



St Helena Island

www.sthelenatourism.com

TRAVEL UPDATE

St Helena has had 0 community cases of COVID-19 throughout the whole pandemic and is 97% vaccinated. As one of few COVID-free places on Earth, we're lucky to be living almost 'as normal', without worries about social distancing or masks. We can enjoy sundowners, weddings, Sunday lunches, hugs from family and friends and much more.

It's COVID-19 travel changes and border protocols that have kept the community safe. While these are beginning to relax, many requirements remain in place - vital information about flights and entry requirements have been compiled into brief, clear information leaflets that are now housed on the home page of the St Helena Tourism website and are being kept consistently updated.



ISOLATION CONNECTED

The landing of St Helena's branch of Google's Equiano fibre optic undersea internet cable, on 29 August 2021, marked the first shore landing in the entire Equiano project.

The project should deliver St Helena's first high-speed, fibre-optic connectivity with speeds ranging from a few hundred gigabits per second up to multiple terabits, as demand varies.

The cable will be able to 'go live' once both the St Helena branch and the main trunk of the Equiano cable are laid, powered and tested; and once the local provider and arrangements are in place and ready to go live.



HISTORIC GENERAL ELECTION

The 2021 General Election that took place on 13 to 14 October broke modern records for St Helena, with record candidate numbers, record female councillors and a record voter turnout. This election also marked the island's change to a ministerial system of governance.

The 12 elected councillors, from most to fewest votes, are Julie Thomas, Andrew Turner, Dr Corinda Essex, Martin Henry, Jeffrey Ellick, Ronald Coleman, Karl Thrower, Gillian Brooks, Mark Brooks, Christine Scipio, Robert Midwinter and Rosemary Bargo.

Julie Thomas on 25 October accepted the council's sole nomination for Chief Minister. On 1 November she selected her four ministers: Jeffrey Ellick (Safety, Security & Home Affairs Portfolio); Mark Brooks (Treasury, Infrastructure & Sustainable Development Portfolio); Christine Scipio (Environment, Natural Resources & Planning Portfolio); Martin Henry (Health & Social Care Portfolio). The Chief Minister will retain the Education, Skills & Employment Portfolio herself.



BACK FROM THE BRINK

The She Cabbage (*Lachanodes arborea*) was thought to be extinct until 1976 when it was rediscovered by the late George Benjamin. Seeds were then raised from the rediscovered trees and planted at suitable sites. When the last wild trees died in 2012, the She Cabbage became classified as Extinct in the Wild. Since the 1990s, conservationists have put continuous effort into propagating the She Cabbage and maintaining living gene banks. However, only a few hundred seeds had been successfully collected over the past 13 years.

This year, the Terrestrial Conservation Team at the Scotland Endemic Nursery collected a massive 20,000 seeds, with nearly 17,500 now potted out.

In late October, a locally produced short film about She Cabbage restoration won an Impact Award in a COP26 young persons film competition.



ROYAL NAVY VISITS



The Royal Navy's only Ice Patrol Ship, *HMS Protector*, visited St Helena twice this year to conduct crew changes that coincided with arrival of charter flights. The visits took place 6 to 10 September and 14 to 20 October. While in St Helena's waters, the ship carried out a hydrographic survey and surveillance of the seamounts. Personnel also enjoyed shore leave (after meeting quarantine requirements), frequenting local businesses and engaging in community events.

MAKING HEADLINES

On 21 October an article about how St Helena has fared during the pandemic became one of BBC News' most read online articles. On the back of the article's success, Head of Tourism Matthew Joshua was interviewed on BBC News, and clips from SHG's locally produced promotional video were featured. This international coverage came at no cost to SHG's Sustainable Development team but secured the island international exposure to a few hundred million people. This led to a 900% (approx.) increase in St Helena Tourism website hits on 21 October.



BIRDS FLY HIGH

On 17 October the Wirebirds claimed an unexpected 2-1 victory over Rovers to become the 2021 St Helena Football Association league champions.

This was only the third time in history the Wirebirds have secured that title.

The Wirebirds played a great season that put them at the top of the table - two points ahead of last year's winners, Rovers.



PEAK WIREBIRD SEASON

September to March is Wirebird nesting season.

Be sure to look out for them at Deadwood Plain and Prosperous Bay!

SAVE THE DATE



DID YOU KNOW?

REDISCOVERY

The endemic St Helena Ebony (*Trochetiopsis Ebenus*) was thought to be extinct until 21 years ago this November, when it was rediscovered on a cliff at Blue Point by George Benjamin and Charlie Benjamin. Charlie climbed down the side of the cliff to recover the endemic and steps were taken immediately to cultivate the last Ebony plant.

GENTLE GIANT SEASON

The first Whale Shark of this season was spotted a few weeks ago.

The season typically spans between December and March.

Visit them at the only known location in the world where adult male and female Whale Sharks congregate in equal numbers, potentially to mate.

Swimming with these gentle giants in the clear, warm waters of St Helena is a bucket-list adventure - book your trip now.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- 3 Dec - New Horizon's Christmas Bazaar
- 4 Dec - St Helena Football Association Presentation
- 10 Dec - Pilling School's Christmas Bonanza
- 18 Dec - Pilling School's Festival of Lights
- 24 Dec - Christmas Eve Float Parade