



# News from Gilbert House

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## Message from the Chair

*MLA Roger Edwards — Public Works*

The Committee of 24 (C24), full title "The United Nations Special Committee with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of

Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples", came into being over 57 years ago and during that time 80 colonial territories have become independent as a result of self-determination. Seventeen remain on the list including the Falkland Islands and most other British Overseas Territories.

Originally there were three ways of being removed from the "list" - 1. Independence, 2. Integration, 3. Free Association. In 1970 a fourth option for de-listing was introduced: "the emergence into any other political status as long as it is freely determined by a people". I always argue that the referendum of March 2013 met this criteria perfectly.



The sole responsibility of the C24 is to the people of the Non Self Governing Territory and that is clearly laid out in Chapter XI of the UN Charter at Articles 73 and 74. Article 73.a. states - "to ensure, with due respect for the culture of the peoples concerned, their political, economic, social, and educational advancement, their just treatment, and their protection against abuses;" .

Nowhere is the C24 given responsibility for dispute resolution.

Each year we attend C24 in New York and argue for our right of self-determination as laid down in the 'Charter of the United Nations', Chapter 1, paragraph 2, which states 'for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples' .

Each year Argentina attends and argues that we are not "a people" in our own right but an implanted population put there by the United Kingdom and adds that the Islands belong to Argentina and were occupied, by force, in 1833 following the illegal eviction of Argentine citizens by the UK.

At this year's C24 meeting the resolution was presented by Chile, Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador and Nicaragua. Following the Interventions by the Falkland Islands and Argentina, 18 countries spoke to the resolution and only Indonesia spoke of 'de-colonisation' rather than the Argentine sovereignty claim which was the sole content of speeches by the other 17 nations.

How can C24 any longer be regarded as relevant?



Several key papers for my portfolio were approved by Executive Council last month. The first two were on the childcare subsidy and the childcare (day care and child-minding) capital project. This means that FIG will be providing a subsidy that will act as a 'top-up' for all registered childcare providers at a maximum rate of £1.75 per child per hour, to allow them to achieve payment of £4.50 per hour per child. The subsidy will enable providers to invest in their staff and training, as well as to meet their obligations with regard to safeguarding. The approval of the paper on the childcare capital project will enable childcare providers to be able to apply for assistance with funding improvements to premises, acquiring a site to develop new premises or

a contribution towards the cost of a site. Child-minders will also be able to apply for funds to make safety improvements to their premises. A paper on the new childcare regulations will be coming forward later this month. The childcare provision project has been ongoing for several years and it is pleasing to see the hard work of both FIG staff and the childcare providers coming to fruition. There is still much to do but we are heading in a very positive direction. The provision of funds for the childcare subsidy in the FIG budget for 18/19 was very welcome but I believe that we need to do more to help families with childcare costs and I will be pushing for this.

The other recent ExCo paper that I would like to highlight was the one covering enhanced provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities. It builds on what is already in place and it will be great to see how this work develops in the future.

There was some tremendous work on display at the recent Susan Whitley Memorial Exhibitions on display by students from the Infant and Junior School and Camp Education and the Community School. As someone with zero artistic ability I was so impressed by what they produced.

## MLA Teslyn Barkman

### *Natural Resources*

It's a mans world – I wouldn't tell that to Jacinda Ardern, current Prime Minister of New Zealand and proud mum to a new baby girl. It's hard to believe that NZ faced an uninspired electorate and the same kind of male politician candidates, or that the 35% female politician aim was achievable. Until they looked at the reasons why women in particular felt unengaged and now there is attention to achieve public parity.

I have amazing role models too in my family and mentors who have demonstrated just how strong Falklands women are. Considering that, I was asked recently what is the purpose of joining the Commonwealth Women's Parliament (CWP) and Forum earlier in the year?

Standing in for MLA Roberts I was wide-eyed, fascinated, admiring and disgusted, absorbing as much as I could. As the only branch who had not been involved previously in the CWP, British Islands and Mediterranean (BIMR), I was playing catch-up, but it was clear that issues still remain world-wide, some large and some more hidden and that they are evolving with technology. Most striking was the work that can be done with a fresh perspective on things. One of the most powerful CWP sessions was with youth group members, who credited having their own group to talk about issues gave them the confidence to aim higher in life and resist pressures of social media.

Shocking too, was the sexist abuse suffered by British MPs. Not something I've experienced in this role but it got me thinking, why are there always fewer women standing to be politicians? Could examples of countries unlocking barriers like these be applicable here?

Are women started on lower grades, experience work issues while on maternity leave? Are they bullied or harassed more in the workplace? I'll be proposing soon that we dig a little deeper on some of these questions, and if you have any ideas please get in touch.

With a nod to the last Youth Parliament in 2015, MLA Pollard and myself will also be proposing to look at lowering the voting age, in hope of inspiring more people to engage in politics and have their say.

We are best when we support each other.



## MLA Dr Barry Elsby

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### *Development and Commercial Services*



The first 8 months of this new Assembly has been extremely productive. The highlight in many ways was our recent budget as this clearly articulates our determination to drive forward key infrastructure developments such as the new Vulnerable Persons Unit, a new port, redevelopment of the MPA air terminal, and commence work on understanding how we might build a new Infant and Junior School. We were also able to help people with measures such as increasing family allowance and making it tax free, subsidising nurseries so they can raise standards to meet the new regulations and the Travel Credit Scheme.

I am also pleased that after much discussion and pressure, we are finally seeing light at the end of the “rotor wind tunnel”. There is a real chance that by the end of next year we will be able to greatly reduce the time MPA is closed by more accurate prediction of rotors. This is key not just to the present LATAM flight but also for any second flight.

Just before writing this article I tweeted out a message about the appointment of Islander Carol Morrison to develop and drive forward a Public Health strategy for the Islands. This is a key piece of work, focussing as it does on prevention rather than waiting for people to become ill and then trying to treat them. It will involve a significant investment by Government and a change in how we approach health. It is accepted that for every £1 governments invest in public health measures, there is a saving of up to £14 by having a healthier society.

Finally, at the July Assembly meeting MLA Leona Roberts and I will be calling a debate on the subject of “dying with dignity”, sometimes also called Assisted dying. A growing number of countries have laws that allow people in the last stages of a terminal disease to request medication that they could take to end their lives. We are aware that this is an emotive subject but believe we should discuss and debate the issues around taking control of ones life in the final weeks.

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## MLA Ian Hansen

### *Health and Social Services*

After having been overseas addressing the Committee of 24 and attending various other meetings for over three weeks with MLA Edwards, Colin Summers and Imogen Didlick, it has been a case of catching up with my Portfolio responsibilities on my return.

The Director of Health and Social Services is away in UK at the moment, on both a mixture of leave and work. Some of the work entails interviews for certain posts within KEMH and also looking into accommodation issues, concerning patients who have to be sent to IK for treatment. This is a very important feature of our patient care, as sometimes individuals and families are away from home for months at a time. Most of the present



accommodation is fine while others need to be scrutinised more closely. It has been suggested in the past that we (FIG) should be looking at either buying a property of some kind or long term leasing of apartments. These suggestions along with the possibility of block booking suitable B&Bs will be discussed at length when the Director returns later this month.

Everyone will be aware of the ambitious and very important programme for the development of the KEMH. While it may appear that not an awful lot is happening, much is going on behind the scenes. PWD personnel along with our hospital management team have spent and are spending considerable time on this project.

One Creative Development, a building related firm specialising in matters structural, mechanical and electrical were here in April to survey the KEMH. Using a wonderful gizmo called Point Cloud digital methodology they are able to supply the chosen contractors with precise information as to where every electrical wire, water pipe and who knows what else is hidden in the infrastructure behind the walls.

On a final and different note this month, a member of the public approached me the other day and suggested it was time we thought of a more permanent and better name for the Vulnerable Peoples Unit (VPU). Any ideas out there?

International relations are more important for us in the Falklands than most other Overseas Territories mainly because we are under the constant threat of a much larger country, who want to claim our home for themselves. But we also need to work on things such as trade (largely in the form of Brexit at the moment) as well as learning how other countries tackle their issues and whether or not we can apply them to our specific set of circumstances.

There are many international forums whereby Argentina tries to garner political support for its claim and it is essential that we do what we can to forge relationships with countries that will dispute this claim or at least not support it. The more friends we have internationally that will unwaveringly support our right to self-determination then the better.

As an Assembly we have also recognised that as the war becomes a distant memory for some of those in the UK, there is a whole new generation that may not have even heard of the Falkland Islands. It is because of these reasons that it is essential that we travel the world to spread the word about our right to self-determination and how wonderful the Falkland Islands are, but also that we invite influential people from elsewhere to see for themselves.

There are many tools we can use when trying to combat the false claims of our neighbour, a very powerful one is the 2013 sovereignty referendum where we had 91.94% of the registered voters turnout of which 99.8% voted to remain British. But the most powerful for me is every student who studies abroad, every sports person who represents us overseas, every person on holiday who takes the time to explain how wonderful our Islands are, every tourist driver in the Islands, any person who takes the time to do a small kindness or just have a conversation with someone not from the Islands is doing public diplomacy in some way.

Falkland Islanders continue to deliver on public diplomacy and although the MLAs are the ones occasionally travelling solely for that purpose, it is you the public that are able to reach much further than the eight of us. I would personally like to thank you all and humbly ask that you continue to represent us as well as you can.

## MLA Leona Roberts

### *Environment and Public Protection*



This newsletter is intended to become a regular way for MLAs to share what we're working on, our thoughts, ideas and priorities. It should help clarify some of the processes and hopefully encourage the public to become more involved in decision-making.

I am keen to see more debate in the community and in the House. Some of this may lead to legislation, some may not initially achieve much more than raising awareness of issues and opening up conversation. Either way, I believe it's important that MLAs make their opinions known and are prepared to actively give the public a chance to

This is one of the reasons that Farmers Week is so important. It's an opportunity for people to get together, exchange views and get their message over to officials and MLAs. I wasn't able to get there very much but have asked that next year my diary is kept as free as possible so that I can attend more. I believe it was a successful and productive week though, so congratulate all those involved.

Finally - July has been largely dominated by the World Cup. For many of us England's spirited performance has brightened a pretty gloomy time of year and, despite not making the finals, supporters can be proud of this young team. The tournament has almost certainly boosted the economy as well as our spirits and we shouldn't underestimate the importance of the 'feel-good factor'. Well done to all those organisations that catered for supporters - it sounds like the atmosphere at these places was outstanding.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if one day we could have a family fan-zone too? Not only celebrating sports (and other major events), but also inspiring competition and engagement, building community spirit and encouraging us to celebrate together. In time for the Island Games perhaps..?!



## MLA Roger Spink

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### *Government Services*

Post budget the focus turns to delivery of the Assembly's policies and capital projects. Monitoring and program management will be crucial to make sure that momentum is maintained to deliver on the promises that MLA's have made. Within Government Services despite several years of limited progress by FCO on sorting business banking we are still trying to make card payment services available for businesses here in the Falkland Islands. Our friends in Gibraltar have put us in touch with Gibraltar International Bank ("GIB"). The good news is that we currently have a local business going through the process of opening an account and then try to find a card payment provider so that this



business can then accept credit cards. If this is successful, then it is hoped that some other businesses that do not currently have access to card payment facilities will be able to follow this process. In addition to this and just in case GIB cannot do everything, we are following up on two other promising potential options in the UK. On the telecoms side the Communications Regulator is undertaking a range of activities monitoring Sure's compliance with the price-cap, key performance indicators (including recent broadband upgrade and the 2G/4G network) and general licence obligations. It is anticipated that initial reports on the spectrum management project will be available at the end of August, along with the findings from the 2017 price-cap submission which the Regulator received from Sure in April. I would like to encourage anyone interested in this work to look at the new website [www.regulatorfi.org.fk](http://www.regulatorfi.org.fk). One issue that really concerns me is the intermittent phone availability in Camp. This was one of several points raised by camp residents during farmers week. It surely cannot be acceptable in a remote area during this century to have communications cut off to the rest of the world. In the interim I understand Sure are considering their response to those customers affected by the outages over the last couple of months, details will be confirmed by Sure, and could include some element of compensation. Long term FIG will need to consider how the Communications Ordinance 2017 is working, and whether changes need to be made to ensure that interests of consumers are being protected and arrangements are fit for purpose.

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## Picture of the Month

*Cirrostratus cloud reflections in South End Pond taken by Georgina Strange*



## Key Dates & Contacts

Members of the Legislative Assembly will be presenting a cheque to the resident "2 Parachute Regiment" on Saturday 21 July 2018, 15.00 at the Liberation Monument. The cheque of £5000 is a contribution towards the statue of a Paratrooper at the Garrison Church in Aldershot to commemorate the Regiment's long history with the town, from the Falkland Islands Government on behalf of People of the Falkland Islands.

Open Public Meeting	Monday 23rd July – Court and Assembly Chamber – 17:00
Next sitting of ExCo	Wednesday 25th July 2018
Next sitting of Legislative Assembly	Thursday 26th July 2018
Recess	Monday 30th July – Friday 10th August

### Members of the Legislative Assembly's Contact Details

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