



PRESS RELEASE

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It is absurd to suggest that the Government has abandoned Western Beach

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar utterly rejects the accusation made by the GSD that Western Beach has been abandoned, indeed, the very opposite is true.

The main problem at Western Beach was the result of the Spanish authorities diverting a storm drain from what is now a marina in La Linea into the Western Beach basin. Illegal sewer connections to that storm drain cause sewage to discharge into the beach thereby polluting its waters.

The GSD were actually in Government in Gibraltar when this happened and this was drawn to their attention, given the high profile nature of the works that were underway on the Spanish side. However, nothing was done at the time.

Later, a complaint was made to the European Commission by the ESG and Sir Graham Watson who was then one of our MEPs. This complaint was taken up with Spain by the Commission and has now been set alongside others for legal action.

Since this Government entered into office, Western Beach has become the most frequently monitored beach in Gibraltar with numerous samples taken on a weekly basis precisely to safeguard public health. Furthermore, the Government has and continues to lobby the European Commission in order to find a permanent solution to the Spanish induced problem of sewage contamination at Western Beach. Several of Gibraltar's MEPs have assisted with this by asking questions in the European Parliament.

On the matter of seaweed, the Government regrets that Western Beach has also been severely affected by the recent growth of brown algae in the Bay but as previously explained, this phenomenon is a wider regional problem. Whilst research is ongoing to establish longer term management strategies to deal with this, the Government has spent a considerable amount of money in cleaning the beach. Unfortunately, the problem has been compounded by the strong weather experienced this summer and the seaweed is being washed ashore at a faster pace than expected. This said, the frequency of cleaning at Western Beach has been increased.

Away from matters of pollution and seaweed, the GSLP/Liberal Government has constructed a car park at Western Beach and has provided changing room and toilet facilities closer to the actual beach itself. These had previously been located half way down the narrow access road.



It is therefore absurd that the Opposition should claim that the Government has abandoned Western Beach. The facts show that the problems with Western Beach were initiated under the GSD administration the moment that they did not take up the issue of the diversion of the Spanish storm drain.