

UK OVERSEAS TERRITORIES

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Covid-19 vaccine roll-out to Overseas Territories (© Govt. Gibraltar)

- | **EU Exit** | **COVID-19** |
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- | **Mental Health Webinar** |
- | **UKOTA AGM and new President** |

Prince of Wales and PM contribute to Joint Ministerial Council 2020



The 2020 Joint Ministerial Council (JMC) took place between 23 and 26 November. For the first time ever, due to the UK Government's COVID-19 restrictions, the JMC was held virtually: it followed two previous postponements resulting from the 2019 UK General Election and the pandemic.

The JMC is the highest forum for political dialogue and consultation between UK and elected leaders and representatives of the Overseas Territories. It exists to provide leadership and promote co-operation in areas of mutual interest. It provides a forum for the exchange of views on political and constitutional issues between the governments of the Overseas Territories and the UK Government; to promote the security and good governance of the Territories and their sustainable economic and social development; and to agree priorities, develop plans, and review implementation.

Chaired by the then Minister for the Overseas Territories, Baroness Sugg CBE, and the Minister for European Neighbourhood and the Americas, Wendy Morton MP (who has responsibility for the Falkland Islands and Gibraltar), the JMC

covered a wide range of topics, including the economy, COVID-19 response and recovery, the impact of the UK's withdrawal of the EU, protecting vulnerable groups, and the environment both in the run up to COP26 and beyond.

Opening remarks were made by UKOTA President Cllr Derek Thomas from St Helena and the JMC was addressed by the Prime Minister Boris Johnson who reiterated the UK's commitment to the Overseas Territories and to working together in partnership to tackle many of the challenges facing both the UK and the Territories, including COVID-19 and climate change.

His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales addressed the JMC ahead of the debate on the environment. Prince Charles spoke about the extraordinary biodiversity in the Territories, the important environmental work being done at a local level, and he singled out the Government and people of Tristan da Cunha for specific praise following their announcement that the Territory is to create one of the world's largest marine reserves.

The environment session was addressed by the Rt Hon Lord Goldsmith, FCDO/DEFRA Minister for Pacific and the Environment, and was chaired by Hon Dr John Cortes MP, Minister for the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Education in the Government of Gibraltar. The overriding message from this session was the need for the UK Government to engage with the Territories on COP26 and then to ensure we are meaningfully involved in Glasgow later this year. With the Territories representing over 90 per cent of the UK's biodiversity we have an exciting story to tell, and it will be to everyone's benefit for us to showcase this at COP26.

Whilst this virtual JMC was no substitute for the usual in-person meeting, it did allow for a wider variety of elected representatives and specialists to join from the Territories. A news report can be viewed [here](#).

For full details of the outcomes of the JMC and the commitments made by both the UK Government and the Territories, please read the UK-Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council 2020 communiqué, which can be found on the FCDO website. View [here](#) the video by HRH Prince of Wales.

Territories seek clarity after EU Exit

On 24 December, the UK Government and the European Union agreed their Trade and Co-operation Agreement, bringing to an end four-and-a-half years of uncertainty.

The UK Overseas Territories respect the decision taken in the 2016 referendum to withdraw from the EU. Once the outcome was clear, we always believed it was in the wider interests of the Territories for the UK to make a success of life outside the EU. With this in mind we were pleased that the UK was able to reach a deal with the EU and that this deal was supported overwhelmingly by MPs in Westminster and leaders across the EU.

The deal however makes no provision for the UK's Overseas Territories and no other agreement was concluded regarding our future relationship with the EU in terms of trade,

funding, and wider cooperation and engagement. As a consequence, goods exported to the EU from the Territories are now subject to the EU's Common External Tariff and no formal mechanism exists for our future engagement with the EU.

Whilst we appreciate that the UK negotiating team raised our issues in the negotiations and that, as a result of there being no mandate on the EU side for such discussions, the matter could progress no further, we now find ourselves in a very challenging position and are urgently seeking clarification from the UK Government as to how we move forward. For UKOTA our priorities are having tariffs lifted, establishing a new relationship with EU, and looking at what mechanisms the UK Government will be putting in place to replace EU funding streams such as the European Development Fund.

COVID-19

COVID-19 has impacted each of the UK's inhabited Overseas Territories differently. Whilst some have managed to remain COVID-free, others have had a significant number of cases and, tragically, a number of COVID-related deaths.

The Territories, like countries across the globe, have also seen borders closed, flights cancelled, tourism collapse, unemployment rise, and normal life put on hold.

COVID-19 has been a challenge for everyone, but with limited resources, smaller and more vulnerable populations, and remote locations, it has been particularly challenging for the UK's Overseas Territories.

Whilst each Territory has put in place plans to deal with its own specific circumstances, it is fair to say that the response has been impressive as Territories have used their own resources to deploy innovative programmes and there will be much that others could learn from this work. This local work has been bolstered with support from the UK Government, whether it is the sharing of best practice, regular engagement from Public Health England and Territory Chief Medical Officers, the provision of PPE and vaccines, and in some cases the provision of ventilators and additional medical capacity. We are all incredibly grateful for this additional support, not least the vaccines that are currently being rolled out in the Territories.

Bermuda Elected Chair of UKOTA



Ms Kimberley Durrant, Bermuda Government UK Representative

Congratulations to Bermuda who take over the presidency of UKOTA from St Helena, following the UKOTA AGM on 14 January. The new officers are:

Chair: Ms Kimberley Durrant, Bermuda Government UK Representative

Secretariat: Karen Mentipty, UKOTA Secretariat

Hon Secretary: Tracy Knight, UK Representative for the Turks & Caicos Islands

Hon Treasurer: Chris Carnegy, UK Representative for the Government of Tristan da Cunha

Mental Health Webinar

UKOTA, with the support of the UK Government, organised a webinar on Mental Health in December 2020. This approach was taken after the planned physical workshop in London for Territory Leaders had to be cancelled on two previous occasions.

The event aimed to increase understanding of mental health issues in the Overseas Territories, and the context and constraints of accessing funding and technical assistance/advice; to provide a forum for exchange of knowledge

and practices; and to engage with the UK Government and NGOs to better understand support that could be available to the OTs

The webinar was facilitated by Poppy Jaman OBE, Global Ambassador for Mental Health and CEO, City Mental Health Alliance. There were 100 registered participants with representation from every territory that had the required connectivity. Speakers included elected representatives from St Helena and Gibraltar; officials from key Whitehall departments and agencies; and campaigners from mental health charities.

A moving intervention came from a Cayman Islands mother who described the distress brought by her son's mental illness.

The feedback from participants was positive, with 91% saying they would be definitely interested in participating in future webinars and 9% saying maybe. The feedback also identified the areas of Mental Health the territories would like to focus on in future.

Anguilla

Tourism using an island bubble concept



Anguilla has been a popular destination for tourists for many years – according to the 2020 World's Best Awards survey, it was voted *Travel + Leisure* readers' favourite island in the Caribbean. Though the COVID-19 pandemic has certainly had a devastating effect on the tourism industry – not only for Anguilla, but for fellow UK OTs – Anguilla's Premier, Dr Ellis Lorenzo Webster, was pleased to announce phase two of Anguilla's reopening plan on the 1st November 2020, with new requirements for entry.

Since March 2020, Anguilla has reported fifteen positive coronavirus cases and zero deaths: the CDC has listed it as having a "very low" COVID-19 risk and there are no active or suspected cases at the time of writing.

Premier Webster, a medical doctor, stated that Anguilla's objective "has always been to reopen in a prudent way, taking every precaution to protect the health and safety of our residents and our guests".

According to Anguilla Tourist Board chairman Kenroy Herbert, the island is "uniquely positioned to take advantage" of the "new normal" that requires health and safety precautions such as social distancing.

"We are a little off the beaten track, our spectacular beaches are uncrowded, and we have an expansive villa sector with properties at a variety of price points and intimate boutique resorts" Herbert said in the tourism board's statement.

November saw the launch of Anguilla's "island bubble" concept – while visitors technically must quarantine on arrival and follow general COVID-19 protocols such as social distancing, sanitizing and hygiene practices – they can still enjoy a relaxing and activity-filled holiday.

Bubbles have been formed between hotels, resorts and villas, plus a selection of approved amenities, restaurants, bars, services and activity providers – such as water sports and beach yoga. Under current regulations, still in force as we went to press, entry to Anguilla is restricted and must be pre-approved.

Anguilla – At a Glance

Capital: The Valley | **Size:** 91 sq km | **Population:** 15,000 (2018) |
Currency: Eastern Caribbean Dollar (EC\$) | **Time Zone:** Greenwich Mean Time -4 hours |

Bermuda



Coping with COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic called for decisive action from the Government of Bermuda in order to contain the spread of the virus throughout the island. The Government made the decision to close Bermuda's borders to all commercial flights on 21 March 2020.

Two chartered flights were organized via the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in co-ordination with Government of Bermuda London office, to ensure Bermudians could return home safely. The two chartered flights commenced on 3 and 24 April 2020, and safely returned 289 residents back to the island. Upon landing, the individuals were tested for COVID-19 and were required to quarantine for two weeks in a facility organized by the Government to ensure containment of the virus.

Bermuda's community pulled together to curb the spread of the virus, this included the closure

of all public schools, and the introduction of a remote education strategy with options for a variety of learning activities for students. Alongside the closure of schools, the government created a list of businesses ordered to close which included retail, personal care, churches, community facilities, bars and dine-in restaurants. For businesses not required to close, the government advised of measures including working from home where possible, reduction of customer facing operations, deferral of non-essential work requiring close customer contact, and for businesses where work must continue that social distancing guidelines be followed. In order to support Bermudians who were facing financial uncertainty as a result of the pandemic, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Labour, Community Affairs and Sports delivered a COVID-19 Unemployment Benefit scheme. The benefit covered 60% of an individual's weekly gross salary, and would last for

a maximum of 12 weeks. This support proved vital for Bermudians during these unprecedented times.

In order to protect and maintain the safety of the local community while supporting the tourism sector, the Government of Bermuda re-opened L. F. Wade International Airport with detailed travel protocols and robust testing requirements for residents and visitors. Due to the significant impact of the pandemic on the local economy, the Government of Bermuda developed a One Year Residential Certificate programme which would qualify persons to extend visitor stays in Bermuda and enhance the marketability of Bermuda as a place to reside, visit, or do business. This programme allowed for non-Bermudians, including post-secondary students, to live on the island and work remotely with organisations elsewhere.

Bermuda – At a Glance

Capital: Hamilton | Size: 53.3 sq km | Population: 63,779 (2016 census) |
Currency: Bermudian Dollar (BMD) | Time Zone: Greenwich Mean Time -4 hours |

British Virgin Islands



Sharing BVILOVE

2020 started out with enthusiasm and a renewed sense of progress in the British Virgin Islands. The arrival of the Coronavirus pandemic early in the year meant a coming together of the government and people of the BVI to tackle this formidable threat. The territory has fared particularly well with less than 100 confirmed cases. The early measures taken allowed for the reopening of the territory to visitors in December 2020.

Regionally, BVI has remained engaged with other governments and last February the Premier signed an agreement with the Caribbean Accreditation Authority for Medicine and other Health Professionals to establish medical schools in the Territory. It is hoped that this agreement will create more opportunities for the people of the BVI, providing scholarships to study medicine at home, adding value to the healthcare sector and boosting the economy.

Recently the BVI was re-elected to serve as a Vice Chair of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC), a subsidiary body of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). This is the BVI's third consecutive two-year term in the post. The BVI will support the newly elected CDCC Chairman, in advancing

the Committee's agenda as the region grapples with the impact of COVID-19 and calls for international support and innovative solutions to get through the crisis. The BVI will also co-chair a proposed summit of the associate members of ECLAC in 2021 to discuss their challenges, progress and needed support to implement the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda that has been impacted by COVID-19 and other developments.

In a moment of hope, pride and love the British Virgin Islands Tourist Board unveiled to the Virgin Islands community and the rest of the world its new 'BVILOVE' brand in September 2020. The BVILOVE campaign is intended to bolster the BVI's image locally, regionally and internationally by focusing on what makes the BVI a special destination and business jurisdiction.

Kenisha Sprauve, the Chairperson of the BVI Tourist Board said that the time was ripe for the BVI to adapt and adopt to this new brand with its new feel, new image and new perspective: "BVILOVE is our people. BVILOVE is reopening our Tourism industry. BVILOVE is welcoming visitors back to our shores."



Hon. Andrew A. Fahie

British Virgin Islands – At a Glance

Capital: Road Town (Tortola) | Size: 153 sq km | Population: 32,000 |
Currency: US Dollar (US\$) | Time Zone: Greenwich Mean Time -4 hours |

Cayman Islands

Message from André Ebanks

Cayman Islands Representative to the UK and Europe (CIGOUK)



It has been a remarkable year for all, and whilst it has been uniquely challenging it has also brought opportunity, and has enabled a very close sense of community among Caymanians all over the world. As such, we have enhanced our efforts to engage closely with Caymanians overseas throughout the COVID pandemic.

The Cayman Islands has tackled the COVID outbreak head on, and enjoys an essentially COVID-safe environment with highly controlled borders and strict rules and regulations including mandatory quarantine for all inbound air passengers and PCR testing for anyone joining the community. We shared more details in a full narrative of the timeline and actions of the Cayman Islands through the pandemic [here](#).

As in person meetings became largely a 'thing of the past' this year it has been a pleasure to participate on a number of virtual conference panels, including the Virtual Islands Summit discussing "Global and Local Challenges in the UK Overseas Territories post Brexit", (full details [here](#)). I also enjoyed a fascinating discussion at the Caribbean Transitional Energy Conference discussing the future of green economy for the Cayman Islands (full details [here](#)).



Unveiling ceremony for the new Houses of Parliament

The year saw other historic moments for the Cayman Islands, further constitutional advancements including the transitioning of our Legislative Assembly to a House of Parliament. It was an honour to work so closely with Her Majesty's Government to obtain messages of support from HRH The Prince of Wales, the UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon (more details [here](#)).

In October the EU published the decision to remove Cayman from its list of non-co-operative jurisdictions for tax purposes. Read more details [here](#).

We were blessed to close the year with a virtual Christmas party organised for all Caymanians overseas who were unable to return home for Christmas, within which we focused on community support and CaymanKind with the understanding that it is hard to be away from home at this time of year. Approximately 80 meals were sent across the UK to eat at the event and cultural performances were enjoyed. The full article is [here](#).

On balance I believe the Cayman Islands is grateful to have navigated the challenges of 2020, however we naturally are looking forward to a hopeful 2021.

André Ebanks

CAYMAN CONNECTION

Cayman Christmas Overseas!

Friday 18 December 2020
6 - 8pm GMT, 1 - 3pm EST

CaymanKind

Cayman Islands – At a Glance

Capital: George Town | Size: 264 sq km | Population: 60,765 |
Currency: Cayman Islands Dollar KYD | Time Zone: Greenwich Mean Time -5 hours |

Falkland Islands

The Falkland Islands declared mine-free

On 14th. November 2020, the Falkland Islands community reclaimed their beaches, in a celebratory event to mark the completion of the Islands-wide demining programme and officially reopened Gypsy Cove and Yorke Bay, the final area of the Falkland Islands to be declared mine-free. The public event began with speeches, after which things proceeded with a bang, as the final landmines were detonated. The security wire fence to Gypsy Cove was then officially opened and everyone allowed to walk or run down to the beach for the first time since 1982, with some going in the sea and even a football match played on the beach.

The celebrations represent a huge achievement which follows decades of hard, unrelenting and courageous work by many people, both from overseas and within the community. Minefield signs have been a familiar sight across the landscape for over 38 years, with younger Islanders never having known their homeland



without them, but now all Islanders are able to enjoy unrestricted access, and without fear of injury, to every corner of our Islands.

The demining story gained considerable support and media attention both in the UK and globally, including a personal message to the Islanders from HRH The Duke of Cambridge, who saw the minefields first hand when he served as a helicopter pilot in the Falklands in 2012.

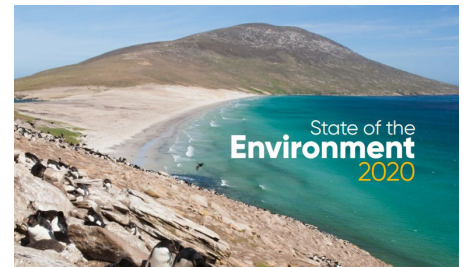
New Environment Team

Dr Rachel Cooper has joined the Falkland Islands Government as the new Head of Environment. Rachel has lived in the Islands since 2018 and during that time has worked as an independent consultant in bio-economics, ecology and marine resource science. She leads a new Environment Department team who will provide the Government with an enhanced planning, strategy

development and implementation capability in relation to environmental issues, and reflects the Government's commitment to ensuring that the environment is preserved for future generations. One of the immediate priorities of the Environment Department will be to develop an Islands-wide Environmental Strategy, which is one of the aims of The Islands Plan 2018-2022.

Recycling boost

A new agreement for recycling mixed metal cans has been made between the Falkland Islands Government and British Forces South Atlantic Islands, as an initial step in a partnership to deliver a joint waste management plan in the Islands. Equating to between 10-15% of average household waste, these cans will no longer be disposed of in landfill, but will be sent to Mount Pleasant Complex material recycling facility. There they will be crushed, baled and put into backload containers for onward shipping to the UK, where they will ultimately be recycled.



State of the Environment report

The Falkland Islands 'State of Environment 2020' report, which provides a summary of the overall state of the Islands' natural environment towards the end of 2019. The report uses the UN Sustainable Development Goals as indicators against which we can measure the aggregate state of environment. It gives a baseline used to track changes in our environment and to assess how our policies are working, which in turn will provide the evidence needed to support future decision-making.

The report highlights many positive developments such as the health of seabird populations and the measures the government is taking in fisheries management, but also identifies areas where there is room for improvement, such as around waste management.

The report is available to download from <https://www.fig.gov.fk/policy/environment>.



Electric vehicles in Stanley

Stanley Services Ltd have introduced an electric vehicle as part of their delivery fleet. The pilot project is designed to show their commitment to evolve operations whilst reducing environmental impact. The vehicle will be used by their hotel and travel operations, in line with their environmental ethos. Around 35% of electricity production in Stanley comes from renewable energy wind turbines.

Falkland Islands – At a Glance

Capital: Stanley | Size: 12,173 sq km | Population: 3,200 |
Currency: Falkland Islands Pound | Time Zone: Greenwich Mean Time -3 hours

Gibraltar

The challenges and difficulties brought about by COVID-19 this year were as unprecedented and unpredictable as any in modern times. Gibraltar has had to adapt quickly and significantly to negate both the health and economic effects of the virus. Despite this, there are still many positive stories to be told about Gibraltar in 2020.

University Lab

In order to combat the threat of the virus and obtain an accurate assessment of its prevalence in the community, a testing laboratory was set up at the University of Gibraltar. Staffed by young scientists - both local and from abroad - the team worked under the guidance of Public Health Gibraltar and in conjunction with the Contact Tracing Bureau. Testing capacity started at 150 swabs per day, and by November the team were routinely carrying out 1000 tests per day, with results returned within 24 hours. This has helped limit cases in Gibraltar despite the onset of the second wave of virus, and as a result Gibraltar's air-bridge status with the UK has stayed untouched for practically the duration



of 2020. In fact, Gibraltar was able to avoid any COVID-19 related deaths until October, and unfortunately since then a total of 6 people have died as a result of the illness.

New Governor

February 2020 saw the departure of Governor Lt Gen Ed Davis after four years in the role, with the Chief Minister Fabian Picardo QC thanking him for his "stalwart support of Gibraltar". Vice Admiral Sir David Steel was appointed as his successor in June, and although the governor's inauguration was less grandiose than in previous years due to COVID-19 regulations, this did not dampen the warm welcome from the Gibraltarian people who wish him the best for his tenure.



Community

The unity and charity shown by the people of Gibraltar during this crisis was significant positive this year, as donations for the Gibraltar Health Authority COVID-19 Fund surpassed £2million. Furthermore, many furloughed workers offered to volunteer their services as either trainee triage nurses, at call centres checking in on families, or as delivery drivers and errand runners for those in the community who were at higher risk to the effects of the virus and unable to carry out these



tasks themselves. Despite the challenges of this year, the community spirit and selflessness of the Gibraltarians was a reminder that we are one close-knit, caring community.

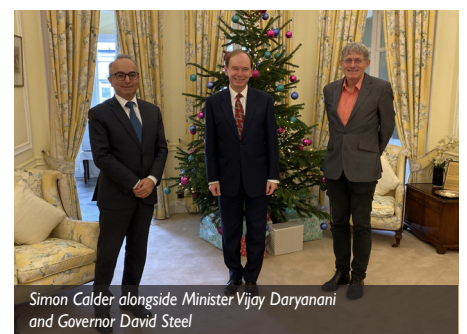
Tourism

Gibraltar was not exempt from the global impact that COVID-19 had on the tourism industry. The initial lockdown saw cross-frontier travel limited to essential workers, and whilst movement did increase briefly over the summer, the combination of Spain's lockdown restrictions and a lack of cruise liners visiting the peninsula resulted in a drastic decrease in tourism. Nevertheless, Gibraltar was able to maintain regular flights to and from London throughout the year and the announcement of new bi-weekly flights from Luton courtesy of Wizz Air bodes well for the future. Vijay



Daryanani, the Minister for Tourism, commented that he was delighted and "encouraged to see an operator such as Wizz Air putting their faith in Gibraltar as a destination". Additionally, the visit of distinguished journalist and travel-blogger Simon Calder in December in order to publish a 'destination review' of Gibraltar in The Independent only served to increase the profile of the peninsula as a positive tourist attraction. The article can be viewed here:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/48-hours-in-gibraltar-48-hours-weekend-escape-flight-hotel-rock-b1767231.html>



Gibraltar – At a Glance

Capital: Gibraltar | Size: 6.5 sq km | Population: 33,686 |
Currency: Gibraltar Pound | Time Zone: Central European Time |

Montserrat

In his New Year message the Premier, the Hon. Joseph E. Farrell said that the government has a clear goal to ensure the people of Montserrat are safe and healthy; while at the same time working to build the economy, providing opportunities for persons to work and have access to a decent standard of living.

The Premier provided an update on some of the recent economic activities

- The first phase of the Fibre Optic project funded under the Capital Investment Programme for Resilience and Economic Growth has been completed and it is now up to the service providers on island to make good use of this facility by improving the quality of services they provide to businesses and households, while the Government of Montserrat with the assistance of the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office will seek to use this commodity as a tool to attract investors to the island.
- With a restructured business unit within the office of the Premier, the revitalization of the National Development Foundation loan facility and the Government of Montserrat

utilizing some of its own resources, it was possible to initiate the first round of lending that will focus on entrepreneurs in key areas such as ICT, manufacturing and tourism. It is through these expanded private sector activities that we will be able to provide additional jobs, stimulate growth in the economy and set the country on a path to sustainable development.

- During the last sitting of the Legislative Assembly, the Remote Employment Bill was passed signalling the start of a programme designed to attract persons from different parts of the world who wish to work remotely using Montserrat as choice destination. This programme will provide increased business not only in the real estate and vehicle rental sectors but will also for the retail industry and other service providers.

All of these programmes are expected to have a positive impact on economic activity not only in 2021 but well into the medium term. They will have the dual effect of creating jobs and business opportunities while improving Montserrat's economy, energy and disaster resilience.



We are making steady progress towards the island's sustainable development: despite the challenges we face, we will strive to realise our goal for our beloved country.

Joseph E. Farrell
Premier

Vaccination roll-out in Montserrat

The Ministry of Health and Social Services on Montserrat began the process of administering the Oxford AstraZeneca COVID-19 Vaccine on Montserrat on February 8th 2021, following the first batch of 3,000 doses of the vaccine that arrived on Montserrat from the United Kingdom on Wednesday February 3, 2021. 474 persons have registered for the vaccine to date.

Governor, His. Excellency Andrew Pearce and Premier, Hon. Joseph E. Farrell were amongst the first to receive the vaccine. The vaccination process was livestreamed by the Government Information Unit (GIU) on YouTube here and Facebook here, and also on local access cable Digicel Channel 96.

Governor Pearce described the vaccination process as a very smooth one, adding that

"the decision to take the vaccine or not is an entirely personal one, as it is not mandatory but when we look at the science of our battle against this virus, it is clear that these vaccines are very powerful and effective."

Commenting on the importance of being vaccinated, the Premier, Hon. Farrell said "I think it is so important that I take my vaccine. I know what the consequences are of an infection from the coronavirus and as a result of that I think I need to protect myself, my family and of course the citizens of Montserrat, with whom I come in contact with."

The Governor and the Premier are expected to receive their second dose in March.



The Governor being vaccinated

Montserrat – At a Glance

Seat of Government: Brades | Size: 102 sq km | Population: 4,922 |
Currency: Eastern Caribbean Dollar (EC\$) | Time Zone: Greenwich Mean Time -4 hours |



Pitcairn Island

Environment successes but tourism on hold

After the difficult year of 2020 it is a good time for reflection. Over recent years Pitcairn has grown and developed as a high-end tourist destination supported by funding from the EU's European Development Fund and the UK Government. EDF funding has enabled several tourism related infrastructure projects to take place. Pitcairn was poised for a huge year in tourism and then COVID-19 struck.

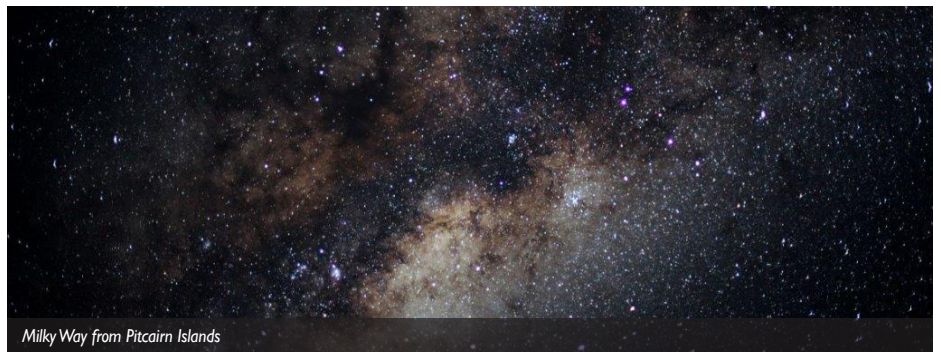
Given our medical capacity issues Pitcairn made hard calls early, and at the beginning of the pandemic closed its borders to all but returning residents and government officials.

Returning residents must undergo a 14-day quarantine period and two COVID-19 tests in New Zealand prior to embarkation to Pitcairn. We continue to work with Public Health England and the World Health Organisation on appropriate protocols.

The effect of COVID-19 on Pitcairn's growing tourism has been devastating with 21 cruise ships due to visit and considerable revenue lost from tourism home stays.

Pitcairn is grateful for the COVID-19 support package from the UK Government and remains currently one of only 18 countries and territories around the world which remains COVID-19 free. So, we have much to be thankful for.

Pitcairn is pleased to be part of the wider



Milky Way from Pitcairn Islands



Humpback Whale and Calf taken off Pitcairn Islands

Overseas Territories and UK environmental Darwin Initiative. We had been successfully building an eco and adventure tourism industry as we looked to leverage of our green and blue economy. Our no-take Marine Protected Area and Whale Sanctuary is, at 842 km², one of the largest in the world.

We are attempting to deal with our plastic issues on Henderson, one of the four islands in our group. Henderson is a UNESCO World Heritage Site with several endemic birds, and an important breeding ground for the endangered green turtle. We are preserving our unique flora and fauna, our many endemics and some of the world's

most pristine coral reefs. We are the world's only island group Dark Skies Sanctuary and were successful in naming an formerly un-named star and its associated planet which can be seen from the Pacific region.

Pitcairn is conscious of the need to preserve and protect our world for future generations

Hopefully by the end of 2021 we shall have replaced fossil fuel by solar powered renewable energy. So we have much to be thankful for and are well placed to build for the future when better times come.

Pitcairn – At a Glance

Seat of Government: Adamstown | Size: 47 sq km | Population: 57 |
Currency: New Zealand Dollar (NZD) | Time Zone: Greenwich Mean Time -8 hours |

St Helena to receive fibre optic connectivity in 2022

St Helena Island is expected to have fibre optic connectivity and associated high speed internet in early 2022. It comes after St Helena Government (SHG) signed a contract with Google to connect the island to phase one of the 'Equiano' sub-sea cable project.

The Equiano Cable is a new private telecommunications cable that will connect Africa with Europe. It will span around 16,000 km from Sesimbra, Portugal, to Melkbosstrand, South Africa, with initial branches to Nigeria, Namibia, and St Helena. The branch point for St Helena will be located approximately 1,100 km from the shoreline of the African continent, and the branch from there to St Helena is approximately 1,120 km.

SHG agreed terms with American Manufactured Structures and Services in July



2020 for the provision of the modular cable landing station and associated components. The following month, a deal was struck with Telecom Egypt for the provision of the fibre trunk capacity and submarine line terminal equipment,

Telecom Egypt will provide the termination equipment in the landing station and 100Gbps transmission from St Helena to Lisbon and Cape Town for a period of 15 years.

Tackling Domestic Abuse



The White Ribbon Campaign 2020 on St Helena took as its theme 'Stand Up and Speak Out Against Domestic Abuse'. With support from the UN Development Programme's Safe Haven Project and the Children & Adults Social Care Directorate, the campaign in November 2020 sought to honour the survivors and victims of domestic abuse.

Events took place at various locations in Jamestown, and included a high tea held at Rosie's Bar & Restaurant where over 70 people attended. Awareness raising took the form of radio interviews, wearing white ribbons and campaign T-shirts, signing pledges to 'Stand Up and Speak Out' and pinning them to wooden

people-like images, along with footballers wearing white ribbons before their matches and also signing pledges. A special assembly at the island's secondary school gave information on teenage dating and abuse, and a White Ribbon Campaign stall was set up at the Canister with merchandise such as T-shirts, key rings, mugs and pens. Leaflets on domestic abuse also helped highlight the subject.

Domestic Abuse Service Lead Debbie Knipe explained: "Around the world, White Ribbon awareness focuses on men taking a stand against domestic violence. The St Helena White Ribbon Campaign Committee this year chose to change the focus from targeting males and

decided that the aim and vision is to use the voices of both males and females of St Helena to encourage all on the Island to 'Stand Up and Speak Out' against all kinds of abuse, irrespective of gender and age."

The Campaign closing ceremony, held at the Castle Gardens, Jamestown, included a speech from Debbie and others from Miss St Helena, Latisha Fowler; Director of Children & Adults Social Care, Tracy Poole-Nandy; Member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Councillor Christine Scipio and the Governor, HE Dr Philip Rushbrook. He said: "The White Ribbon that we are wearing has become the symbol of anti-violence and it's by coming together that we can go forward to increase our opportunities to prevent it. We're recognising it, we're standing up to it, and in our own way, working to decrease it. In St Helena we are very fortunate we have the Independent Domestic Violence Advocate, we have the dedicated team working near Ebony View, and also the modern services of the Children & Adults Social Care Directorate. They are here to support, intervene, and to help our community to live better lives together. My congratulations for another successful White Ribbon Campaign."

St Helena – At a Glance

Capital: Jamestown | Size: 410 sq km | Population: 4,289 |
Currency: St Helenian Pound | Time Zone: Greenwich Mean Time |

Tristan da Cunha

Vast Marine Protection Zone declared



© Dan Myers, National Geographic

The most remote inhabited island on Earth has become one of the world's biggest sanctuaries for life above and below the waves.

The community of Tristan da Cunha has declared that almost 700,000 km² of its waters will join the UK's Blue Belt of marine protection, becoming the largest no-take zone in the Atlantic and the fourth largest on the planet.

The 687,247 km² Marine Protection Zone – almost three times the size of the UK – will safeguard one of the world's most pristine marine environments and protect the wealth of wildlife that lives there. The Zone around Tristan is the gold standard of marine protection, with no fishing or other extractive activities permitted across the whole area, also known as a 'no-take zone'. This move makes the Tristan islanders the guardians of the largest such zone in the relatively unprotected Atlantic Ocean.

The announcement, made by the Tristan da Cunha Government, helps the UK Government with its ambition to lead the global effort to tackle the nature crisis and secure protection of 30% of the world's oceans by 2030. The UK has a duty to protect the wildlife found in all of its Territories and will be responsible for long-term monitoring and enforcement of this vast Zone.

Tristan da Cunha is an archipelago located 2,787 km west of the African mainland. It takes longer to sail to Tristan da Cunha from Cape Town than it took Apollo 11 to reach the Moon.

James Glass, Tristan da Cunha's Chief Islander, said: "We're delighted to announce our Marine Protection Zone, 25 years after we declared Gough Island in the Tristan group a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Our life on Tristan da Cunha has always been based around our relationship with the sea, and that continues today. The Tristan community is deeply committed to conservation: on land, we've already declared protected status for more than half our territory. But the sea is our vital resource, for our economy and ultimately for our long-term survival. That's why we're fully protecting 90% of our waters - and we're proud that we can play a key role in preserving the health of the oceans."

Sinking highlights vulnerability of shipping links

62 seafarers were rescued after Tristan's main fishing vessel, MFV Geo Searcher, hit rocks and sank in the south Atlantic on 15th October 2020.

The incident happened close to Gough Island, which meant all on board could be winched ashore. They were later recovered by South African authorities who deployed the research vessel SA Agulhas II from Cape Town.

The Geo Searcher was a lifeline link for Tristan da Cunha, ferrying people and supplies to the island as well as supporting the lobster catch in the small proportion of Tristan waters where a certified sustainable fishery is licensed. The sinking has thrown into sharp focus the reliance of the world's remotest community on a yearly handful of ship calls. The island's leaders are exploring ways to make the system more resilient against shocks such as these.



Tristan da Cunha – At a Glance

Capital: Edinburgh of the Seven Seas | Size: 98 sq km | Population: 245 |
Currency: Pound Sterling | Time Zone: Greenwich Mean Time |

Turks and Caicos Islands



Two islanders complete training at Sandhurst

On Saturday 22 November the first ever Turks and Caicos Islanders to attend the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst were commissioned; Officer Cadets Francis Glinton and Adrian Parker. The salute at their commissioning course Short Parade was taken by Baroness Sugg, then Minister for the Overseas Territories.

Captains Glinton and Parker completed six weeks of training at the Academy covering: Army Leadership Code, Principles of Law and Armed Conflict, Action Centred Leadership,

Army Ethics, Mental Health, Combat Estimates, Chemical, Biological, Nuclear and Radiological Agents Detection, Weapon Handling and in other areas

Captains Glinton and Parker were also Commissioned with the newly formed Turks and Caicos Islands Regiment at a ceremony held at St. Monica's Anglican Church, Providenciales, on Thursday, 10th December 2020. When the Islands' Regiment stand up next year, they will each take command of a Troop of Marines.

In 2019, the Government began the process of recruiting Islanders to join the first ever military regiment, which is envisioned to become the country's own Defence Force. The overarching aim of the military regiment is to improve security and disaster management locally. This ambition was laid out in the National Security Strategy developed with the input and assistance from the FCDO and the Ministry of Defence in the UK as well as the local government. The force would work to support the maritime units of both Immigration and Police.



Alicia Kearns, MP

APPG established for the islands

After a long hiatus, an All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) was formed in October under the Chairmanship of Alicia Kearns MP. Ms. Kearns, a first time Member of Parliament for Rutland and Melton, led the charge on re-establishing the Islands' APPG. The group was formed to encourage and foster better relations between the Islands and the UK Parliament, and to bring greater attention to the issues facing the Turks and Caicos Islands and all the Overseas Territories. Premier Sharlene Cartwright-Robinson said "the Turks and Caicos Government welcomes the formation of this cross-party group and its interest in the Islands."

The membership of the APPG are: Chair Alicia Kearns, Co-Chair Rt Hon. John Spellar and Vice-Chairs Baroness Benjamin, Rob Butler; Lord Randall of Uxbridge, Henry Smith and James Sunderland.

Elections called for 19 February

The Governor, Mr. Nigel Dakin, on the advice of the Premier, has set the date for General Elections for members to the Territories' House of Assembly for Friday, 19 February. Nominations were held on 29 January and thirty-eight candidates have been nominated to fill fifteen elected seats, including the constitutional roles of Premier and members of Cabinet.

Turks and Caicos – At a Glance

Capital: Cockburn Town, Grand Turk | Size: 616.3 sq km | Population: 42,953 (2019) |
Currency: United States Dollar (US\$) | Time Zone: Greenwich Mean Time -4 hours |

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