THE ST HELENA
INDEPENDENT
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WE STAND WITH UKRAINE

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Airport Drama Over

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Chief Minister to Speak in UK Parliament Next Week

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Another Ultra-Marathon Swimmer Arrives Tomorrow to Take the St Helena Challenge

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Chief Minister to Speak in Parliament Next Week

Front and Centre – personal appearances to give evidence means only the committee members get a front view of witnesses. This photo is taken from the public seating area.

Next Wednesday Rebecca Cairns-Wicks will give oral evidence to a committee of the House of Lords which investigates constitutional issues. In 2023 the UK and the Overseas Territories agreed a Joint Declaration, it was described as a modern partnership for a stronger British family and a vision for modern, collaborative partnerships fit for the 21st century. This investigative committee aims to find out if, three years down the line, the new relationship between The UK and the BOTS has lived up to the hype.

The Overseas Territories has two main groups, the Caribbean territories and the South Atlantic. The Caribbean contingent has already given their oral evidence to the committee on 11th February. Next Wednesday, our chief minister is scheduled to be the first speaker, followed by representatives of the Falklands and Tristan da Cunha.

During the Covid pandemic it became normal practice to attend these types of meetings virtually, using Zoom, Teams or one of the several other video links. Our chief minister will attend from the Castle, appearing in the committee room on screen.

Transcripts of what was said at the meeting are published after the event. The main issues raised by Caribbean representatives are shown separately. Taken together, the main concerns and major differences between territories are obvious. Stephen Doughty, UK Minister for the Overseas Territories appeared before the committee on 13th January.

Mr Doughty emphasised the importance of a consistent approach in the UK-OT relationship. We can only assume this was mentioned because, in the past, there has been inconsistency. Going further, Doughty said a charter of engagement is being developed, one purpose is to assess the UK government's responsibilities and make sure they are made clear. The minister put much value on the Joint Ministerial Council (JMC) and pointed out that 94% of the actions from the 2024 JMC had been delivered or were well on their way. Doughty listed some of the results from the actions, they included, new patrol vessels and emergency services in the Caribbean, major infrastructure projects, hospitals, ports and work to protect biodiversity. He highlighted £13 million in infrastructure projects completed over the past year and another £60 million-worth in the pipeline. Mr Doughty then reduced speed and admitted that some longstanding issues were moving too slowly. He stated it is necessary to have strong compliance on things like prison conditions and facilities, pointing out some facilities have been quite outdated, perhaps with challenges around them. Excellent support from the Ministry of Justice helped to address some issues. The minister mentioned a prison he visited in Anguilla when he toured the Caribbean territories.

Chief Minister to Speak in Parliament Next Week

When he finished speaking, it was the turn of committee members to raise issues and asked questions. As often happens, the issue which quickly came to the fore during the committee's discussion was the Caribbean overseas territories regulation of financial services. It is not as rigorous as it should be. Money laundering, that is Caribbean Banks taking large deposits from criminal syndicates, then making their dirty money look respectable.

Lord Foulkes spoke at length on this subject. He said the relaxed regulatory regime reflects badly on the United Kingdom because people around the world know that we are ultimately responsible for these overseas territories. We need to take robust action.

Basically true, but very tiresome. Lord Foulkes and many others like him can look much closer to home if they want to take robust action on money laundering. Numerous reports from government bodies, law enforcement, and anti-corruption watchdogs consistently describe London as a major global centre for money laundering. The UK National Crime Agency (NCA) estimates that hundreds of billions of US dollars of criminal money are likely laundered through UK banks each year.

One thing for sure, after Rebecca Cairns-Wicks speaks, no one will be talking about hundreds of billions of US dollars being pumped into the Bank of St Helena.

You can follow the committee meeting on LinkedIn or Twitter (now called X).

The Major Concerns of Caribbean Territories

Anguilla

The principal issue for Anguilla is the negotiation of a new constitution. We have the oldest one by far, dating back to 1982. Through that new constitution, we will seek greater autonomy for the democratically elected Government of the territory.

Montserrat

Over 30 years ago the Soufrière Hills volcano erupted and that impact continues to shape the development of Montserrat. A significant proportion of the island is uninhabitable and a large amount of the population live here in the UK today. Our ambition is to move towards long-term financial stability and sustainability, and that ambition underpins our current policy focus.

Turks & Caicos Islands

Turks and Caicos is completely self-sustaining and does not really depend on the United Kingdom for any kind of aid. It does not really have a substantial number of Turks and Caicos islanders living and working in the United Kingdom. Our biggest challenge is the security of the Turks and Caicos Islands given our geographic location 100 miles north of Haiti and the destabilisation of the whole Government. It could be classified as a failed country.

British Virgin Islands

We have the challenge of climate change. In 2017, we were devastated by two category 5 hurricanes. As you know, our territory contributes very little to greenhouse gas emissions, which add to the challenge, but we are on the front line of the impacts and negative effects of climate change.

Bermuda

Although Bermuda has one of the most advanced constitutions among the overseas territories, like other OTs such as Anguilla and the BVI, we are also in order of priorities seeking further constitutional autonomy.

Explainer

Here's Another Nice Mess

The application for permission for a Judicial Review on of the Civil Litigation (Costs) Ordinance happened last month. There are many in St Helena who have an overwhelming personal interest in the outcome of these legal proceedings, however, it is a matter of great importance to all of us because we could be directly affected by the consequences of this Order.

What is the Judicial Review about and how is it we all find ourselves in another mess created by those who have authority over us? Let's start from the beginning.

Sergio Villatoro, called 'the bone man', was a very busy orthopaedic surgeon, praised by government for the number of operations he was somehow able to perform.

Eventually, and far too late, the injury and damage he caused through clinical negligence, of a proven criminal nature, was brought into the open. More than 130 have now sought to claim compensation for the physical suffering they have endured due to Villatoro Bran's negligence. There could be others who suffer, but have not come forward to make a claim. It is estimated the total number of claimants could easily be 450. It is reasonable to assume at least 10% of the Island population have been directly or indirectly (family & friends) affected by his criminal negligence.

In the beginning, some of Villatoro Bran's victims went to the Public Solicitor Office for help in making a claim for compensation. Unsatisfied with the results achieved, a large firm of UK solicitors were invited to get involved. With the resources, staff, skills and experience equal to the task, Hugh James Solicitors created waves that ran through St Helena government administration and in legal circles. Hugh James was not in awe of the Island's government. Our government were soon in awe when they must have realised the true consequences of recruiting rogue doctors.

At first, when Villatoro Bran was found guilty of criminal negligence the government knew they did not have a leg to stand on. Villatoro Bran had seen to that, even without a surgical operation. The government publicly announced they wanted to ensure the victims were adequately compensated and would instruct their own solicitors to work with Hugh James Solicitors so the legal process could be completed as soon as possible. SHG would remain at arm's length through out the process. This was not to be.

Maybe the government did not realise the extent of their liabilities. Maybe they did not realise how much money would be involved due to our government not knowing how to recruit genuine doctors of good reputation. It's been an expensive lesson, but now they do.
Whatever the reason, suddenly, the mood changed. Our government moved the goalposts again. A wrecking ball was taken to the negotiations between the two firms of solicitors. Now there would be no agreement to conclude the legal process as soon as possible. The St Helena government were going to fight every step of the way.

The fight reached its height on 26th June 2025 when the last government introduced a Bill which was whisked through Legislative Council to become the Civil Litigation (Costs) Ordinance. On 30th June the governor dissolved Legislative Council in advance of the general election on 3rd September. The Legislative Council could have continued into October. Pulling down the shutters three months early seemed strange at the time.

There was no public consultation on the Civil Litigation (Costs) Ordinance. It was not known

about until a few days before the Legislative Council Meeting. The day after it was passed, it received whatever Royal Assent is called in St Helena and immediately came into force. Our government can work really fast when they want to.

The Civil Litigation (Costs) Ordinance deals only with the Conditional Fee Agreement our government were so keen on supporting in September 2023 when they appointed a firm of UK solicitors to negotiate with Hugh James Solicitors. By June 2024 further work was stopped on that agreement. In June 2025 they rushed the Civil Litigation (Costs) Ordinance through Legislative Council. Conditional Fee Agreements should streamline the legal process, cutting time and costs when there are a large number of cases on the same matter.

The Ordinance showed the government's true intention. The Ordinance denies the right for anyone seeking a solicitor of their choice if they wish to enter into a Conditional Fee Agreement for clinical negligence. It is now compulsory for all claims made on a 'no win no fee' basis to go first to the Public Solicitor Office (PSO) at Ladder Hill. Only if the PSO decline to represent you can you seek legal representation elsewhere.

The Ordinance also creates rules and regulations which result in top rated overseas law firms not being able to offer you their services because of the limits on costs they can claim. Various other barriers are built into the Ordinance which limit your access to justice. The Ordinance places no restrictions on government being represented by the legal professionals denied to you.

For these and more reasons Mario Peters and his mother together with the St Helena Equality and Human Rights Commission applied to the court for a Judicial Review to test the legality of this legislation.

OPINION

Judicial Review on Sergio Claims Allowed Only on the Money

The St Helena Supreme Court has issued an order stating that certain specific aspects of the Civil Litigation (Costs) Ordinance and the associated Notice are accepted for Judicial Review. Sir Nicholas Blake, acting as judge of the Supreme Court made his ruling last month on applications for a Judicial Review. The judge has allowed a review of the hourly rates payable to solicitors and barristers as well as a clause in the Ordinance specifying restrictions on when an insurance can be obtained against the risk of paying an opponent's legal costs and fees if their case is lost.

Judge Blake's Order does indicate the Judicial Review might include aspects of the detailed process and conditions set out for Conditional Fee Agreements, also known as 'No Win No Fee'. The purpose of the Civil Litigation (Costs) Ordinance is to direct with the force of law how all aspects of Conditional Fee Agreements should be negotiated.

As the law now stands, the local Public Solicitor Office (PSO) is always the first place anyone must go if they wish to seek compensation for clinical negligence.

Continues on NEXT PAGE...

OPINION

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Continues from PREVIOUS PAGE...

Judge Blake

The Public Solicitor Office tell us on their website –
"We are here to help if you or a member of your family has come to harm as a result of negligence. You have a right to seek compensation for your injuries. We will handle your claim with care, sympathy and complete professionalism, helping you carry on with your life".
Sir Nicholas Blake, Acting Supreme Court Judge, described the PSO as –

"An organisation with a very modest budget, staff, resources and limited skills and experience."

When referring to the Mario Peters case and the representation he received from the PSO, Judge Blake observed, "Although liability and causation were admitted, judgement was not entered and the assessment of damage did not appear to have progressed." Hugh James took over the case in 2024.

Despite this, Judge Blake has not specifically included for Judicial Review one of the restrictions on conditional fee arrangements which demands that first, "the litigant has applied to the Legal Assistance Fund and had their application refused".

However, there is an aspect of the Ordinance where Judge Blake questions how certain details were decided in view of there being no public consultation on the proposed Civil Litigation (Costs) Bill before being presented to Legislative Council.

Part 3 of the Ordinance includes eight sections, some very detailed, which specify how a conditional fee arrangement is set up and exactly what process is to be followed when doing so. Part 3 includes around forty clauses and sub-clauses covering when a conditional fee arrangement can be used, what it can contain, the information to be provided, how agreements can be amended or cancelled and when insurance is permitted.

The Independent has contact with legal professionals who maintain a close interest, but are not directly involved with, the claims for clinical negligence against Sergio Villatoro Bran. Judge Blake's Order is seen by some as somewhat confusing and even contradictory. However, after stating permission is refused to seek relief in respect of other sections of the Ordinance, further legal applications for review are allowed and will be considered when the Judicial Review on hourly rates and insurance is before the court.

Included In Judge Blake's Order is a recognition that competent legal assistance may be unavailable in circumstances where there is volume and complexity of litigation. He suggests this may amount to a denial of access to a Court of Justice and be unconstitutional. As such, that may have a bearing on some points of contention.

Judge Blake has allowed his Order to be challenged and it is considered he recognises several very important issues with considerable related public interest matters should be heard by the court. This may well be a long legal process. Discussion on the extent basic human rights are affected by the Ordinance appear to have taken a back seat, with monetary considerations in the driver's seat.

Another Drama Over

In the end, the problem causing the airport to be closed was solved quite quickly. Three days after the charter flight arrived with the required parts and the engineers to fit them, the airport opened once more for Airlink flights Two days later, the Tuesday flight touched down at St Helena airport much to the relief of many people. Much of the backlog of people wanting to come here or leave was cleared with the Tuesday flight. It is thought that tomorrow's flight will accommodate those who remain. The airport closure was a dramatic example of how much can go wrong if the right people and equipment are not in the right place at the right time.

The Independent made contact with one of the specialist engineers who arrived on the charter flight eight days ago. A very pleasant man who was so pleased the job he did solved a big problem for so many people. He did not say much about the job he did because others decide what information is given to media, and when. He did not even give his name. He did say when he stepped off the plane he went straight to the fire tenders, put his bags down and started work. He did not see very much of his bed before the job was finished. The two specialist engineers remain in St Helena for a further week or two. There is less urgent work for them to apply their skills.

The governor and the chief secretary have both mentioned the need for investigation of what went wrong and why, but the focus on that will need to be when the more immediate concerns are resolved. The Governor talked of an independent and transparent investigation, the Chief Secretary spoke of a degree of investigation focussing in prevention of the same situation recurring.

The most urgent fault for repair was in the gearbox of the pump in R1 fire tender. The repair required many parts being disassembled to get to the fault. The fault had been correctly and precisely identified by airport engineers but specialist engineers were needed to do the work.

Further checks on the other two fire tenders showed similar faults were present in R2 and R3. Further comments on the cause of the fault common to all tenders pointed to the 'challenging environment' at the airport, also the Island's remote location. It was also mentioned the capacity of R3 will be improved and that the tenders use bore hole water.

It was also said the fire tenders are nearing the end of their working life and the search has started for replacements for R1 and R2 with the support of the FCDO. Whether to lease or buy is one of the many questions. Contact with airports with similar environmental conditions is being made to check what choices they have made to combat the adverse effects.

The challenges in the environmental conditions will arouse the curiosity of the inquisitive. Wind, rain, low cloud and sea mist come immediately to mind. Common to all of them is a high salt content which can be very damaging. But how much damage would salt do to a vital part buried deep inside the gearbox of a pumping mechanism? Maybe it's something in the bore hole water used for the fire tenders? The water is bound to contain minerals. Salt is one of the most common minerals on Earth and is found in rock formations. Could that be it? While answers to these and many other questions are sought, the risk of a repeat occurrence must remain higher than it should be.

The St Helena Airport Response Team

Including the full complement of three fire tenders.

Arriving Tomorrow to Take on the St Helena Challenge

Dina Levačić - World Champion Ultra-Marathon Swimmer

Tomorrow Dina Levačić steps off the plane at St Helena airport, ready for the St Helena ultra-marathon. Dina is the first of three open water swimmers to arrive here in the next few weeks. Each swimmer will have two weeks here to check out the sea conditions and maybe find a day when the sea-state is a bit calmer. Open Water Africa, founded and run by Howard James, has organised this series of swims. Howard is already booking top-line swimmers for next year's series.

Dina Levačić celebrates another success, waving the Croatian flag

Dina Levačić, from Croatia, is an experienced and successful open water swimmer. She has completed the 'Oceans Seven', a collection of channels and straits where sea conditions become more troublesome than usual as the ocean current squeezes the water through restricted spaces. In 2023 Dina was named World Open Water Swimmer of the Year by the World Open Water Swimming Association (WOWSA). Last year she was inducted into the International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame on Jersey. Another crown in her cupboard is the Triple Crown of Open Water Swimming. This means Dina has swum the English Channel and the Catalina Channel, California and around Manhattan Island.
Born in England, now living in Africa, Howard James is also an open water swimmer with several honours under his belt. He has had a nervous week, checking on the latest news about the airport fire tenders.
As well as getting into open water himself, he organises events like the St Helena ultra-marathon and at Lake Malawi.

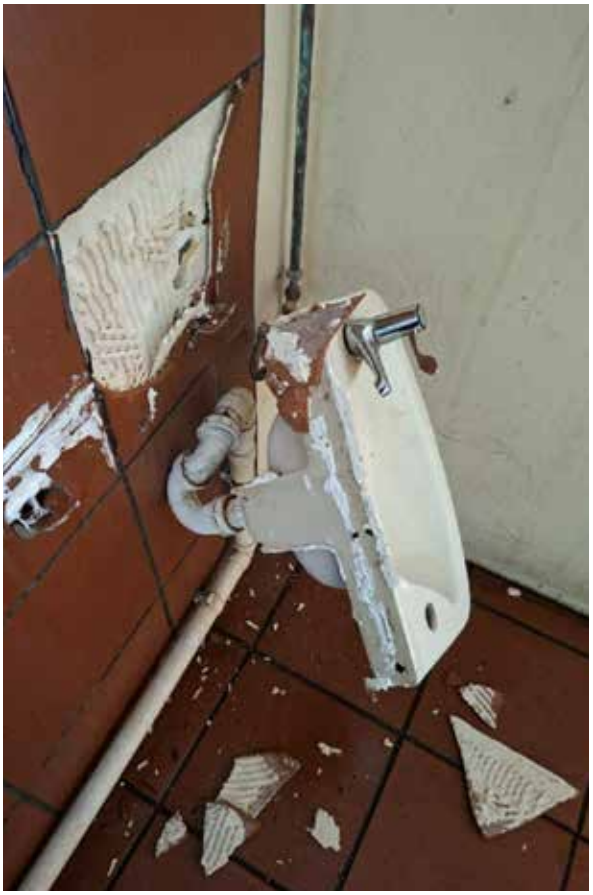
Howard James, founder of Open Water Africa.

Dina spoke earlier this week to Croatian media about her trip to St Helena. She said, "In a few days I will be embarking on a journey that includes two demanding swims in different parts of the world, which actually form one complete project".
"I have no previous experience of other swimmers on that route, so it's almost blind, even though the organizers and local people provided all possible information," she said. Dina particularly highlighted the nature and marine animals they would encounter.
"I'm most looking forward to the cetaceans that live around St. Helena and my goal is to see them. Interestingly, the island is home to the oldest land animal in the world, the 194-year-old Jonathan the tortoise," she said.

After St Helena Dina goes on to Bolivia and Lake Titica where she plans to swim 16 km, at an altitude of 3,812 metres with a water temperature of around 15°C. "The biggest challenge is the altitude. It will be a solo swim and, if everything goes well, I will be only the second woman to swim it," she said.
Another day, another challenge.

That Sink-ing Feeling

More Vandalism in Jamestown.



Late-Night Vandals strikes again! On Saturday (Valentine's Day), the Royal St Helena Police Service published a post on Social Media seeking assistance from the public in regards to the latest case of vandalism in Jamestown.

Between the later hours on Friday 13th February to the early hours on Saturday, one of the sinks in the public toilets opposite the Museum was completely ripped off the wall, leading to the facilities closing for repairs. This causes inconvenience for others who requires the usage of the public toilets, who will now need to occupy themselves elsewhere.

Police Constable Lane commented "Acts of vandalism against public property are not victimless crimes [...] These facilities are maintained by taxpayer funds and provide an essential service to our residents and visitors. The cost of repair is significant, and the loss of the facility impacts everyone."

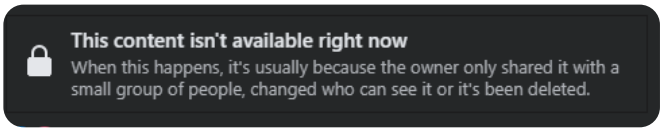
The RSHP requests that if anybody knows any information regarding the incident, that they should contact the Police on 22626 or email community.police@sainthelena.gov.sh quoting reference number HEHN00016960; you can also contact the Neighbourhood Police Team on WhatsApp (290 67897) or speak to any of the officers.

'This Content Isn't Available Right Now'

Latest post from the Police shows progress, then removed...

St Helena has been really active for the past couple of months. With the Airport closure on the 6th February and the Police Man-Hunt, it seems that the island has had a negative start to 2026.

However, on Tuesday, the RSHP shared an update on the Man-Hunt that, following pleas to Rick Thomas, he has turned himself in and the Police can now proceed to question him on the alleged "Threats to Kill" allegations.
The public's reaction has been mixed, with many defending Rick, while others questioning the impact this has on the island as a whole when posts like this gets shared on a public platform where anybody can see it. But on Wednesday, the initial post has been removed.



One person on Facebook, who has shared the Police's post prior to its deletion, raised some points on how public posts on this in a small community can affect the individual's mental health.

"Is it good for this young mans mental health to have what is possibly alledge crimes plastered on social media?" they said. "Think also about the mental health of his family and friends. To have a love ones issues put on and discuss on social media would have cause great stress and anxiety. Is the way he has being protrayed in the eye of us the reader fair?"

The Police has had a rapidly declining reputation recently. With their absence during a public meeting last month and what most has viewed "lack of effort" during a search for missing person in December, it's clear that the general public does not view the Police in high regards and proactive as they once were. It's up to them to restore faith in the system.

Court Report

22nd January 2026

Sinead Toni Green of ***Half Tree Hollow*** was charged with two counts of common assault. She was found guilty with a fine of £100.00 on each count and compensation of £275.00 in total.

Rico Deejay Benjamin of ***Half Tree Hollow*** was charged with two counts of common assault. He was found guilty with a fine of £100.00 on each count and compensation of £275.00 in total.

Simon Rex Issac of ***Levelwood*** was charged with driving a motor vehicle exceeding the prescribed limit. He was found guilty and disqualified from holding or obtaining a driver's license for a period of 12 months, with a fine of £175.00 and court cost of £15.00.

Liam Keith Yon of ***Trapp Cott*** was charged with two counts of unlawfully assaulting a police officer and one count of common assault. He was found guilty on all charges with compensation of £550.00 only.

Anelka Jerome Leo of ***Trapp Cott*** was charged with two counts of breach of anti-social behaviour order and two counts of assaulting a police officer. He was found guilty and given a further 18 months' Probation Order and 40 hours unpaid work on all counts.

5th February 2026

Kieran Daniel Thomas of ***Jamestown*** was charged with driving a motor vehicle exceeding the prescribed limit. He was found guilty and disqualified from holding or obtaining a driver's license for a period of 2 years, with a fine of £260.00, court cost of £15.00 and compensation of £1,686.00.

13th of February 2026

Andre Thomas was charged on a total of five offences - taking 387 indecent images of a child and possessing a further 12,878 indecent images of a child. He was sentenced to a total of 34 months' custody.

The St Helena Independent
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Putty Hill
Alarm Forest
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To ensure inclusion, please submit adverts and copy by 1pm on Wednesdays. Later requests subject to available space.

Pancake Day

Tuesday 17th February was known as Shrove Tuesday and traditionally known as 'Pancake Day'.

As annually, St James Parish Council hosted the traditional pancake race is lower Jamestown which attracted a large crowd of people of all ages.

Many looked on whilst enjoying the others in all categories raced whiles flipping their pancakes, creating a lively, competitive atmosphere for the large crowd.

Members of the Parish Council and friends were busy in the Vicarage making pancakes to keep up with the demand of the public serving them with traditional toppings like lemon and sugar or syrup, along with a choice of three curries – Chicken, Beef & Tuna with Rice and the 1st Jamestown Scout Group serve Hotdogs, so nobody went hungry

Prince Andre Lamar

Andre Lamar Youde made an early appearance to first time parents **Jean-Paul George** and **Shantelle Youde-Peters** of Deadwood on the **4th January,** weighing **6lb 5oz**.

Both parents are so happy to enjoying their new and exciting journey with their bundle of joy and along with the families are embracing every opportunity to shower him with the affection and the love he deserves.

Jean-Paul and Shantelle would like to thank their moms Linda and Claris, dad Stedson, doctors, midwives, both families and all those here and abroad who sent messages of congratulations, gifts and even came to see and shower Andre with cuddles and kisses, it was greatly appreciated.

Births (Dec '25 - Jan '26)

Andre Lamar Youde (M) - 04/01/2026

Marriages (Dec '25 - Jan '26)

Njabulo Chester Gumede & Victoria Zandile Mabuyakhulu
20/12/2025 (The Castle, Jamestown)
Rico Shaun Williams & Sophia Denise Peters
20/12/2025 (St. James Church, Jamestown)
Timothy George Clingham & Patrice Jade Yon
27/12/2025 (Plantation House, St Paul's)
Darren Richard Plato & Lucille Monique Constantine
27/12/2025 (The Castle, Jamestown)
David Christopher Johnson & Isobel Jane Fowler
28/12/2025 (Bertrand's Cottage. Longwood)
Dameon Mark Hercules & Zoe Adele Miller
30/12/2025 (New Ground Camp, St Paul's)
Kurt Bennett & Charmaine Marie Scott
31/12/2025 (B74 Wirebird Drive, Half Tree Hollow)
Scott Richard Angell & Clara Alexandra Pysh
03/01/2026 (The Castle, Jamestown)
Martin Rex Richards & Tracey Jean Clarke-Williams
10/01/2026 (Willowdene, Alarm Forest)
Scott Patrick Fagan Crowie & Penelope Jayne Bennett
20/01/2026 (Richard's Travel Lodge, St Paul's)
Lewis Jon Jesper & Chloe D'Leen Betts
27/01/2026 (The Castle, Jamestown)

Deaths (Dec '25 - Jan '26)

Bertram Douglas Clifford Gardenfield Y (Male, 84) - 02/12/2025
Iris Winifred Sim (Female, 77) - 05/12/2025
Thelma Maud Ellick (Female, 75) - 09/12/2025
Mildred Madeline Stevens (Female, 87) - 10/12/2025
Michael Robert Hudson (Male, 69) - 11/12/2025
Colin George Yon (Male, 55) 13/12/2025
Cedric Ivor Henry (Male, 76) - 15/12/2025
John Edward Walton (Male, 81) - 22/12/2025
Eric George Crowie (Male, 67) - 23/12/2025
George Windsor Bennett (Male, 87) - 23/12/2025
Maurice George Henry (Male, 80) - 25/12/2025
Patricia Ann Crowie (Female, 62) - 25/12/2025
Ivan Rex Beard (Male, 83) - 07/01/2026
Ellen Jean Buckley (Female, 95) - 18/01/2026
Cecil George Anthony (Male, 82) - 19/01/2026
Peter Kenneth Johnston (Male, 85) - 30/01/2026
Vernon Denis Coleman (Male, 94) - 30/01/2026

Celebrating Human Art

Miky

Generated AI images is on a rising trend on social media, but it's important to remember the real, human artists who has the talents that you may require.
So that's why I want to showcase the budding artists that not only contributed to the economy, but also gives creativity a heart and soul that a robot cannot capture.

If you are an artist of any form, whether it's digital or physical, we would love to hear from you.

If you would like for us to showcase your work, feel free to submit your pieces, along with information about what medium you use and what inspired you to pursue art by emailing independent@helanta.co.sh, or send a direct message me (Mic-kail Harris) on Facebook.

These are some of my work. Utilising **Virtual Photography**, **Real Life Photography** and a 3D Modelling and Animation program called **Blender**, with colour adjustments and edits made in **Adobe Photoshop** and **Lightroom**.

Whether it's painting a picture or playing a song, let's come together and bring back the heart and soul of art before we allow Artificial Intelligence to run our lives.

Week 2

RIDDLES, RHYMES AND GAMES FOR KIDS

LITTLE SAINTS

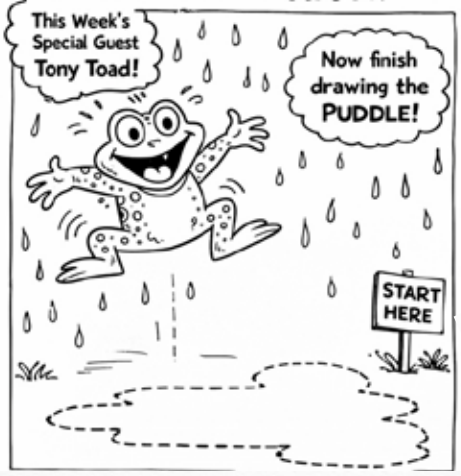
Created by Helen Jones-Gentle established © 2026

FOR PARENTS TOO!

Est.2026 by Helen Jones-Gentle

DRAW IT!

IT'S GONNA RAIN!



How many Tina Tuna's can you find?

RAIN WORD SEARCH

U	M	B	R	E	L	L	A	N	Z	C	N
P	A	U	L	W	V	T	U	H	P	L	R
A	R	P	U	D	D	L	E	Q	O	O	Y
H	K	B	T	D	A	A	J	D	O	U	D
B	O	P	C	Y	J	Q	Z	X	L	D	A
A	G	T	Q	T	P	R	A	I	N	D	K
N	P	D	Q	R	E	O	S	C	A	S	J
I	L	Z	I	W	V	R	A	K	Z	G	X
G	Y	X	X	E	I	I	Z	V	J	U	Z
U	K	G	E	T	G	X	U	G	C	S	W
H	J	R	X	Q	H	Z	J	B	V	A	X
N	G	P	T	F	Y	H	X	K	D	T	L

WORDS TO FIND:
RAIN
CLOUD
PUDDLE
UMBRELLA
WET

COLOUR DUG DOG

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE!

Can you find 5 differences?

UNSCRAMBLE IT!

UNSCRAMBLE THESE RAINY WORDS!

NARI _ _ _ _ _

DULOC _ _ _ _

DUPDLE _ _ _

BMREULLA_

TEW _ _ _ _

_ _ _ _ _

GIVE ME 5 RHYMES FOR RAIN...

WRITE US...

Jokes or PICTURES? Send them to DUG at Red Gate House Post Box, Red Hill, St.Paul's.

We will write back to YOU and send it to your school.

The Parish of St Paul's		
Sunday 22nd February 2026 – 1st Sunday in Lent		
8.00 a.m.	Eucharist	Cathedral
9.30 a.m.	Eucharist	St Andrew
11.15 a.m.	Eucharist	St Helena & The Cross
5.00 p.m.	Choral Evensong	Cathedral
	Wednesday 25th February	
7.00 p.m.	Lent Course	St Andrew
The Parish of St James		
Sunday 22nd February 2026 – 1st Sunday in Lent		
9.30 a.m.	Eucharist	St James
	Thursday 26th February	
7.00 p.m.	Eucharist with Healing	St John
The Parish of St Matthew		
Sunday 22nd February 2026 – 1st Sunday in Lent		
11.15 a.m.	Eucharist	St Matthew
	Tuesday 24th February	
7.00 p.m.	**Mission Worship and Praise**	**St Mark**

Hey Kids!

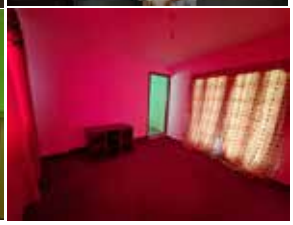
Come and join Adventure Kids for some Fun & Games, Arts and Craft, Songs & loads of stories to be told.

WHERE: Baptist School Hall/James Town
WHO: Age 4-11yrs old
WHEN: 21/02/26
TIME: 10:00-11:30am

Refreshments will be served.

House for Sale

Two Bedroom House.
Secluded area.
Potential for extensions, animal rearing, and gardening.
Location St Paul's, Knollcombes, Nr Bishops Bridge.
Parcel FP0240. Just over two acres (2.11 acres).
Price £120,000.
For further details contact Peter Young via +290 23709 or oursins@helanta.co.sh



ASCENSION ISLAND GOVERNMENT
TWO BOATS SCHOOL

VACANCY NOTICE
Secondary Teacher (Science)

Total package value up to £41,018 per annum
Comprising salary of up to £23,840 plus food and utilities allowances, housing and other benefits – details below.

About the role
Two Boats School is a unique, friendly primary and secondary school located on the beautiful island of Ascension in the South Atlantic. With around 65 students aged 3–16, our small and nurturing environment enables every child to be known, valued and supported to achieve their best.

What you'll do
We are seeking to appoint a Secondary Teacher of Science to join our small and supportive school community on Ascension Island. The post will commence at the start of the September 2026 academic year. The role will primarily involve teaching Key Stage 3 Science and GCSE Science/Marine Science lessons. Due to the size of the school, teachers are expected to be flexible and contribute to the wider curriculum, and the ability and willingness to teach Music, French and/or Food technology would be an advantage.

What you'll bring
You will hold Qualified Teacher Status (or an equivalent recognised teaching qualification) and have experience teaching Science at secondary level. You will be adaptable, organised and committed to safeguarding, with a positive approach to working in a small-school and island community setting.

What's it like to live and work on Ascension?
Ascension is a small volcanic island, situated in the South Atlantic, with a warm stable climate (26-34°C). We are part of the wider UK Overseas Territory of Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha, situated approximately 1,000 miles from the mainland of Africa and 800 miles from our nearest neighbour, the island of St Helena. To thrive here in this high profile role, you must be resilient, adaptable and able to live and work in a remote environment and small community.

What we offer
In addition to an annual salary of up to £23,840 (taxable on Ascension), the role attracts an accompanied status contract and the following benefits:
• Rent free furnished accommodation worth £3,000 pa (taxable benefit)
• An Accompanied status food allowance of £7,680 pa accompanied, or Single status £3,840 pa (taxable benefit)
• An electricity allowance worth £3,296 pa
• A water allowance worth £3,202 pa accompanied, or £1,921 single status
• Relocation costs for your personal effects, including assistance with the shipment of a vehicle
• One mid-contract return journey to your country of recruitment
• 30 days' annual holiday (with an additional 9 days public holidays)

• A gratuity payable on the successful completion of a 2-year contract
• Free primary dental and medical care and off island, with medical referral if required including medivac arrangements in an emergency.
• Free schooling for dependent children from 4 to 16 years.
• Free annual travel insurance
• Death in Service insurance

The appointment will be subject to:
• Satisfactory employment references
• Enhanced Criminal Records Check and Qualified Teacher Status checks
• Satisfactory Medical Clearance (employee and any accompanying dependents)

Closing date: Wednesday 11 March 2026
Interviews: Week Commencing 16 March 2026 (via video call if off island)
Start date: September 2026 (Travel to Ascension Island would take place during the last week of August 2026)

For more information, a full job description, and to apply, visit:
www.ascension.gov.ac/lifestyle-and-employment/working-here/

If you have any questions about the role, email: recruitment@ascension.gov.ac

NOTIFICATION

MEETING OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL AUTHORITY

"The Land Development Control Authority will hold its monthly meeting on **Thursday, 05th March 2026, at 10 am in the St Helena Community College Main Hall, Jamestown**.

Meetings of the Authority are open to members of the public, applicants and objectors.

The Agenda and redacted version of the Handling Reports will be available on the LDCA Web Page of the SHG Web Site. Should you require assistance, please contact the Secretary of the Land Development Control Authority on telephone number 24724.

Applicants and objectors may speak at the meeting providing that a summary of the points to be raised has been submitted to the Secretary at least 24 hours before the meeting".

St Helena Government

FAIRNESS INTEGRITY TEAMWORK

INVITATION TO TENDER

Renovation of Alarm Forest Police Post & Red Gate House Roof

St Helena Government would like to invite suitably experienced contractors to submit tenders for the following contracts:

ED23-2025/26 – Renovation of Alarm Forest Police Post
ED24-2025/26 – Red Gate House Roof

A site visit to view the works will take place on Wednesday, 18 February 2026, at 09:00, meeting at the Police Post, Alarm Forest and at 11:00, meeting at Red Gate House, Red Hill, St Pauls.

Contractors should note that site visits requested after this date will not be entertained unless there is a relevant reasson why the contractor could not attend the scheduled site visit.

Copies of the tender document and further details can be obtained from the Procurement Officer, on telephone no: 25932 or via email tiffany.lawrence@sainthelena.gov.sh .

Completed tenders should be placed in the Tender Box located on the Top Floor, Post Office Building by 12:00 on Wednesday, 25 February 2026, clearly marked with the tender number detailed above.

Interested parties should note that this opportunity is **not** being advertised overseas.

ASCENSION ISLAND GOVERNMENT
TWO BOATS SCHOOL

VACANCY NOTICE
Deputy Head Teacher

Total package value up to £48,118 per annum
Comprising salary of up to £30,940 plus food and utilities allowances, housing and other benefits – details below.

About the role
Two Boats School is a unique, friendly primary and secondary school located on the beautiful island of Ascension in the South Atlantic. With around 65 students aged 3–16, our small and nurturing environment enables every child to be known, valued and supported to achieve their best. We are now seeking a dedicated and forward-thinking Deputy Head Teacher to lead our Primary sector and contribute to the strategic development of the whole school. This is an exceptional opportunity to work in a close-knit, community-centred setting, where you will have a meaningful and lasting impact on teaching, learning and student outcomes across the Primary phase.

What you'll do
As Deputy Head Teacher, you will lead the Primary phase and support the Head Teacher with the day-to-day running of the school. This is a teaching role (with a reduced timetable), so you will have recent and relevant Primary teaching experience and strong knowledge of the UK National Curriculum. You will champion high-quality teaching and learning, model excellent practice through a reduced teaching timetable, and oversee curriculum planning, assessment and pupil progress. You will also act as the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the whole school and take a key role in pastoral care and behaviour. In the Head Teacher's absence, you will step up to lead the school.

What you'll bring
You will be an experienced and motivated Primary teacher with QTS and strong knowledge of the UK curriculum. You'll have proven leadership experience, excellent communication skills and the ability to drive high standards in teaching and learning. A commitment to safeguarding, inclusion and supporting the wellbeing of all students is essential. You'll be resilient, adaptable and ready to play a key role in a small, close-knit island community.

What's it like to live and work on Ascension?
Ascension is a small volcanic island, situated in the South Atlantic, with a warm stable climate (26-34°C). We are part of the wider UK Overseas Territory of Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha, situated approximately 1,000 miles from the mainland of Africa and 800 miles from our nearest neighbour, the island of St Helena. To thrive here in this high profile role, you must be resilient, adaptable and able to live and work in a remote environment and small community.

What we offer
In addition to an annual salary of up to £30,940 (taxable on Ascension), the role attracts an accompanied status contract
and the following benefits:
• Rent free furnished accommodation worth £3,000 pa (taxable benefit)
• An Accompanied status food allowance of £7,680 pa accompanied, or Single status £3,840

pa (taxable benefit)
• An electricity allowance worth £3,296 pa
• A water allowance worth £3,202 pa accompanied, or £1,921 single status
• Relocation costs for your personal effects, including assistance with the shipment of a vehicle
• One mid-contract return journey to your country of recruitment
• 30 days' annual holiday (with an additional 9 days public holidays)
• A gratuity payable on the successful completion of a 2-year contract
• Free primary dental and medical care and off island, with medical referral if required including medivac arrangements in an emergency.
• Free schooling for dependent children from 4 to 16 years.
• Free annual travel insurance
• Death in Service insurance

The appointment will be subject to:
• Satisfactory employment references
• Enhanced Criminal Records Check and Qualified Teacher Status checks
• Satisfactory Medical Clearance (employee and any accompanying dependents)

Closing date: Wednesday 11 March 2026
Interviews: Week Commencing 16 March 2026 (via video call if off island)
Start date: September 2026 (Travel to Ascension Island would take place during the last week of August 2026)

For more information, a full job description, and to apply, visit:
www.ascension.gov.ac/lifestyle-and-employment/working-here/
If you have any questions about the role, email: recruitment@ascension.gov.ac

Vacancy
Due Diligence Assistant

Since 1790

Salary for the post will be £1,041 per month

Solomon & Company (St Helena) Plc has a vacancy within the Insurance Agency for a Due Diligence Assistant on a three month fixed-term contract.

As the Due Diligence Assistant, you will assist with collecting customer identification documents, and perform customer screening and risk assessments in accordance with established Anti Money Laundering processes.

Interested Persons Should:

- Possess grade C or above in English & Maths (or equivalent)
- Be proficient in the use of IT and competent in the use of Access Dimensions
- Have strong customer service skills with a friendly, professional approach
- Demonstrate excellent organisational, communication, and interpersonal skills
- Be analytical with strong attention to detail
- Be able to work both independently as well as part of a team and use own initiative
- Be target driven with the capability to achieve deadlines
- Be flexible to work outside of normal work hours as and when required

For further information contact:

Tracey Thomas, Insurance Manager via 22860 traceyt@solomons.co.sh

Application forms may be collected from Solomons Main Office Reception, Jamestown or alternatively an electronic copy can be requested via hradmin@solomons.co.sh and completed forms should be returned to Anya Thomas, Human Resources Organisation & Development Officer, Solomons Main Office, Jamestown by **26 February 2026.**

VACANCY ADVERT

St Helena Airport Ltd

The St Helena Airport is looking to recruit person for the following post: CNS Specialist..

We are seeking an individual that can ensure the effective operation, maintenance, and continuous improvement of communication, navigation, and surveillance (CNS) systems at St Helena Airport.

Applicants must be in possession of the following:

- 5 GCSE grade A*-C (or equivalent), including English and Mathematics (NVQ2) or demonstrated relevant experience.
- Specialised trade or craft qualification in Air Traffic Management Systems, Electronics or a related field (NVQ-4) or demonstrated relevant experience.
- At least 5 years post qualification experience within the CNS field.
- Knowledge and experience of AGL (Airfield Ground Lighting Systems)
- Strong interpersonal skills to form effective working relationships with people at all levels

Applicants must be of a professional manner and also be able to provide the following:

- A full medical assessment
- A 5-year verifiable employment history check and be able to show proof for periods of unemployment in accordance with the Overseas Territories Aviation Requirement (OTAR) 178.
- Pass a Narcotic and Alcohol test
- A Criminal Background Check.

Other essential requirements are listed in the Job Description.

The salary for this post is between £36,087.61 and £43,775.43 per annum, depending on qualifications and experience plus a 12.5% company pension contribution.

For more information and if you want to receive an application form please contact Elaine Hopkins, HR Officer on email address recruitment@sthelenaairport.aero or on Telephone number 25180 Ext 0.

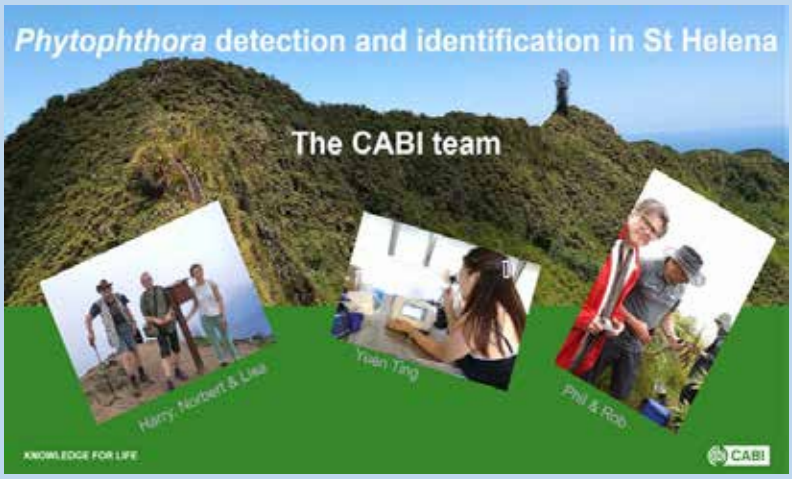
The closing date for this position is 6 March 2026.

'Restoring a globally significant Cloud Forest'

News from the St Helena Cloud Forest Project

Welcome to another 'news bite' from the St Helena Cloud Forest Project!

Today, we'd like you to meet one of our key international partners—CABI (Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International)



CABI is a non-profit organisation whose mission is to improve people's lives worldwide by providing information and applying expertise to solve problems in agriculture and the environment. For St Helena, CABI continues to carry out critical work in researching plant pathogens for our FCDO-funded St Helena Cloud Forest Project!

Building on work under the Darwin Plus project DPLUS157, they are conducting important research into plant pathogens and their impacts on our endemic trees in the Peaks National Park!

This work is critical for the survival of our rare endemic plant species and the future of St Helena's Peaks National Park.
We thank CABI for their continued expert support! More on CABI: www.cabi.org

Look out for another update soon on CABI's recent visit to the Island!

Be sure to follow the St Helena Peaks National Park on Facebook, and @StHelenaPNP on X, to stay up to date with all the latest news and information on the FCDO-funded St Helena Cloud Forest Project

Scan the QR Codes below for quick access to:

Website **Facebook** **Twitter/X**

FROM THE COUCH .....

Contributed by Leigh & Louis

Premier League Results

Wednesday 11th	Aston Villa	1	0	Brighton
Wednesday 11th	Man City	3	0	Fulham
Wednesday 11th	Nott'm Forest	0	0	Wolves
Wednesday 11th	Crystal Palace	2	3	Burnley
Wednesday 11th	Sunderland	0	1	Liverpool
Thursday 12th	Brentford	1	1	Arsenal
Wednesday 18th	Wolves			Arsenal

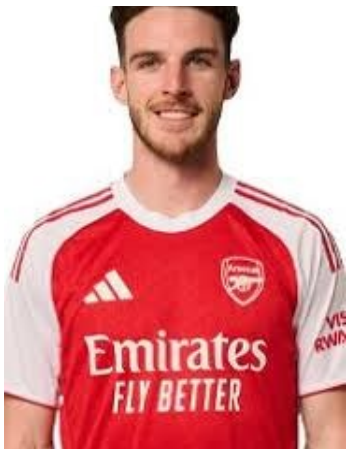
Match Report

Gabriel Magalhaes saw a headed chance blocked early on from what proved to be Arsenal's only real sight of goal in the first half.

Instead, it was Brentford who went closest to scoring before the break, with David Raya producing a fine reflex save down to his left to keep out Igor Thiago's downward header from close range.

Arteta brought on Martin Odegaard for Eberechi Eze at half-time, and Arsenal instantly looked more effective, with their breakthrough coming 61 minutes in. Michael Kayode could not fully clear the danger, and Piero Hincapie's cross was met by Madueke, who sent a looping header past a wrong-footed Caoimhin Kelleher.

Brentford did not have to wait long for their leveller, though, as Sepp van den Berg flicked on Kayode's long throw and Lewis-Potter got on the end of it to head past Raya.



Man of the Match

Both teams had chances to win the game late on as Thiago was denied by a superb Cristhian Mosquera block before firing over the bar, while Kelleher denied Gabriel Martinelli at the death.

Premier League Fixtures

Saturday 21st	15:00	Aston Villa	vs	Leeds
Saturday 21st	15:00	Brentford	vs	Brighton
Saturday 21st	15:00	Chelsea	vs	Burnley
Saturday 21st	17:30	West Ham	vs	Bournemouth
Saturday 21st	20:00	Man City	vs	Newcastle
Sunday 22nd	14:00	Crystal Palace	vs	Wolves
Sunday 22nd	14:00	Nott'm Forest	vs	Liverpool
Sunday 22nd	14:00	Sunderland	vs	Fulham
Sunday 22nd	16:30	Tottenham	vs	Arsenal
Monday 23rd	20:00	Everton	vs	Man United

ST HELENA GOLF REPORT

Contributed by St Helena Golf Club

Showers made golf unsafe & unplayable

Twenty-four golfers had signed up for what was expected to be a highly competitive Greensome competition with of 3/8 of the combined handicap applied. With such a strong turnout, anticipation was high for an exciting afternoon of golf.
Unfortunately, persistent showers and fog swept across the course, making conditions unsafe and unplayable. As a result, the competition was cancelled for the day.

Despite this setback, the clubhouse remained lively. A group of members stayed behind and enjoyed a relaxed and entertaining afternoon of social euchre, while others opted to head home to the comfort of a warm and dry Sunday indoors.

The Club will host the **Monthly Medal** competition next **Sunday.22nd February**

Members are encouraged to sign up early and support one of the staple events on the golfing calendar.

Members are reminded that the **Annual General Meeting (AGM)** will take place on **Sunday, 1 March 2026**, at the Clubhouse.
The AGM will be **preceded by a Texas Scramble shotgun start competition**, providing a fun and social start to the day.

All documents relating to the AGM will be:

- emailed to members on the mailing list, and posted on the Club notice board for easy access.

During the AGM, the Club will also be **electing new committee members**. We encourage as many volunteers as possible to step forward. You do not need to be a playing member to serve on the committee. You can sign up as a non-playing member and put your name forward for election enabling you to make valuable contributions to the Club and the wider community.

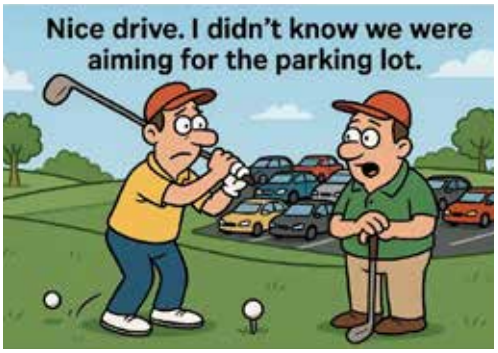
Stay Connected

For updates on fixtures, results, and club activities:

- Follow us on **Facebook**

Visit our website:
www.sthelenagolf.com

Happy Swinging
SHGC



Golf Jokes

Why was the golfer kicked out of the zoo?
He tried to chip into the hippo's mouth.
Why did the golf ball apply for therapy?
It felt like it was always being pushed around.
What do golfers eat for breakfast?
Par-faits and tee-toast.
Why did the golfer break up with his GPS?
It kept sending him into the rough.
What's a golfer's favorite type of music?
Swing, obviously.
Why did the golfer bring a ladder?
To reach a higher level of his game.
Why did the golf ball file a complaint?
It was tired of being hit and ignored.
Why don't golfers ever lie?
Because they know every lie counts.

During the month of December and January 11 couples tied the knot to become Mr & Mrs.

At the Independent, we have invited all couples if they would like to share their magical day with you and a few replied which we will bring exclusively to you over the weeks.

Today we introduced Mr & Mrs Rico Williams and Mr & Mrs Darren Plato.

After 18 beautiful years of love, laughter, and growing together, 20th December 2025, Rico Williams of New Ground married uptown girl Sophie Peters, in a heartfelt ceremony at St James Church. Surrounded by the warmth of family and friends. Their vows marked not just a wedding day but the celebration of a journey nearly two decades in the making.

The groom was smartly dressed in a grey suit, proudly supported by his Best Man and father, Malvin Henry, along with Groomsman Rudie Mcdaniel.

The bride was simply radiant in a elegant white sleeveless dress, escorted with pride by her father, Patrick Peters, and her Maid of Honour and sister, Stacey Williams. Adding even more sweetness to the day were their pageboys — the couple's beloved son Alexis and nephew Cruz — with niece Journi completing the party as Sophie's adorable mini bride.

Following a deeply touching ceremony filled with smiles and happy tears, the newlyweds shared an intimate photoshoot in the public gardens, capturing moments they will treasure forever.

The celebration continued at Marble Hall, beautifully styled with greenery, white roses, warm white lights and lanterns. Of course the bride had to add a touch of Christmas decor on rustic wooden centrepieces — the perfect setting for a night overflowing with love, joy, and togetherness.

Mr & Mrs Williams are truly grateful to everyone who helped make their special day so magical and unforgettable. Thank you for being part of their love story xx

On 20 December 2025 after a 17 year relationship, Darren Plato and Lucille Constantine, formerly of St Pauls were married at the Registry Office with a blessing by Bishop Dale Bowers at St Pauls Cathedral.

The Groom was smartly dressed in a grey suit and lilac tie, accompanied by his Son Alex as the Best Man and Lucille wore an Ivory Wedding dress, and was given away by her Dad, Peter with her best friend Larisa Richards as Maid of Honour.

The Couple's Daughter Ruby was bridesmaid and their Grand Daughters, Charlotte and Thea were flower girls all wearing lilac.

Most of the Wedding party having travelled from the Falklands and UK to attend this special occasion.

The reception took place at Richards Travel Lodge with the venue all decorated in colours to match the theme Lilac.

Lucille and Darren would like to extend thanks to all their family and friends and anyone else who played a part in helping them to make their day such a special and memorable one.

More next week.....

Home For Sale

OFFERS INVITED IN THE REGION OF £97,500

For Sale by Owner
A lovely, almost complete home set in peaceful, green surroundings. This property offers a solid foundation and modern layout.

Visualised impressions below show the home's full potential as a bright, welcoming residence blending comfort with natural beauty.

For inquiries, contact: **shpropertysales@gmail.com**

Online Viewing

YouTube Channel (Video, Slideshow, Virtual Viewing): http://shorturl.at/itKuc

360° Self-Directed Walkaround: http://shorturl.at/YtMh8

Impressions of How the Finished Property Could Look ;

Property Highlights

- Freehold Title, Fast Closing
- A Quality Investment
- Quiet, Private Location
- Near Bus Stop In Alarm Forest Area
- Fiber Internet Available on Island
- Close to the Capital Jamestown
- Potential for Open-Plan Living/Dining Area & Two Spacious Bedrooms (Including Ensuite Master) & a 3rd Bedroom / Office
- Large Windows and Sliding Doors
- Outdoor Space & Garden
- Sunset Views of Castle

https://www.propertyfinder.sh/properties/hunts-bank-property-for-sale/

shpropertysales@gmail.com

MACS SHIPPING SCHEDULE UPDATE

	BLUE MASTER II 261202	GOLDEN KAROO 261203	GREY FOX 261206
Immingham	20-Dec	17-Jan	21-Feb
	KAROLINE 261701	KAROLINE 261702	KAROLINE 261703
Cape Town	31-Jan	02-Mar	02-Apr
Rupert's Bay	09-Feb	10-Mar	10-Apr
Ascension Island		15-Mar	
	KAROLINE 261801	KAROLINE 261802	KAROLINE 261803
Cape Town	25-Feb	31-Mar	23-Apr

*schedule may change without prior notice. For the latest updates, please visit our website.

Moving your cargo globally with flexibility and care.

Get in touch with us: macship.com

CPT +27 21 405 3400 | sthelena.cpt@macship.com

MACS

WHATEVER YOU NEED TO SHIP