



News from Gilbert House

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Message from the Chair

MLA Ian Hansen — Health and Social Services

I am sure that MLA Pollard and MLA Bragger will be updating us all on how the Party Conferences went during their attendance over the last few weeks. As someone who has attended five of these I have no doubt that they will have found the interaction with politicians and the many visitors to the Falkland stand interesting and informative.

The Falkland stand is now only at the Labour and Conservative Party Conferences, but I recall attending three when there was a coalition Government. Jan Cheek and I had consecutive years at the Lib Dem Conference as well as the other two.

I don't think there is any question how valuable it is for us to be seen at these conferences and to meet as many past, present and perhaps most importantly, future politicians of the UK Government.



On my portfolio matters, this last week we have had personnel from One Creative down here to further commence work on both the Vulnerable Persons Unit and also the renovations/changes to KEMH. They have met with the Development Board, MLAs, and of course hospital management and Public Works Department. Both of these expensive, important and ambitious projects are still pretty much on line as far as time scale and cost are concerned.

This is down to the hard work of the project managers and good support from organisations such as One Creative.

It is rapidly approaching a year since the election of this Assembly. It will be interesting to hear next month what we as individuals consider what we have achieved or failed on in our particular portfolio responsibilities.

I for one feel I certainly have a far better understanding of our Health Care Service than I did when allocated this portfolio a year ago.



The state of the world's oceans and the horrifying scale of plastic pollution have featured frequently in the international news over the past year and we in the Falklands are far from immune to this problem. I was pleased therefore to bring a Motion to the Assembly in support of the FI Wise Waste group – a community initiative which aims to encourage more responsible consumer behaviour, particularly with regard to single-use plastics. I was delighted that the Motion received the unanimous support of Members and hope that this signals our commitment to dealing with this problem.

To quote the Wise Waste group – their aims are “rethinking how we deal with waste in a place where recycling options are slim: reusing what we have, refusing what we don't need, repairing what we can, and generally using a bit of creativity and going the extra mile for a greener alternative.”

It's all about small but significant changes on a personal level and encouraging the behaviour we want to see. The group has been widely supported by the community with individuals and businesses alike taking steps to make those incremental changes for the greater environmental good.

FIG is also pledged to finding better ways to reducing and handling waste and I was able to outline some of the steps already being undertaken, such as the imminent installation of water coolers at schools, in government buildings and at the JVC, and improved glass-crushing methods and bottle banks which will allow the vast majority of waste glass to be reused as trench fill.

Mount Pleasant's recycling initiative is nearing completion and FIG are working with the MoD to hopefully reach an agreement which will see tins, cans, paper and some plastics handled there.

The rubbish dump is a highly-visible, long-term problem. Plans are coming together for a modern, managed dump, but this is going to take time, so I hope in the meantime that we can find a way to make more immediate improvements at Eliza Cove.

We've a long way to go, but every bit helps so on Clean Up Stanley Day (Saturday October 27) don your gardening gloves for a couple of hours and help give the town a Spring clean!

MLA Teslyn Barkman

Natural Resources

Who should be eligible to vote in our democracy? It's a question that has stirred up a lot of debate and differing opinions.

A fall-back position by those who don't support 16 or 17 year olds having a vote has been to point out that, 'if you are mature enough to have a vote, you are mature enough to smoke or drink'. To this I would say; why then are 16 year olds able to be employed? Why are they able to pay tax if they are employed? Why are 17 year olds allowed to drive?

Smoking and drinking are restricted to 18 for separate reasons. The main arguments I see are that smoking is bad for your health, and drinking in excess impairs your brain function and decisions. Each carries risks to a human at any age, and each is a separate consideration to the real issue. By changing the conversation to a 'you are only mature for everything at 18', you don't talk about the benefits to society that lowering the voting age could bring.

Voting age is a cause being looked at around the world, with more and more countries and territories like St Helena (17), and Scotland (16) making the move because it has benefits to society. It encourages people to engage in politics earlier, and to feel encouraged that they have a voice in our community. These are the points I would like to see discussed; the real pro's and con's of the issue in a dedicated debate.

Another move brought up when discussing voting eligibility is do we extend to PRP holders who have made their home here permanently? This isn't something we've discussed in depth at Gilbert House, although I know it is supported by some. It stirs up a lot of questions as to whether it is easy enough for people to become Status holders? Would a voting right for PRP holders discourage them from becoming Status holders? Or should there be a certain amount of years you've lived in the community, that you automatically get a say? I am very interested to hear everyone's views...



MLA Roger Spink

Government Services



We are rapidly approaching the anniversary of our election and with that in mind I have been reflecting on how far we have been able to get on with the goals set out in the Islands plan.

For many items such as the Vulnerable Persons Unit, training centre, some government housing and the hospital redevelopment although there is not much yet to show on the ground, contracts have been let and commitments made. Looking forwards as we start the 2019/20 budget setting process I am considering such projects as being underway.

Our attention and drive I believe must focus on other important areas where we have not made as much progress, the number one priority must be the replacement port vital to our economy

as a gateway, for the key fishing industry and also for tourism to develop. Other capital items we need to push forwards include the Diamond Jubilee Road extension and future housing plots, the Sports complex, camp radio, further government housing and air terminal at MPA.

We need a development plan for Government properties as movement of PWD from their offices offers the opportunity to review what the best use of that site would be and I invite readers to let us know what they think should be developed on the PWD offices site. We also need to progress the power station replacement despite the interim generators imminent arrival. Pressure on the 2019/20 budget will mean we have to be more cautious and selective in our ideas for expansion of Government services but I would very much like to see an Orthodontics service provided for young people to have their teeth sorted and the option could be for others to pay for cosmetic treatment.

MLA Roger Edwards

Public Works

As you will be aware, I visited the UK on my way to Vigo for the Conxemar. With Autumn on its way, the trees are just beginning to change colour, a magnificent sight and it is this magnificence which led me to consider trees, their conservation and the Queen's Canopy project. The immediate result is my topic for this month's Newsletter.

Already, in the Falkland Islands, we recognise the importance of protecting and conserving our unique environment. With these factors in mind, I would venture to suggest that we put forward our proposals to support "The Queen's Commonwealth Canopy". This project was originally launched in Malta in 2015 at the 24th CHOGM. The aim of the project was "to eventually link all

53 Commonwealth countries in a canopy of sustainable forest conservation initiatives for future generations".

In April of this year, ITV broadcast a conversation between Her Majesty and Sir David Attenborough as they walked in the gardens of Buckingham Palace. They discussed trees, nature and conservation as well as their hopes for the future of the Queen's Canopy.

We, too, are a part of the Commonwealth.

Trees are already recognised as having numerous benefits for the environment: they help to combat climate change by absorbing CO2 and releasing Oxygen back into the atmosphere; in one year, an acre of mature trees can provide enough oxygen for 18 people; they help to prevent soil erosion; they provide a habitat for wildlife and, on a more mundane level, they can be used to block out unsightly views. Above all, they are a thing of beauty in themselves, something that can bring joy to many and a sight which our children should have the opportunity to grow up with. Trees, even in small numbers, should be part of our environment.

Yes, we would have to go through an accreditation process and we may have a problem because of our lack of indigenous trees but we do have indigenous vegetation which also seems to be included.

Surely, we should, at least, take the first steps by submitting a proposal to the Royal Commonwealth Society to unite with our fellow Commonwealth countries to mark Her Majesty's lifetime of service.



Having just spent the last three weeks with MLA Bragger in the UK I would like to take some time to reflect on our schedule including the party conferences.

The main parts of our visit were of course the Conservative and Labour party conferences. Both of which seemed incredibly successful to me with thousands of visitors including many politicians. The support for the Falklands was humbling.

As well as having a stand in the exhibitor's hall we also took the time to seek out fringe events. Amongst the fringe events I attended were Gibraltar receptions, a rural and international

receptions as well as discussions around the future of defence, addressing the construction skills gap, how to get more women and young people involved in politics, inclusive capitalism and how digital technology can transform government services.

We also took the time to attend a South Georgia stakeholder meeting and reception which covered a variety of subjects including tourism, science, fishing, heritage, biosecurity and biodiversity with many subject experts attending.

Next was a trip to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office with our Head of Section, Desk Officer and also for I believe the first time ever for the Falklands the Permanent Under Secretary (Sir Simon McDonald), where we had some good discussions regarding current issues affecting the Falklands.

We met with BAS in Cambridge where we had a really good tour of the facility and emphasised our intent to see the Falklands continue being the gateway to Antarctica as well as reassuring them of our desire to see us continue to work together.

Last but not least was a trip to see the CPA where we first met with and had a lengthy chat with the Secretary General Akbar Khan followed by a practical meeting with CPA staff about plans we may have for parliament week in the Falklands later in the year.

Finally I would like to say thank you to both Sukey Cameron and Michael Betts for putting up with two conference newbies and showing us the ropes. These last three weeks have just reinforced my confidence in the great work all at FIGO do.



World Mental Health Day
BIG BRUNCH
SATURDAY 13 OCTOBER 2018 IN THE TOWN HALL 10AM TO 1PM

A range of breakfast/lunch options available as well as:

- SKIP FIT WITH BEV BATES
- INTERACTIVE OMNI WITH SUE WILKS
- CHOCOLATE MEDITATION WITH CAROL MORRISON
- JEWELLERY MAKING WITH TERESA LANG
- PRESERVE THE PAST WITH REX EAGLE
- BUILD A BEAR OR BUNNY WITH ACORNS

A stylized illustration on the right side of the poster. It shows two hands, one above and one below, cupping a human brain. The brain is depicted with detailed gyri and sulci. The hands are simple line drawings. The background of the poster is split into an orange upper half and a dark blue lower half.



MLA Stacy Bragger

Education and Community



I've just returned to the Islands after attending this year's Labour and Conservative Party Conferences with MLA Pollard. It was the first time that I have attended the Party Conferences and as something of a political anorak I found the experience fascinating.

We travelled up to Liverpool first for the Labour Conference and when we walked into the conference venue it was fantastic to see that the Falklands stand had the prime spot. The eye-catching stand was the first as people walked towards the main hall which enabled us to engage with a huge number of people.

We then moved onto the Conservative Party Conference in Birmingham and we enjoyed another very warm welcome. We had several senior Ministers visit the stand and we were able to raise relevant issues with them. They all unanimously voiced their support for us.

Both of the Party Conferences had a different feel to them but what was common at both for us was that people were genuinely interested in the Islands and what life is like for us here. The overwhelming majority of visitors to the stand at both conferences were wholly supportive. However, as time moves on from 1982 it is clear that we need to develop ways to continue to speak to the British public and to better inform them about the Islands.

While at the Party Conferences we met with Gibraltar's Chief Minister Fabian Picardo and it was a good chance to discuss with him building further links between us and to also thank him for the work that has taken place to enable Falklands businesses to open bank accounts with the Gibraltar International Bank.

I took the opportunity to attend a number of fringe events at both conferences covering a wide range of subjects including early years development, mental health issues and Birmingham's preparations for the Commonwealth Games which of course the Falklands will be sending a team to.

Thanks to Sukey Cameron and Michael Betts for their hard work over the two weeks and for their good company on and off the stand.

Overall, it was a very positive trip that gives us a platform to speak to a huge range of people. It's great to be back home

Development and Commercial Services

Three weeks ago I undertook a very successful political visit to Montevideo. It’s clear that many Uruguayans understand and support our right of self-determination and are keen to look at commercial and other opportunities here.

El Prado, the huge agricultural show in Montevideo, was on when I was there and the Falklands again had a stand in the British pavilion. Almost 80,000 people went into the pavilion and saw the stand and learned about the modern Falklands, be that tourism, trade or job opportunities here.

There are, of course, long standing links with Uruguay, be that the naming of Lafonia after Snr Lafone or the ongoing links with the excellent Hospital Britanico.

I think I took my first patient to the hospital in the back of a Herc in 1991 and, as with the Hospital in London where I trained, the quality of care and equipment was outstanding but some of the buildings were old and in need of modernisation.

The Hospital Britanico is now a very modern building. Dr Jorge Stanham has been the Head of the hospital and our point of contact and to this day still meets every Falkland Island patient when they arrive, no matter what time of day or night. He will be retiring in a few years time and the doctor who is likely to be his successor joins Dr Stanham in meeting our patients, such is the desire to continue this special bond.

Whilst the Falkland Islands Government spends many millions of pounds on treating illness, we have been slow to invest in prevention. We finally have a Public Health group and one of the things they are promoting is Mental Health.

One in four of us will suffer a mental health problem in our lives and it can be as devastating as cancer, as happened with Ros. The Coroner referred to the care we offer to sufferers as being a Cinderella Service, under invested in with none of the priority given to such things as heart attacks and cancer; that has to change.

The independent inquiry report into her death will be published soon. It has highlighted many areas of concern in how patients with mental illnesses are treated.

October 10th is World Mental Health Day. Team Tranquil and our Public Health committee is highlighting this day as a time to think about these illnesses and push for a change in attitude. There will be a Big Brunch on Saturday 13th in the town hall – please come along and support them.



Key Dates & Contacts

Next sitting of ExCo	Wednesday 24th October 2018
Next sitting of Legislative Assembly	Thursday 25th October 2018

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