

Speaker of the House Launches Second Issue of 'House Matters' Newsletter

Release Date: 18 September, 2026



OFFICIAL VISIT
Speaker of the UK House of Commons
Strengthening parliamentary partnership and democratic leadership.

EDUCATION THROUGH PARLIAMENT
Inspiring the Next Generation
Youth debates, school visits and civic education in action.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS
Supporting those affected by Cancer, Strengthening Families
When we strengthen families, we strengthen the Virgin Islands

BUILDING TOMORROW'S PARLIAMENT

Strengthening the House of Assembly through the House of Assembly (Management) Act, 2025

A modern governance framework for a stronger, more independent Parliament and better services for the people of the Virgin Islands.

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- YOUTH & CIVIC
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The Speaker of the House of Assembly of the Virgin Islands, the Honourable Corine N. George-Massicote, has launched Issue 2 of the House's official newsletter, House Matters.

The first issue was released during the 75th anniversary of the restoration of legislation in the Virgin Islands. This new issue continues the newsletter's mission, to keep residents informed about legislative business, regional and international engagement, and the standards that guide the work of the House.

This issue offers deeper coverage of legislative activities, updates on the House's regional and international engagements, and more insight into the procedural and ethical standards that underpin its work. The goal remains the same, to provide Virgin Islanders with clear, timely, and accessible information about what the House of Assembly is doing.

As she welcomed readers to the second issue of House Matters, Speaker George-Massicote said,

"It is an honour to serve as Speaker of the House of Assembly and to work on behalf of the people of the Virgin Islands. We created this newsletter to help you better understand what the House of Assembly does and how its work affects your everyday life. The House belongs to the people, so it is important that everyone has the opportunity to know what is happening and why it matters.

Over the past few months, the House has continued working to make Parliament stronger and more effective. We have debated and passed important laws, worked with regional and international partners, improved how the House operates, and continued building an institution that is open, modern and accountable to the people."

Highlights in Issue 2 include:

- House Highlights
- Parliament in Action
- Blue Economy Youth Debate
- Youth & Civic Education
- Behind the Scenes

The House of Assembly of the Virgin Islands is the Territory's legislative body, responsible for making laws, approving public expenditure, and holding the Government to account in service of the people of the Virgin Islands.

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Gallery

Message from the Speaker

Continuing the Journey Together

Welcome to the second edition of *House Matters*.

It is an honour to serve as Speaker of the House of Assembly and to work on behalf of the people of the Virgin Islands.

We created this newsletter to help you better understand what the House of Assembly does and how its work affects your everyday life. The House belongs to the people, so it is important that everyone has the opportunity to know what is happening and why it matters.

Over the past few months, the House has continued working to make Parliament stronger and more effective. We have debated and passed important laws, worked with regional and international partners, improved how the House operates, and continued building an institution that is open, modern and accountable to the people.

One aspect of my work that I enjoy most is meeting with our young people. Through our Education Through Parliament programme, students are learning how government works, why good leadership matters and how they can play a role in shaping the future of the Virgin Islands. Whether through school visits, classroom presentations or youth debates, I am always encouraged by their curiosity, ideas and enthusiasm.

This edition also highlights the visit of Sir Lindy Hoyle, Speaker of the House of Commons in the United Kingdom. His visit was an important milestone for the Virgin Islands and strengthened the relationship between our two Parliaments while recognising the progress being made by our House of Assembly.



Parliament is not only about passing laws. It is also about listening to the people and understanding the issues that affect our daily lives. In this edition, we also look at important conversations about women's health, the challenges many mothers face, and the experiences of families in our community. These are issues that deserve understanding, support and thoughtful action.

As we continue moving forward, I remain committed to helping build a Parliament that is transparent, accessible and responsive to the people it serves. Together, through respect, service and shared responsibility, we can continue strengthening our democracy and building a brighter future for the Virgin Islands.

Thank you for taking the time to read *House Matters*, and thank you for being part of this journey with us.

Hon. Corine N. George-Massicotte
Speaker of the House of Assembly
Virgin Islands

Special Feature: A Historic Visit from the United Kingdom Speaker

Building Relationships Beyond Borders

The House of Assembly of the Virgin Islands was honoured to welcome Sir Lindy Hoyle, Speaker of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom, during his official visit to the Territory.

The visit marked an important milestone in the longstanding relationship between the Virgin Islands and the United Kingdom and recognised the continued development of the House of Assembly as a modern Parliament. It also provided an opportunity to strengthen parliamentary ties, exchange ideas and share experiences on the role of legislatures in serving the public.

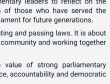
Discussions during the visit focused on strengthening democratic leadership, improving the effectiveness of Parliament, promoting openness and accountability, building public confidence in democratic institutions, and encouraging greater participation by young people in public life.

The visit also reinforced the importance of preserving the traditions of Parliament while embracing innovation and modern practices that enable the House of Assembly to better serve the people of the Virgin Islands.

The evening provided an opportunity for former and current parliamentary leaders to reflect on the progress of the House of Assembly, acknowledge the contributions of those who have served the institution, and reaffirm their shared commitment to strengthening Parliament for future generations.

The occasion also highlighted that Parliament is about more than debating and passing laws. It is about serving the people, upholding democracy, listening to the voices of the community and working together to build a stronger future for the Virgin Islands.

Sir Lindy Hoyle's visit stands as an important reminder of the value of strong parliamentary partnerships and the shared commitment to promoting good governance, accountability and democratic values across the Commonwealth.



Youth Debate: SECURING OUR SEAS, SUSTAINING OUR FUTURE



As part of the official visit of Sir Lindy Hoyle, Speaker of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom, students with confidence, passion and conviction as they explored issues such as:

- Protecting marine life and the natural environment
- Building resilience to climate change
- Supporting sustainable tourism
- Safeguarding the fishing industry and marine resources
- Creating new economic opportunities through the Blue Economy
- Balancing economic growth with environmental responsibility

The debate showcased the intelligence, confidence and leadership potential of young people throughout the Territory while reinforcing the importance of involving youth in national conversations surrounding the future of the Virgin Islands.

The event also reinforced the importance of giving young people a voice in national conversations, by encouraging them to share their ideas and take part in discussions about the future of the Territory. The House of Assembly continues to ensure the next generation of leaders and responsible citizens.

The debate was a powerful reminder that protecting our environment and strengthening our economy can go hand in hand. More importantly, it showcased the vision and a strong sense of responsibility of young people who are prepared to lead with knowledge, vision and a strong sense of responsibility.

BUILDING TOMORROW'S PARLIAMENT

STRENGTHENING THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY TO BETTER SERVE THE PEOPLE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

The House of Assembly has proudly served the people of the Virgin Islands for generations. The House of Assembly (Management) Act, 2023 builds on that foundation by providing a governance framework that will strengthen the House and support its role for generations to come.

"The framework is changing. The mission remains the same: serving the people of the Virgin Islands."

WHY THIS MATTERS?

The House of Assembly belongs to the people of the Virgin Islands. It is where laws are debated and passed, national issues are discussed, and the Government is held to account on behalf of the public.

For the House to continue fulfilling its important responsibility, it must have the governance, systems and resources needed to support its work. That is why the House (Management) Act, 2023 represents an important milestone in the continued development of the House of Assembly.

The Act does not change the constitutional role of the House; it strengthens the way the institution is governed and administered, ensuring it is better equipped to meet the needs of a modern legislature while continuing to serve the people of the Virgin Islands.

The House of Assembly is the institution through which the legislative functions of the Virgin Islands are carried out. To carry out its constitutional responsibilities effectively, it requires governance arrangements specifically designed to support the work of the House.

For many years, the Office of the House of Assembly functioned administratively within the wider Public Service. With this amendment provided the administrative framework under which the House operated, it was not specifically designed to meet the distinct governance, operational and administrative needs of a parliamentary institution.

As the responsibilities of the House expanded, it became clear that a different structure was needed, one that recognised the unique role of Parliament and provided greater responsibility for the management of its own administration, staff, finances and operations.

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LOOKING AHEAD

The new framework will help the House of Assembly to:

- strengthen transparency, accountability and good governance;
- improve the services that support Members and parliamentary committees;
- modernise parliamentary administration and technology;
- strengthen financial stewardship and oversight;
- preserve the records and history of the Legislature;
- respond more effectively to the evolving needs of the House; and
- make the House of Assembly more open, accessible and responsive to the people of the Virgin Islands.

These improvements will strengthen the House's ability to serve the public while reinforcing confidence in one of the Territory's most important democratic institutions.

The House of Assembly has played a central role in the democratic life of the Virgin Islands for generations. The House of Assembly (Management) Act, 2023 builds on that foundation by providing a governance framework that reflects the needs of a modern legislature while preserving the principles that have guided the House throughout its history.

As the House continues to evolve, its purpose remains unchanged: to represent the people, make laws in the public interest and uphold the Government to account.

The House of Assembly (Management) Act, 2023 is more than an administrative reform; it is an investment in the future of parliamentary democracy in the Virgin Islands. By strengthening its governance and modernising the way it operates, the House is ensuring that it remains equipped to represent the people, uphold democratic accountability and serve the Virgin Islands with integrity, transparency and excellence for generations to come.

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EDUCATION THROUGH PARLIAMENT

Parliament comes to Life for Cedar International School Students.

Students of Cedar International School recently visited the House of Assembly Chamber as part of the ongoing Education Through Parliament initiative.

The visit provided students with a unique opportunity to experience Parliament first-hand while gaining a deeper understanding of:

- How laws are made
- The role of elected leaders
- Parliamentary procedure and debate
- Civic responsibility
- Leadership and public service

One of the highlights of the visit was the opportunity to participate in discussions and observe the parliamentary process in action, giving students a practical appreciation of how ideas are debated, decisions are made and legislation is considered within the Legislature.

The visit created an interactive and welcoming environment where students were encouraged to recognise that their voices, ideas and dreams matter, and that they each have the potential to make a positive difference in their communities.

Speaker George-Massicotte encouraged the students to remain confident, respectful and engaged while emphasising the values that shape good citizenship and responsible leadership:

- Education
- Discipline
- Respect
- Confidence
- Compassion
- Service to Others

She reminded the students that leadership is not defined by age, but by character, responsibility and a willingness to positively impact others.

The Education Through Parliament initiative continues to strengthen the connection between young people and the House of Assembly by providing meaningful opportunities to learn about democracy, civic participation and public service. By opening the doors of Parliament, the House hopes to inspire a new generation of informed citizens, community leaders and future parliamentarians.

"These students are tomorrow's leaders. By opening the doors of Parliament, we are meeting in a future generation that understands the importance of democracy, service and responsible leadership."

TAKING PARLIAMENT INTO OUR SCHOOLS

Speaker visits Enis Adams Primary School to promote civic education.

The House of Assembly's commitment to civic education extends well beyond the walls of Parliament.

As part of its ongoing community outreach programme, Speaker Hon. Corine N. George-Massicotte visited Enis Adams Primary School to deliver an engaging presentation on the role and work of the House of Assembly.

The visit formed part of the House's continued efforts to bring Parliament closer to students across the Virgin Islands, helping young people develop a greater understanding of democracy, leadership and active citizenship.

During the presentation, students explored:

- The role and purpose of the House of Assembly
- The responsibilities of the Speaker
- How laws are debated and passed
- The importance of leadership and public service
- Why civic education matters
- The three branches of government and their roles

Students participated enthusiastically throughout the session, asking thoughtful questions, sharing their ideas and demonstrating a genuine interest in how Parliament serves the people of the Virgin Islands.

Speaker George-Massicotte encouraged the students to remain curious, work hard and believe in their ability to make meaningful contributions to their schools, communities and the Territory. She reminded them that every leader begins as a learner and that the future of the Virgin Islands rests in the hands of young people who are informed, compassionate and committed to serving others.

The visit reflects the House of Assembly's ongoing commitment to ensuring that Parliament remains visible, accessible and connected to the people, particularly young people, who represent the future of the Virgin Islands.

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PARLIAMENT IN ACTION

Every sitting of the House of Assembly is an opportunity to shape the future of the Virgin Islands. While the passing of legislation is an important part of Parliament's work, it is only one aspect of the House's constitutional responsibilities.

The House also debates matters of national importance, considers Bills, approves resolutions, establishes committees and provides oversight on issues affecting the people of the Virgin Islands. Together, these responsibilities help strengthen democratic governance and ensure that Parliament remains responsive to the needs of the Territory.

During the period April to June 2024, Members considered a broad range of parliamentary business that reflected the House's continued commitment to:

- Good governance and accountability
- Justice and fairness
- Consumer protection and safety
- Efficient public services
- Constitutional development
- Community wellbeing

Bills Considered by the House

Consumer Protection (Amendment) Bill, 2024

Elections (Amendment) Bill, 2024

Other Governance and Private Members' Bills considered during the session

Resolutions Approved

The House also considered and approved resolutions that supported the work of Parliament and the wider development of the Territory, including:

- Approval of the Constitutional Negotiating Committee, advancing the Territory's constitutional reform process and supporting continued dialogue on the future constitutional relationship of the Virgin Islands.
- Appointment of the Special Select Committee on the Elections (Amendment) Bill, 2024, demonstrating Parliament's commitment to detailed scrutiny of significant electoral reform proposals and encouraging public participation in the legislative process.

Resolutions are an important part of the parliamentary business, enabling the House to establish committees, express opinions and authorise actions that support good governance and effective administration.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Committees are an important part of the work of the House of Assembly. While much of Parliament's work is seen during sittings of the House, committees provide an opportunity for Members to examine matters in greater detail and give focused attention to issues that may require further consideration.

Through committees, Members can review information, hear from public officers, organisations and other stakeholders, and consider different perspectives before reporting their findings and recommendations to the House. This helps to strengthen oversight, accountability and informed decision-making.

Committees can also provide an important connection between Parliament and the public by creating opportunities, where appropriate, for persons and organisations to contribute to matters being considered.

Parliament Beyond Legislation

The work of the House extends well beyond considering Bills. Parliament provides a forum where issues of national importance are debated, Government actions are scrutinised, and decisions are taken that influence the future direction of the Virgin Islands.

Whether considering proposed legislation, approving resolutions, establishing committees or debating matters of public interest, Members remain committed to serving the people with integrity, transparency and accountability.

Cancer, Care and Cost.

A cancer diagnosis can change life very quickly. Along with the emotional impact, patients and their families may suddenly have to manage medical appointments, testing, medication, follow-up care and, in some cases, travel overseas for specialised services.

Living in a small Territory means that not every specialised treatment can be available locally. We are fortunate, however, to have healthcare services and the National Health Insurance system to help residents access care both at home and where necessary overseas.

Early detection remains one of the most important ways we can protect our health. Regular check-ups and recommended screenings can help identify some cancers earlier, when there may be more treatment options and better outcomes.

Here in the Virgin Islands, services are available to support early detection, including mammograms, cervical cancer screening, diagnostic imaging and other testing. Public education and screening initiatives also help to encourage residents to take a more active role in looking after their health.

What happens after the diagnosis?

For many families, a serious disease can bring unexpected expenses alongside the worry of treatment and recovery. There may be medication, specialist appointments, travel, accommodation and other costs that can add up over time.

This is why conversations about cancer should not only be about screening and treatment. They should also include how we support patients and families throughout their journey.

As a community, we can continue looking at ways to make preventative care and screening easier to access, strengthen support for persons who need treatment overseas, explore partnerships with regional and international medical institutions, and find opportunities to make medicines and specialised care more affordable.

Prevention is also an important part of that conversation. When people feel encouraged to have regular check-ups and seek medical advice early, health concerns may be identified sooner.

Cancer affects more than the person who receives the diagnosis. It affects the family, friends and communities. By encouraging early detection, supporting those undergoing treatment and continuing the conversation about access and affordability, we can work towards ensuring that no one has to face that journey alone.

Quality Care and Patient Protection

Affordability is an important part of healthcare, but so too is quality patient safety and confidence in the care we receive. We need to protect patients, support healthcare professionals and strengthen confidence in the services available to our community.

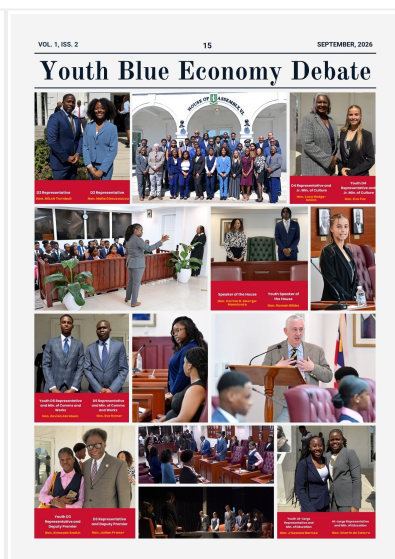
The Virgin Islands already has systems in place to regulate healthcare professionals and maintain professional standards. As healthcare changes and new treatments, medicines, however, the conversation goes even further. How do we continue to ensure that patients can access the care they need while families are supported through what can already be a very difficult time?

There may not be one simple answer. It requires ongoing collaboration between healthcare professionals, policymakers, community organisations, patients and families to be part of the conversation.

Sustaining the Conversation

The House of Assembly has a role in helping to create space for conversations that matter to the people of the Virgin Islands, and that support the health and wellbeing of our community.

Cancer affects individuals and families, but healthcare touches all of us. Taking steps towards prevention, early detection, access, support, quality care and patient support can help us better understand where we are and where we may wish to go as a Territory.



Additional Documents or Media

- [press release speaker of the house launches second issue of 'house matters' newsletter.](#)
- [speaker's newsletter 2nd edition september 2026 final revised\).pdf](#)