstrips in 2007/2008 was 98 and in 2008/2009 it was reduced to 55. The cost of providing the interim helicopter service in 2008/2009 financial year was £7,724.50.

Mr Speaker

The Honourable Ian Hansen.

I thank the Honourable Member for his reply.

Mr Speaker

No other supplementaries?

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Motion

Motion Number 4 of 2009 by the Honourable Mike Summers OBE

That this House adopts the Island Plan 2009/2014

Mr Speaker

The Honourable Mike Summers

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in introducing this Motion I will just say a few words generally about the Islands Plan and one or two specific things, I won't talk at great length at least you all hope.

The first planning for the Islands Plan started when I joined this house in 1996 and it took some while to work through all the requirements of setting out a forward plan for running a small country. And the first Islands Plan was established in 2001 after a lot of work by a lot of heads of department, the creation of statistics, the collecting of information etc. So it was a very busy time but we started off this process in 2001 and since then we have developed the Islands Plan with changes and improvements but the difficulty with writing and creating an Islands Plan is that you both have to describe what you do already and what it is you intend to do. And in creating this Islands Plan for 2009/2014 we tried to restrict the amount of description of what it is that we currently do as a Government because there's a large amount of routine work that needs to be carried out but to concentrate on the longer-term targets and the aspirational targets for the next five years.

So, the Islands Plan is set out in a number of sections that deals with particular generic areas. And, again we have resisted the temptation to describe the Government section by section and department by department but to choose some themes that we considered represented the aspirations, the ethos, the intent of running this small country.

Just in terms of specifics I will talk about one or two things:

The first section on self determination is critically important and perhaps more than any other section in this Islands Plan, it does actually describe what we do on a regular basis. I think that is inevitable but it is important that we continue to explain to the world our right to self determination and to visit the UN C-24, to engage with the CPA, to ensure that our programmes of engagement with Members of Parliament both in the Westminster Parliament, in the devolved parliament and the European Parliaments are maintained and that we keep people informed. And the whole of this section about self determination is about that and making sure that we carry forward the programmes that enable us to continue to persuade right thinking people around the world that the right to self determination is a right that exceeds all others. So that is an important section of the plan.

I will comment briefly on the Sustainable Economic and Financial Management section because I have had a lot to do with that over the years and more recently. It, to a very large extent, reflects the work that we are doing on the economic development strategy and the Rural Development Strategy and describes some of those processes and some of the targets that are beginning to emerge from that. But they will change. The inevitability of the planning process is that as you go through it you will identify which of your original aspirations were achievable, which ones were not, which ones need to be modified. So some of these targets will certainly change in the next year or two. And that's why the Islands Plan should always be reviewed on an annual basis.

But the Economic Development Strategy will, we hope, set some targets for economic growth for describing how the economy will continue to develop and we also describe in not great detail but in general terms in this section what the levers and the enablers are in the economic development strategy to enable private sector and Government to work together to move forward in developing the economy.

Two of these will be critical pieces of work that I think we have done nowhere near enough yet on – one is Immigration Strategy. A lot is talked about Immigration Strategy and has been for many years. We've been relatively relaxed about the way we go about it. I think it is clear from the discussions in Economic Development Strategy that we will have to be more specific about how we are going to grow the population if we do and engage with the public on that, which I think will be a very active debate.

And the other is inward investment. Again, if the economy is going to grow – if we are going to grow existing industries and new industries, inward investment will be essential. We don't have sufficient retained wealth in these Islands to be able to invest in all the things that we would like to invest in. But there is a sort of inherent reaction to inward investment here perhaps resulting from previous experiences of land ownership. Perhaps we are still stuck with the Shackleton philosophy that what you should do is buy everything back and not let other people have it. I am not sure that Shackleton ever meant that you should never let anybody ever buy another piece of land, having got it all back. I think what he meant is you should be able to control that process. And that is an important piece of work that we need to do.

Finally, a quick word on the section on good governance – I am happy to say that the Bill for the Public Accounts Committee is due to be before this house in September, the last meeting

of this particular Council and that is a very good piece of news. The Attorney General didn't quite promise but he did promise to work hard to try to see if we could also have the Bill for the Complaints Commissioner at that same meeting and we hope to be able to do so; two key pieces of work that this Council has pushed forward hard in the Constitutional process and form part of the targets of the Islands Plan.

Mr Speaker, I will say no more at this time other than to commend this document to the House and invite my colleagues to say a few words and perhaps I will wind-up at the end.

Mr Speaker

The Honourable Richard Cockwell

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like also to commend this document to the House and to the general public. I think everybody should actually read this document and realise that it is a living document, it is not cast in stone until 2014. It is something which is going to have to be revised and looked at every year as the Honourable Michael Summers said.

I am not going to talk too long but perhaps I should mention one or two of the items which actually affect myself or my portfolio and because the absence of the Honourable John Birmingham I will try to fit myself into his shoes as well. Although his feet are a lot smaller than mine.

The first thing which actually comes up in the document is the port facility. There is a huge amount of work yet to be done on this but it is, at the moment, aimed for 2010/2013 to actually have the port facility up and running. There is still a huge amount of work to be done on this and as I say, it is aspirational rather than cast in stone.

There is a reference to air access and improved amenities because air access is critical for the development of these Islands. We have to actually improve that.

And internally, we need to have an efficient and appropriate internal air service – how that is formed is really not discussed in this paper. It's just that is what we need and similarly the ferry shipping service – they need to be appropriate to what we need.

And I think Members of Camp would applaud the aim to continuously approve the road network and I think that is an important item particularly for the development of Camp.

In Public Works – I think the two items which would interest people more than anything is the alternative energy – we need to carry on building on our very successful alternative energy system. And, there is a mention of waste management and I think that's something which we have actually fallen behind on to a certain extent. It's something which we have to develop into.

Fisheries - which is our most important industry of all – and it's our largest income earner – it is proposed that we develop the ITQ System and find ways of adding value. And also, interestingly enough, it is proposed to try and get the Illex into the ITQ system.

Tourism - there are a lot of issues, a lot of items on Tourism but basically it is to increase the contribution of Tourism to the economy. At the moment, I believe there is a long way to go there and we have to find ways of doing it.

But I think one of the things which you will find when you read this document and look at it is a lot of cross references. One thing can't happen without the other. And I think that is going to be the problem for the next Council when they look at this and revise it – making sure that one thing is not done without – which affects something else. They will all have to be run on together.

I beg to support the Motion.

Mr Speaker

Thank you. Does any other Member wish to speak?

The Honourable Dr Clausen

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in rising to support this Motion I would just like to make a few points, please. Firstly I think it is a very welcome event to have this document laid before this House. As my Honourable Colleagues mentioned the idea of an Islands Plan has obviously been around for quite some time. It has taken an awful lot of work. We have had different versions in the past in terms of being more descriptive or more numerical and I think that this version is a really good step towards producing some very real targets that I hope we can achieve, or in fact that the next government after November can also work on to achieve. We've had to put in a lot of work in terms of facilitating the collation of a lot of data in terms of policy, national statistics and so on. I think it's really good that that work started and that the unenviable task of establishing all the baselines was there but once we have those we will then be able to be, I think, more clear about where we are going to go. And those targets can, as mentioned by others, be reviewed on an annual basis to make sure they are still right and fit for purpose for ourselves.

I think it is important to mention again – yes this is aspirational to some degree and plan – there are some more day to day, if you like, targets in there as well but not the really mundane business of the Government. And, what is important is its link to the budget. I think one of the key things here is there are some targets in there that will be impacted upon because of available resource and we all recognise that and I just think it's worth mentioning.

In terms of finance the main section that relates to my portfolio is the inclusion of the Medium Term Financial Plan and the targets within that. I think it would be really good that in that particular section that when reporting back we report back what we were able to achieve in terms of setting the budget but then, what our actual out-turn at the end of the financial years actually are. I think that will be really helpful rather than just one or the other of those figures to see where we try to get to and then where we eventually did get to.

Another subject in terms of finance – the tax and fiscal policy report, which is included – obviously we don't know what's going to come out of that yet and so as the review process goes on with this document, once that report is completed we will be able, then, of course, to include some targets in terms of tax and fiscal policy, which will be welcomed.

A slightly, perhaps more controversial point that I think I'd like to make about this plan is regarding one particular point on the structure of it. I think the structure that we have is very good and I completely supported the way it was laid out when we discussed it. But having looked at it myself a number of times over recent months, in fact the last year, I think I have come to a conclusion personally that if I was to be involved (and I might not be) in reviewing this document going forward that perhaps some of the elements in the Camp section could be more integrated with the rest. There is obviously a lot of over-lap in this document and you see it when you go through the sections. Personally, I think that we don't have a Stanley section and we don't have an MPA section or whatever and personally – it's my own view – that I would like to see – it is in no way meant to diminish the importance of the rural business sector or of Camp as a whole but it already is picked up in a number of chapters. Education applies to Camp, Tourism applies to Camp and other areas. That's perhaps one area that might be thought about in the future. But for now I think it's a perfectly good document.

I think I would just like to also mention a couple of environmental points which my Honourable Colleague mentioned there. I think we have come a long way already in terms of the contribution this country has made to being environmentally friendly, if you like, in terms of recycling our waste. We have made improvements on waste. We have more work to do, a lot more work to do, but there's been quite a lot. But most importantly is our impact or the impact we've been able to have in reducing our reliance on fossil fuels. Obviously, everybody is aware, we have three big towers there and they set a nice big sign but we have to continue that work because it is very important that we continue to reduce our reliance and it's good to see that that's included within our Plan, too.

Sir, I have no further comments to add. I support the Motion.

Mr Speaker

Thank you.

The Honourable Janet Robertson

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members as I would like to obviously support the Island Plan and hope that the public at large can understand precisely what the intention was with this document – to understand that a lot in it is aspirational. We do realise that it's going to be difficult to achieve some of those – some of the intentions placed in there and it is quite true that frankly some of them are going to require budgetary support and it remains to be seen yet whether that it going to be possible.

Nevertheless, in terms of a plan to focus on at budget time, I think this is absolutely critical. To have some long-term view and some agreed direction is what we need and I think it is what has been lacking in previous years. So, I am extremely pleased that we have done this and really I have to congratulate all the people who put huge amounts of effort into compiling this document. And obviously as Members have mentioned there is still a long way to go. There are a whole range of baselines that need to be established and so on but I will talk a little bit more about that later.

In the absence of our colleague the Honourable Richard Stevens, I would just like to say a little bit about the Education section. In a way, well, it's been described to me by one person,

in a way as a no-brainer. We all support Education, we all want to see it progress and develop but to a large extent, it's how we do that and how we focus strategies in education. At its most simple level what we are trying to do is to ensure that our children have the right tools so that they can become real value to their community in their working lives and that involves providing basic sound education at primary and at secondary level. That accounts for all the varied weaknesses and strengths of those individuals in the classroom and we had been talking quite a lot recently about the term, "value added" and essentially what we are talking about in respect of "value added" is the value that's placed on each child as it progresses through the educational system so it's not necessarily how high they achieve but how much they progress as individuals from all the way through their years in education.

In addition to that, - fortunately in education is one of the areas where we do have a lot of baseline figures and it allows us to compare ourselves to see how well we are doing in relation to other educational systems in the world and in this case in UK but it does help us be able to measure our school and we look forward to seeing progress in that.

It's interesting – one of the targets relates to increasing pass rates for students at FE and HE. And again, this is quite sensible and logical that this should be placed in there but something was said at the public meeting the other day that made me realise just how important this is. And there was one student who said that his preferred option at University was not available to him, immediately anyway, because of his pass rate in certain subjects at GCSE. And it highlights, I think, the need to ensure that our children truly understand that their GCSEs are not just a pathway into college or into a training programme or into an apprenticeship. They're in this competitive day and age it is actually their passport into much education beyond their "A" levels or their NVQ. So I think that's really something that we really do have to focus on.

A lot of the rest of the section on Education is aspirational in terms of life-long learning and better access for Camp residents to virtual classrooms and so on. I think that we have got a long way to go before we achieve that and certainly a new education ordinance which is very very sadly out of date.

But one of the issues that I think – certainly I know many civil servants are waiting to see us progress on is in the issue of training and I think that a subject that's been discussed quite a lot as a result of the review of government. It's quite clearly something that people are concerned about. People are seriously interested and people do understand that career development without decent training is much harder and I think that over the course of the next couple of years that the new councillors really should take this issue on board.

Mr Speaker I would like to rest for a moment, if you like, if I could please and return after some other Members have had a chance to speak, to speak about my own portfolio.

Mr Speaker

Indeed – Thank you.

The Honourable Mike Rendell

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, to the best of my memory this is the first time that we have had a Motion to support the Islands Plan and I think it is a very good idea to do this. It's

been there in the background for a lot of people in the islands for a number of years, I think and it's only the people who are particularly interested who perhaps pick up the document and look at it properly so I would treat this exercise here – this Motion here as something of a marketing exercise as well as a Motion of support for it. And therefore I think the more that we can talk about it the better and the more inklings we can give to the population in general the better because it will, I think, be a fascinating document for a lot of people to read even if they don't have any particular interest in the higher echelons of the way things work in Government.

And looking broadly at the whole Islands Plan, with 67 planned outcomes from 16 objectives and 124 performance indicators in total, this is a major piece of work and many officers and colleagues have put in a tremendous amount of effort to produce it.

There is no doubt that this is an ambitious plan and that assessing its progress will be quite time consuming. Nevertheless, it will play a major part in allowing an objective review of progress on all fronts within our community.

I want to touch on some of the areas that interest me in particular and the first one is in the Camp and to note that support for Agriculture itself is just one part of this. So if we look at the detailed agricultural targets we are looking at things like numbers of lambs, fining up of wool fibre diameter, establishing an organic certification scheme and developing a beef market and these are all important outcomes for farmers as they will generate more income and they will help in achieving self sustainability.

It is particularly important that a rural development strategy is adapted, adopted and that it has buy-in from the Camp community and as part of this, the long-term future of Sand Bay Abattoir will be crucial.

Monitoring the effectiveness of the air service and the internal shipping service are key elements in maintaining Camp as is reviewing performance of the new Camp telecommunications system and introducing new telecommunications legislation – hopefully next year.

A comprehensive set of outcomes focused on good governance – my colleague The Honourable Mike Summers has already made some general observations of these but I just want to include a few more of the details. These include an effective and efficient legislative programme, completing and implementing the review of the civil service, establishing targets for the number of complaints investigated by the hopefully soon to be appointed Complaints Commissioner, a court focus on how long it takes from arrest to final outcome – we have talked about the Public Accounts Committee but in regards to the Public Accounts Committee the number of high priority recommendations from that body accepted by FIG. There are some other performance indicators which I think are purely aspirational which include goals for the number of candidates standing in General Elections, the average number of constituents attending public meetings, and achieving reasonable representation of socio-economic groups within the community at general elections. Quite aspirational.

Four years ago in the build-up to the last General Election, I recall having little enthusiasm for the Islands Plan current at that time. In my view it was light-weight in content and scope and I doubt that it played any major part in shaping anyone's objectives. Whilst there will obviously be changes to it as it progresses as a working document, the Islands Plan

2009/2014 is in a completely different league. And, I am going to misquote the famous Crocodile Dundee line by saying “This is a Real Plan.”

I support the Motion.

Mr Speaker

Thank you.

The Honourable Ian Hansen

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in rising to speak to this Motion, I would just like to touch briefly on my portfolio responsibilities within the Islands Plan. At first glance they appear to have the least body, I guess, of the Islands Plan, of course it doesn't mean that in any way they are any less important. In fact, the mention of minerals under 3.1 of the Economic and Fiscal Management section this is arguably perhaps the most important aspiration of the whole document.

As far as the Camp section is concerned, of course it is not just what is on page 15 of this plan there is so much else that means it is important to develop the Camp economy and sustain the population, tourism, transport and telecommunications of course play a huge part as well as the sustainability of agriculture.

There, of course, will be challenges within this plan. And in under the Camp Economy comes “sustainable population” in the section and speaking of that and not least, of course, the development of the Rural Development Strategy, which Councillor Rendell has already touched upon. It is vital that this strategy links all services, communications, agriculture - for it to be even any use at all it must pull everything together and link all these things.

Just to mention briefly – and I don't wish to repeat what Councillor Rendell has mentioned already but it's quite encouraging, for instance, when you talk of the number of lambs potentially available for export and you look at the baseline for that at nearly 12,000. Only think three years ago the baseline was zero. So, that's a very encouraging piece of information.

I don't believe I have anything else to comment on, Mr Speaker. Apart from to agree with colleagues that I have mentioned that this Islands Plan is indeed a living document and must be reviewed annually.

Mr Speaker, I support that this House adopts the Islands Plan 2009/2014.

Mr Speaker

Thank you.

The Honourable Janet Robertson

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there are just a few words about my own portfolio starting off with health. As can be seen in the Islands Plan, health probably is the most brutal measure, health of the Nation takes the first line, which is life expectancy. And, quite clearly

it would appear from where we are in that that we've got some way to go to match European standards. But actually in a small community like this those figures are subject to fluctuations that really can confuse the issue. And really what we need to do is to look at what is behind that. And, in fact, it may not seem like it at first glance but the plan for health is extraordinarily ambitious and is going to require a lot of work over the next few years. Quite frankly, some of it is probably just not going to be achievable in the time-scale that we would like.

There are a wide range of strategies which are quite complex. We've got a five year plan for health, a vulnerable people's strategy, a community training programme for dealing with child protection, development of a comprehensive information and data system, an alcohol strategy and all the baselines to establish for obesity and alcohol abuse. This is a tremendous piece of work.

Just for example a comprehensive information and data system – some of that is simply technological except it's not simply technological because no clear answers as to how to marry up the different information systems in the hospital has actually been achieved yet. And of course all of this has got to go on top of the day to day responsibilities that staff have.

But having said that it is the case that at the hospital we do have – and in the community at large, we do have a number of young, highly trained and skilled local people who probably would quite welcome the opportunity to widen their field of action by contributing and using their skills to help develop in some of these areas. I think we've got to try and be a bit imaginative about using the skills and the knowledge in the community to try and make progress in some of these areas because quite simply it's not going to be easily achievable by just looking at the heads of department and current staff. So I think that I would welcome an opportunity to be able to look at more at that and discussing with heads of department how this could be done.

With regard to the Police, the principle policing strategy has already been developed and approved by Executive Council. The Islands Plan is looking at trying to improve awareness of some of the curses in our society, I suppose they are in any other society which is awareness of sexual offences, drug use and alcohol related crime and road safety, of course. The trick will be to try and improve in these areas whilst still maintaining a good relationship between the Police and the community because that is of prime importance that police work is conducted in a way that is going to encourage respect from the community and lead to good communications between them. I think we've seen in the past the effect of not having a good relationship and really we want to try and ensure that we don't have a failure of communication as has happened in the past.

With regard to the Fire Services essentially what we have to do with Fire Services is try and widen the scope for fire prevention activities and again assessments of community risk and community awareness. And that – there is a programme that the Fire Service has put forward for trying to do that and having access at the moment, there is no legislation to do it but having access to homes and businesses around the Falklands to try and build up those sort of prevention practices and of course in stringent budgetary times trying to maintain the quite wide array of expensive assets is a challenge and that is looking after the maintenance and maintaining their assets and having a programme for them over the next 5 to 10 years is going to be an important part for them.

Just lastly, a few words on FIDF. There is actually little to say about the FIDF but that is because it is entirely good. They do already achieve largely the goals set out in the Islands plan and I am sure you would all agree with me that they are a great credit to us. The principle challenge for FIDF is to ensure that they retain sufficient political support to maintain and progress its role in the overall defence strategies and to be able to maintain the value of their contribution to the British Forces in the Falkland Islands. And we've had good feedback on the role of the FIDF and we know that they are achieving their ambitions nicely. We just have to help to ensure that this doesn't slip back.

Mr Speaker I would like to commend the Islands Plan to the House and support the Motion.

Mr Speaker

Thank you.

The Honourable Director of Finance

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I don't intend to comment on specific areas of the plan because that's been done by other Honourable Members. But I would like to make some more general comments about the plan itself and the process. And the plan presented to the House today is the product of a considerable amount of work and that's involved consultation with many people.

It's a significant achievement and I'd like to thank all those involved on behalf of myself and in his absence the Chief Executive.

As many people will know this isn't the first Islands Plan that's been produced. It's different in format to previous versions but there are many similarities in terms of aspirations and intentions. But this Islands Plan is different in concept. It's not only a document in its own right but it's also linked to departmental business plans and through those plans it will also be linked to individual's promised objectives.

Also when the budget for Government was prepared this year the relevant parts of the Islands Plan were also taken into account so it therefore forms a pivotal part of a comprehensive management plan not only for FIG but for the Islands more generally.

It's also a means to an end rather than being an end in itself. It's a working document against which achievement of objectives will be measured. It will naturally evolve over time as circumstances and priorities dictate but in essence it's a kind of road map – a statement of strategic policy in understandable and measurable terms. So I would therefore urge as many people as possible to get hold of a copy so they can be aware of what we are trying to achieve.

This is important because the Islands Plan is not simply something for Government. There is a role for everybody to play in it and without the involvement of businesses and individuals many of the aims and aspirations will not be possible.

It has been said already but many of the outcomes and targets will be challenging but we have tried to be realistic and not just include a wish list and a set of aspirations. And looking

forward five years is obviously difficult and we will no doubt modify some of the outcomes and targets over time.

Like many governments we are experiencing difficult financial circumstances and there are many influences that are outside of our direct control nevertheless without an overall strategic plan an organisation has no idea where it wants to be or how it wants to get there.

The Islands Plan is a series of objectives and targets with a design to set out our strategic direction and give us milestones against which we can measure our success in achieving them.

Sir, I support the Motion.

Mr Speaker

Would the Honourable Mike Summers like to sum up now please?

The Honourable Mike Summers

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, thanks to all colleagues for their helpful comments on the Islands Plan and I hope it's helped to explain the purpose and the content of the document to members of the public.

The Islands Plan does state our mission is to protect and improve the quality of life for Falkland Islands people and the community. That's its mission, that's its purpose. And in the introduction to the Islands plan there are three bullet points which I think are quite important. It says it's a promise to our citizens, guidance to our staff, business and community partners. It gives direction to Honourable Members' democratic mandates and provides an outlet for our aspirations and aims whilst keeping in mind that they are subject to the resources available. And I think that echoes many of the comments that have been made today.

May I just want to say a quick about the second of those: "Giving Direction for Honourable Members' democratic mandates." I remember when we first started this process some years ago talking to the then CBF Air Vice-Marshall David Crys-Williams, who described it as a line of march. And I think that's a concept that stayed with me for a long time and that's actually what it is – you are setting out a direction. And in terms of giving direction for Honourable Members' democratic mandates, one of the effects in the Falklands of having a non-party system is that you can write whatever manifesto you like before you get elected but having been elected you then have to accept what everybody else has also had in their Manifestos so you don't come to Government with a manifesto. And bearing in mind that we are approaching another election, one of the important features of the Islands Plan is that it does set out this line of march for the Falklands that can, of course, be amended by people's individual manifestos when they first arrive in Government but it provides a route – a line of march that the Government can adopt immediately and then amend over time as it goes forward. So it is, I think, critically important in that respect.

A final comment I would just like to make is that in discussing this document in Executive Council one day Commander British Forces mentioned in passing almost that HQBFSAI was a stake holder in this document. Of course they are. They are not heavily mentioned in it but

the defence of the Falklands is a crucially important part of our National being. And it would be inappropriate, I think, to include the defence plan for the Falklands in the Islands Plan but it is always on our minds and we are always conscious that this is part of the partnership.

Mr Speaker, I commend this document to the House.

Mr Speaker

Thank you.

The Motion before the House is that this House adopts the Islands Plan 2009/2014 and I declare the Motion is carried.

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Order of the day: Bills

Stanley Town Public Services (Amendment) Bill 2009

The Honourable Mike Summers

Mr Speaker, I declare in interest in this issue.

Mr Speaker

Thank you. That is noted.

The Honourable Director of Finance

Mr Speaker, Honourable members, this Bill amends the Stanley Town Public Services Ordinance specifically it repeals section 16 of that ordinance and that section prohibits the erection of a house, other than the caretaker's cottage within 100 feet of the outer wall of the cemetery. The amendment is supported by the Lands Committee. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr Speaker

Thank you. Could I have a seconder for that Motion please?

The Honourable Richard Cockwell. Thank you.

Does any other Member wish to speak on this Bill?

There is no debate. Is there any objection to dealing with the Bill by the short procedure?

Thank you. There is no objection.

Does any Member wish to propose any amendments to the Bill?

Thank you. There are no amendments and I declare the Bill will be read a third time and passed.

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Stanley Town Public Services (Amendment) Bill 2009

Administration of Justice (Amendment) Bill 2009

The Honourable Director of Finance

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on occasions the Chief Justice has been required to come to the Islands for hearings in Chambers – that is, in private. This is because the law currently only allows the Chief Justice to hear ex-party matters in Chambers outside the Islands. Ex-party hearings are those where only one party attends. This Bill will regularise the position to allow any in Chambers hearings to be held outside the Islands by deleting the Ex-party restriction. It is intended to facilitate the conduct of Supreme Court Business. It will also save money on transporting the Chief Justice and potentially Counsel to Stanley. It should be stressed that this does not affect any public Court sittings. These will remain in the Islands.

I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr Speaker

Thank you. Could I have a seconder please?

Thank you. The Honourable Janet Robertson.

Does any other Member wish to speak to this Bill?

There is no debate.

Is there any objection to dealing with this Bill by the short procedure?

There is no objection.

Does any Member wish to propose any amendments to the wording of the Bill?

No amendments.

I declare the Bill will be read a third time and pass.

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

The Administration of Justice (Amendment) Bill 2009

Family Allowances (Amendment) Bill 2009

The Honourable Director of Finance

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Bill is concerned with two amendments to the Family Allowances Ordinance. The first amendment replaces Section 13. This section relates to offences and clarifies the circumstances on which someone could be prosecuted by mis-statement or mis-declaration. It also updates the maximum fine and conviction that has not been changed for many years, from £50.00 to a Level 5 fine, which is currently £3,000.00.

The second amendment in Section 13A provides for a penalty to be agreed with the Postmaster as an alternative to prosecution. This will only apply if the person involved agrees to it and cannot be insisted upon by the Postmaster. It should also be noted that any fines imposed or penalties agreed are over and above the re-payment of any over-payment of Family Allowance, which will also be repayable.

I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr Speaker

Thank you.

May I have a seconder please for this?

Thank you, The Honourable Dr Andrea Clausen to second.

Does any other Member wish to speak on this Bill?

The Honourable Janet Robertson please.

The Honourable Janet Robertson

Yes, Mr Speaker, if I may, if I could ask the Attorney General for some clarification. On Section 13, Clause 3, I would like some clarification of Clause 3 in relation to Clause 2. I understand that Clause 2 is that – suggesting that a person is guilty of an offence if they have had a change of circumstances affecting their entitlements and they have not declared it. Clause 3 seems to be a – I'd like to say a snitching clause so you are guilty of an offence if you do not report that somebody – another person has had a change of circumstances. If that is the case, I find that quite extraordinary. Does this mean that we are all supposed to be spying on our neighbours to ensure that they are not, that their circumstances have not changed in relation to their Family Allowance Entitlement?

Mr Speaker

The Attorney General

Mr Speaker, the key to the working of the Family Allowance regime is the concept of the income of the Family household and that is defined in the regulations to include the income of partners of persons to whom the allowance would be paid.

What the new Section 13 does is to set out the offences in connection with the payment of allowance in these new circumstances where the entitlement includes the partner's income.

Sub-section 1 relates to the making of statements and the provision of information for the purposes of obtaining payment of the allowance and that is either by the person to whom the allowance is going to be paid or by any other person, such as the partner.

Sub-sections 2 and 3 relate to later changes of circumstances.

Sub-section 2 catches the person to whom the allowance has been paid.

Sub-section 3 catches another person who knows that there has been a change of circumstances which affects the entitlement. So this, for example, catches the partner who is aware of the change. But in order to commit the offence the other person, if I can put it that way, must cause or allow the other person not to give the required notification of the change of circumstances to the Postmaster.

Cause – that I think is fairly obvious. An example of cause would be simply not telling the person entitled to the allowance that your income or that there has been a material change of circumstances so that the person to whom the allowance is to be paid simply doesn't know about it so they don't commit an offence even though there has been a change of circumstances but the partner who knows about that change and doesn't tell the person does because he's caused that failure to happen.

Allow is the other circumstance and I accept that that's a more difficult concept to define but it seems to me that "allow" in these circumstances means that he's told his partner, for example, about the change of circumstances but knows that the partner to whom the allowance is actually paid doesn't intend to tell the Postmaster because they want to keep the allowance. And in those circumstances the other person – the partner – has allowed his partner not to make the declaration. So in effect they both then commit an offence. The person to whom the allowance under Sub-section 2 and the partner who knows there's been a change and knows that the individual is not going to report it under Sub-section 3.

I think the protection for an over-use of the "allow" definition or the "allow" category is of course, the fact that any prosecution for such an offence would require to be submitted to the Attorney General and the Attorney General will consider whether, in all the circumstances of the case a prosecution is in the public interest. And plainly, in relation to the "allow" limb of the offence – that is something that we would consider very, very carefully before launching a prosecution in those circumstances.

Mr Speaker

The Honourable Janet Robertson

I would like to thank the Attorney General because I do understand what you are saying now in terms of Clause 3 – the entitlement of another person being aware of how their own circumstances might affect the entitlement of someone. But I think the issue there is connected with by using the term "another person" it seems to me very broad and perhaps this is what you can further clarify for me that it is really about information that connected persons have about the entitlements but not about just random people in the street who might – that it's an offence for somebody to pick up a piece of gossip or something and then not report it. That seems to me to be not quite surely what the purpose is.

Mr Speaker

Attorney General

I agree but again I think the key comes back to the person must cause or allow the other person not to make the required declaration. So it's that link that you have to go to – not simply that you know about something but that your failure to do anything has either caused or allowed the person who has the primary responsibility for notifying ie. the person to whom the allowance is paid not to make the required notification. So caused and allow has a more restrictive meaning than the Honourable Member indicates.

The Honourable Janet Robertson

Thank-you. That's much clearer.

Mr Speaker

Does any other Member wish to raise any matter on this Bill? OK.

The Motion is that the Bill be read a second time.

Is there any objection to that Motion?

No objection.

The Bill will be read a second time.

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Family Allowances (Amendment) Bill 2009

Mr Speaker

The Assembly is now in Committee.

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Clauses 1 to 5.

Mr Speaker

The Motion is that Clauses 1 to 5 stand part of the Bill.

Is there any objection to the Motion?

There is no objection.

Clauses 1 to 5 stand part of the Bill.

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

No schedules.

Mr Speaker

There are no schedules.

The Assembly resumes.

The Honourable Director of Finance

I beg to move that the Bill be read a third time and do pass.

Mr Speaker

The Motion is the Bill be read a third time and do pass.

Any objection to the Motion?

There is no objection.

The Bill will be read a third time and pass.

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Family Allowances (Amendment) Bill 2009

Motion for adjournment.

The Honourable Director of Finance

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this House stands adjourned sine die.

Mr Speaker

Thank you.

The Honourable Richard Cockwell

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it's with mixed feelings that I rise for the last time in this Assembly, as I shall be away on Assembly business when we meet for the last time before the election. I have been wondering what I should say at this time and I happened to meet Norma Edwards who retired at the end of the last Council. And I asked her what did you do and she said that I wrote a few words, in fact a lot of words, down on a piece of paper and when she arrived in the car-park I opened my door and it blew away into the sea. So she had nothing to say at all, well, she had to make it up so that really wasn't very helpful.

If I could mention the Islands Plan on Health objective 11.1, I see that I should have been dead for two and a half years. And I can assure everybody I have every intention of achieving the 2013/14 target.

As I am retiring I thought this would be a good occasion for me to ramble on about my time as an elected Member and give detailed advice to whoever succeeds me. However, you will be relieved to hear that I have avoided temptation and I only have a few points.

With a new election coming up I hope that anybody who believes that they have something to offer towards the running of our country and have the future of the Islands clearly in view put themselves forward for election. It's very easy to sit outside and criticise the actions of the Assembly Members but a very different one when one has to be there to make the decisions.

When I was first elected 12 years ago it seemed to me that the income seemed to be secure and we were able to produce a balanced budget, while making concessions almost unheard of in other countries. Today the situation is very different. Our income is seriously reduced due to the lack of Illex income and rising costs. Things that we've taken for granted in the past have to be looked at. Any new elected Members will, in the next 4 years, unless there is a change in our financial situation, have to address important issues and most certainly they will have to be prepared to make and implement difficult and possibly very unpopular decisions.

From my role, from my perspective the role of a Member should be to make decisions which would enhance the future of our Islands. It is not only the present we serve but the future Islands as well.

I have, in the past 12 years, been involved in virtually every sector of Government – an involvement which has been enjoyable and fulfilling at times and, whilst at others, very difficult.

In particular, apart of my responsibilities within the Islands I've been honoured and privileged to represent our Islands overseas on many occasions, particularly with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, an Association which represents people from over a quarter of the world's population. I hope I have been able to enhance the knowledge and understanding of our Islands and wish to have the right to determine our own future. And this is through all members of the Commonwealth. I have spent a lot of time talking about our right to decide our own future because there is a lot of misunderstanding about that in the world yet.

I would also like to thank all heads of my portfolio responsibilities – past and present – for their patience and support. And I should also like to complement all the Members I worked with the past 12 years. We not always agreed but I hope that we have respected each other's opinions and our right to hold them.

Finally, it would be remiss of me not to thank Claudette Anderson our Clerk and all present and past staff members of Gilbert House. Without their support the job of an Assembly Member would be even more difficult.

Sir, I beg to say good-bye and support the Motion.

Mr Speaker

Thank you.

The Honourable Mike Summers

Mr Speaker, Honourable members, it escaped my attention that the Honourable Richard Cockwell was not going to be here next month but perhaps I shouldn't say anything at this stage and follow an age-old tradition and talk about him behind his back in September. But I think I probably will say a few words in September but Richard it's been a pleasure working with you. You've been a very solid Member of Council for all of this time and sometimes you only miss the good things when they are gone and I am sure that's how it will be with you.

I have just a couple of words to say today. I'd like to congratulate all the competitors in the recent Island Games. I think they did a tremendous job representing our country and being ambassadors for the Falklands as they always do. Fantastic job, some very, very good results they should all be very, very proud of themselves.

I was delighted to see in the news in the last day or two that foreign Minister Morantinos from Spain has visited Gibraltar and was photographed shaking hands with Secretary of State David Miliband and Chief Minister Peter Caruana. And he also made the very wise remark that for Spain to achieve its objectives in Gibraltar they need to convince at least 20,000 people that they are right. This is something rather new for a Spanish Minister to say but isn't it encouraging that here is the Foreign Minister of Spain standing up in Gibraltar saying Gibraltarians effectively have the right to self determination and it's about time we recognised it. Good on him. And perhaps their cousins over the water might just have a quick listen and think about whether their approach to life is right or not. Very encouraging!

While I was travelling relatively recently I had the opportunity to meet the new Overseas Territories Minister, Chris Bryant, relatively briefly, but it was a positive meeting and of course we welcomed him to his post. Far be it for me to lecture the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom but this is the third Overseas Territories Minister we have had inside three years. It doesn't do much good frankly. They don't get much opportunity to get into the job, to understand the territories, to do the work that they need to do. And it is a very diverse job. And I don't suppose Gordon Brown will ever be aware that I have said that this is not very satisfactory but it isn't and I hope looking forward that we can have Overseas Territories Ministers lasting a bit longer. We have invited him to visit and he may come later in the year. We will see.

On a more positive note it was a pleasure to be able to talk to Bill Rammel, one of our old Overseas Territories Ministers, who, of course, is now Minister for the Armed Forces and a very good and positive friend in that area.

Sir, that is all I intended to say today.

I support the Motion for Adjournment.

Mr Speaker

The Honourable Ian Hansen

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in rising to support the Motion for Adjournment. I am sure colleagues will be relieved to hear that I'm not going to speak about Cable & Wireless today, only to mention the fact that I am very disappointed that we haven't received Dr Chris Doyle's report yet, or to my knowledge we haven't and I just hope that it does arrive soon because it is a very important document.

I was unfortunate earlier this month that I wasn't able to attend Farmers' Week due to weather and other commitments. But I believe it was fairly well attended and from what I am hearing there is a lot of very positive feedback coming out of it. And I would like to just take this opportunity to thank SeAled PR the RBA Organisers for the extremely efficient organisation of that event once again, they do a sterling job.

I would also like to just briefly congratulate Councillor Stevens and Councillor Robertson on their well delivered address to the C-24 this year. I thought they were particularly good speeches and well delivered. Thank you for that.

And I just finally I would like to mention Councillor Cockwell's retirement. I had thought also that I would say nice things about him today and then mention the real stuff in September. We were talking this morning, and actually we have known each other for 40 years so not only in my opinion he is a respected colleague but he is a good friend. And I think it is quite fitting that the almost final duty for this Assembly would be for the CPA because not only had he attended many CPA plenaries and regionals but of course you served on the Executive of that Association for a number of years, which is quite an honour. And that just proves, I think your popularity within the CPA.

And finally I actually have the privilege of being, I believe, the only person in the Falkland Islands who has ever seen Councillor Cockwell in full Fijian National Dress – a sight that will live with me, will stay with me forever.

Sir, I beg to support the Motion.

Mr Speaker

Councillor Janet Robertson.

The Honourable Janet Robertson

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am going to keep this very brief. I just wanted to say a little bit about the public meeting on Tuesday. I was absolutely delighted – and I know a number of my colleagues were - about the number of young people that turned up. I know for some there it was a bit daunting, some thought it was going to be a waste of time but nevertheless they came anyway and I thought, well I certainly was very impressed with the contributions that they made and I think there were some very important pointers that we picked up from that meeting. Critically it was about identifying the gap that we have between students' scholastic life and their work in life. We still have not, we are probably even further away than we used to be, in fact, in terms of careers advice and keeping track of our students once they have left the Islands.

I have suggested that we try and take this forward sooner rather than later through the Education Board but it is absolutely critical as one student said, isn't it simply a just a matter of keeping a database and frankly I couldn't disagree with that. We should be able to keep clear, easily retrievable information about our students, what they are studying, where they are studying, when they plan to leave and to be able to keep some sort of contact with them about what they are planning to do once they've completed their degree. And certainly this information should be circulated throughout the community and to the private sector as well.

I also mentioned earlier about the issue about GCSEs. The fact is is that since we are have home student status, which has been fantastic from a budget point of view,, from our students' point of view it does mean that Universities are not quite so keen to snap up Falkland Islands' students because they are not quite, they don't bring the same amount of cash with them that they used to. I actually think that this is not a bad thing because it does mean that our students have to be more competitive.

But I think this message needs to be taken back to the Key Stage 3 children – the Year 9s who are selecting, who are going to be selecting their GCSEs they must be aware that if you want to do Geography, don't get a "C" in Geography because you might lose out on a place at University. It's that kind of message that we have to do more about getting feedback from students.

I wasn't going to say anything else except again to wish Councillor Cockwell – he's shaking his head at me – it's been a great privilege working with you over the last four years and I'm a bit disappointed that you decided not to leave us with a lot of sage advice because in my first year on Council I did go with you to the CPA in Nigeria and you gave me one of the best bit of advice I've had on Council actually. It was at the moment when I was getting rather irate with a rather silly point of view, I thought, that was being expressed across the table and Councillor Cockwell leaned forward and he said "just smile and wave" he says and I think that is probably extremely sound advice when you are doing this job and I think we will miss those little gems.

There is, it's going to be very difficult to find someone to fit those shoes, actually, Richard because there is no doubt in my mind, having gone to the CPA with you, the extent to which

so many people know you, like you, respect you and know so much more about the Falklands, thanks to your attendance over the years and your ability to engage people in chat and just to engage them full stop.

So you will be missed and I do hope you enjoy your retirement.

Mr Speaker, I support the Motion.

Mr Speaker

Thank you.

The Honourable Mike Rendell

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in rising to support the Motion for Adjournment I would like to join in the tributes that we are all giving to the Honourable Richard Cockwell and I hear a lot of very good comments being made about you and I totally support them in every way. I regard you as something of a guru and I look forward to seeing photographic evidence of the incident which the Honourable Ian Hansen has reported earlier in these proceedings.

I can also confirm, to the Honourable Ian Hansen that the Doyle Report is not yet here, is not yet here but we hope to receive it soon.

I only wanted to focus on one particular subject and that is Her Majesty's Armed Forces. In recent weeks we have had a number of opportunities to reflect on the courage and commitment of HM Armed Forces. This started, the recent phase started back in June with all the many wreath laying ceremonies at each of the 1982 memorials, culminating in the Liberation Monument on the 14th of June. And all of these are forever etched into our culture as a mark of gratitude for the supreme sacrifice made by so many to protect our right to self determination. Following on after June the 14th was Armed Forces Day just a week or two later when the Falkland Islands joined, in particular, Gibraltar and the people of the United Kingdom to demonstrate recognition of the relentless pressure under which HM Armed Forces uphold the principles of freedom and democracy wherever it serves around the world.

And then earlier this week there was a brief act of reflection paying respects and renewal of support at Liberty Lodge. For those many members of HM Armed Forces who have, are or are about to serve either in Iraq or Afghanistan. Amongst them, of course, there are several Falkland Islanders as well as a considerable number of serving members of the Armed Forces who pass through the Falkland Islands on a regular basis.

And, of course the recent high casualty rates have demonstrated to us all just how perilous their mission is. And I know we all join in supporting all those brave servicemen and their nearest and dearest tasked with upholding freedom – something very close to our hearts.

Mr Speaker I support the Motion.

Mr Speaker

Thank you.

The Honourable Dr. Andrea Clausen

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would just like to mention a few subjects in closing today. Firstly, following the changes that we brought into force as a result of our budget deliberations just two months ago – there has been quite a lot, I have had quite a lot of phone calls myself on a number of subjects and in particular on family allowance and retirement pension contributions. I would just like to take this opportunity to reassure the public in particular on retirement pension contributions in particular the if you like equalisation of the system for Government and contributions on people’s behalf for Camp, sorry, the fact that the system has gone for Camp – and there is now one system for Camp and Stanley – has had impacts and that that is being looked at and also are some impacts on that particular fact in regard to changes to family allowance. All of those things are being looked into by Government officers and I would just like to reassure those people in Camp in particular but also some in Stanley who are concerned that that work is going on and that we hope we will be able to revert back to them in due course – possibly with a solution – possibly not. We will look at the impacts, how wide ranging they are and what we can do to mitigate them.

I believe that there was a misunderstanding at the end of the public meeting earlier this week with regards to means testing of students who are going away for further education. The misunderstanding that is possibly amongst the public that elements of the grant, if you like, the accommodation and food and so on were to be means tested. This is not so. The only area that was agreed to be means tested was the pocket money element, not the travel element, just the pocket money element which is the £50.00 a week payment which is made to those students in those first two years overseas for further education. I just wanted to make that point really in case there was any further misunderstanding out in the public.

I would also like to agree with my Honourable colleague with regard to the public meeting in general. It was so great to see so many students there and I think we should really do this on an annual basis. I think we did it in our first year following the election and there was a good turn-out then. It is really good to have the opportunity to exchange directly with students when they come back at the end of their academic years to see what they have to say and to see if there are things we can do to make things more comfortable for them and to help them in their planning and all of those other things. I think that’s great.

The only thing I would say is that if there were people at that public meeting or students at that public meeting in particular who felt maybe intimidated and didn’t wish to put their hand up and talk in front of such a large audience that they can, of course, always e-mail or phone any of us about any issues and we will do our best to follow up on any issues they raise with us.

On a Military front, I would also like to make a couple of comments because I am not sure how many people are aware but right now we, I believe, have the Paras here as the RIC and

we also have a group of veterans from 1982, in particular some veterans who were involved in the battle at Goose Green and Darwin. And I would just like to take this opportunity to extend a very warm welcome to all of those Paras, in particular to the veterans. As being somebody who was there at Goose Green in 1982 and I look forward to my opportunity to meet with them over this weekend. I understand we are having a service at Goose Green at the Cross. I hope that both the RIC and the veterans can get what they need from their visits to the Falklands, for the RIC, in particular, training elements and so on. I hope that's rewarding for them and for the veterans I hope that we are able to show them what we have been able to do on the back of the sacrifice that they made and also their colleagues and their friends during the conflict in 1982.

So, I look forward to communicating that myself directly to those people and I wish them all the best for their visit.

On a final note, I would also like to add my very best wishes to the Honourable Richard Cockwell in his retirement. I don't know what we are going to do without all of those sketches that we get at the end of every meeting. Cherie's board will look a bit empty if she decides to put them on e-bay and sell them all. So, I would just like to wish you all the very best and putting your feet up, while sort of putting your feet up and looking after your grandchildren maybe – or grandchild, and Jackson, so all the very best to you, Richard.

Sir, I support the Motion.

Mr Speaker

Thank you.

The Chief of Staff

Mr Speaker, if I can just thank Honourable Members for their words of acknowledgement and support for the British Armed Forces and I would just like to state to the House and to all those listening that our mission in the Falkland Islands is resolute and it is a privilege to support your right to self determination. It's been our mission for 27 years and it will be our mission for the next 27 years or for however long it is required.

Secondly, I would also like to pass on my regards for a long and happy retirement to you, Richard. You were one of the first Members that actually came up, shook my hand and talked to me round at the Governor's House at the first sort of "meet and greet" cocktail evening that I got invited to. He's stopped inviting me now. Perhaps I will get invited again in due course. I really do wish you a very happy retirement and I hope you burst through those 2013 projections on life expectancy.

And finally and for you – for Mike next week we've got an Armed Forces Parliamentary visit of some 12 or 14 Members of Parliament from the UK, I think some Members of the European Parliament as well. I have 2 staying in my house. If you'd like me to hammer home that message so that it does get back to Prime Minister Gordon Brown, then please

come see me afterwards. It will be my absolute pleasure because I support your words completely.

Sir, I also support the Motion for Adjournment.

Mr Speaker

Thank you.

With the permission of the House, I would also like to wish Richard well in his retirement.

Thank you.

The House stands adjourned accordingly.

Confirmed this 18th day of September 2009

Speaker of the House