

Candidate Brief



Senior Magistrate



Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Welcome | 3 |
| Message from the Chief Justice | 4 |
| Information for Candidates | 5 |
| The Falkland Islands Constitution | 5 |
| The Laws of the Falkland Islands | 5 |
| Legislation of the Falkland Islands | 6 |
| The Court System | 6 |
| Supreme Court | 6 |
| Magistrate's Court | 7 |
| Summary Court | 8 |
| Coroner's Court | 9 |
| Tribunals & Other Matters | 9 |
| Court Facilities | 9 |
| Legal Library and other facilities at the Courts | 10 |
| Government Legal Services | 10 |
| Lawyers in Private Practice | 10 |
| Independence | 11 |
| Office hours | 11 |
| Breakdown of number of cases which the Senior Magistrate has dealt with per area of law for 2019 & 2020 | 12 |
| About the Falkland Islands Government | 13 |
| Structure of the Government | 14 |
| General Facts about the Falkland Islands | 15 |
| The people | 15 |
| The economy | 15 |
| Tourism | 16 |
| Air connectivity | 16 |
| Geography/Climate | 17 |
| Islands Living – key facts | 18 |
| Currency & Banking: | 18 |
| Electricity: | 18 |
| Telecommunications: | 18 |
| Shopping: | 18 |
| Eating out: | 18 |

Welcome

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the post of Senior Magistrate for the Falkland Islands. This is an exciting opportunity in an unparalleled location!



The Islands themselves have a land mass of around two thirds the size of Wales and are set in an area of outstanding natural beauty in the South Atlantic. For those with a sense of adventure it provides opportunities that are hard to match elsewhere in the world.

We are a small community with a very British way of life. The wealth derived from the oceans affords good services and near full employment. Respect for the law is part of our DNA and we place great value on the effective administration of justice.

If you are an individual who is prepared to push your personal boundaries, has a clear track record of successful practice and are not afraid to roll up your sleeves as part of a small team, please do get in touch. The Falkland Islands are a place where every person really can make a difference.

Yours faithfully

His Excellency The Governor Nigel Phillips CBE of the Falkland Islands



Message from the Chief Justice

The role of the Senior Magistrate in the Falkland Islands is a varied and exciting one which offers an unparalleled opportunity to adjudicate on a wide variety of criminal and civil disputes in a beautiful jurisdiction.

You will find that the matters that come before you are diverse, and that there will be many opportunities to acquire new skills and expertise whilst building on your existing judicial knowledge and experience. No two days will be alike, and you will find the variety of work as judge and coroner a refreshing change from a judicial list of similar matters coming before you week on week.

You will be well supported by the Head of Courts Service and the Court staff, and you will have the benefit of a Court room with live-link facilities and retiring rooms that would be the envy of many a court centre in England and Wales, coupled with up to date electronic research facilities.

When sitting as an Acting Supreme Court Judge you will also assist me on matters in the Supreme Court which can range from serious criminal trials (with or without a jury) to large value commercial disputes and judicial review.

As the resident judge on the Falkland Islands you will also have an important role to play in upholding the rule of law, and representing the judiciary in the wider community, a community which you will find to be friendly and welcoming.

Finally, there are few comparable jurisdictions in the world where your work place is only minutes from home and from locations where you can observe an incredible range of wildlife, both at the end of the working day, and at weekends.

I hope you will apply, and wish you every success in your application.

James Lewis QC
Chief Justice of the Falkland Islands

Information for Candidates

The post of Senior Magistrate in the Falkland Islands was established in the mid-1970's and until the 1980's was held by a local officer who was not professionally qualified. Since the early 1980's the post has been held firstly by expatriate lawyers, but latterly it has been held by those who have had previous judicial experience.

The Senior Magistrate is the only resident judicial office holder in the Falkland Islands. The Chief Justice, (who is based in the UK) visits the Falkland Islands at regular intervals when the business of the Supreme Court so requires. When exercising independent jurisdiction, the Senior Magistrate acts independently and is subject to appeal to the Supreme Court, but sits as Acting Judge in the Supreme Court by arrangement with the Chief Justice. The Chief Justice has statutory authority to review all proceedings in the Magistrate's and Summary Courts.

The Falkland Islands Constitution

Unlike the United Kingdom, the Falkland Islands has a written Constitution on the Westminster model. This incorporates provisions as to "fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual" and any locally made law which is inconsistent with those provisions of the Constitution is, to the extent of the inconsistency, void. Constitutional questions, including alleged infringements of the fundamental rights and freedoms provisions of the Constitution are determined by the Supreme Court. Certain parts of the Constitution have similarities to the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998, which does not apply in the Falkland Islands.

The Laws of the Falkland Islands

The Falkland Islands are a common law jurisdiction and the common law and the rules and doctrines of equity for the time being applicable in England apply unless inconsistent with statute law in force in the Falkland Islands. Decisions of the English courts may be persuasive, and decisions of the House of Lords and Supreme Court are of great persuasive authority.

"Statute" above includes -

- a) United Kingdom Acts or subsidiary legislation which, by their own terms, or by Order in Council, apply to the Falkland Islands or which have been adopted by local legislation (Ordinances);
- b) United Kingdom Orders in Council applying to the Falkland Islands;
- c) Falkland Islands Ordinances; and
- d) Subsidiary legislation made under Falkland Islands Ordinances

In addition the Falklands Islands are bound by some international treaties and conventions directly through the United Kingdom.

The Falkland Islands Legislative Assembly has extensive legislative powers. There are a considerable number of Ordinances in force, together with subsidiary legislation made under such Ordinances. Many Ordinances are based on equivalent English statutory provisions, but some, (including those relating to real property) are widely different from those in force in England.

Legislation of the Falkland Islands

‘Ordinances’ are made by the Falkland Islands legislature and are our principal sources of law. Such Ordinances are supplemented by local orders and regulations. However, English Acts can also apply to the law of the Falkland Islands either directly or indirectly.

In recent years, the Law Commissioner has undertaken a wholesale review of the laws of the Falkland Islands and this can be found on www.legislation.gov.fk. This gives comprehensive and up to date access to all the necessary legislation.

Of particular importance is the Law Revision and Publication Ordinance 2017, which details how and what legislation from England and Wales is applied in the Falkland Islands.

The Court System

Chapter VIII of the Constitution of the Falkland Islands deals with the Administration of Justice including the appointment of judges, tenure of office, jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal. Section 88 of the Constitution provides for the appointment of the Senior Magistrate.

Supreme Court

The Supreme Court of the Falkland Islands has original unlimited criminal and civil jurisdiction broadly comparable to that of the High Court of Justice in England, including admiralty and probate jurisdiction. It also has original divorce jurisdiction. The procedure is similar to that of the English High Court before the introduction of the Civil Procedures Rules in England and Wales in April 1999.

The Senior Magistrate may expect to be appointed Acting Supreme Court Judge, and to exercise the interlocutory jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, as requested by the Chief Justice, including that relating to interim injunctions.

It may exclude jurisdiction to make a final order so that any order made by the Senior Magistrate could be varied or discharged at a later stage by the Chief Justice. This may avoid an appeal to the Court of Appeal in London at great expense to the litigants.

However, as an exception to this, the Acting Judge may be empowered by the Chief Justice to make final orders for divorce, (including applications for ancillary relief) and in probate and other matters, depending upon the skills and experience of the person concerned.

In criminal matters, the Supreme Court has first instance jurisdiction over indictment offences and may sit as a Judge alone or Judge and Jury. In recent years, the legislation governing the eligibility for jury service has been widened to address difficulties of a small society, such as the Falkland Islands. The Acting Supreme Court Judge has presided over jury trials when the Chief Justice has not been available. The Supreme Court also has appellate jurisdiction in respect of criminal and civil matters from the Magistrate's Court and Summary Court. An appeal or further appeal, (as the case may be) lies to the Falkland Islands Court of Appeal which usually sits in London. From the Court of Appeal an appeal lies, in certain circumstances, to the Privy Council.

The Supreme Court also has the power of its own motion to review certain proceedings before the Magistrate's Court or the Summary Court.

The Supreme Court exercises jurisdiction with regard to alleged infringements of the written Constitution of the Falkland Islands and applications for judicial review.

Magistrate's Court

The Senior Magistrate is the only resident judicial officer in the Falkland Islands and presides in the Magistrate's Court, which has jurisdiction to try summarily all offences other than those specifically reserved to the Supreme Court. The sentencing power of the Magistrate's Court is unlimited and the Senior Magistrate has jurisdiction to try some offences which carry life imprisonment. The Senior Magistrate generally sits alone, but occasionally invites lay Justices of the Peace to join them as observers. The Magistrate's Court and the Summary Court, (described below) may sit as committing courts in respect of offences which are triable on indictment. There are no offences triable "either way" in the Falkland Islands and the Senior Magistrate does not sit with a jury.

There is not a great deal of 'serious' crime in the Falkland Islands although in recent years there has been an increase in complaints of, and conviction for, sex offences, in particular with regard to child victims.

The Senior Magistrate can expect to deal with a mixture of thefts, burglaries, assaults and road traffic cases, many of which will be alcohol related. Youth and child defendants appear before a Youth Court, (the bench may be the Justices of the Peace or the Senior Magistrate).

The Magistrate's Court has civil jurisdiction broadly equivalent to that of a County Court in England and Wales. Proceedings brought under the pre-Woolf County Court Procedure include;

- Small claims (fixed amount)
- Small claims (Hire Purchase)
- Small claims (unliquidated)

As well as dealing with the above, the Senior Magistrate also holds jurisdictions for appeals in certain matters. In recent history this has included:

- Appeals against decisions under the Firearms and Ammunition Ordinance
- Appeals under the Infectious Diseases Control (Coronavirus, Quarantine) Regulations 2021
- Appeals against seizure of goods by customs.

The Magistrate's Court exercises jurisdiction for family matters, (public and private). The legislation in respect of this is fairly recent but is awaiting amendment and update. At present, the Family Procedure Rules 2010 and practice directions are used with local ordinances.

Robes are worn for sittings of Magistrate's Court exercising criminal jurisdiction, but not in civil or family matters.

Summary Court

The criminal jurisdiction of the Summary Court is largely co-extensive with that of the Magistrate's Court. However, its sentencing powers are limited to a maximum of 6 months imprisonment. All criminal cases are commenced in the Summary Court and the more serious or complex ones are committed to the Magistrate's Court. The Summary Court also has some jurisdiction in family matters and the lay Justices undergo appropriate training but, because of difficulty with local connections, this jurisdiction is rarely exercised. The Summary Court also has jurisdiction in respect of liquor licensing with an appeal to the Senior Magistrate. The Senior Magistrate has co-extensive jurisdiction with the Summary Court as to the grant of extensions, occasional licences, and protection orders. The Head of the Courts acts as clerk to the Summary Court and carries out the administrative work in liquor licensing.

Training and guidance to the lay Justices is provided by the Head of Courts and Tribunals Service with assistance from the Senior Magistrate.

The Senior Magistrate is also Justice of the Peace.

Coroner's Court

The Senior Magistrate is also Coroner and ordinarily sits without a jury. The Coroner's Act of 1988 (England and Wales) applies with some necessary local modifications. The Supreme Court has jurisdiction for judicial review of the Coroner's Court. There is a third party contract for the provision of Coroner's Officers (and Bailiffs) with a local company. As part of the work of the Coroner, it is likely that you will come in contact with multi-national companies involved in the fishing industry as well as tour operators who work in and around the Falkland Islands and South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands. This will, quite often, require quick reaction and locating of translators. The jurisdictions of SGSSI and British Antarctic Territory operate under the current legislation of England and Wales. Arranging post mortem examinations can be a challenge though the need to establish cause of death is at the same standard as in the England and Wales Jurisdiction. Post mortems took place on 3 occasions during 2019 and 2020 with a pathologist travelling from the UK. There are a number of pathologists who assist the Falkland Islands and most are available and willing to discuss cases with the certifying doctors at the hospital.

Tribunals & Other Matters

The office of the Senior Magistrate holds various other appointments to tribunals eg Tax Appeal Tribunals, Mental Health Tribunal, Workmen's Compensation and Fisheries Disputes Commission. The demand is sporadic for these activities. In the past 5 years there have been 2 matters put before the Mental Health Tribunal and 10 before the Tax Appeal Tribunal for example.

The Senior Magistrate is also the Chair of the Criminal Justice Council and Sentencing Guidelines Committee. The Criminal Justice Council is a statutory body which is responsible for maintaining an overview of the working of the criminal justice system in the Falkland Islands and ensuring any issues are tackled with a 'whole system' approach. The Chief Justice is the President and the Head of Courts and Tribunals Service is the Secretary.

Court Facilities

The Courts sit in the Court and Council Chamber on the ground floor of the Town Hall in Stanley. The Chamber is also used by the Legislative Assembly, which sits monthly.

The room is also used to host public meetings, elections and any other business as may be required. The business of the court has priority use.

Legal Library and other facilities at the Courts

The Court and the Government Legal Service both have recently updated libraries. So far as possible, the duplication of text books is avoided and both libraries are available to the respective staff. The Court subscribes to the Lexis Nexis online research facility.

The Court also has its own website under the management of the Head of Courts. The Court and Council Chamber and judge's chambers are of a standard similar to that found in England and Wales. The Court and Council Chamber are fully equipped with modern sound recording equipment and a 'live-link' video facility for use with vulnerable witnesses.

Government Legal Services

The 'public' legal practitioners work in the office of the Attorney General, and include:

- Head of Legal Services
- Crown Counsel (Land & Contracts)
- Crown Counsel (Prosecution)
- Crown Counsel (Safeguarding)
- Administrative support staff
- Law Commissioner
- Legislative Drafters

Lawyers in Private Practice

At present there are two private firms operating in the Islands. The advocates who practice within them are very limited in number, (one or two at most) and tend to be general practitioners who also deal with a full range of contentious and non-contentious work.

Falkland Islands legal practitioners comprise a single tier profession and have rights of audience in all Courts of the Falkland Islands.

From time to time counsel and specialist solicitors from England are instructed and appear in the Falklands Courts.

Independence

If the Senior Magistrate were to dissociate themselves from cases of which they may have some prior knowledge, or in which they are acquainted with a witness or party, they would be unlikely to hear at least half of the cases which come before the court.

However, far from being required to live in an ivory tower, the Senior Magistrate is encouraged to learn about the unique features of the way of life in the Falkland Islands in order to enable them to understand the local community, in order to best serve the laws of the Islands.

The Senior Magistrate is not unique in having to balance conflicts of interest. Throughout the history of this small community a number of officials had to perform multiple and potentially conflicting functions. Candidates should be assured that, as such an office holder, it is still perfectly possible to socialise within the community and to take part in community activities. Previous Senior Magistrates have taken part in radio quiz shows, sporting events and drama productions, for example.

It is, however, still important that the office holder should conduct both their personal and public life in a manner such that it preserves both the perception and reality of impartiality and independence from all sources of undue influence in the performance of the duties of the office of Senior Magistrate. There is a Judicial Code of Conduct with which the Senior Magistrate is expected to comply.

Office hours

The Senior Magistrate is expected to keep Government office hours which are 8.00 am to 12 noon and 1.00 pm to 4.30 pm, Monday to Friday. Occasionally it will be necessary for the Senior Magistrate to work outside these hours or at weekends due to emergency applications or as Coroner.

There are no regular court sittings on weekends and out of hours applications are rare, but the post holder would be expected to facilitate emergency business when needed.

Further information can be found at: www.courts.gov.fk

Breakdown of number of cases which the Senior Magistrate has dealt with per area of law for 2019 & 2020

The figures below detail the number of cases per area, but do not indicate the number of sittings.

| Family Cases (Private & Public) | Number |
|--|--------|
| 2020 | 1 |
| 2019 | 2 |

| Civil Enforcement | Number |
|--------------------------|--------|
| 2020 | 8 |
| 2019 | 8 |

| Civil Claims (<£5,000) | Number |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| 2020 | 35 |
| 2019 | 25 |

| Probate (as Acting Judge) | Number |
|----------------------------------|--------|
| 2020 | 15 |
| 2019 | 18 |

| Criminal Cases (Senior Magistrate) | Number |
|---|--------|
| 2020 | 12 |
| 2019 | 11 |
| Criminal Cases (Acting Judge) | |
| 2020 | 1 |
| 2019 | 0 |

| Coroner | Number |
|----------------|--------|
| 2020 | 10 |
| 2019 | 6 |

| Matrimonial (as Acting Judge) | Number |
|--------------------------------------|--------|
| 2020 | 4 |
| 2019 | 8 |

| Civil Cases (as Acting Judge) | Number |
|--------------------------------------|--------|
| 2020 | 0 |
| 2019 | 4* |

** this includes Court of Protection, Civil claims .£50,000, and Enduring Powers of Attorney.*

About the Falkland Islands Government

The Falkland Islands are a UK Overseas Territory where executive authority is vested in Her Majesty the Queen. This authority is exercised by HM's Governor on her behalf. The Governor is advised by an Executive Council, comprised of three elected Members of the Legislature, the Chief Executive, and the Financial Secretary. This forum is also attended by the Islands' Attorney General and the Commander British Forces South Atlantic. Executive Council follows the UK Cabinet model, with meetings held in private (usually fortnightly).



The passage of legislation, votes for expenditure, and the annual budget including taxation levels are resolved by the Legislative Assembly. This is composed of eight elected Members (three from Camp¹ and five from Stanley²), the Chief Executive and Financial Secretary. The Commander British Forces and Attorney General attend Legislative Assembly and are permitted to speak on matters related to their roles. The Assembly itself is presided over by a 'Speaker', who is elected by the Members of the Assembly. The Assembly meets monthly and the proceedings follow a UK Parliamentary model. The Chief Executive and Financial Secretary do not vote on legislation.

All eight elected Members are independent of any political parties and each carries portfolios of services, which cover a wide array of diverse activities including Treasury and Taxation, the Public Accounts Committee and Trade and Industry, all the way through to Health and Medical Services and child protection.

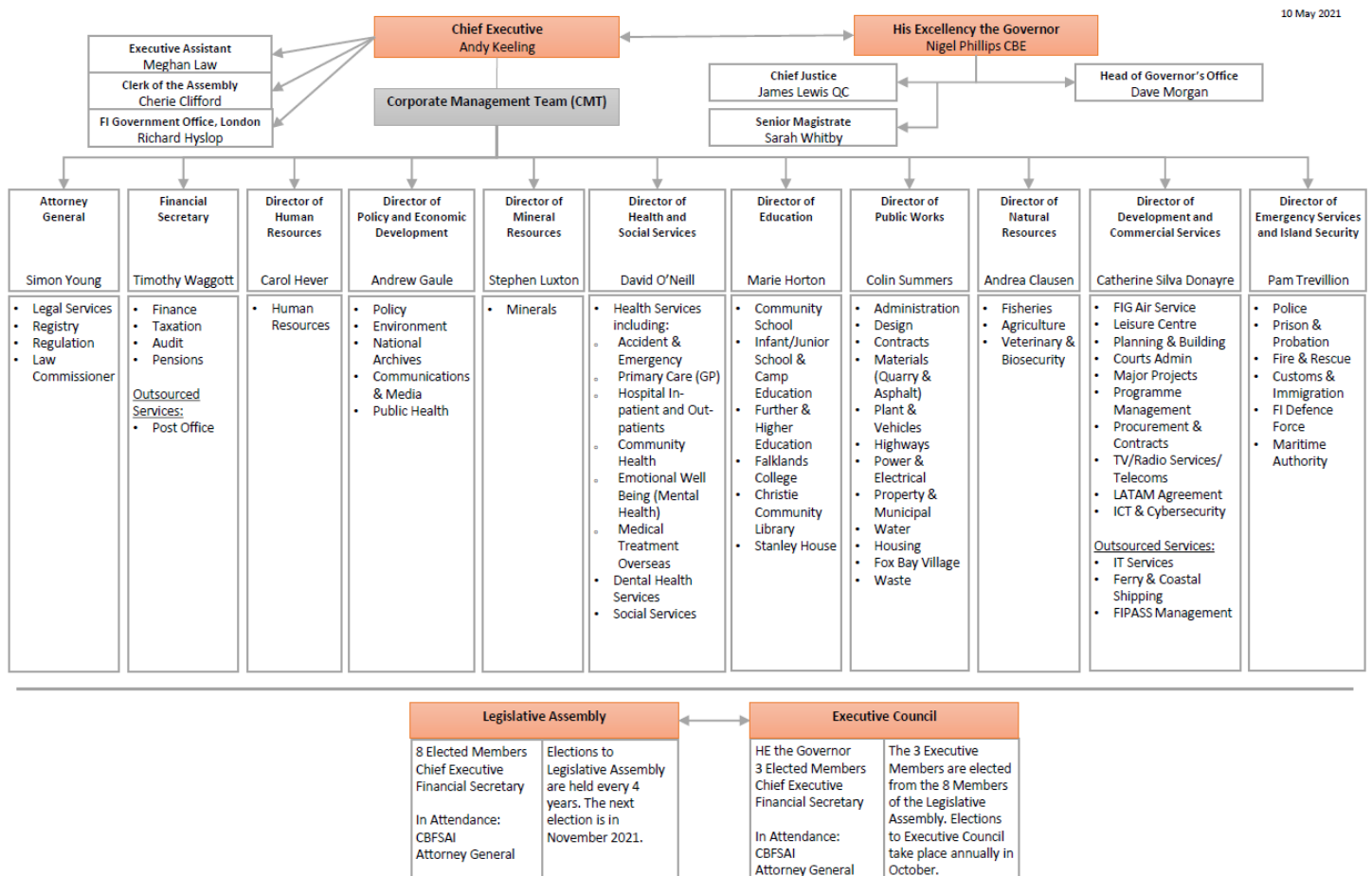
A wider network of 'Committees' exists, (around 20) and they generally include at least two elected Members and a mix of civil servants and lay members. The Standing Finance Committee, for example, considers and monitors the budget and includes all eight members. Such committees now meet in public under rules mirroring the UK's Local Government (Access to Information) Act. The intention is to speed up decision making processes and strengthen transparency, accountability and scrutiny.

The above is all set against the background of the 'The Islands Plan'. The Plan has been established to encapsulate the high level strategic aspirations agreed as being key to progress the sustainable, economic, social and political development of the Falkland Islands for the benefit of all residents. Elected Members' top priorities under the Plan are currently: Self-determination and good governance; Economic development; Population and workforce; Transport and communications; Education and training; Health and social care; Infrastructure; Safety and Security; Community, Culture, and Protecting the environment.

¹ Camp – the countryside is known as Camp

² Stanley – the capital of the Islands

Structure of the Government



As can be seen from above, Government departments in the Islands mirror the entire range of not only UK civil service departments, but also those services, which are often provided by local government and other NGO's elsewhere.

Directors of the departments meet regularly in a forum known as CMT (Corporate Management Team), chaired by the Chief Executive to consider corporate policy and strategy.

The business of Government itself is delivered by a core professional Public Service of c760 permanent employees (at any one time of which around approximately a fifth are officers on contract from outside of the Falkland Islands i.e. they have been recruited from locations such as the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Canada etc).

General Facts about the Falkland Islands

The people

The Islands have an ordinarily resident population of approximately 3,400 people. Almost 2,500 live in Stanley which is the southern-most capital in the world. Around 13 per cent of the population, c400 people, live in the countryside or “Camp” as it is referred to locally.

Mainly because of a positive migratory balance, the Falkland Islands has experienced positive demographic growth in recent years, with population growing by 3.0% per year on average between 2012 and 2016. The Falkland Islands has a relatively young population compared to other developed economies, as evidenced by indicators such as the dependency ratio (46% in 2016).

The population itself is predominantly of British birth or descent and many can trace their family on the Islands back to the mid-nineteenth century. In addition there is a permanent military garrison at Mount Pleasant airfield (MPA), some 35 miles west of Stanley, comprising a civilian population of approximately 400 individuals, in addition to military personnel.

More information on population can be found in [the 2016 Census report](#).

The economy

In 2016, the unemployment rate in the Falkland Islands was just 1.0%. The high economic activity rate – also evidenced by a labour force participation rate of 89% – suggests that there is little scope for increasing labour supply by drawing additional residents into the labour force, and that any net new jobs will require immigration.

In the last decade, nominal GDP has grown at an average rate of 11% per year (from £98m in 2009 to £255m in 2018). Annual GDP is highly volatile and double digit year on year swings are common, mainly due to the importance to the economy of resource sectors (such as the fishing and hydrocarbons industries) which are characterised by volatile output value. Non-resource GDP, however, has experienced a steady growth in real terms over the last decade and has been growing at an average rate of 3% per year between 2009 and 2018.

Sheep farming has been a traditional form of livelihood of the Islands since the 1850s. Agriculture’s relative importance in the whole economy has been decreasing in recent years – more due to growth in the fishing industry rather than decline in agriculture *per se*. Agriculture is still the second largest employment sector in the Falklands (after the public sector) accounting for 10% of employment in 2016.

The main economic driver since the late 1980’s has been commercial fishing, with the establishment of a controlled conservation zone in 1987, now at 200 nautical miles from the coastal baseline. Revenues to Government are around £20 million per year from licence or quota fees, as illustrated in the following table. In some recent seasons there have been downturns in catches, but the existence of the Government’s substantial cash reserves has proved valuable in smoothing revenue fluctuation.

The commercial fishing industry remains a buoyant sector today and revenue from the fishery is the main income source for the Government, though oil exploration activities have also boosted GDP in recent years.

Hydrocarbon exploration has been taking place in Falkland Islands waters for some time, with major drilling campaigns occurring in 2010-2012 and 2015-16. The decision of oil companies on whether to sanction production will be driven by expectations of future oil price, attractiveness of the specific project, investment climate and other factors.

Exploration activity has provided a stimulus for the Falklands economy, as well as providing a contribution to government revenues. The economic impact of oil production, should it be sanctioned, would be much larger – though long-term impacts are expected to be modest in terms of overall population growth.

Small businesses have been helped to establish and grow by the Falkland Islands Development Corporation (FIDC). Further information about the Corporation is available on the [FIDC's website](#).

The Falkland Islands economy experienced the negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic mostly as a result of strong links with the global economy through established trade flows. Disruptions to international supply chains, logistics, and air connectivity have posed serious challenges to those sectors that are most exposed to shocks in world markets and most dependent on foreign labour – such as agriculture, fishing, and tourism. However, the performance of most domestic-market-oriented sectors appears to have been broadly in line with recent years' trends or, in case a reduction in the rate of activity has been felt, it seems that most businesses have already recovered or are likely to fully recover quickly.

More information on the economy can be found in the ['State of the Falkland Islands Economy 2020'](#).

Tourism

The Falkland Islands have a unique wildlife footprint and a relatively untouched natural environment. These together with military history are points of interest that draw tourists to the Islands. The Falkland Islands receives visits from cruise ship passengers as well as land-based tourists.

During the summer months the islands' are visited by an ever increasing number of cruise ships. The number of cruise passenger arrivals has grown from around 20,000 in the 2000/01 tourist season to 72,836 during the 2019/20 season, the largest number to ever visit the Falklands in a single season. In the 2020/21 season there were no cruise visitors due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

More information on the Islands and tourism in general can be found on the [Falkland Islands Tourist Board's website](#).

Air connectivity

Under normal circumstances, air connections to the Islands include two flights a week by Ministry of Defence Chartered Airline from Brize Norton, Oxfordshire, and LATAM flights service connections to South America.

With the aim of enhancing air connectivity with South America (and from there with the rest of the world), a new weekly commercial air link connecting the Falkland Islands with São Paulo in Brazil was established in November 2019.

The new air link was suspended – together with the other LATAM weekly air link connecting the Falkland Islands with Punta Arenas and Santiago in Chile – in March 2020 due to the impact of Covid-19 restrictions on international air connectivity.

Geography/Climate

The Falkland Islands are located in the South Atlantic on the same latitude as London lies north. They comprise of two main Islands (East and West Falkland) and some 700 smaller islands, set 400 miles from the South American mainland and 8000 miles from the UK.

The maps below show where the Islands lie in relation to South America and give an overview of the Islands themselves and their main settlements.

Map 1. The Islands and their position



Map 2. The Islands and their main settlements



The temperature varies between a maximum of 24°C in January down to a minimum of minus 5°C in July/ August. Rainfall is generally low, winters are not as severe as the UK and the Islands enjoy more sunshine per annum than the south of England.

The countryside is comparatively bare of forestry, but it has its own unique flora and fauna. In geographical terms the Islands have a fascinating history that has resulted in some striking natural features such as the impressive rock formations known as 'stone runs', but which are actually rivers of angular quartzite. Bird and marine mammal wildlife also abound.

The Islands are also home to vast colonies of penguins and albatross, as well as over 200 species of other birds. They are also popular breeding grounds for sea lions, elephant and fur seals and over 15 species of whales and dolphins.

The protection of this unspoiled environment is a high priority in the Islands Plan and the Government spends around £1.5m per annum in environmental research with university partners from Imperial College London, Queens University Belfast, British Geological Survey and an independent local trust, Falklands Conservation.

The South Atlantic Environment Research Institute (SAERI) has also been set up to encourage growth in the level of research undertaken in the Islands and to develop the location as an international research platform.

More details on Falklands Conservation can be found on www.falklandsconservation.com

Islands Living – key facts

Currency & Banking: The currency of the Falkland Islands is the Falkland Islands Pound (FKP) which has the same value as Sterling when used in the Falkland Islands. British pounds are legal tender throughout the islands and dollars are also accepted in some locations. The Falkland Islands Pound cannot be exchanged outside of the islands but Bank of England notes are accepted. Standard Chartered bank is the only commercial bank on the Islands and new accounts can be set up to allow salary payment and transfers to and from UK banks.

Electricity: The electrical current is 220/240 volts, 50 Hz. Standard British appliance plugs will work in the Falklands.

Telecommunications: Sure telecoms provide telecommunication services in the Falkland Islands. This includes telephone and internet services. Being on a remote island means reliance on a satellite link so internet speeds are slower in comparison to UK fibre optic, and more expensive. Further information can be obtained from their website at www.sure.co.fk

Shopping: Stanley has two supermarkets and a number of smaller convenience stores. These are stocked with a good selection of imported goods, (canned, frozen and other packaged foods). Supplies of fruits and vegetables are grown locally and imported from South America. These in particular can be in limited supply and more expensive than the UK. Fresh local produce such as beef/lamb is readily available and of good quality and typically less expensive than the UK.

Eating out: Stanley has two good quality restaurants serving a range of local food. There is also a diner and some of the local pubs provide bar meals. Falkland menus feature locally grown produce such as lamb, beef and vegetables, as well as seafood caught both inshore and offshore. Strong links with Chile mean that a range of excellent wines are also available from South America.