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Budget Speech – The Hon Steven Linares MP

Mr Speaker

This is my 20th Budget speech and my 8th as a Government Minister.

I start my speech by giving a synopsis of what has been achieved over the last year and some of the things we intend to do this coming year in relation to my areas of responsibility these being Culture, The Media, Youth and Sport.

CULTURE

I will start with my responsibility for Culture.

In last year's budget speech, I announced that the Government remains firmly committed to the development of Culture locally and to exporting our arts at an international level.

I am delighted to confirm that in line with this policy Gibraltar Cultural Services (GCS), on behalf of the Ministry for Culture, established a Cultural Development Unit in November 2018.

It saw the employment of a full time Cultural Development and Educational Officer.

The Unit has already been instrumental in introducing training programmes for cultural officials, groups, coaches, performers, administrators and others involved in the cultural field.

It supports educational establishments, the Youth Service and other stakeholders.

It is developing generic cultural educational programmes, it is promoting our art galleries and our public library, amongst other duties.

Ministry of Culture, the Media, Youth and Sport

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The Unit has been very proactive and has managed to organise art, drama, music, photographic, poetry/creative writing and social media workshops and courses.

This has happened in conjunction with different societies, groups and companies such as the Photographic Society, The White Light Theatre, WrightTech and many more.

The unit has been instrumental in also organising a theatre lighting and sound 3-day course, allowing young people to explore the processes and techniques involved in creating lighting for stage.

The Development Unit introduced an Art Treasure Hunt that will be part of this year's Summer Sports and Leisure programme with guides taking groups around. They worked on the 2nd Youth Arts Jamboree.

Therefore the new Development Unit has proved to be a great move and a total success story.

Mr Speaker, this year we will see the launch of Gibraltar Cultural Services Cultural Awards to celebrate the best of Gibraltar's Arts and Culture.

This will take a similar form to the GBC Sports Awards. It will be an event that will recognise the potential, ability, talent and achievements for individual or collective excellence, in our cultural community.

The Awards will also support our community's cultural development.

The first Cultural Awards will be celebrated on the Thursday 5th December 2019.

GCS on behalf of the Ministry of Culture have organised a great number of events which range from:

A Cultural Art Exchange held in January at '*Palacio de la Diputación Provincial de Cadiz*'. The project '*Easterly Winds*' saw 17 local artists presenting their works there. It was led and curated by Magda Bellotti with GCS overseeing it.

The next Phase will be in 2020 when artists from Cadiz will exhibit here in the Gustavo Bacarisas Gallery.

The Gibraltar-Berlin Art Residency project took place for a third year, in July 2018.

This saw a Gibraltar artist taking up an art residency in Berlin, and a Berlin artist doing a residency in Gibraltar. A book and exhibition of the Residency was launched in October 2018 at the John Mackintosh Hall.

We continue to support the participation of local artists in competitions and exhibitions abroad.

Examples of this policy in action are the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, Paul Cosquiere and Karl Ullger at the Lloyds EC3 and Edinburgh Art Fair event, to name a few.

In autumn we are organising a cultural art exchange together with the JM Memorial Foundation.



This is the first phase of the project that will see artists from Tangier coming to Gibraltar to exhibit their work.

All the above gives effect to our strategy of exporting our culture to the world.

Mr Speaker, this year GCS have introduced a number of new initiatives with a view to market and promote our Art Galleries.

Working with the Tourist Board via their Visitgibraltar.gi website, the galleries are advertised on a weekly basis using different images.

The galleries have also been promoted via social media.

We have also trained freelance walking tour guides, so they are now able to include the galleries as part of their tours itinerary.

A Re-dedication and Open Day at the GEMA Gallery and presenting to the public a new exhibition of works, with artworks belonging to the Government's Art Collection are examples of further promotion.

We have also opened up one of the vaults at GEMA to local artists and groups, with a number of successful exhibitions already organised to date.

More monthly exhibitions are planned for the rest of the year.

GCS has been busy organising World Book Day, 2nd Youth Open Day in conjunction with the Youth Service, the 2nd Artisans Christmas Market at Line Wall Road Boulevard, with the Tourist Board the Literary Festival, The Street Art Murals with the Ministry for the Environment, The 3 King's Cavalcade and the 5th edition of Gibtalks.

GCS on behalf of the Ministry is also running the usual programmes and festivals that are organised on an annual basis.

This includes the Spring Festival; Shakespeare for Kids, the Autumn Programme, the Gibraltar Fair and National Celebrations; the New Year's Celebrations; the International Art competition; Literary and Poetry competitions; May Day, the Drama Festival, the Christmas Festival of Lights and Classical Concerts among many others.

An important part of the work that GCS has done now for a number of years together with many other departments including my own Ministry for Youth is the Updating of the Cultural Organisation's Register.

This is in keeping with Child Protection policy as directed by the Child Protection Committee.

In the last six months they have ensured that all of the groups have completed or signed up to one of the Safeguarding Children Tier 1 courses. They have processed new groups and are ensuring members are vetted accordingly.



We are currently working on an information booklet to inform all Cultural Organisations as to how they can formally register locally.

I will say more about this later given that this format is replicated in my other responsibilities of Sports and Youth.

Mr Speaker, GCS have been leading on the Cultural programme for the Island Games.

This involves the organisation of the following:

- a major Retrospective Exhibition jointly, with the Gibraltar Chronicle, to celebrate Gibraltar's participation at the Island Games from 1985 to 2017. It will be launched on Tuesday 18th June 2019 and will run until after the Island Games on Saturday 13th July;
- an Island Games Art Residency that will be held in Gibraltar from the 23rd June to 6th July. This is organised together with Kitchen Studios, culminating in an exhibition at the John Mackintosh Hall launching on Thursday 4th July 2019. Multidisciplinary artists from numerous participating islands will be involved, working together with local artists in a variety of workshops and events;
- Supporting the Island Games Committee with the Games Opening Ceremony;
- The annual Gastronomy Festival, Calentita will kick-start two weeks of events at Casemates Square on Friday 5th July. Casemates will be known as the 'Games Square' Where Summer Nights will be held daily from the 6th to 13th July 2019 respectively. This will also include some of the Games medal ceremonies;
- And organising a tree planting ceremony during the Games on Wednesday 10th July 2019.

GCS as part of its contract with the Ministry for Culture has undertaken works to all its major assets.

Many of the rooms at the John Macintosh Hall have been refurbished.

New roofing has also been provided above the changing rooms.

The Ince's Hall has had the auditorium, entrance lobby, staircase, back-stage and corridors painted and a new air-conditioning unit has been installed.

Other minor areas have also been refurbished.

GEMA, the Gustavo Bacarisa Gallery, and many premises occupied by clubs and associations have been refurbished, repaired and painted.

GCS has also acquired a number of new artworks which will be added to the Ministry of Culture art collection.



GAMPA

Mr Speaker, I move on now to the Gibraltar Academy for Music and the Performing Arts, GAMPA.

It is right to remind everyone at this point that the idea of setting up an Academy was a manifesto commitment of this GSLP/Liberal Government.

The Academy continues to be a success story.

In fact, over the last 4 years GAMPA was so successful that it outgrew their premises!

In September we moved GAMPA to new premises at 7 Hospital Hill.

Extensive works were undertaken in order to modify the premises to their requirements.

This building has 12 classrooms of different sizes as well as storage facilities, a homework room, a boardroom, waiting areas and a reception area.

GAMPA currently have over 350 students involved in tuition, both in one to one and in group classes.

Mr Speaker, I am happy to say that GAMPA's old premises at 63 Flat Bastion Road have been transformed into a Studio Theatre.

The drama fraternity had long been asking for more space and room to be able to stage small productions.

GAMPA has been able to provide an atmospheric venue for small performances by converting the magazine at 63 Flat Bastion Road.

The new use has fully respected the heritage of the site.

This is yet another example of the Government tastefully converting a heritage building to a modern use.

It will be known as The Magazine Studio Theatre.

Works for this were funded by GAMPA through profits made over the past year.

The Magazine Studio Theatre is kitted out with a 10 m² Stage and a light and sound rig as well as a dressing room and waiting/bar area.

GAMPA also purchased a vintage grand piano to be used to entertain the waiting audience.

Both of these premises are used daily.

Percussion classes and exams are all held at The Magazine Studio theatre which also stages performances every 4 weeks.

This includes both plays open to the public and private recitals.



Initiatives:

Mr Speaker, this year GAMPA took on a Gibraltar-wide programme called “I Am Me”.

They toured all the schools giving self-esteem and character building workshops.

They also held choir workshops with all school choirs and recorded the “I AM ME” song featuring all local schools choirs as well as recording a video of the song.

The aim of this programme is to promote a positive message of togetherness and it also worked as an anti-bullying campaign.

It was a way to reach the younger generations and promote their well-being through a positive message.

During 2018 GAMPA have been involved in a great number of performances and initiatives.

Such as:

- Offering Dramatherapy classes for eight weeks for students with special learning needs and challenges;
- The Gibraltar Youth Choir which represented Gibraltar at the World Choir Games in Tshwane, South Africa, obtaining 3rd Place in the Pop Ensemble;
- Acting students taking part in the Shakespeare for Kids workshops organised by UK based company and GCS;
- A Technical Theatre Course offered to acting students by GCS technician Mark Cortes at the Magazine Studio Theatre;
- Workshops for their Instrumentalists in collaboration with the Philharmonic Society with Vilem Veverka and the Martinu Quartet;
- Reena Nagrani participating in the Elena Cobb winners concert at the Royal Albert Hall in London;
- “Kids Rock The Concert”. This is the annual Parasol Foundation Sponsored end of term show held at the John Mackintosh Hall Theatre featuring over 200 students from the academy.

These are just a few of the many events that they have organised alone or together with other Groups.



The Parasol Foundation Scholarship Programme

Mr Speaker, GAMPAs continued to work very closely with the Parasol Foundation in order to develop "The Parasol Foundation Scholarship Programme".

The scholarships awarded are for:

- "Students who show a high level of skill or have the potential to excel";
- "Beginners who showed potential and have achieved considerable progress in a short space of time";
- "Students in financial hardship".
- And to Ensemble which is open to all students of the Academy in order to be able develop a Youth Orchestra.

This is another of our manifesto commitments.

GAMPAs very proud in continuing to offer examination opportunities to students who choose to study both Classical and Rock and Pop music as well as in Acting and Drama.

Mr Speaker

Our Annual Mega Concert, now "Gibraltar Calling", goes from strength to strength.

This was one of our manifesto commitments.

It has become an event which has excellent international appeal.

Every year we see how people from abroad flock to Gibraltar to enjoy our 2 day festival of Music.

Our visitors come mainly from the UK.

This is great for our economy.

In fact it was relevant to hear the Chief Minister and my colleague Minister Licudi report to the House that all tourism statistics were up and that hotel occupancy is up.

Event-led tourism works.

We see how artists and bands Social Media to announce that they are coming to Gibraltar.

This generates even more publicity.

As an example, Stormzy on Twitter has 1.1m followers and last year he tweeted he was coming here.



Rita Ora has 6.8m followers and she too mentioned Gibraltar.

I would like to read a short email that was forwarded to me to make precisely this point.

This email is from a journalist to the organisers.

Hi Richard

Hope you are well today.

I received Suzie's OOO so I wondered if you could facilitate linking us with someone that works in Tourism PR for Gibraltar.

Mirror Online would like to run a piece on Gibraltar as a great weekend destination – tagging in Gibraltar Calling – but we need to provide them with a breakdown of latest hottest restaurants, places to visit/stay etc.

Deadline for all copy 14 Aug (but we'll need the info by midday on Monday 13th in order to pull content into copy for the Mirror).

Would it be possible for you to connect us with someone that can give us this info?

Thank you!

Polly

This free publicity is worth many thousands of pounds which we would otherwise spend in marketing Gibraltar.

And to boot it is a festival that nearly everyone in Gibraltar enjoys.

So the benefit of continuing with “Gibraltar Calling” is huge and therefore we will continue to do so.

The Media

Mr Speaker,

I now turn to my responsibilities regarding the Media.

I am pleased to report that construction of GBC's brand-new media centre at South Jumpers Bastion is now well underway.

The building's steel frame has now been virtually completed, with internal works proceeding well too.

Technical fit-out is now due to start this coming February, with GBC Television and Radio Gibraltar expected to start live transmissions from the new venue next summer.



The Government is very much looking forward to our national broadcaster finally being able to operate from purpose-built facilities that will also provide a much more pleasant working environment for GBC's employees.

The relocation project continues to be the priority this year for GBC's management team, who are liaising with expert consultants and service providers on how to extract the highest possible benefit from the new building.

The project has its challenges, as it is preserving the heritage value of the site while incorporating the new build.

It is being designed with an efficient use of all available space.

The new Broadcasting House will provide an excellent facility for our national broadcaster.

While it is being constructed, the life of the current building is being stretched to ensure television and radio programming can continue in the interim.

Investment continues on electronic systems that will be relocated next year to South Jumpers Bastion, while other 'end of life' systems are being carefully maintained by GBC's engineers to avoid duplication in costs, before being decommissioned.

Moving a television and radio station is logistically complex, when one of the main considerations has to be at minimal disruption to the programming.

Despite that, plans are well in hand to relocate the facilities in 2020.

Mr Speaker,

The past twelve months has seen the expansion of radio services, with the introduction of an alternative schedule overnight on Radio Gibraltar Plus, which now carries up to 14 hours a day of additional programming, providing a wider choice for listeners.

This has been achieved by maximising technology and reorganising assets always having in mind value for money.

Radio Gibraltar has and will continue to ensure that it is always a big part of our community with a strong schedule of programmes that are both informative and entertaining, with a high level of listener interaction.

It achieves this by staging roadshows at events throughout the year and thereby living-and-breathing Gibraltar through the airwaves.

Mr Speaker,

The selection of TV programmes offered nowadays by GBC is a far cry from those that were on our screens just a few years ago.

Since 2013, this Government has provided GBC with the much-needed additional resources for them to improve the variety and quality of both its local and international programmes.



The past twelve months are a testament to this, with the number of television programmes produced increasing.

Now we can see 'Viewpoint', 'The Hub', 'City Pulse', 'The Powder Room' and 'The Sports Locker' and they have become the main stay of the studio-based shows.

Other new and returning series included are 'In Their Footsteps', 'Fortress of Fortresses' and 'Working with History' – all of which focused on Gibraltar's rich history.

There are too many programmes to list, but it is worth mentioning the many outside broadcasts and Christmas and Easter Specials that are also produced, as well as the live UEFA 'Nations League' and 'European Qualifier' games, and the very successful 'GBC Sports Awards' celebrating the achievements of our many sports men and women.

Being the Minister for the Media and Sport, the event could not be more fitting in the context of this overview of my Ministry's activities, for which I am delighted that the Awards are now a firm fixture of both the broadcasting and sports calendars.

Gibraltar's vibrant economy, the local political scene, busier than ever social calendar, as well as the ongoing Brexit story, means that GBC's team of journalists have been work at maximum pace to keep Gibraltar informed.

GBC has total and absolute freedom to be impartial and that is what is to be expected from a public service broadcaster when it delivers news reports to the consumer via the traditional means of radio and television, as well as through the corporation's very active social media and online platforms.

Mr Speaker,

One of the biggest successes for GBC is its long-standing charitable arm, the Open Day Charitable Trust. The community fund-raises throughout the year, with all of it coming together on the second Wednesday of December when marathon radio and television shows are staged. The event very much brings everyone together just ahead of the festive season.

This year the all-time fund-raising record was broken with a huge £165,000 collected for local worthy causes. The Trust provides funding for specific projects nominated by locally-registered charities. The more recent one is that of a £75,000 First Aid Unit for St John Ambulance. The Trust has also donated £50,000 to the Society for Cancer Relief, £17,000 for the funding of numerous fitness activities for the elderly organised by the Physical Activities Association for Mature Older Adults among several other donations.

Mr Speaker,

There are not many countries, if any, our size that have the benefit of having its own national television and radio service. It says much about Gibraltar as a mature society, while providing a



sense of nationhood.

GBC has currently 80 proud professionals at all levels who give their all to ensure the Corporation delivers the best service, including television and radio programmes, online content and daily news coverage.

Work on programming for the next 12 months is already very much in production. This will include coverage of next month's Gibraltar Island Games, more live international football, a new series of 'Inspired by' that travels to India this time to focus on Gibraltar's Hindu community, and a second series of 'A Life Abroad' among many others.

Broadcasting in Gibraltar is moving forward, with radio, television and online services into the future as a result of the investment into the sector being made by this GSLP/Liberal administration.

As Minister for the Media I am happy to say that there are now a number of other private broadcasting entities in the market.

YGTV is running a good service with its online services.

Rock Radio has recently gone on air offering listeners music geared for the young, but also for the not so young.

Our traditional 2 daily newspapers The Gibraltar Chronicle and the Panomama keep us very much informed of all that is current through the traditional print format. They are also available on social media and online platforms.

We also have a number of magazines in the market covering social, cultural and musical events.

This shows that we enjoy a wide variety of events in our social calendar which are then reported upon and recorded by the media in general.

Youth Service

Mr Speaker,

The Gibraltar Youth Service continues to open its doors and have created and developed programmes that have reached to more young people.

It is great to see our Community Youth Workers developing programmes designed for youngsters to acquire life skills and at the same time doing all kinds of Community and Charity work.

These programmes are:

- 'The Insight Project' - which aims to increase the awareness of young people about the employment and career paths that are available to them. The Gibraltar Youth Service has been reaching out to government departments and local businesses in order to facilitate an insight experience for young people on what it might be like to work in these place.



- The Zone - started in September 2018 and it provides a safe place for young people during lunchtimes where they can have a healthy meal prepared for by young people who are gaining experience in the catering business and have undertaken health and hygiene courses. This is open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. On Tuesdays and Thursdays in the afternoon **the Zone** is further extended to young people who are not in education, employment or training. It is also open for anyone who requires additional support with employment and life skills.
- 'The Mingle' - is a programme that the Youth Service together with The Care Agency and the Department of Education have recently embarked upon. This is a new community initiative with young adults up to 30 years who have or experience mild learning difficulties. This has increased the joined-up approach amongst organisations that come in to contact with vulnerable adults. The project is in its infancy but the Youth Service are very excited about its potential.
- Joyful Riot - this started October 2018 and is an inclusive community choir initiative where people of all ages are welcome to attend. Performances have taken place at St Theresa's Church during Chirtsmas, also at a road show to various adult services including St. Bernadette's, the Elderly Residential Services, Clubhouse and the Community Day Care Centre for Adults. The power of music increases social fulfilment, boosts confidence and reduces anxiety and stress levels.
- #sitforcalpehouse - This started in April and saw many people and groups take pictures on a throne and donate the proceeds to Calpe House. Most of the members of this Parliament have done so. Currently the Throne is on 'tour' continuing to raise funds for Calpe House.

In partnership with Gibsams & Gibraltar Dyslexia Support Group two videos were filmed and edited by GYPT to raise awareness of Mental Health Issues and Dyslexia.

Mr Speaker,

As we have seen recently, young people are very keen to make a statement about Climate Change.

'Going Green' is yet another project which the Gibraltar Youth Service have introduced,

The objective is to reduce their environmental impact in the office and in the Youth Clubs.

Establishing gardening projects, recycling all goods and using these items in their arts and craft sessions are some of the practical effects.

They have upholstered all their sofas instead of purchasing new ones.

They have sourced eco-friendly cleaning products and continue to recycle their waste.

They do not purchase single use plastic cups and encourage their employees and club members to bring their reusable drink bottles.



They participate annually in The 'Clean up the World' campaign.

They are also working with Island Games in designing and creating sea model creatures from recycled goods (Clean Seas, Our Future).

These will be exhibited at the Youth Centre during the week of the 6th - 12th July.

What was known as the Gibraltar Youth Council has now changed its name to the Voice of Young People.

This group was formed in order for them to highlight issues which concern young people.

To date they have created a young person's local directory which features Health, Leisure, Education, general Advice and other support services that young people can use at any given time.

They also prepared a questionnaire for youngsters.

This was completed by 1,302 young people. The aim was to find out what issues they are facing today. Bullying, mental health, drugs and underage drinking were the top 4.

The VYP group are already working to address these issues and have already met with the Chief Minister.

In this meeting they informed the Chief Minister of the work they were doing and how they intended to progress.

They have also met with Minister Cortes and officials from the Department of Education to see how bullying was being tackled and to influence current policy.

They have also been instrumental in highlighting the issue of teenage mental health.

To this end they have seen how the Health Service is dealing with it and learnt how there will be a health councillor soon in the schools to be able to deal with these issues at an early stage.

They will be meeting soon with the RGP to highlight the issue of drugs and underage drinking which was a concern high on their agenda.

All in all this group has been very proactive and the youth service will continue to work with them to highlight the priorities of Young People.

Youth Day 2019 was a joint event with Gibraltar Cultural Services.

This year a youth day committee was formed comprising of young people representing various youth organisations. The committee had the opportunity to debate and decide on all matters concerning Youth Day. Their responsibilities for delivering Youth Day ranged from choosing a date and the venue, to email administration, promotion of event and working during the event itself. The experience the organisers have gained was immense and will serve them well in the future.



Bikeability is a partnership programme with the Ministry of Transport. One of the Youth and Community workers will be training professionally in the UK to teach cycling skills to adults and children.

Lastly I would like to mention the participation of the Youth Service on our January 2019 Cavalcade Float. This year their float supported and promoted the Island Games.

The Youth Service continues to participate in further professional development. For example, Managing Challenging Behaviour is a course that staff have recently attended.

The Youth Service is now a vibrant proactive service which continues to form part and contribute to various multi- agency forums.

They are represented on the Child Protection Committee & Sub-Training Committee, the Drugs Advisory Council, the Youth Advisory Council and the CHAMP (Children Healthy and Active Multi-agency Programme) initiative.

The Laguna Youth Club, Dolphin's Youth Club and the Plater Youth Club continue to open their doors to a younger age group of children aged 7-14.

They have developed a debating project.

This is a fun way for young people to research, learn, develop their knowledge and most importantly to be confident when speaking in front of an audience.

They have been developing their employability and problem solving skills through the planning and fundraising of an educational trip to Poland, which will include a visit to Auschwitz.

As a result, of the success of the work done by the Youth Clubs, and the increase in numbers coming in to the clubs, more support workers have been called in for these sessions.

The Youth Service is now well positioned to continue with the great work they do for young people going forward into the future.

King's Bastion Leisure Centre

Mr Speaker

I will now move on to my areas of responsibility as Minister for Sport and Leisure.

In the King's Bastion Leisure Centre, there have been a number of major projects carried out during the last year.

One of these projects involved the installation of the Funcard System.

This system has replaced the POS stations in the Bowling Alley, Ice Rink, Fitness Gym and Reception.



This meant the installation of card issuing kiosks in the Bowling and Fitness Gym areas and the addition of card readers to each of our 60 arcade machines, with extensive cabling required throughout the Centre to connect all the equipment to the servers.

With this Funcard system, users are able to put money on the card which they can then use for any of the activities in the Leisure Centre excluding the Cinema and Restaurant.

The benefit to the Centre is that it removes the cumbersome task of cash handling particularly the coins from the arcade.

This potentially will result in an increase in revenue of about 15%, which will help to offset against the cost of installing the system.

All the wood panelling beneath the carpets in the right Cinema screen and in their kitchenette, which was suffering from severe dampness, were also replaced.

New mirrors were installed in the Fitness Gym and one of the ice rink compressors in the chiller pit became faulty and also had to be replaced.

In the Amusement Arcade, three new games machines have been added.

A thorough inspection of the ceiling of the bowling alley concluded that extensive refurbishment works had to be carried out ahead of its refurbishment.

The ice rink had been leaking for some time. These works meant the closure of the rink for a few months. Now this has been repaired, the centre embarked on the principal project planned for this year.

The previous Bowling Alley which was hailed as the state of the art when it was opened in 2008 was actually a second hand system which was already 15 years old before it was placed in the King's Bastion Leisure Centre.

Therefore it was not in a fit state to bear the rigours of the Island Games taking place next month.

I am happy to say that this has now been completely replaced by brand new bowling lanes, a new scoring system and new mechanical equipment.

This is now up and running and our bowlers have been able to train there in preparation for the games next month.

Sport and Leisure

Mr Speaker,

As Honourable members are very much aware we will shortly be hosting the 18th Edition of the Natwest International Island Games.



The opening ceremony, scheduled for Saturday 6th July, marks the start of what will be a week of great sporting competition.

Gibraltar and the other 23 territories will battle it out for medals.

It will also be the culmination of four years of extremely hard work by a very large cross section of the community.

Since the opportunity presented itself to host the Games whilst in Jersey in 2015 I have seen the local sporting fraternity pull together in a way only Gibraltarians can.

The work undertaken by those involved in the Games together with the assistance offered by many other sectors of the community means that Gibraltar will no doubt host a truly memorable week.

I would like to place on record my personal thanks and that of the Government, to all those who have worked tirelessly to make the games a success, many of whom have done so on a voluntary basis.

I will not name them as there are too many to mention and I do not want to omit any individuals or entities from the list.

We are now at a point where these Games are very much a reality and will be Gibraltar's biggest sporting event to date.

The journey has not been an easy one, no one expected it to be.

I think we need to be reminded that some 2500 visitors will descend on the Rock for approximately ten days with this figure including athletes, officials, team members and press who will cover the Games.

Images and reports of our country will be sent back to their respective Islands.

The importance of this positive exposure cannot be underestimated.

As I mentioned earlier, the Island Games will feature a full and varied cultural programme.

I urge everyone to support the Games be it by supporting Team Gibraltar at the different venues or by engaging with our visitors with our famous hospitality.

Mr Speaker,

At this juncture I am pleased to announce that the Island Games expenditure will be in keeping with what was submitted in the original bid document.

In the last financial year recurrent expenditure under the Island Games sub-Head has been reconciled at £1,520,970 with revenue totalling £212,500.



For the coming Financial Year this expenditure (which should be finalised by early September) is projected to amount to £894,475 with revenue projected at £1,304,500.

When analysing both the expenditure and the revenue over both financial years the net cost to HM GoG is £898,445. This is in fact less than the £1 million that was originally estimated which is great news.

The fact that the Games will result in visitors eating in local restaurants, staying in local hotels and spending in local shops whilst enjoying our tourist sites and everything else Gibraltar has to offer for a full ten days will bring approximately £3m to the economy in general.

Mr Speaker,

It is also important to remember that apart from the legacy that the Games will leave, the figures I have just quoted include expenditure in many other smaller but crucial legacy items that our sportspeople will be able to benefit from for a very long time.

The Sandpits Lawn Tennis Club and the Multi-Use Games Area at the Bayside Sports Complex have benefitted from a resurfacing programme that will at the BSC in particular be utilised by the community in general.

The spectator experience at the Tercentenary Sports Hall has been greatly improved with the installation of glass panels in the stands making the entirety of the playing area visible irrespective of where you are seated.

Willis's Magazine is currently undertaking a repair and refurbishment programme that will make it an iconic venue for the Pistol Shooting events during the Games and will make the chambers available for use in a controlled manner not only to the Gibraltar Pistol Association but to others also post Games.

These chambers were lying unused and after extensive consultation with all relevant stakeholders and with input from the Development and Planning Commission, the Heritage Trust, the Department for the Environment and others they have been revived and will be re-used.

Over 200 bespoke barriers have been purchased for the road events namely cycling and triathlon. These will be available for future sporting events and are an asset that can be used for other cultural events like the Cavalcade.

As a final point under this item we must also consider all the equipment that our registered sports associations involved in the Games have received.

This will help them develop their respective sports and contribute to raise standards when we compete at an International level.

Mr Speaker,



The hosting of the Island Games has been the main focus this year.

However, Gibraltar has continued to organise and host numerous events many of which form an integral part of the annual calendar of International Federations.

Expenditure in this respect has totalled nearly £1.3m.

These international sporting events have real value in publicity terms. In this respect, they also:

- 1) Provide exposure on major sporting television networks during prime time slots as is the case of the Pool, Darts and Snooker events;
- 2) Fill local hotels during quiet off peak periods of the year as is done with the Chess Festival which continues to grow in strength and reputation and is revered the world over;
- 3) Maintain our sporting fraternity active at an international level, with many of the organisational models employed locally, now serving as templates for other host countries.

It is worthwhile to continue to attract them to Gibraltar.

Event-led tourism has always been a policy of this GSLP/Liberal administration.

The list I am about to provide is a testament to this.

Over the last financial year, the Government has via the GSLA supported, been involved in or directly organised the:

World Snooker Gibraltar Open (85 persons x 5 nights = 425)

PDC Darts Gibraltar Open (150persons x5 nights = 750)

Gibraltar World Pool Masters (95x4 nights =380 Bed Nights)

Gibraltar International Chess Festival (400 persons x 11 nights =2000)

8th International Junior Chess Festival (160 x 8 nights = 1280)

European Backgammon Team Event (450 persons x 6 nights = 2700)

4th Gibraltar International Backgammon Tournament (part of the European Tour) (350 persons x 6 nights =2100)

Eurafrica Trail (45 persons x 2 nights = 90)

Gibraltar Squash Open (25 persons x 4nights = 100)

Table Soccer World Cup (400 persons x 11 nights = 2000)

Gibraltar International Regatta sailing (20 persons x 4 nights = 80 Bed Nights) + 40/50 day visitors

Rock Masters Ten Pin Bowling (95 persons x 4 nights = 380 Bed Nights)



International Dog Shows (100 persons x 2 nights = 200)

+ 500/600 days visitors

International Song Festival (30persons X 2 nights = 60 Bed Nights) + 100 day visitors

United Nations Ju-Jitsu Conference

Netball Europe Challenge Open

Harley Davidson Rally

Classic Vehicle Rally

The value to our economy of hosting all these events in Gibraltar is as follows:

All these events had a total of 15,225 bed nights.

And an approximate extra 2,700 for tournaments mentioned where an average accurate calculation is made.

Therefore a total of 17,925 bed nights.

Each Bed Night is now considered to be worth £120 which includes (general expenditure by visitor being hotel, food, beverages, amenities, tourist attractions, shopping).

The value to the economy is more than double the expenditure.

This does not include day visitors and all those who come to the events independently.

The GSLA has also assisted the Gibraltar Football Association with the hosting of Champions League and Europa League qualifiers last summer.

It has also been an integral part of ensuring that the National Team once again play official UEFA matches at the Victoria Stadium.

The Bayside Sports Complex, the Multi Use Games Area commonly known as the MUGA, is a hive of activity during good and dry weather but falls foul to inclement weather.

We have therefore decided to convert it into a Semi Rigid Covered Area.

Works will start after the Games since the area has been prepared to host Tennis matches during the Games.

Mr Speaker,

Sport plays a vital role in our society.



We host many events, which take up time from local use of our existing facilities.

All of our 42 registered sports associations have continued to organise and complete their respective seasons.

It has been a testing year and I would like to thank those that have been affected for working so closely with the Ministry of Sport and the GSLA to try and maintain normality as much as reasonably possible.

Our sportspeople have understood the magnitude of the Island Games.

More importantly they can see the benefits that the new infrastructure projects will provide.

Their cooperation has been instrumental in allowing the Project Team and the GSLA to fulfil their responsibilities.

Mr Speaker,

HMGOG's financial support for the local sporting fraternity has been unwavering.

We will continue to support our sportsmen and women.

A total of £621,000 been provided via the Gibraltar Sports Advisory Council.

The previous administration had budgeted in 2011 to spend a total of £516,000 on Grants to Sporting Associations, International Competitions, Sport Development Projects, and including for Hosting of Special Sports and Leisure Events.

We have currently budgeted for this year a total of £635,000 for Grants to Sporting Associations, International Competitions and Sport Development Projects excluding Hosting of Special Sports and Leisure Events.

I repeat, EXCLUDING the hosting of special sports and leisure events.

The Hosting of Special Sports Events, which is shown on the estimates book as a separate item, is an additional £1m.

This shows that not only are we providing events which the community enjoys, as I mentioned above, but we are also investing in our sporting associations in order to host many events here in Gibraltar.

This brings all the spin-off benefits to our economy that I described earlier.

These events have only been possible after GSAC (which is made up of voluntary representatives voted for by the associations themselves) sifted through every single application and applied the set criteria.



These individuals give up much of their free time in what can become very long meetings and are a vital cog in Gibraltar's sporting machinery.

My thanks to them also!

Mr Speaker,

In order for these associations to receive financial or logistical support they have to meet certain criteria at the point of annual registration.

As members will be aware this GSLP/Liberal administration set up the Child Protection Committee with representatives from the GSLA sitting on the Executive Committee as well as the various sub-committees.

It was therefore logical that child protection policies and safeguarding criteria form an integral part of the registration process for sporting and leisure entities.

With this in mind, the GSLA's Sports Development Unit has rolled out an extensive training programme that has meant that in the last financial year 170 coaches and/or individuals who deal with children and young people have received safeguarding training delivered by the GSLA.

This leaves the total since November 2017 at over 350 if we add to this all those coaches who receive safeguarding training via their sports specific coach education.

Huge strides have been taken in ensuring a safer environment for those involved in sport and leisure.

The period of grace for the submission of adequate child protection policies has also elapsed but I am very glad to report that the vast majority of the registered sports associations have already submitted finalised versions whilst those that have not are working very closely with the GSLA to finalise theirs.

Mr Speaker,

Whilst dealing with the participation of children in Sport and Leisure I would now like to move onto the Summer Sports and Stay and Play programmes.

The Summer Sports & Leisure Programme 2018 once again improved on its previous year's attendance.

540 children were registered with the main arm of the programme namely the Sports Train and Stay and Play programme. Amazingly, repeat attendances totalled over 10,000 units over six weeks (one unit= one child attending one session).

The Sports Train offered sporting and leadership activities for 7 to 14 year olds every weekday morning.



The Children's Corner offered appropriate sport and recreational activities three days per week for 5 and 6 year olds.

The Family Evening Sessions noticed a marked improvement in attendance with sessions attracting groups on average of 45 people and 90+ on some occasions.

The Stay and Play programme offered sport, physical, arts and leisure activities for children with disabilities five days per week.

This element in particular needed to review its scheduling given the significantly higher attendances and with this in mind the temporary staff complement has been increased for the upcoming programme.

In addition, the Care Agency was actively involved in the induction training programme for 2018 adding to the quality of delivery whilst safeguarding the interests of leaders and children alike.

There was a need to call upon the services of MEDOC during the programme as the availability of those on the supply list did not meet the ratios for the service users attending.

Mr Speaker,

Due to the hard work of those involved with the stay and play programme and its success I am happy to announce that the purpose built premises at the boat house will be extended this financial year to accommodate the high demand of children attending.

This is a far cry from the days before 2011 when the stay and play programme was conducted from a small unit in the boathouse.

The GSLA together with several Government Depts has provided 20 Sport Associations and Leisure providers with a range of sport coaching courses and taster sessions for children and young people.

Mr Speaker,

Sports and Leisure is an extremely dynamic industry and the information I have provided shows that the Ministry for Sport and all its components are certainly in tune with what is required and are, providing the community with the service, support and facilities that they require but more importantly deserve.

Therefore it is only right to invest in Sports.

Last year in my budget address I said that:

“never in the history of Gibraltar has a government invested so much time and effort in sporting projects than our GSLP/Liberal Government.”



How true it is and will be seeing the fruits of this investment in the coming weeks and months as we roll out the completion of the works.

Therefore I will not now go over or mention all the new facilities we have built.

I will allow the general public to judge for themselves.

Last year, I also asked people to be patient in the final year before the Games.

I would like to thank the whole of the population for allowing us to work for you.

Thanks also goes to the Sporting Associations who have endured disruption to their training schedules or venues.

It's an honour to have been able to deliver facilities which will be there for many years to come.

Many of the events that were mentioned above will once again be part of our calendar.

Given that Gibraltar will now enjoy new and improved sporting facilities, we are actively working to try and attract more international events to Gibraltar.

Each option is being studied with value for money and international exposure in mind.

This is the main criteria that must be fulfilled before contracts are signed or commitments are given.

The new facilities will allow us to develop our Sports Industry and the sky is the limit.

With our wonderful facilities we will be in a position to attract Clubs, Schools, and National teams at all levels coming to Gibraltar to compete with our athletes and/or to do their training routine.

Therefore the Government will be encouraging our sporting fraternity to host more international events.

We have seen how our hotels fill up.

It is good to see new hotel projects going up and increased capacity to Gibraltar by air.

This is a reflection of the exposure that Gibraltar has received.

It is also the result of working closely with the Tourist Board who also market our events abroad.

The plethora of new sporting venues will be worth every penny spent.

More venues will also mean that local competitions and development programmes will be able to continue with hardly any disruption if any at all.

The GSLA will now have more options through the use of alternative facilities, instead of having to postpone or cancel league fixtures or training programmes.



All in all a win-win situation which has only happened as a result of our GSLP/Liberal vision and our unprecedented investment in sport.

This sports industry may well become another pillar of our economy and will succeed Brexit or no Brexit.

Mr Speaker,

I want to close my address this year by saying thank you.

Thanks goes to the staff, at Gibraltar Cultural Services, at the Gibraltar Academy of Music and Performing Arts, at Leisure Management Services from Kings' Bastion Leisure Centre, at the Gibraltar Sports and Leisure Authority, at GBC and at the Youth Service.

I would like to thank all members of the Youth Advisory Council, the Voice of Young People, the Gibraltar Sports Advisory Council, all the cultural groups from the arts, drama, photographic and dance fraternities.

I would like to thank, for their patience, all those who have been in any way affected by the works that have been taking place and to the general public who are or have endured any inconvenience such as road closures or diversions.

I am convinced that they will understand the importance of the Games and that next month they will be even more understanding when the Games are actually on.

Thank you for allowing us to work for you.

Thank you also to all the members of the Governing Bodies of those sports who are and have been involved in delivering state of the art facilities which will leave a lasting Legacy well after the Island Games has passed.

I am extremely grateful to the Organising Committee of the Island Games most of whom do this without any financial interest. However, I must single out one person for a special thank you and that person is Linda Alvarez.

Linda's leadership has been truly exemplary throughout the process.

To all the volunteers in the committee and those how have put their names down to be ambassadors of our proud country.

The team at AKS and at Orfila's, that have and are producing all the architectural and technical designs for all the sporting and cultural projects, that I am involved in.

Thanks to the Contractors Casais for the wonderful student accommodation they have completed on budget and on time.

To GJBS all it's workforce and all the workers from their sub-contractors who have worked round the clock.



Thanks to those at the Technical Services Department and to the Chief Technical Officer for their valuable input into these projects.

Thanks to the all the essential services who have worked with the Organising Committee of the Games.

Mr Speaker,

Thanks to you and your staff at Parliament and last but definitely not least my staff at the Ministry of Culture, The Media, Youth and Sports at City Hall.

Without them I would not have been able to implement all the positive policies and manifesto commitments which I am involved in. They are definitely my right hand.

Thank you all.