



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 653/2016

Date: 23rd November 2016

---

### **Government Will Chase Big & Small Debtors Just the Same!**

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar notes that the vast majority of the top thirty debtors to Government accrued or started to accrue their debts at the time that the former GSD administration was in power.

It is, therefore, frankly laughable for Daniel Feetham to now pretend that he and his Party have any credibility when it comes to collecting debts from those that fail to pay their dues.

In fact, it has become exceedingly clear that the GSD when in power allowed huge amounts of debt to accumulate from some very large businesses. That was unfair and the GSLP-LIBERAL administration is dealing with the problem we inherited in a fair and structured way by the creation of the new Central Arrears Unit.

- Of the 30 top debtors to Government in respect of PAYE outstanding, 25 accrued or started to accrue their debt when the GSD was in office.
- Of the 30 top debtors to Government in respect of Personal Tax outstanding, 25 accrued or started to accrue their debt when the GSD was in office.
- Of the 30 top debtors to Government in respect of Corporation Tax outstanding, 20 accrued or started to accrue their debt when the GSD was in office.
- Of the 30 top debtors to Government in respect of Rates outstanding, 25 accrued or started to accrue their debt when the GSD was in office.
- Of the 30 top debtors to Government in respect of Social Insurance outstanding, 18 accrued or started to accrue their debt when the GSD was in office. Of those which accrued under the GSLP-LIBERALS, all are either paying by agreement or are negotiating already to pay off the amounts.

The Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP, said: "I am extremely proud of the work we are doing to collect arrears of revenue. We are not going to allow businessmen and companies to fail to pay their dues. It is unfair to other businesses not to enforce payments by all across the board. Unfortunately, Mr Feetham's GSD got rid of the Central Arrears Unit and allowed some of the richest people in our community not to pay their liabilities. Some of those liabilities accrued into huge amounts. We will pursue every debt as vigorously as possible. Some people have got away without paying for too long. Some enjoy the trappings of a very wealthy lifestyle but at the same time they do not pay their dues. That is not just unfair to competing companies and business people, it is particularly unfair also to working people who have their taxes deducted from their salaries. So my Government will not allow such practices to continue. In particular, we will be



harshest in collecting PAYE payments deducted by employers from workers' pay packets and not paid to the tax office. 25 out of 30 of the top debtors in respect of outstanding PAYE liabilities accrued or started to accrue when the GSD was in office. That is a shameful record for which Daniel Feetham should apologise to the Community and to working people.

"That is money that was taken from workers' pay but not paid to the income tax office under Mr Feetham's watch. We are also collecting housing rent arrears from people who just won't pay, whilst ensuring those who cannot pay are helped to deal with the root problems that prevent them from paying their dues. But Mr Feetham represents the Party that created and allowed the "culture of entitlement" amongst fat cats who were not chased for the payments due from them. He cannot pretend otherwise. We will ensure that everyone pays their dues, as that is the only way of ensuring fairness for the hardworking people of Gibraltar who pay their taxes, rents, mortgages and other liabilities on time. They don't deserve the abuse that Mr Feetham and the GSD permitted by the fat cat "*cara duras*" who failed to pay and who the GSD and Mr Feetham failed to chase for payment."