

OPINION

SENTINEL
COMMENT

Andrew Turner, SAMS

As many will know I am not a fan of the St Helena Police carrying the "less-lethal" Taser weapons for the very simple fact that they are "less-lethal" rather than "non-lethal." Essentially they are still a weapon that can kill people.

It was sad this week to see in major UK media outlets the story of a Police Officer being charged with the murder of retired Aston Villa footballer Dalian Atkinson, who died after being tasered by the Officer.

According to a BBC report this is believed to be the first time an officer has been charged with murder after a person was tasered by police.

The UK Crown Prosecution Service made the decision to press charges following an investigation by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), which provides oversight of policing actions in the UK.

This sort of independent oversight is a vital. Even if all tasers are always used responsibly by all officers, without independent oversight the public has to simply trust that every Police action goes perfectly every time. Dalian Atkinson's case clearly shows things don't work like that.

And yet here on St Helena there is no such oversight. According to SHG the only oversight is from the Police themselves; and the taser use specifically is governed by the St Helena Taser Policy, which is a document that SHG says "is not for public disclosure."

According to the Chief of Police David Lynch "The work of the Directorate is scrutinised by the Attorney General's Chambers and the Court." But of course, the court looks at evidence in specific cases but is in no way dedicated to scrutinizing the Police Force. The other issue is that it is also tied to SHG and therefore would be unlikely to declare the police acted improperly, since that could lead to a lawsuit that the AG's Chambers would then have to defend.

It will be interesting, as the Police's own review of its own taser use is due to be released, to see what the findings are. So far we're unaware of any taser use at all by the Police – but the main issue remains the lack of public assurance that situations like Dalian Atkinson's, if they did ever occur, won't go without independent investigation.

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YOUR LETTERS

Dear Editor,

At last the Crown Dependencies and British Overseas Territories lay their own wreaths at the London Cenotaph

A while back I put efforts into the Crown Dependencies and the British Overseas Territories to being able to lay wreaths at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday. At the time I received some stick and derision from some of those in authority about such efforts. The idea was deemed, nonsense, impractical, implausible, costly, not appropriate and much more.

I did have some publicity on the issue.

I had been supporting Andrew Rosindell, the MP for Romford in Essex, who had started this campaign.

Andrew is Chairman of FOTBOT (Friends of the British Overseas Territories) and involved with numerous UK Parliamentary Committees to do with the individual Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories.

He deserves every credit for bringing this about.

It was wonderful to see the Chief Ministers or their equivalents of Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories laying their own wreaths at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday.

It only goes to show that if you believe a cause is worth taking up, it merits being followed through to the end.

Mission impossible at the time, finally became mission accomplished.

I note that there was little public support for this worthy idea at the time from some in authority.

However, I am pleased there was a change of mind and a readiness to lay the wreaths!

It was never going to detract from what was done locally, any more than anyone else attending from any other area detracts from their own locality.

If anything, it enhances the value of Remembrance Sunday, the sacrifices made, and the importance of safeguarding our cherished values in the future.

Anthony Webber
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Dear Editor,

I delivered the following speech at church recently, and I have been asked by quite a few members of the congregation, and encouraged by Bishop Dale, to send the speech to your paper. The story touched people on the night and, although it is very personal, may inspire others to "follow their dreams":

I am going to tell you a story about a five year old girl who lived with her grandparents. She had a very happy life with her extended family and friends. In the small village where she lived, all roads were sandy hollow lanes, perfect places for adventures. All the children used to

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walk barefoot. Playing puddles when it rained and sitting in the warm sand when the sun shone, drawing shapes with their fingers, pretending to write...playing school.

On one of those beautiful summer days an old man came cycling through the hollow sandy lane. He lost his balance and fell off his bike with all his shopping falling out of his pannier, rolling down the road. He was always drunk and seemed to be asleep on the road. All the children teased him. A car came over the brow of hill and hit the man lying on the ground. Now there was blood, vegetables, bread and total silence. All the children had run and hidden in the bushes, except the little girl. She stood and looked at the scene, incapable of leaving. She needed to do something, but what? She had never seen an accident and the silence was eerie. She ran back to the house to fetch her grandma, because Grandma would know what to do. The girl led Grandma through the children's secret passage back to the sandy lane. Of course, Grandma knew what to do! She called an ambulance. She picked up the bike and the shopping and she told the children to stand on top of the hill to slow down all traffic.

At this moment, the little girl decided that her life was going to be about helping other people. Some of her friends looked the other way; they didn't play with her anymore. Other friends teased her and put spiders on her back when they were out playing.

All because she had tried to help and she had shared the children's secret passage, a shortcut from the house to the lane, with Grandma.

The little girl grew up, knowing she wanted to be a doctor. She finished school with the right qualifications and she studied for an anatomy degree. Why not medicine, you may wonder? The girl believed that clever people become doctors and she considered herself too ordinary. Half way through her degree, anatomy and medical students were taught together, as they had to learn the same subjects. Guess what? Medical students were ordinary humans. Some were very bright, some were arrogant and some were very kind and one or two became good friends. The girl realised that she was no different. She completed her anatomy degree, studied medicine, had a fulfilling career, encouraged many young women and men to follow their dreams, because she had realised that we can all follow our

dreams.

You may wonder what happened to the people in this story. The wise grandma lived for 96 years, loved and protected all her family in difficult times. She passed away in her own home, with a smile on her face, surrounded by many of her family.

I can't tell you what happened to the man who was taken away by ambulance.

I can tell you what happened to the girl. She is standing in front of you now.

I am hugely blessed and humbled by the opportunities that life has given me. The sick old man, my Grandma, the "flesh and blood" medical students, all were blessings in disguise and wonderful teachers.

Saint Helena has provided me with more chances to witness kindness, selflessness and humanity. You are excellent teachers, good colleagues and caring friends. The healthcare community is just that: a community.

I share my appreciation for all of you.

From hospital nurses and doctors who work tirelessly day and night to keep those who are sickest safe and to help them back to good health, from the highly skilled technical staff in the laboratory, and the x-ray department, to the therapists and nurses in the community - you are always compassionate and never too tired to go the extra mile. Our support staff, from administration to handymen, to work amongst you all has allowed me to experience your commitment to keeping Saint Helenians healthy.

I'm not going to turn this into an Oscar's speech by thanking all my colleagues in health and social care by name, but I will express my heartfelt gratitude for all you do: dentists, pharmacists, mental health team and social care colleagues, clergy and charities.

By caring for others, you show compassion and wisdom, and you are thoughtful, patient and courageous. Please keep going. Care for yourselves as much as for your patients and colleagues. Whatever your beliefs are, compassion and fellowship unite us all.

Find that little boy or girl in you, follow your dreams, and you never know...what turns up next. What I have learned is this: You will receive more than you give.

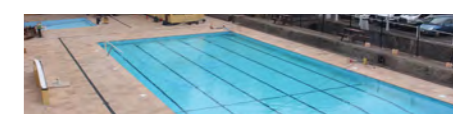
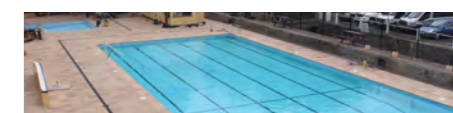
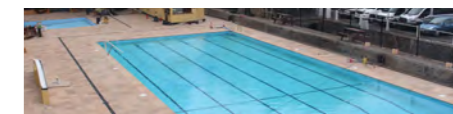
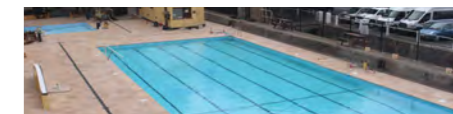
I thank you wholeheartedly for the opportunity to share some of my story and thoughts with you. This has now become our story, because, like

many before me, you have welcomed me into your lives. Thank you.

Blessings and peace to you all,
Dr Juliane (Jules) Couch

Water loss
over past week
equates to 3.5
swimming pools

— Andrew Turner, SAMS —



Over the past week, 2,300 cubic meters of water – which equates to approximately 3.5 Jamestown swimming pools – has been used.

This is a loss of 2% of St Helena's stored water, and has gone hand-in-hand with a significant increase in water consumption.

Only one day in the last week was under the island-wide consumption level of 1,000m³ needed for water stocks to replenish.

Surface flows are erratic at best and pumping efforts have expanded with extra pumping from Warren's Gut.

There is still no significant rainfall predicted. Reservoirs now stand at 38.6%.