

Release for website

In another historic first for the Cayman Islands and the Overseas Territories (OTs), the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (JCPC) opened its Sitting in the Cayman Islands on Tuesday, 15 November 2022. The four-day Sitting will conclude on Friday, 18 November.

In addition to conducting hearings, the Justices have been engaged in several information-sharing initiatives designed to add value to the visit for the Cayman Islands. These include a “Court Users” meeting, to be attended by a cross-section of legal practitioners; a meeting with senior high-school-aged students from St. Ignatius High, Cayman Prep High, and the “Dual Enrolment” programme at the University College of the Cayman Islands (UCCI). A similar meeting with students at the Truman Bodden Law School (TBLs) takes place on Friday morning.

Speaking at the opening ceremony on Tuesday in Grand Court 1, Lord Reed said: “This is an important occasion in the history of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. It is a privilege for us to serve as the final court of appeal for the Cayman Islands. That means serving all the people of the Islands. Our work is important to life in the Islands, and to the prosperity of the Islands. That is a heavy responsibility, and one that we take very seriously.”

Continuing, Lord Reed said that the JCPC had prioritized establishing a “strong relationship with the Islands. We want to get to know the Islands and the people of the Islands, to learn about life here and the challenges that you face. Since we arrived, we have been spending time with members of the judiciary here, visiting places of interest, and learning about the economy and the social life of the Islands, and the challenges that people face. We were honoured to be able to take part in the Remembrance Service on Sunday, and were greatly impressed by the sense of community, by the fact that everyone was involved, from veterans and community leaders to cubs and brownies.”

Lord Reed was responding at the opening ceremonies to welcome remarks by the Attorney General of the Cayman Islands, the Hon. Samuel Bulgin, KC, and the President of the Cayman Islands Legal Practitioners Association (CILPA) (see full speeches on this website).

Prior to the opening, the Lord Justices, accompanied by the Hon. Chief Justice Margaret Ramsay-Hale, participated in a wreath-laying ceremony on Remembrance Sunday at the Cenotaph in memory of those who died in the two world wars, and at the Seaman’s Memorial.

On Wednesday morning, high school students participated in an “Ask a Justice” session with the Justices, from St. Ignatius High, Cayman Prep, and the Dual Enrolment (DU) programme at the University College of the Cayman Islands (UCCI). The DU students are drawn from the senior-year students from John Gray High School and Clifton Hunter High. The Ask a Justice programme, initiated by the JCPC, is said to provide a unique insight into the work of the Justices and is excellent for students with a keen interest in the law.

Teachers from participating schools have all reported an enthusiastic response from the students. “The students are very excited to be in attendance and have been working through their lunchbreaks this week to get prepared,” said Mr. Daniel Baker head of Sixth Form at Cayman Prep. “I am sure the day will help motivate them to do well in their forthcoming exams and identify suitable career pathways in Law.” This session of Ask a Justice will be available to the three institutions via live stream to allow other students to view the session.

The opening of the JCPC Sitting on Tuesday was preceded by an inspection of the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service (RCIPS) Guard of Honour in front of the Main Court of the Halls of Justice.

Opening ceremonies were followed by the start of the JCPC Sitting in the Cayman Islands at Courtroom 9, on the second floor of the Halls of Justice Building C (former BNS Building).

Accompanying JCPC President The Rt. Hon. The Lord Reed of Allermuir for the opening ceremonies will be Deputy President The Rt. Hon. The Lord Hodge, The Rt. Hon. The Lord Lloyd-Jones, The Rt. Hon. The Lord Briggs of Westbourne, and The Rt. Hon. The Lord Kitchin.

On Tuesday morning, prior to the opening ceremonies, recently retired Chief Justice Sir Anthony Smellie joined current Chief Justice Ramsay-Hale in welcoming the Justices. They were joined by HE the Governor Mr. Martyn Roper, the Deputy Governor Mr. Franz Manderson, the Premier the Hon. Wayne Panton, the Deputy Premier the Hon. Christopher Saunders, the Attorney General the Hon. Samuel Bulgin, and the President of the Cayman Islands Legal Practitioners Association Mr. Erik Bodden.